

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 2
Number 1 *Parameters* 1972

Article 7

7-4-1972

SECRETARY STIMSON AND THE EUROPEAN WAR, 1940-1941

F. Gunther Eyck

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters>

Recommended Citation

F. G. Eyck, "SECRETARY STIMSON AND THE EUROPEAN WAR, 1940-1941," *Parameters* 2, no. 1 (1972), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.1039.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters by an authorized editor of USAWC Press.

SECRETARY STIMSON AND THE EUROPEAN WAR, 1940-1941

by

PROFESSOR F. GUNTHER EYCK

(Editor's Note: *In Volume I, Number 1 of Parameters (Spring 1971) Professor Eyck wrote about "Secretary Stimson and the Army Reforms, 1911-1913, in which he gave a comprehensive account of some significant innovations in the conduct of military affairs that were instituted during Henry L. Stimson's initial appointment as Secretary of War. In this issue of Parameters, Professor Eyck discusses the part played by Stimson in preparing the defense system of the United States for a world war less than three decades later. Stimson's activist policies of intervention and his concept of global defense against aggression are of specific interest at a time when some of these maxims are being challenged.*)

On July 10, 1940, when Henry L. Stimson was sworn in as Secretary of War, he returned to a position which he had last held

Professor Eyck received his baccalaureate (History) from Alma College, a Masters Degree (History) from New York University, and another Masters Degree (Library Science) from Columbia University. His doctorate (History) was also awarded by New York University. As a political scientist and historian, he has had numerous professorships, including tenures at the University of Texas, The American University, and the US Naval War College. He has been an analyst, branch chief, and deputy division chief in the US Information Agency, where he is currently employed. In academic year 1971 he held the Stimson Chair of Political Science at the Army War College. He will teach an elective course, Political Thought and Institutions, at the War College in the fall of the Academic Year 1973.



twenty-seven years earlier.¹ The changes that had occurred in the interval were tremendous and as tangible in the War Department as in the world at large. In 1913 the secretary had left office in an atmosphere of peace and with the expectation that the small US Army, so effectively reorganized during his 22-month tenure, would be wholly adequate for any small-scale emergency operations along the Rio Grande, in Cuba or the Philippines. The United States was supreme in the Western Hemisphere; its navy was an effective guarantor of maritime security; the Monroe Doctrine provided the desired diplomatic safeguards; and the traditional policies of non-alliance made an involvement in European wars most unlikely.

Within less than three decades these suppositions were put to an even more severe test than they had been in World War I. Mr. Stimson, when taking on at the age of 72 the arduous task of looking after the military defenses of the nation at a critical juncture of history, had little time to compare the circumstances of 1913 and 1940. Yet occasionally he would remark on the contrasts. Thus he told the graduating class at West Point on June 11, 1941:

In 1911, although we little realized it, we were approaching the close of a long period of constantly expanding liberty.... Today... our own nation, sheltered as it is by the geographical position and natural resources... is confronted by the most dangerous threat which has ever faced its political and economic independence.²

Stimson perceived the differences from the past and the dangers from the present well



US ARMY

Secretary Stimson (left), General Marshall and others observing a trackless tank in April 1941.

before he resumed office. Now, a major European war was being fought and America's former allies were in desperate straits. Now, this country was seriously divided on the question of whether to enter the war or to remain neutral. Now, the danger of Fifth Column subversion was far greater than that of open attack. Now, the technological advances in weaponry and communications required a far more elaborate organization of production and procurement, not to mention specialized training for a huge number of troops and an ever more complex system of logistics.

Fortunately, Stimson had not lost the balanced judgment, the innovative spirit and

the unwavering determination which had marked his earlier service. Nor would he compromise his basic principles. He stood firmly for active opposition to aggression, preservation of democratic institutions and human dignity and rights, effective defense of national security including support of potential allies of the United States, and the creation of a large and modern conscript Army.

His defense concepts were global rather than continental, dynamic rather than static and three-dimensional: moral, political and military. As early as March 7, 1939—a week before the complete Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia—he commented in an interview with the *New York Times*:

I believe that our foreign policy cannot with safety be geographically limited to a defense of this hemisphere... On the contrary, I think that if we should stand idly by... until Britain, France and China are either conquered or forced to make terms with militaristic aggressors, our own hemisphere... would neither be a safe nor a happy place to live in, for a people with American ideals of life.³

He steadfastly held to the view that US national security and an effective international order of law would best be served by keeping this country actively involved overseas. To his mind, disengagement from international responsibilities would neither keep this country out of war nor reduce the likelihood of war. Stimson gave a classic formulation to his persistent support for overseas involvement, if not intervention, in the statement contained in his first Annual Report as Secretary of War in the Roosevelt Administration. "To keep America out of war is a mere unhelpful slogan. To keep war out of America is a sound historic policy dating back to the Monroe Doctrine."⁴

Stimson did not hesitate to challenge those who consistently favored neutrality in the impending European conflict, and he left no doubt as to his sympathies or views. He outlined his position *vis a vis* a rapidly and dramatically changing international situation

in a radio speech at a Yale University commencement exercise on June 18, 1940. On that day, it may be recalled, France surrendered to the Germans in one of the most stunning moments of the twentieth century. The global impact of this catastrophic surrender was quickly understood by Henry Stimson.

He declared that the United States probably faced the greatest crisis in its history. He warned that the world was divided into two irreconcilable camps, one of which strove for "justice and freedom" while the other "recognized only the rule of force."⁵ At the end of his speech Stimson called for specific measures to counteract the effects of the astounding German triumph before it became all-consuming. Among the proposed measures were the repeal of neutrality legislation; the opening of American port facilities to British and French shipping; acceleration of the shipment of war materiel to Britain and France, if necessary in American bottoms and under American convoy protection; resistance to Fifth Column pressures; and, last but not least, the reintroduction of compulsory military service—one of Stimson's most cherished concepts.

Domestic reaction to the forthright speech varied widely. Among those greatly impressed by Mr. Stimson's bold arguments was President Roosevelt. On the day after the New Haven talk, he offered to Stimson the post of Secretary of War. Stimson accepted after brief hesitation. As he pointed out later, he was glad to be back in a position of responsibility for the US Army, which in his own words he had known and trusted for thirty years, working for a President whom he respected and having an outstanding Chief of Staff in General George C. Marshall. What more, Stimson remarked, could any man wish for in a time of national peril?

As it soon turned out, not everything and everybody favored him. On four previous occasions the US Senate had readily confirmed his nomination to high office. This time the situation proved more difficult. Searching questions were asked not only by members of the Military Affairs Committee

but also by such renowned Senators as Robert A. Taft and Arthur H. Vandenberg. Some of the sharpness of the ensuing arguments could be traced to the fact that Stimson, a long-time Republican who had served four Republican Presidents, was about to break ranks and join a Democratic administration.

More important, however, were the basic issues, and he showed little willingness to compromise on them. Possible involvement in a European war, for a second time within one generation, greatly concerned those who questioned him closely. Yet Stimson did not rule out this possibility. He made clear his views that certain nations had banded together for the purpose of "systematized aggression," that the United States must not wait for a would-be aggressor to establish himself at its continental borders, that it was vital for the United States to rearm, and that continued support for Britain was necessary in the interest of national security. He also pointed out that the two overriding issues with which he would be concerned as Secretary of War would be "the arousal of a national spirit"⁶ and the time factor in building a large modern Army. Materially and psychologically, he stated, the nation was unprepared for war. Yet he strongly denied being a warmonger and pointed with pride to his efforts at arms limitations and the promotion of peace when serving as Secretary of State in the early thirties. His frank answers and lucid views secured confirmation by a two-to-one majority.

Upon assuming office, Stimson immediately set out to attain his objectives. The collapse of France had placed Britain in a most difficult position. Its very survival was uncertain, its inadequate forces spread thinly and its supplies running short. The Secretary depicted the situation as gloomy, and he admitted to nervousness about preparations for a German invasion of the British Isles. Yet he was convinced of the "indomitable spirit" of the British and ready to offer whatever support he could muster.

A week after taking office he noted in his *Diary* that Navy Secretary Frank Knox, his fellow-Republican teammate who had joined

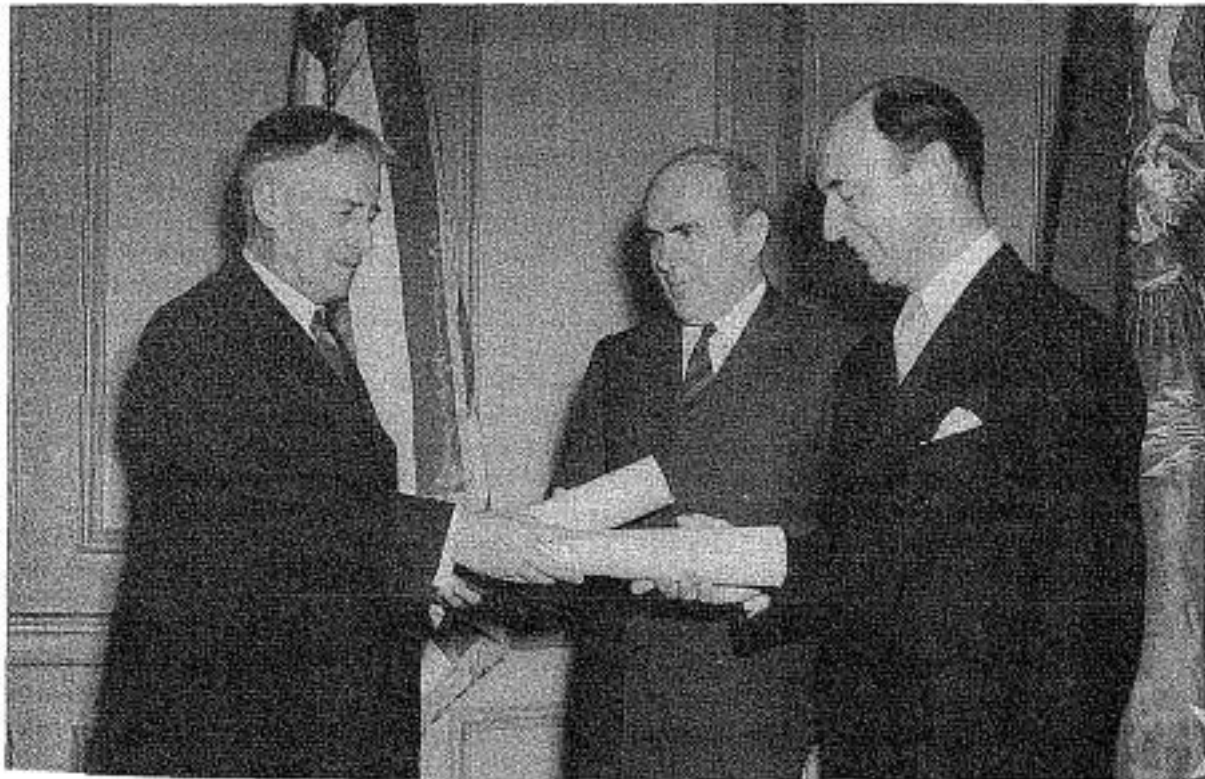
the Roosevelt Administration at the same time and out of similar considerations, was also ready to "give the British all we could."⁷ However, this was easier said than done since Stimson all too soon became aware of how little there was to be given and how much the British requested.

At one of his earliest meetings with British representatives, the latter repeated the requests first made after evacuation from Dunkirk: 1,250 planes per month; between 1,000 and 1,500 medium tanks; 38,000 A.A. machine guns and 31,000 other machine guns; 400 field guns; 300 mortars and 500,000 Enfield rifles—not to mention ammunition for all types of weapons. Much as he sympathized with Britain, Stimson realized that even if the United States could furnish such vast quantities of arms, it could not do so without violating existing neutrality legislation and denying to the Army many of its own new requirements. Nevertheless, he approved

shipments of smaller consignments because he understood how critical the situation was and because to him an unconquered Britain remained the first line of an effective American defense.

Yet, in a series of meetings with Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Defense Production Chief William S. Knudsen, and Arthur Purvis, the head of the British Purchasing Commission, Stimson made clear that only after the minimum needs of the US Army had been filled in such vital sectors as aircraft production could he release in good faith airplane engines and frames to the British. He also objected, with the recent French catastrophe in mind, to specific long-range commitments. In August 1940 he stated that although he had been among the first to call for assistance to Britain, her situation had become more difficult and did not exclude the possibility of defeat.

In spite of such misgivings, the Secretary



Secretary Stimson presenting commissions to Assistant Secretaries of War Mr. Robert Lovett (right) and Mr. John J. McCloy (center) 22 April 1941.

US ARMY

arranged in close cooperation with General Marshall for an initial shipment of aircraft engines and frames. Moreover, he took active part in the negotiations which in August of 1940 resulted in the first major American military assistance to Britain—the transfer of 50 overaged destroyers. While skeptical at first as to the legal prospects of such transfer, and mindful of Congressional opposition, Stimson became more hopeful when it was evident that the President himself pushed the issue and that the British would offer an adequate quid pro quo by permitting the United States to lease for 99 years base facilities in eight British possessions in North and Central America.

In his typical straightforward manner, Stimson objected to any legal subterfuge such as turning the much needed ships over to Canada rather than directly to Britain. He was present when President Roosevelt worked out the final transfer arrangements with Canada's Prime Minister Mackenzie King at Ogdensburg, New York. And he observed with much relief that this arrangement was "very possibly the turning point of the war and that from now on we could hope for better things."⁸

Alas, the hope proved premature. In the fall, Britain came under very heavy air attacks and suffered tremendous shipping losses. Requirements for replacement and augmentation of war materiel increased correspondingly and Stimson felt constrained to remark on September 9: "We have so little that we can give them."⁹ Yet he saw to it that the British received the five Flying Fortresses and 250,000 Enfield rifles for which they had contracted along with the 50 destroyers. The request for 200 fighter planes, however, was turned down and another request for 70 light tanks left open.

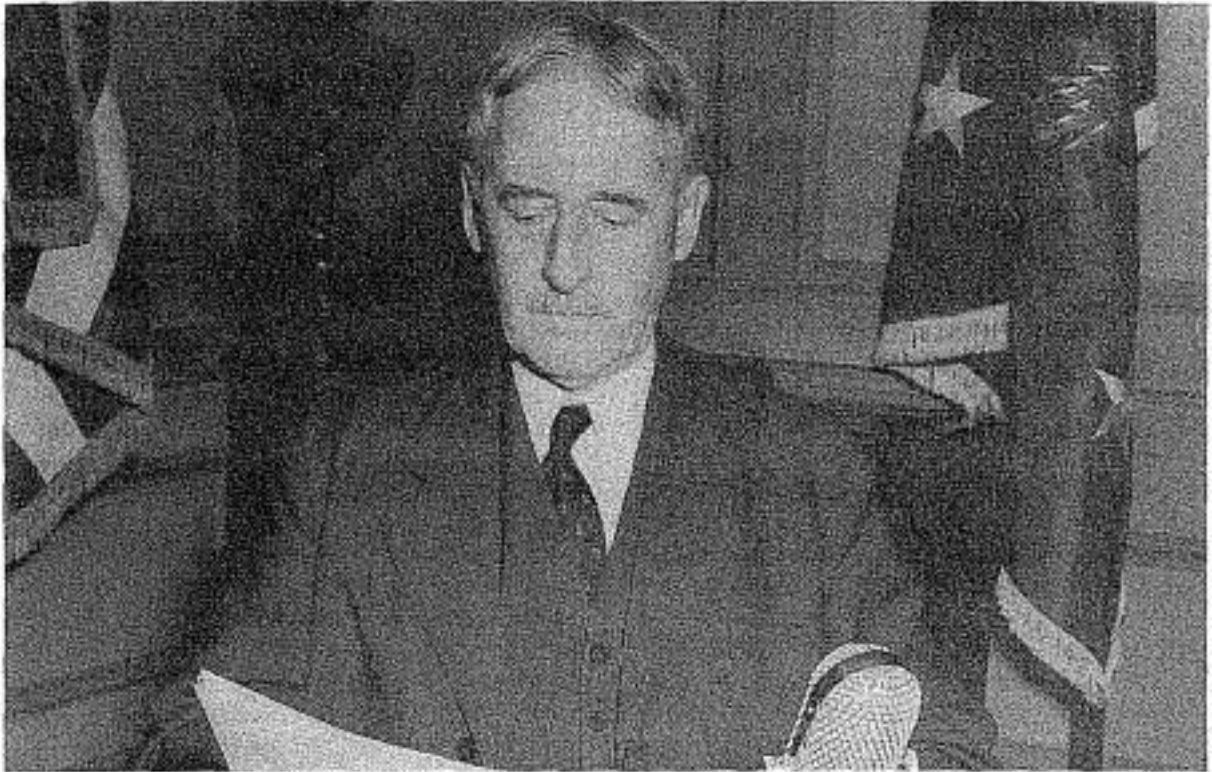
This did not mean that Mr. Stimson had become more dubious about the determination of the British to fight on, or of their capability of winning much needed victories. On the contrary, he stated repeatedly that Britain's morale remained unimpaired, and he termed victories in the western desert "inspiring." Quite apart from his anglophile sympathies, he maintained that

Britain remained the outer bastion of US defense.

The Secretary argued before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January 1941 along the same lines as six months earlier that the United States was buying time to rearm itself from "the only nation which can sell us that time."¹⁰ To keep the sealanes to Britain open and to supply that country with the necessities for military and economic survival comprised one of the axioms of his defense policies. In his Yale University speech and his confirmation hearings alike he had mentioned a convoy system with American help in order to secure the flow of supplies. In December 1940 Stimson elaborated on the possibility of the US Navy assuming convoy duties in the Atlantic. And in March 1941 he noted in his *Diary* that he had reached agreement with Secretary Knox that convoying offered the only solution.¹¹

However, the President fully realized that once the US Navy extended its protection to ships of other nations it would soon be drawn into a showdown with German raiders. To the disappointment of Stimson, Knox, and others he vacillated on this crucial issue. As Stimson had once reacted to the dilatoriness of President Taft by saying he felt like driving his fist for him, the Secretary now kept nudging President Roosevelt. In his view the President ought to lead, and lead boldly, rather than take half-measures in the hope that public opinion would ultimately catch up. Roosevelt's Atlantic patrol system was such a measure, since it could do little more than warn Allied shipping of U-boats, and Stimson did not hesitate to speak his mind to the President and urge stronger action.¹²

On May 6, 1941 the Secretary in a radio address came out directly in favor of US protective convoys for British ships. He also called upon Americans to spare no sacrifice in defense of freedom, which he saw gravely threatened by Nazi Germany. Three weeks later Stimson submitted to the President a memorandum suggesting that he ask the Congress for authority to use US forces to help Britain in the grim battle of the Atlantic. Although Roosevelt declined this advice, he did order troops to Iceland to relieve British



US ARMY

Secretary Stimson broadcasting from his office in the Munitions Building during May 1941.

contingents there. This move had been planned as early as March 1941 but was not to take effect until September of that year. However, upon the urgings of Knox and Stimson the President advanced the timetable and in July announced the arrival of US forces in Iceland. Mr. Churchill, among many other Britons, enthusiastically welcomed this development, and for very good reasons. Among other advantages, British and Allied shipping could now be protected by the United States. In September, the so-called safety zone was extended to longitude 260 west, near the Azores, and losses diminished gradually.

Stimson considered the Atlantic the center stage of the war and repeatedly tried to have the United States focus its primary attention and activities on that area. One of his major concerns was a possible Axis descent on Latin America. In a memo of May 1941, he warned the President that once the Nazis had established domination of Africa's western

coasts, they would launch "the inevitable attack on us."¹³³ He urged Roosevelt to move a substantial part of the US Pacific fleet to the Atlantic and to do so quickly. However, opposition from Secretary of State Hull and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Stark, reduced the shift to a few units.

Not only did the military and economic situation of Britain continue to be precarious, but her financial position was greatly weakened before the end of 1940. Stimson was keenly aware of the rising difficulties and preferred meeting the issue openly and directly rather than hush-hush it. When Treasury Secretary Morgenthau estimated in early December 1940 that the British deficit in the United States by the end of the fiscal year would reach at least two billion dollars, Mr. Stimson urged that the Congress be informed at once. He reasoned that neither Congress nor the British should be deceived as to the gravity of the situation and that it would be improper for the executive branch

of the US Government to act solely on its own discretion in this vital matter.

These considerations made him one of the most ardent supporters of the famous H.R.-1776, the Lend-Lease Bill. In his testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on January 16 and 17, 1941, he presented a gloomy picture of the plight of the remaining free countries in the West.

In 1917, he pointed out, the United States could draw on British and French supplies to fill almost all its needs for war materiel. In 1941 Germany had acquired control over most of the continental arsenals, while Britain desperately sought large quantities of weapons from the United States and in competition with many other nations. In his introductory summation the Secretary stated that the Lend-Lease Bill would enable the President to put into operation an effective national defense policy. The bill, Stimson said, would allow the US Government to look at the same time after the defenses of the nation as well as of those other nations "whose defense is a matter of vital importance to us."¹⁴ †

During the rather acrimonious hearings the Secretary opposed attempts to limit the range and the effectiveness of the bill. He staunchly defended it on the two basic issues to which its opponents returned again and again: the discretionary powers of the Chief Executive in making allotments or alternately denying them to other countries, and the danger of being drawn into the war by excessive commitments. Stimson reassured his questioners that the President was most unlikely to act single-handedly, and he insisted that the effective defense of the United States in the present emergency depended in large part upon rendering effective help to Britain and perhaps to other nations. He reasoned that passage of the bill would probably offer the last opportunity of strengthening the United States and Britain simultaneously without involving this country in war.

Spokesmen for the Administration ultimately prevailed. Upon passage of the Lend-Lease Act in early March 1941, Stimson remarked on March 17 that it constituted an

"unprecedented measure but... was at the same time an act of magnificent realism."¹⁵ Indeed, the seven billion dollar credit asked for by President Roosevelt and approved by the Congress in the immediate aftermath of the enactment of Lend-Lease was a striking illustration of the correctness of Mr. Stimson's assessment.

While the Secretary became convinced of Britain's ability to hold out indefinitely, if adequately assisted, he had grave doubts regarding the chances of another major country about to be challenged by German aggression: the Soviet Union. Stimson concurred with General Marshall's assessment and that of the War Plans Division that at worst the Red Army would be destroyed within a month and at best it could last for three months. In fact, he was so skeptical about Russian capabilities that he recorded in his *Diary* on June 17, 1941—five days before Operation Barbarossa took place—that more likely than not the Soviet Union would surrender even without a fight.

Yet once the German onslaught had occurred, Stimson's view became less negative and he assessed with alacrity the advantages which might accrue, however temporarily, to the United Kingdom and to the United States. He correctly assumed, along with others, that as long as Germany was involved in the East, pressure on Britain would diminish correspondingly as it would also in West Africa and in the Mediterranean theater of war. He urged the President, as he had on earlier occasions, to take the lead in winning the battle of the North Atlantic and to protect effectively the American Hemisphere in the South Atlantic.

But already in early July his grave doubts reasserted themselves. He spoke of the "terrible German Moloch" that seemed invincible. And now he not only doubted Soviet ability to resist but even American capability of challenging this "moloch" effectively.

In spite of his grave reservations about the chances of the Red Army, he thought that so long as it continued to resist, the Germans would have to direct their primary attention to the Russian front. He was less sure as to

how much help the United States should and could offer. In late July 1941 he released to Russia, with British concurrence, 150 fighter planes already in transit to Britain and another 50 still being assembled in this country but on order to Britain. However, the tremendous advance of the German armies deep into Russia caused him to reconsider the advisability of further shipments under Lend-Lease arrangements. In conjunction with the Chief of Staff he held back on additional consignments.

Not only was Henry Stimson uncertain as to the duration of Soviet resistance, he also took umbrage at Soviet diplomatic conduct and excessive stubbornness. When Roosevelt upbraided him at a Cabinet meeting on August 1, 1941, for delays in shipments to the Soviet Union, Stimson became irate. He caustically remarked in his *Diary* that there were those who were being "hellbent" on helping some nation or another without any regard to the needs of the US Army. Nevertheless, Stimson saw to it that additional war materiel was dispatched to the

embattled Russians and in mid-September he recorded with satisfaction that the President had praised the efforts of the War Department.

Not until the fall of 1941 did the Secretary begin to feel more assured as to the prospects of the Russians lasting into the winter. The decision in early November to extend the Lend-Lease Act to cover fully all major Soviet requests met with approval on Mr. Stimson's part, as did the projected amount of one billion dollars worth of aid during the following year.

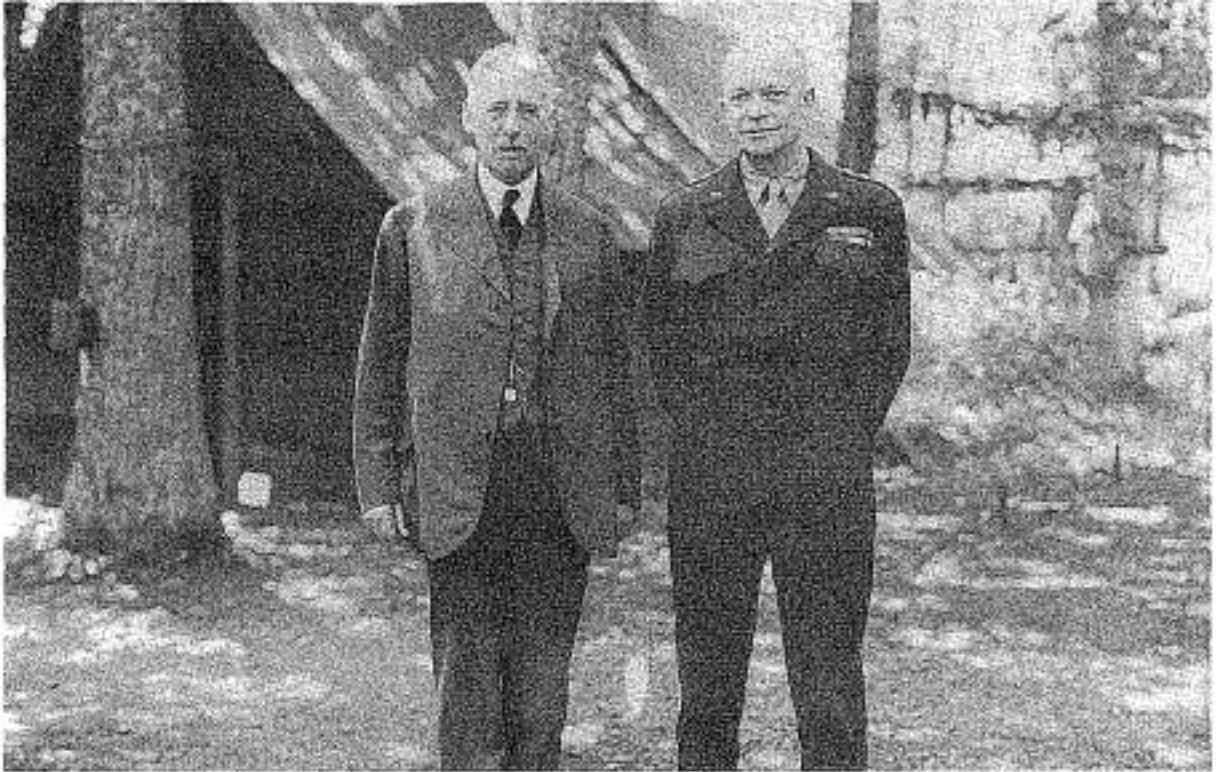
However much concerned Stimson was with the fortunes and misfortunes of Britain, China, and the Soviet Union as the principal opponents of the Axis powers, he subordinated this concern at all times to the primary goal of his tenure of office: the strengthening of American combat readiness. To this there were two major components—the building up of the Army and the expansion of war materiel production.

Stimson had always strongly advocated



US ARMY

The drawing of capsules for the first National Lottery for selective service in October 1940. Pictured are President Franklin D. Roosevelt; Major General Erwin M. Watson, Aide to the President; Henry Stimson, Secretary of War; Colonel C. R. Morris, US Army Retired.



U S A R M Y

Secretary Stimson and General Eisenhower at a press conference held in England in July 1944.

conscription and regarded compulsory service as "a good thing."¹⁶ He argued consistently for passage of a selective service bill but strong public pressures delayed it. In July 1941 he called this bill "the foundation stone" on which the Administration's defense policy rested. In support of the bill he pointed out that the American Nation in previous national emergencies had recourse to conscription and that this would best ensure a fair and orderly utilization of manpower. He mildly criticized Roosevelt for dilatory tactics in connection with the delays of the bill and he sharply castigated opposing groups—many of which, Stimson asserted, were backed by subversive Nazi influences.

The Secretary was all the more pleased when the bill finally became law on September 16, 1941. The following day he termed it "an unprecedented feat"¹⁷ since it was the first time in US history that a conscription law had been enacted before the outbreak of war. He also believed that the

new Act would be conducive to the building of national morale, an issue which concerned him much.

Stimson did not cease to warn of the dire dangers of moral and physical unpreparedness. In a speech on August 15, 1941 he observed that understandably Americans had difficulty grasping the conditions of subjugation to which France had fallen victim so rapidly in June of 1940. Yet the French a mere two years earlier would not have been able to envisage a situation in which their army disintegrated rapidly and their country became a vast prison.

Preparedness remained his watchword throughout the 18 months during which he held office prior to Pearl Harbor. He anticipated that in the moment of truth the American people would rally to the defense of the country and he thought that this moment could not be postponed indefinitely. After the President's famed Arsenal of

Democracy speech on December 29, 1940, he stated that it was not enough for the United States to be "permanently . . . in a position of toolmakers"¹⁸ and that once Americans had clearly distinguished the right from the wrong they would fight.

To get the men and to get their morale geared up for what appeared to Mr. Stimson the unavoidable involvement in war were but minor problems when compared with the issue of arms procurement. There was no dearth of funds since the Congress generously provided for over 15 billion dollars in fiscal 1941. To obligate these funds and to place orders for equipping nearly one and one-half million men, however, proved a tremendous undertaking.

The rapid pace of the projected expansion of production was slowed by low plant capacity, manufacturers' reluctance to shift to largescale munitions production without effective guarantees of adequate financial returns, labor problems, rivalries between

military and civilian procurement officers and, above all, an unstructured and uncoordinated government procurement system. Some of these difficulties became plain to Mr. Stimson soon after taking office. In August 1940 he told the House Ways and Means Committee that out of a projected construction of 4,000 aircraft, only thirty-three contracts had as yet been signed.

As late as May 1941 Secretary Stimson still expressed concern over delays in certain essential armaments such as anti-aircraft guns. To speed up production, he had authorized within 24 hours of his assumption of office the establishment of a Production Branch in the War Department. Later he gave full support to plans and administrative arrangements for the improvement of a very cumbersome and even wasteful production system. In November 1940 an informal review board came into being upon recommendation of General Marshall. It included Secretaries Knox, Morgenthau and Stimson, who had



US ARMY

Secretary Stimson discussing the progress of the French Campaign with LTGs Omar N. Bradley and George S. Patton in July 1944.

strongly backed the recommendations of the Chief of Staff, and William S. Knudsen.

Stimson pushed repeatedly for the streamlining of production to the advantage of defense priorities. In December 1940 he pressed Morgenthau and Knox to help him persuade the President to appoint a production chief who would have complete responsibility for all defense requirements. However, Roosevelt early in 1941 only went so far as to set up such an office within the White House staff. Moreover, instead of the one headman asked for, there remained two: Knudsen and the labor leader Sidney Hillman.

The desired speedup in productivity caused the Secretary to make some telling comments and some extraordinary proposals. When the issue of increased supplies of aluminum came up for discussion and some of the New Dealers raised objections to letting ALCOA take all of the orders rather than giving them in part to a new company which did not as yet fully operate and where delays might occur, Stimson argued that he would prefer "some sinful aluminum now than a lot of virtuous aluminum a year from now."¹⁹ He favored tax relief and safe profit margins for private industry in order to encourage fuller participation in defense production. In September 1941 he urged Knudsen to order a halt in the production of new automobile models so as to place a greater tooling capacity at the disposal of ammunition makers. And in October he proposed that all commercial aircraft production be halted.

Industrial labor formed another vital sector in the nation's defense production and Mr. Stimson repeatedly appealed to organized labor to pull its weight. He worked well with many top labor leaders and did not tire of seeking the support of the rank and file. In a speech to the national convention of the AFL in November 1940 he warned that American citizens of all walks of life were confronted by an ever growing danger to their institutions and rights from aggressor nations. He praised his audience for being alert to this danger and acknowledged labor's share in the current national effort. However, he did not rule out substantial future sacrifices and referred in

glowing terms to the example of British organized labor.²⁰

By the same token Stimson did not hesitate to express irritation at prolonged and repeated strikes which slowed production. On occasion he implied that either the Communists or the Nazis were behind these strikes. Where possible, he encouraged their speedy settlement with the help of the newly created Labor Relations Section in the War Department. He also pressed for a three-shift and six-day week in US arsenals. In the House hearings on Lend-Lease he argued effectively that these arsenals were not put to maximum use as long as there was no legislation allowing allied countries, such as Britain, to draw upon US Government reservoirs of ammunition production.

In spite of his preoccupation with the Atlantic theater of war and the vast and multiple problems of building up at one and the same time the US Army manpower and equipment, Henry Stimson did not lose sight of the Pacific area. He knew only too well from his service as Secretary of State the issues and stakes connected with Japanese expansionism and specifically so in regard to China. He had given to the latter constant moral and diplomatic support and, whenever possible, material assistance. He also knew that in the long run a direct confrontation between the United States and Japan could hardly be avoided. Prior to the challenge of Pearl Harbor, however, Stimson felt that he would best serve the cause of American security and of the free world by preparing the US defense system for a world war in which the European war was an all-important opening phase that must not be lost.

NOTES

1. See the author's article on *Secretary Stimson and the Army Reforms, 1911-13* in *Parameters*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Spring 1971).
2. *Stimson Papers*, Historical Manuscript Collection, Yale University, hereafter cited as *Stimson Papers*, Printed Materials, 1940-1943, Box 530 (War Department Releases file).

3. *The New York Times*, (March 7, 1939).
4. *Annual Reports of War Department; Report of the Secretary of War to the President, 1941*, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1939-41, p. 4.
5. *Stimson Papers*, Printed Materials, Box 530.
6. U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, *Nomination of Henry L. Stimson Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs*, 76th Congress, 3rd session, July 2, 1940, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940.
7. *Stimson Papers, Diaries*, July 15, 1940.
8. Philip Goodhart, *Fifty Ships That Saved the World*, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Company, 1965, p. 168.
9. *Stimson Papers, Diaries*, September 9, 1940.
10. *Stimson Papers*, Printed Materials, Box 530.
11. Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948, pp. 367-369 where this issue is treated at length.
12. When at a Cabinet meeting President Roosevelt spoke of the proposed patrol system as "a step forward." Mr. Stimson remarked at once, "Well, I hope you will keep on walking, Mr. President. Keep on walking." The statement has been quoted in Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948, p. 370.
13. *Stimson Papers, Diaries*, May 25, 1941.
14. *Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign*

Affairs, House of Representatives, 77th Congress, 1st Session on H. R. 1776, January 15 to 29, 1941, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1941, p. 90.

15. *Stimson Papers*, Printed Materials, Box 530. Statement made in a briefing to Army supply officers.

16. *Stimson Papers, Diaries*, October 10, 1940.

17. *Stimson Papers, Correspondence*, September 17-20, 1940, Box 65.

18. *Stimson Papers, Diaries*, December 29, 1941.

19. Quoted in James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt*, 2 Vols. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970, II, 52.

20. See for example his address on *The Relations of Labor to National Defense* given to the Convention of the American Federation of Labor, New Orleans, November 18, 1940.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

I wish to express my appreciation for the time and advice offered to me in the preparation of this article by Dr. McGeorge Bundy, President, The Ford Foundation; and by Professor James McCregor Burns of Williams College, and the late Professor Herbert Feis. Also acknowledged is the continued helpfulness of the staff of the Manuscript and Archives Division of Yale University, which houses the Stimson Papers.

