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The Origins of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, 1939-1943

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the bureaucratic origins and diplomatic processes that led to the creation of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), established in November 1943 to aid destitute populations and battle-scarred countries after the Second World War. Based on archival work in Canada, Europe, and the United States, the author argues that UNRRA was not only a test case for the United Nations organization set up after the war; it also served as a model for the whole system of postwar global governance.

Yet this agency was not what it seemed. While Franklin Roosevelt claimed the UN signified the emergence of a new "world civilization," his Administration planned to use UNRRA to construct and manage a global order in America's image. UNRRA would provide the U.S. government an instrument with which to advance its ideological agenda and achieve its geo-strategic aims. The UN, in effect, was imagined and conceived in Washington as a tool of informal empire. American officials had little desire to surrender U.S. resources or freedom of action to any international authority. They therefore devised a scheme that, while giving the impression of wide participation, would enable the U.S. to dominate the organization and act unilaterally if necessary.

However, wartime exigencies, criticism from countries all over the world, and the presence of Soviet power forced American diplomats to compromise when negotiating the UNRRA agreement. The resulting concessions limited Washington's strategic options vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and various regions of the world, particularly Eastern Europe. This fact certainly pleased Moscow, but a series of subsequent revisions to the agreement hardly appeased the other concerned countries. Yet they accepted it: these countries needed and feared the United States. As a result, UNRRA came into being in late 1943, but the process that made it possible had damaged Washington's clout.

This research challenges accepted views of the United Nations and America's place in the world. It revises our understanding of Franklin Roosevelt's grand strategy, the Cold War's origins, and the international system in existence today. It also unearths the roots of post-Cold War anti-Americanism.

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THE ORIGINS OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

ADMINISTRATION, 1939-1943

Charles W. Sharpe, Jr.

A DISSERTATION

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THE ORIGINS OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION
ADMINISTRATION, 1939-1943

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Charles W. Sharpe, Jr.

To General William Eldridge Odom

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to first thank my dissertation committee. Walter McDougall was an outstanding advisor and mentor. He pushed me to accept nothing short of excellence. He read each draft of this manuscript with a keen eye and provided formidable feedback on everything from substance to style. The tact with which he managed my brashness made it easier for me to reconsider some of my firmest views. His humility is an inspiration, and the impact of his thought on my trajectory enormous. While I was at Penn, he published two volumes of American history, the central thesis of which often provided the prism through which I viewed many of this story's actors: in both the good and bad sense, America is and has always been a nation of hustlers.¹

Bruce Kuklick read each chapter of my manuscript carefully, and it benefited immensely from his knowledge of philosophy, intellectual history, and America's foreign relations. His taunting and witty criticisms of my work not only precipitated changes to the manuscript that strengthened the final product; they also forced me to think more seriously about the composition of my audience. His outrageous ploys in the lecture hall, for which he is a legend at Penn, might be appropriate with undergraduates, but he taught me that humor, sarcasm, and showmanship should be used in scholarship with discretion. I am grateful for his generosity, invitations to swing the baseball bat at his summer home, and impact on my understanding of historical research *and teaching*.

¹ Walter A. McDougall, *Freedom Just Around the Corner: A New American History, 1585-1828* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004); Walter A. McDougall, *Throes of Democracy: The American Civil War Era, 1829-1877* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008).

Jonathan Steinberg is one of the most decent people I've met in the American Academy. His commitment and devotion to students is unrivalled. I am baffled by the time he spent on my work and attention he devoted to its details. Steinberg pointed out small but embarrassing errors of fact; he expunged the manuscript of imprecise diction, syntax problems, and poorly chosen metaphors. He also forced me to rethink critical aspects of the argumentation, and helped me understand the wider significance of my work. It was Jonathan, moreover, who advised me when I first came to Penn, and who taught me much about the nuts and bolts of researching and writing history. He is an exemplary historian and teacher.

Many other individuals over the years have shaped my thinking and trajectory as a historian. They are too many to name here. But a few, in particular, stand out. Paul Kennedy was a ferocious supporter of my desire to become a historian from the outset; his conversation and company remain one of the highlights of my time in New Haven; he especially fostered my interest in the United Nations and the Second World War. John Lewis Gaddis was similarly supportive, though brutally critical of my work in ways, which, at the time, I could not understand. His words stuck and criticisms lingered for years. But they forced me to think seriously about why and how one conducts historical analysis. I am stronger as a result of it.

I am also grateful to a younger generation of historians who supported me. Ronald Granieri recruited me to Penn and went out of his way to help me design a course of study that accorded with my interests. He encouraged me to attend Matthew Connelly's seminar on Population Control at Columbia University while I was conducting research at the UN Archive in New York City. As a result, I wrote a research paper on UNRRA,

which Connelly and Granieri arranged for me to present at a conference hosted by William Hitchcock at Temple University. Here the possibility of a dissertation on UNRRA first emerged. Like Connelly and Granieri, Hitchcock, who was then writing a chapter on the organization for his forthcoming book, supported the idea of a sustained monograph on the topic.² He read large portions of the manuscript. His advice helped me avoid self-defeating pursuits.

This dissertation is in no small part the result of countless hours that too many people invested in me. I cannot even begin to thank them all here, and fear that if I were to attempt such a task, I would try my reader's patience. The research on which this manuscript is based, moreover, could not have been undertaken without the assistance of hundreds of archivists, many of whom remain anonymous, and the diverse institutions that supported me both intellectually and financially over the years, most importantly, the University of Pennsylvania.

² William Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 211-280.

ABSTRACT

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ADMINISTRATION, 1939-1943

Charles W. Sharpe, Jr.

Walter A. McDougall

This dissertation analyzes the bureaucratic origins and diplomatic processes that led to the creation of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), established in November 1943 to aid destitute populations and battle-scarred countries after the Second World War. Based on archival work in Canada, Europe, and the United States, the author argues that UNRRA was not only a test case for the United Nations organization set up after the war; it also served as a model for the whole system of postwar global governance.

Yet this agency was not what it seemed. While Franklin Roosevelt claimed the UN signified the emergence of a new “world civilization,” his Administration planned to use UNRRA to construct and manage a global order in America’s image. UNRRA would provide the U.S. government an instrument with which to advance its ideological agenda and achieve its geo-strategic aims. The UN, in effect, was imagined and conceived in Washington as a tool of informal empire. American officials had little desire to surrender U.S. resources or freedom of action to any international authority. They therefore devised a scheme that, while giving the impression of wide participation, would enable the U.S. to dominate the organization and act unilaterally if necessary.

However, wartime exigencies, criticism from countries all over the world, and the presence of Soviet power forced American diplomats to compromise when negotiating the UNRRA agreement. The resulting concessions limited Washington's strategic options vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and various regions of the world, particularly Eastern Europe. This fact certainly pleased Moscow, but a series of subsequent revisions to the agreement hardly appeased the other concerned countries. Yet they accepted it: these countries needed and feared the United States. As a result, UNRRA came into being in late 1943, but the process that made it possible damaged Washington's clout.

This research challenges accepted views of the United Nations and America's place in the world. It revises our understanding of Franklin Roosevelt's grand strategy, the Cold War's origins, and the international system in existence today. It also unearths the roots of post-Cold War anti-Americanism.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Acheson Papers | Records of the Office of Assistant Secretary of and Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, 1941-48, 1950 |
| ACFPF | Records of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy, 1942-45 |
| AFSC | American Friends Service Committee |
| ANF | Archives Nationales de France |
| ARA | American Relief Administration |
| BDFA | British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print |
| BEW | Board of Economic Warfare |
| BOT | Board of Trade |
| <i>Bulletin</i> | <i>The Department of State Bulletin</i> |
| CDEA | Canadian Department of External Affairs |
| <i>CDT</i> | <i>The Chicago Daily Tribune</i> |
| CFB | Combined Food Board |
| CPRB | Combined Production and Resources Board |
| CRB | Commission for Relief in Belgium |
| CU | Columbia University |
| DC | Washington D.C. |
| <i>DCER</i> | <i>Documents on Canadian External Relations</i> |
| De Gaulle Papers | Archives du général de Gaulle, 1940-1958 (De Gaulle Papers) |
| DG | Director General |
| DO | Dominions Office |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| DOT | United States Department of State |
| DS | Dominions Secretary |
| EAM | Greek National Liberation Front |
| EC | Records of the Economic Committees, 1940-46 |
| EDES | National Republican Greek League |
| ELAS | Greek People's Liberation Army |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FO | British Foreign Office |
| GATT | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade |
| HC | High Commissioner |
| HHP | Herbert Hoover Papers |
| HHPL | Herbert Hoover Presidential Library |
| HTL | Harry S Truman Presidential Library |
| ITO | International Trade Organization |
| JDC | American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee |
| <i>LAT</i> | <i>The Los Angeles Times</i> |
| LOC | Library of Congress |
| MAB | Munitions Assignment Board |
| MEW | Ministry of Economic Warfare |
| MOF | Ministry of Food |
| NARA | National Archives and Records Administration |
| <i>NYT</i> | <i>The New York Times</i> |
| Notter Papers | Records of Harley A. Notter, 1939-45 |

| | |
|------------|---|
| PM | Prime Minister |
| PPIC | Post-Presidential Individual Correspondence File |
| PRO | National Archives of the United Kingdom/Public Record Office |
| REW | Record Relating to Economic Warfare, 1941-44 |
| RFC | Reconstruction Finance Corporation |
| SOS | Secretary of State |
| SOSDA | Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs |
| SOSEA | Secretary of State for External Affairs |
| SOSFA | Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs |
| <i>TI</i> | <i>The Times of India</i> |
| UNRRA | United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration |
| <i>WSJ</i> | <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> |
| <i>WP</i> | <i>The Washington Post</i> |
| WRPR | Records Relating to Wartime Relief and Postwar Rehabilitation |

PREFACE

I might never be able to fully explain the persistence of my interest in the United Nations. But if “the study of history is the study of causes,” as E.H. Carr once put it, then I suppose it makes sense for me to explain how I came to write this book.³ The process began some years ago, when I took a job at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in New York City. For better or worse, this experience has had a profound impact on my journey. While the corruption and inefficiencies of UN bureaucracy frustrated me, the humanitarians who risked their lives and careers to fulfill the UN Charter inspired me. These contrasting impressions stuck, and I entered the graduate program in history at the University of Pennsylvania eager to learn more about these international agencies.

Serendipity handed me a dissertation topic my first year. A fellow historian suggested I begin reading the Herbert Lehman papers at Columbia University. Lehman, a former Governor of New York State, had been the first Director General of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), an agency set up in late 1943 to administer relief and other services to suffering individuals in the wake of the Second World War. It was the first international organization of its type, and it undertook the largest humanitarian relief operation in history. Following its dissolution in 1948, its responsibilities devolved to many of the UN agencies in existence today. It therefore seemed to me that this agency provided an excellent platform from which to investigate questions I had as a result of my own experiences. The topic also passed muster in terms

³ Edward Hallett Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 113.

of those jazzy buzzwords driving current debates. I thought that UNRRA was “international,” “transnational,” and “global” all at once.

As a result, I set out to write a book that would somehow meet the methodological requirements of these labels. Using both state and non-state archives in countries all over the world, I hoped to tell the story of UNRRA’s creation, development, operations, and liquidation in 1948. With this agenda in mind, I turned to archives in several Western capitals and looked for published materials from other relevant places. After months of collecting documents, I returned home to read, study, and write, but quickly came to an unfortunate realization. Though able to draw some conclusions about the organization’s development, the nature and scope of its operations, and even the causes of its liquidation, I could not answer the most important question of all, which seemed to have bearing on everything else: Why was the organization created in the first place?

On the face of it, it appeared that UNRRA had been established to address a series of problems the Allies expected to face at the war’s end. They worried, for example, about famine, pestilence, and a displaced persons crisis. If left unaddressed, any one or combination of these problems could have set off revolutionary upheavals threatening the entire postwar peace. Consequently, the challenges these difficulties posed had to be met. While the “transnational” nature of these problems required an “international” solution, the geographic scope and extent of the devastation meant that some sort of coordinated action would have to be undertaken on a “global” basis. UNRRA, therefore, seemed to be a logical outgrowth of the problems at hand. Yet a series of extraneous factors led me to believe that this was not the whole story.

First, I could not quite understand why the United States had so suddenly abandoned its tradition of unilateralism in foreign affairs, especially when it had tackled similar problems on a national basis after the First World War. Second, it was clear that most if not all of the world's nations remained deeply suspicious of UNRRA, particularly of the motives behind the four powers apparently responsible for its creation: China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. Finally, the most recent research on the United Nations, at least in my mind, raised serious questions about the intentions and plans of the United States. At the San Francisco Conference in the summer of 1945, the American Government successfully broke the cable codes of every delegation to the conference with the exception of the Soviet Union, in what is now the largest known peacetime spy operation in United States history.⁴

Thus unlike previous historical works on the United Nations, I decided to reject the public statements and press releases of the wartime leaders and other responsible policymakers. Methodologically, it seemed wiser for me to follow the guidance of Marc Bloch. "True progress," he wrote "began on the day when, as Volney put it, doubt became an 'examiner.'" ⁵ Until evidence proving the honesty of their statements became available, I assumed their remarks were either incomplete, misleading, or outright lies. This assumption caused me additional work and even embarrassment. Not only did I find myself at odds with a basic American judicial tenet – the assumption of innocence until proven guilty – I suddenly realized that in many cases I had looked at the wrong archival collections, and in some instances, had shown up at the wrong archive.

⁴ Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation, Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations: A Story of Superpowers, Secret Agents, Wartime Allies and Enemies, and their Quest for a Peaceful World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003).

⁵ Marc Bloch, *The Historians Craft* (New York: Vintage Books, 1953), 81.

A second round of archival visits led me to reframe the project. New materials I found gave me every reason to focus exclusively on the period leading up to UNRRA's establishment. Indeed, I realized that it would be impossible to even begin evaluating the organization's development, operations, and liquidation before a sustained study of its origins and creation had been undertaken. Thus what began as an effort to study an international organization as an independent "transnational" actor turned into a story about one country – the United States – and its relations with the rest of the world. After considerable analysis and long reflection, I concluded that UNRRA was not only a model for the entire postwar international system; it was also at the center of a deliberate and conscientious effort on the part of American policymakers to create and administer a global empire.

It was this important realization that brought me back to my time as an international relations student at Yale University. During my first year in Yale's MA program, a professor assigned me Walter Russell Mead's essay, "The Jacksonian Tradition." Though I have come to disagree with aspects of the argument, Mead's analysis and descriptions of one faction in the American electorate, which he improperly labels the "Jacksonians," are in many ways accurate. These people, according to Mead, are "suspicious of untrammelled federal power... skeptical about the prospects for domestic and foreign do-gooding (welfare at home, foreign aid abroad), [and] opposed to federal taxes but obstinately fond of federal programs seen as primarily helping the

middle class...” They are often religious, militaristic, pessimistic, and quite adept at mismanaging money.⁶

This professor – whose stature and identity meant nothing to me at the time – asked the class if anyone knew of people who might fit this description. To my surprise, I was the only person to respond affirmatively. This fact placed me in the unenviable position of having to answer the professor’s follow-up question. “Who do you know who is a Jacksonian?” I answered with four words: “Everyone in my family.” As the professor urged me to elaborate, I watched as my classmates’ jaws dropped – either from disbelief or outright disdain – with each new word: “Harley Davidson... too many Budweisers... 357 magnum revolver... bankruptcy... the hell with ‘em or just bomb ‘em.” I gave the class and the professor an accurate description, supported by true stories about real people in my life. But most important, this experience reminded me just how far I had come. This august Yale professor knew first-hand what it meant to come from my neck of the woods – the edge of Appalachia – and went out of his way to encourage me.

Born in Cookeville, Tennessee, William Eldridge Odom graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1954. Over the next twenty years, he served his country in Germany, Vietnam, and the Soviet Union. He obtained a Ph.D. in government from Columbia University, and became one of the United States’ preeminent intelligence officers and experts on Russia. Odom was also responsible for sneaking large portions of Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s invaluable archive out of the Soviet Union. He also served as Zbigniew Brzezinski’s military assistant in the Carter White House, and then as Director of the National Security Agency in the Reagan Administration. In the military he

⁶ Walter Russell Mead, “The Jacksonian Tradition,” *The National Interest* 58 (Winter 1999/2000): 5-29.

achieved the rank of Lieutenant General. A gifted teacher who felt an obligation to future generations, Odom blessed me with his time and talents.

General Odom taught me the basics of American foreign policy; he also shared with me and the other students an argument that would later appear in a book he co-authored with Robert Dujarric, *America's Inadvertent Empire*. The book assesses elements of American power at the turn of the twenty-first century, and argues that an enormous gap still existed between the United States and the rest of the world. It also asserts, as Odom did in our class, that this gap could be quickly closed if America's leaders act foolishly. The book, in effect, strove to provide current and future leaders the knowledge with which to make proper policy decisions. As such, it provides both quantitative and qualitative description of America's assets vis-à-vis the rest of the world along with an explication of the limits and possibilities of the global system created by the United States.⁷ Walter Russell Mead commented best on the book:

“Their basic argument is that the United States is strong because it has a depth and breadth of liberal practices and institutions that other societies cannot match – and that because liberal institutions generally reflect long-term cultural habits and trends, they will not soon catch up. This case is a sort of synthesis between Francis Fukuyama's end of history and Samuel Huntington's class of civilizations: liberal values lead to success, but not everyone can get there.”⁸

True, perhaps. But what should one make of the book's title? Odom and Dujarric chose it reluctantly. As they write, understanding America's relations with the world

⁷ William E. Odom and Robert Dujarric, *America's Inadvertent Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

⁸ Walter Russell Mead, “America's Inadvertent Empire by William E. Odom; Robert Dujarric,” *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 2 (March-April, 2004): 164.

“requires recognizing that the United States has created, perhaps inadvertently, a new type of imperial regime. It is an empire, but not the traditional kind. Structurally and qualitatively it differs fundamentally from all past empires. Using the terms *imperial* and *empire* risks confusion because those words convey notions of a hierarchy of power, subordination, and dominance that are either missing from the American empire, or only loosely institutionalized.”⁹ Thus Odom and Dujarric chose the word “empire” for lack of a better term. Whether the American imperium emerged “inadvertently” remained for them an open question, one to be answered by future historians.

During my tenure at UNDP, I frequently complained to Odom of my frustrations with the organization. One conversation I had with him has persisted in my mind to this very day. “Do you know when the United Nations works well?” he once asked me. “No,” I replied, “but I’m stuck in this morass and am wondering if there is any chance that it can ever work.” Upon hearing my reply, Odom responded with his usual Tennessee frankness, which endeared him to many, but occasionally angered others. “It works best when the United States dominates it. That is the way it was designed,” he proclaimed. I later learned that Odom studied under Leland Goodrich while at Columbia. Goodrich served on the International Secretariat to the United Nations Conference at San Francisco in 1945. He helped write the United Nations Charter, and later became one of the country’s leading experts on international organizations.

It was General Odom who first encouraged me to pursue my Ph.D. Thus, I tried to keep him abreast of my progress at Penn. In late 2007, I informed him of my intention to write a dissertation on UNRRA. His snappy dismissal of the idea disappointed me. Like

⁹ Odom and Dujarric, *America’s Inadvertent Empire*, 5.

several other distinguished scholars, he considered it an intellectual road to nowhere.

Perhaps a little Jacksonian pessimism had gotten the best of him. But I feared he had legitimate concerns. He warned me, “Given the historical profession’s current preference for cultural and social history, you’ll have difficulty getting a job.” His concern for my wellbeing was, above all, a testament to his character. Odom saw his students playing a key role in the future of his country, and he wanted them to be successful. Thus, he persisted with his usual pep talk and dollops of advice about finishing as quickly as possible. “Race, race, race,” he often said before hanging up the phone.

It was a jarring conversation. He wasn’t on board. But I was still riveted by my experiences at UNDP. Moreover, a number of younger historians, and even a few older ones, fully supported the project I had proposed. I therefore decided to stay the course and held out hope that I would one day be able to convince General Odom of its merits, regardless of its popularity. By the spring of 2008, I had begun to see more clearly the path my research would take, and planned to schedule a visit with him when he returned to Washington D.C. But I never got the chance. On May 30, 2008, General William Odom passed away at his vacation home in Lincoln, Vermont. America had lost a great patriot. I lost my teacher. It is to him that this work is dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of 1943, members of the alliance fighting the Second World War signed an agreement establishing the first-ever international organization tasked with administering relief to war-ravaged populations. Known as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), this organization would undertake the largest humanitarian relief effort in history. At the time of its dissolution in 1947, UNRRA had delivered food, medicine, housing, farming, and industrial supplies to countless millions of men, women and children in more than twenty countries.¹⁰

Nothing like it had ever been attempted before. Up until the First World War, efforts to aid suffering peoples during and after military conflicts had typically been the purview of religious groups, voluntary societies, and non-governmental entities. Occasionally governments sponsored or aided these efforts, but rarely did they administer relief on their own, and never had there been a full-scale international effort bringing together governments from all over the world to do this type of work. UNRRA was a radical departure from the past.¹¹

During the October 1918 armistice negotiations that brought the First World War to an end, several Allied countries proposed that existing international food agencies take on the task of relieving destitute populations. But the American Food Administrator,

¹⁰ It remains unlikely that we will ever know exactly how many people UNRRA assisted. On this issue, see Herbert Lehman, *Reminiscences of Herbert Henry Lehman*, *Columbia University Oral History*, 1961 (New York: Columbia University, 1972), 458-459.

¹¹ Several scholars have argued, quite correctly I think, that this change has led to the “increased secularization of relief work.” See, for example, Gerhard Daniel Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61.

Herbert Hoover, rejected the proposal. The United States, in his view, would supply most of the economic resources after the war, and its preferences should not be subject to veto by some inter-allied body. Thus with President Woodrow Wilson's approval, Hoover arranged for the United States Government to deliver food and other relief supplies to Europe on an independent basis. The Allies had little choice but to send representatives to work with the American relief missions he established, which became the American Relief Administration (ARA). On February 24, 1919, Congress appropriated \$100,000 million for this governmental agency. An inter-allied body *was* established to tackle problems related to relief, but it had little control over America's relief efforts.¹²

By July 1, 1919, the United States reverted to its usual way of doing things. The ARA expired as a government agency, but continued its work as an independent non-governmental organization. Hoover remained in control, even after he became the Secretary of Commerce in 1921. The ARA would raise an additional \$100 million from private donations and work with the newly established Quaker group, the American Friends Service Committee, to supply four million tons of relief supplies over the next five and half years to a number of European countries.¹³

¹² Apparently no monograph has ever been written on American relief efforts immediately after the First World War. Typically scholars have focused on the Belgian relief efforts during the war, and the relief mission to Soviet Russia in 1921-23. As far as I can tell, the most exhaustive account of the efforts undertaken during the armistice is included in Kendrick A. Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary, 1918-1928* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 1-34. For very limited coverage see Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001), 60-62; for documentary and first-hand account, see Herbert Hoover, *The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1958), pp. 91-114.

¹³ Clements, *Life of Herbert Hoover*, 1-34.

During the Second World War, the Administration of Franklin Roosevelt, when planning for postwar relief, apparently departed from all past formula and chose to construct an international agency to provide assistance to war-torn populations. Why? Stated succinctly, policymakers in the Roosevelt Administration hoped to establish an American-led international system at the end of the war. UNRRA provided both a means to this end, but also a model for postwar global governance. How the United States arrived at this decision, and the process that brought this organization into being is the subject of this dissertation.

Guiding Principles and the International Approach to Relief

The Roosevelt Administration's postwar planners believed that America's failure to remain sufficiently engaged abroad after the First World War had, in part, caused the Second World War. This failure did not reflect negatively on the United States, but on the Europeans, who remained too weak, too divided, and too immoral to construct a stable economic and geopolitical system, either in Europe or anywhere else in the world, capable of creating prosperity, guaranteeing basic freedoms, and respecting human rights. They believed the United States, despite its blemishes, was an exemplar of stability, freedom, and constitutional democracy, and its management of affairs in the Western Hemisphere a model for the world to follow. Thus they concluded that American forms of government, and the hemispheric system should be erected on a global scale.

Two impulses underlay their thinking. First, they wanted to defend and advance the interests of the United States, while also serving the "general interest." To accomplish

this aim, they hoped to put in place an American system, one which Roosevelt idealistically called a “world civilization.” As revisionist historians have long pointed out, they were especially concerned with economics.¹⁴ They knew that a free and open international trade regime supported by a dollar-backed monetary system would provide opportunities for American financiers and industrialists hoping to push their capital and sell their products all over the world. In turn, this economic exchange would create jobs and growth at home. It would also, they hoped, stabilize Europe and facilitate the transformation of backward societies abroad. Yet the apparent obsession with economics concealed one of their lesser known aims, namely to open naval bases around the globe, and to keep some troops abroad to help police the earth.¹⁵ Stability, they reasoned, depended upon American power.

American history shaped their aims. Sumner Welles, Roosevelt’s chief postwar architect until mid 1943, invoked 1776, when “American statesmen determined to weld into a nation thirteen separate colonies differing in religion, in social structure, in commercial interest, and to some extent even in race and language.” This endeavor, he believed, should be attempted on a global basis.¹⁶ Other officials shared his views. Oscar Cox of the Lend-Lease Administration believed that “many of the problems which Europe face[ed were] very similar to the ones the Founding Fathers took on when they

¹⁴ The New Left historiography is too large to list here, but recent work examines the Roosevelt Administration’s plans to reconstruct the world largely from this perspectives. See Patrick Hearden, *Architects of Globalism: Building a New World Order During World War Two* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2002).

¹⁵ On naval bases, see Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), ch. 6.

¹⁶ See draft speech prepared by Adolf Berle for Sumner Welles, December 18, 1942, File State Department Memoranda: Acheson, Berle, 1942, Box 83, Office Correspondence 1920-1943, Welles Papers, FDRL.

started to draft the Constitution. There were fights and vested interests.”¹⁷ But Cox and other officials believed that if the nations of the world could hold something akin to the American constitutional convention, then they might be able to forge a political system for the entire world like that of the United States.¹⁸ The outcome – some form of international organization – would serve not only the American interest, but also the good of mankind.

Righteousness constitutes the second impulse that shaped American thinking. Officials were not so blind that they could not see the possibility of missteps, or the extraordinary challenges they faced, but they were supremely confident of the moral correctness of what they were doing. They gave the impression that it was their Biblical duty to go into the world just as Christ had done to *save* humanity, and that if they had not inherited the work of God, then at least they had his blessings in the grand project they undertook. One of Roosevelt’s advisors, Adolf Berle, spoke in this manner: “Strength will be there; but with strength will be the power which God has given to our fertile earth to relieve suffering, to satisfy need, to make production do what it ought to do; to preserve not only the freedom of free peoples, but to give elsewhere an example of what freedom can do for mankind.”¹⁹ These words capture the spirit of many officials in the Roosevelt Administration, particularly the so-called New Dealers.

¹⁷ See Oscar Cox to Harry Hopkins, December 21, 1942, File Post-War Planning, 1942-1942, Box 328, Book 7, Hopkins Papers, FDRL.

¹⁸ The American postwar planners referred to a possible relief conference as a “relief constitutional convention.” See Chronological Minutes, AC-3, April 4, 1942, File President Roosevelt’s Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹ “Address by Assistant Secretary Berle,” June 22, 1940, in *Bulletin*, June 22, 1940, Vol. 2, No. 52, Publication 1477 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940), 676.

While such officials faced opposition from conservatives in the Administration who opposed the scope of their plans, they agreed on what constituted the basis of their ability to act. Whether given to them by God or not, power was the ultimate arbiter in international affairs, and the United States, at this juncture in history, had more of it than any nation on earth. If as Kant asserted, “the state of peace must be founded,” then the Americans believed that power provided the essential ingredient to not only make it happen, but to ensure its preservation over time.²⁰

For American policymakers, this fact translated into two problems. First, how could the United States ensure a sufficient concentration of power within a federation of states or world organization that could reestablish stability immediately after the war and prevent in the future the breakdown of the international order? Though several of his diplomats disliked the idea, and would become increasingly hostile to it as the war progressed, the problem was resolved, at least in Roosevelt’s mind, with the so-called four policemen of the world: China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States would collaborate to stop would-be or potential aggressors. In appearance each country would maintain responsibility for a particular sphere: China in East Asia and the Western Pacific; Britain in Western Europe and its Empire; the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and the Eurasian landmass; and the United States in the Western Hemisphere.

But in reality this arrangement was conceived to ensure the United States assumed the hegemonic position in the international system. Roosevelt knew well that two of these powers were weaker than the others: China remained backward and decrepit despite its potential might; and Great Britain was in obvious decline, both financially and militarily.

²⁰ Immanuel Kant, “To Eternal Peace,” 1795, Carl J. Friedrich, translator, in *Basic Writings of Kant*, ed. Allen W. Wood (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 433-475.

Roosevelt appears to have reasoned that these two countries would align with the United States against the Soviet Union in possible disputes, and that Washington would have to fill the power vacuum created by their weaknesses. Furthermore, Britain's hostility to Stalinist doctrine, and China's fear of a communist insurgency increased the probability that they would look to the United States for assistance. In this way, Washington would be in a position to protect American interests; and it would maintain sufficient power to forge unity within the broader multilateral system of states that they envisioned.

Yet the latter fact presented policymakers with a second problem. While they believed a multilateral system could not function without a hegemonic state, they also espoused the view that hegemony, by its very nature, tends to undermine the legitimacy of a multilateral system. This conundrum puzzled decision-makers in the Roosevelt Administration. How could they erect a global system led by the United States that would not succumb to this paradox? Oddly, the answer to this question emerged during discussions over postwar relief, and American plans to provide relief and rehabilitation assistance to war devastated societies became the model for the postwar international system. As one official put it, "The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Authority – which you doubtless know about – is, to my mind, an empiric foundation – stone for the consideration of the kind of world order that I am sure we both have in mind."²¹

In subtle terms, another official suggested there would be means to resolve the tension between the need for multilateral support and the occasional requirement for speedy action: "Late-war and post-war affairs should be under the broadest possible international determination," he wrote. "As in all organized affairs, there must be a

²¹ Oscar Cox to Walter Nash, December 1, 1943, File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

structure which expedites the process of agreement for action. But this structure should begin in full participation of the largest possible number of nations to the end that decisions may be of a character so representative as to be most probably in world interest.”²² The message was clear: the United States would seek broad international support at the outset, but if agreement were not immediately in the making, then there would have to be procedures to forge a consensus rapidly.

The international approach to postwar relief was not what it seemed. Apart from its immediate propaganda benefits, American officials believed it would win legitimacy for U.S. leadership in the postwar era, while also convincing the American people to remain engaged in the world. But because officials in the Roosevelt Administration abhorred the idea of relinquishing control over their resources or sacrificing their independence to an international agency, they crafted a proposal that would allow them to dominate the agency and even ignore it if necessary. UNRRA may have been designed to address a wide array of functional problems, but it was also a device to convince reluctant nations to accept America’s postwar plans. Yet Washington’s apparent commitment to multilateralism actually worked to conceal the country’s unilateral methods, global pretensions, and hegemonic aspirations.

The Wartime Debate Over Humanitarian Relief

With underutilized source materials from Canada, Europe and the United States, I have constructed a narrative that follows the allied debate over humanitarian relief during

²² Paul Appleby to Oscar Cox, November 10, 1942, File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Box Papers, FDRL.

the Second World War. The story I tell starts at the moment when Herbert Hoover precipitated exchanges over relief just before the outbreak of the war, and continues until the agreement establishing UNRRA was signed at the White House on November 9, 1943. It covers five stages: (1) the debate over wartime or cross-blockade relief; (2) the internal bureaucratic discussions in the American and British Governments over postwar relief; (3) the informal Anglo-American talks over the structure of the desired relief organization; (4) the subsequent four-power negotiations between China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States over relief agency; and (5) the efforts to convince the American people, Congress, and the world to accept the relief agreement.

The heated debates over humanitarian relief offer an unusual perspective into the formation of the wartime alliance. This seemingly unimportant topic assumed heightened significance shortly after the war's outbreak. Herbert Hoover, who by then was a former President of the United States, insisted that the belligerents accept a program to feed people suffering in Europe due to the British blockade. To deflect his demands, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Winston Churchill, pledged in August 1940 to provide relief as soon as Europe could be liberated from Axis oppression. This promise, coupled with the political problems Hoover continued to cause, had diverse impacts. It facilitated the formation of the Anglo-American alliance, the Grande Alliance, and ultimately the wider political and military alliance known as the United Nations.

The scholarship on the United Nations has been devoted almost exclusively to the charter and international organization that bears its name. Yet no work provides an in-depth understanding of why and how the actual United Nations alliance came into being. This fact is astonishing: the United Nations did not win the Second World War. It was

won primarily by the Soviet Union, which lost more than 23 million people, roughly 14 percent of its population, and the United States, which provided the money, guns, and much of the technological prowess. The British Empire certainly played an important role as well, but it was insufficient for ultimate victory. These facts beget a question: why was the United Nations alliance needed in the first place? What purpose did it serve? By examining wartime diplomacy via the lens of postwar relief, we see that it facilitated allied propaganda first and foremost, which poses another question: did the United Nations organization serve an identical purpose?

Here again the wartime debates on relief provide an answer. The scholarship on the United Nations organization has focused primarily on the meetings at Dumbarton Oaks in 1944, and the San Francisco Conference in 1945; these works are almost exclusively concerned with the questions of how to set up a postwar international organization, and the actual form that the organization should take. Many of these works take the speeches and press releases of wartime leaders, politicians, and diplomats for the absolute truth.²³ Related scholarship on the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944, and more

²³ See, for example, Thomas M. Campbell, *Masquerade Peace: America's UN Policy, 1944-1945* (Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1973); Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: the Triumph of Internationalism During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967); Robert C. Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: The Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Postwar Security* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Georg Schild, *Bretton Woods and Dumbarton Oaks: American Economic and Political Postwar Planning in the Summer of 1944* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995); Ruth B. Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter: The Role of the United States, 1940-1945* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1958); Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation, Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations: A Story of Superpowers, Secret Agents, Wartime Allies and Enemies, and their Quest for a Peaceful World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003). For a dated but strong overview of the historiography on the United Nations, see William C. Widenor, "American Planning for the United Nations: Have We Been Asking the Right

recently, the Food and Agriculture Conference of 1943, is similarly devoid of answers to the question.²⁴ The debate over humanitarian relief provides an excellent opportunity to reevaluate the stated intentions of policymakers: indeed it was in the context of the discussions on relief that American officials determined why they should set up a postwar international organization under the United Nations rubric.

Relief also provides a new perspective from which to analyze Anglo-American relations. The British, in fact, wanted the Americans to take decisive action. But when it became apparent that the American proposal for a relief agency would provide a model for postwar international organization, they pursued a policy not unlike the one they

Questions?" *Diplomatic History* 6, no. 3 (July 1982): 245-266. Widenor often reads the public statements of the policymakers for the truth. But unlike other historians, he underlines the role domestic opinion played in shaping the Roosevelt Administration's postwar plans. See also Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal For the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Belknap Press at Harvard, 2005). Borgwardt takes the words of the politicians and diplomats and shows how they have become international law whether they intended it or not. Paul Kennedy has also published a book on the United Nations, but is more concerned with the organization's future than the past: Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (New York: Random House, 2006).

²⁴ On Bretton Woods, see Armand Van Dormael, *Bretton Woods* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978); Alfred E. Eckes, *A Search for Solvency: Bretton Woods and the International Monetary System, 1941-1971* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975); Harold James, *International Monetary Cooperation Since Bretton Woods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). On the Food and Agriculture Conference, see Amy L.S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945-1965* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2006). For a brief but excellent article on FAO, see Craig Alan Wilson, "Rehearsal for a United Nations: The Hot Springs Conference," *Diplomatic History*, (Spring 1980), Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring 1980): 263-281. Craig points out that the FAO Conference was staged for public relations purposes, but he is unable to connect this to the wider United Nations project. We also have a number of official histories on the United Nations. See, for example, Maggie Black, *The Children and the Nations: The Story of UNICEF* (New York: UNICEF, 1986); Craig N. Murphy, *The United Nations Development Programme: A Better Way?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* Vol. 1-3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950).

followed with respect to the League of Nations. As Mark Mazower writes, “From Whitehall’s pragmatic perspective, [the League] was thus an imperial project that looked as if it could simultaneously cement the alliance with the United States, shore up Eastern Europe against Bolshevism, and link Britain’s European and imperial commitments.”²⁵ In anticipation of this behavior, American policymakers sought to knock Britain out of the equation. As a result, the visit of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, the British official responsible for relief, to Washington in the summer of 1942 ended in failure. The Americans spurned his efforts to augment British power and preserve their empire.

The State Department planners based the structure of the organization on the American constitutional system, yet their vision of how it would operate paralleled the New Deal idea of how the American government should function – the executive would be supreme. Thus while a strong Director General position – reserved for an American citizen – would play the presidential role, overseeing a vast global executive that would implement relief programs in accordance with American interests, a Council consisting of the United Nations would serve functions not dissimilar from those of the American Congress. The latter’s real purpose, however, would be to provide the agency legitimacy. Additionally a four-power Central Committee consisting of China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States would operate as a steering committee. This arrangement had no parallel in the American Government, but Roosevelt preferred it and State Department officials supported it with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

When the British realized they had little choice but to accept what the Americans proposed, the draft for an international relief organization was shared with China and the

²⁵ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 192.

Soviet Union, which in turn necessitated four-power talks. The relief negotiations thus provide an unexploited opportunity to examine the feasibility of Roosevelt's four policemen. At no other point during or immediately after the war did high-level representatives of the four powers meet for the purpose of discussing a postwar matter of a constitutive nature. The discussions at Dumbarton Oaks, it should be pointed out, included the four powers, but the Russians refused to meet directly with the Chinese, which meant that the Anglo-Saxons met first with the Russians, and then with the Chinese. The four-power talks that led to the creation of UNRRA, by contrast, included all four of the powers at once. Apart from the regular meeting of the Central Committee after the establishment of UNRRA, this was a rare event.

The results were surprising. On the critical issue of the Director General's authority to operate in a given territory, which would have given Washington the freedom to utilize the agency as a proxy for its broader postwar project, the Soviets refused to bend. Though with important distinctions, the Chinese supported their position. The British also came to Moscow's defense, arguing that the agency could always withhold aid if a prospective recipient state refused to meet its demands. Washington's freedom of action was therefore compromised even before the organization came into being, but with the war still raging, the United States could not endanger the Grand Alliance.

The four-power talks would also make another fact abundantly clear. Canada, at least in early 1943, was the second most bountiful country in the Western Alliance, and arguably the second most powerful, behind the United States. The Soviet Union would emerge victorious at Stalingrad during this period, but the decisive Battle of Kursk that signified an inevitable Russian victory still lay in the future. The relief organization

would need Canadian resources, but officials in Ottawa rejected Roosevelt's four-power formula and resented their exclusion from so many of the wartime conferences and meetings. While the Chinese and Soviets held tenaciously to the four-power formula, the British, who were as dependent on Canadian as they were on American resources, insisted on the enlargement of the Central Committee to provide a seat for Ottawa. This fact dragged out the process for weeks, and almost forced the United States to scuttle the proposal altogether.

This aspect of our story provides a window into the conflicting dynamics of five overlapping configurations in the international system: the Grand Alliance fighting the war; the Four Policemen who would guarantee the security of the postwar world; the informal Transatlantic Triangle linking together Britain, Canada and the United States economically, militarily and culturally; the British Commonwealth connecting the independent elements of the British Empire with London; and the Inter-American system unifying the Americas under Washington's leadership. If the four-power talks preserved the Grand Alliance, and left open the possibility of a postwar world run by the Four Policemen, it also weakened Canada's bonds with the Commonwealth, and signified a postwar alignment between Ottawa and Washington.

The relief portfolio also discloses the central paradox of the United Nations: its members were not united. When the American Government shared the draft relief agreement with the alliance and the so-called associated powers, they read the document with complete trepidation. While many governments, especially those exiled in London, abhorred the four-power Central Committee, others feared the Director General, who, in their view, would function as an international dictator. Yet because the Allied countries

remained divided, either over how to respond to the draft or due to extraneous issues, they were simply incapable of presenting any sort of unified opposition to the American plan. While key players such as Brazil and France considered it in their interest to play along, even though they disliked the proposal, others worried that they would arouse the wrath of the world's most powerful country, and thereby forfeit any possible influence they might have at the peace table. Thus the appearance of unity resulted; but underneath the spectacle lay deep discontent.

Efforts to secure Congressional approval for the relief agreement colored the closing act with irony. To win allied support, American diplomats repeatedly told them that the UNRRA Council would function like the American Congress. An elaborate system of Council committees would assume policymaking functions similar to the legislative responsibilities of the powerful committees in Congress. American officials argued that the Council would wield considerable power. Yet just as they made this case, these same officials endeavored to force the hand of Congress on the relief agreement. Instead of presenting it as a treaty, which would have required a two-third majority vote of the Senate, they cajoled the Senate Foreign Relations Committee into a formula whereby they would relinquish this power, not only for the UNRRA agreement, but for most all of the planned postwar arrangements.

Analytical Frameworks: Transnationalism and Imperialism

The story I tell rarely uses the word transnational: the actors in it never employed this term. But the word, if properly defined, can help the reader analytically: the ideas it

connotes played a central role in the thought process of many of the characters in this story, who worried about problems and actors that might be described as transnational. This term obviously signifies movement across the borders of sovereign states. But it should be distinguished from just any movement across frontiers; these movements entail actors, forces, or phenomena that transpire *against* or *despite* the system of states. Only with this distinction can we really understand the use of the prefix “trans,” which not only connotes across, but also beyond, through, and changing thoroughly, as it relates to the system of states. As such, transnational developments are intrinsically destabilizing, or purposely revolutionary in terms of their effects on international affairs.²⁶

This definition points to another aspect of my argument: UNRRA was explicitly anti-transnational. It was a creation of states, to be used by states, for the purpose of preventing and containing cross-border problems such as pandemic and famine. Policymakers also worried about a displaced persons crisis, which constituted both a problem and an actor deserving of the descriptor, transnational. UNRRA worked to manage, survey, and control these people. It served similar objectives for other actors, particularly those working in relief or a related field. Here the aim was to utilize and exploit transnational actors to resolve problems, but to do this in a way that centralized control. Entities such as the American Friends Service Committee would be subsumed in a superstructure that would allow states, primarily the United States, to control them,

²⁶ For a recent discussion on the meaning of “transnational” as it applies to history, see C.A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyer, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed, “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1441-1464. Here I have extracted central ideas from this conversation, but refer directly to the definition of “trans” as posted on dictionary.com.

coordinate their efforts, and use them for their own purposes, whether in obtaining resources or administering relief programs.

This interpretation exhibits a degree of disrespect to the terms intellectual origins. Most likely, the writer and intellectual, Randolph Bourne, first used the word in a 1916 essay entitled “Trans-National America,” which was a reaction to what one author calls “a nation rent by crusades for ‘Americanization.’” Bourne’s essay attacked American imperialism abroad, and the melting pot at home. While touting a non-interventionist message, he suggested the United States accommodate immigrant cultures into what he referred to as a “cosmopolitan America,” as opposed to forcing the country’s newcomers to assimilate into one Anglo-Saxon culture. In turn, this “trans-national” or multicultural America would provide a model for the nations of the world to emulate.²⁷

Even if we were to accept this interpretation of the transnational label, it does not alter our argument. On the one hand, UNRRA sought to unify the nations of the world around American ideas. The New Dealers, especially Adolf Berle, accepted neither the merits nor the possibility of multiculturalism; rather, they believed new communications foreordained the creation of a homogenous global culture. Doubtless they preferred that it take on an American quality.²⁸ On the other hand, UNRRA constituted an interventionist ploy on the part of the United States to advance American interests, which Bourne would have opposed. UNRRA, in fact, tilted the United States towards empire, and should be analyzed in “imperial” terms. Here again Berle’s words of years later are astute: “If

²⁷ Michael McGerr, “The Price of the ‘New Transnational History,’” *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1991): 1063.

²⁸ See “The Uses of Victory,” Draft, September 19, 1942, File Post-War Plans 1939-44, Box 65, Berle Papers, FDRL.

empire cannot be avoided, it can be made fruitful. It may even be made to move toward an effective system of world order.”²⁹ For diverse reasons, this argument is ironic.

Imperialism constituted a central concern of the major Allied powers. The idea weathered attacks well before Bourne wrote his essay, notably in John A. Hobson’s 1902 classic, *Imperialism*, which influenced the Bolsheviks in Russia, and helped turn opinion against the 19th century empires.³⁰ Woodrow Wilson’s calls for self-determination at the end of First World War dealt the empires a further blow, fueling anti-colonial nationalism and independence movements around the world.³¹ By the outbreak of the Second World War, imperialism was a dirty word. Yet it still constituted a pillar of European power in the world: the Belgians, British, Dutch, and French planned to hold onto their colonies after the war. But the upstart states on the periphery – the Soviet Union and the United States – attacked the notion. They hoped to smash the old imperial structures, and replace them with something new. Yet they had different ideas about what should replace the old system, which brought them into conflict, and led them to make accusations of empire against one another. Imperialism became a political football.

For this reason, we focus not on what constitutes an empire, but on how power works within one. If the American-led system set up during and after the Second World War remains undeserving of the imperial label – and that may be the case – the analytical

²⁹ Jordan Schwartz, *Liberal: Adolf Berle and the Vision of an American Era* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 175; but for the full explanation, see Adolf Berle, *Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967), 469-505.

³⁰ J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965). The influence of Hobson’s work on the Bolsheviks is most readily apparent in Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1939). Lenin’s book was first published in 1917, a year after Randolph Bourne’s essay.

³¹ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

benefits of thinking of it as an empire are simply too rich to ignore. It not only allows for comparison with other systems over time; it provides a device by which to understand how the system functions, which, for better or worse, still exists. Indeed this approach points to a second aspect of my argument, namely, that American officials designed UNRRA not only for the purpose of setting up and administering this new global order, but also as a means of placing or integrating the United States more firmly in the world.³² How did American officials hope to accomplish this objective? How did they plan to execute their power in the new international system? The answer, simply put, is gently, carefully, and surreptitiously, but with force only if necessary.

Here the ideas Elias Canetti articulated in his magnum opus, *Crowds and Power*, shed light on the logic of American policymakers. Canetti had the wisdom to realize that crowds create a feeling of equality among those who are in them, which makes it easier for an individual in a crowd to obey the orders of a ruler than if he or she were alone. He defined crowds broadly enough to include fans at a football game and members of a parliament, but also nation states and religious denominations. Canetti, however, drew a distinction between crowds that exist for centuries, like the Catholic Church, and those that dissipate rapidly, like short-lived political movements or a frantic gathering around a haphazard fight. The creation of institutions, he argued, elongates the existence of a crowd, or the sense of equality for those who are in one; simultaneously, they offer a hierarchy through which orders can be given.³³ American officials believed it would be

³² This idea of “placing” the United States in the world I have taken from Paul A. Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,” *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (December 2011): 1349.

³³ Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (London: Phoenix Press, 1960).

easier to issue commands and maintain influence over global affairs through institutions than if they had to deal with countries on an individual or ad-hoc basis.

In *Crowds and Power*, Canetti explained the logic behind these ideas quite precisely. A number of American policymakers, though not all of them, instinctively understood them. Canetti likened the issuance of a command or order to the strike of a bullwhip, which arrives with momentum and stings upon contact. The sting, he suggested, constitutes the problem with power. Overtime these stings build up and create resentment towards, or cause for rebellion against the individual or entity delivering the commands. He suggested two possibilities exist to relieve the subject of the sting. Either he or she has the opportunity to give orders, and thereby reduce the stings from his or her own inner being, or he or she joins a “reversal crowd” that turns against the person or entity giving the orders, just as the mobs of the French Revolution turned on Louis XVI. Thus Canetti concluded: “If we would master power we must face command openly and boldly, and search for means to deprive it of its sting.”³⁴

After the Second World War, American officials hoped to avoid the resentment caused by Wilson and Hoover’s unilateral management of relief after the First World War.³⁵ As a result, they sought to institutionalize relief in a framework that would serve as a model for postwar global governance. In this way, those who voluntarily chose to become a part of the organization would feel a sense of equality with one another, even if it did not exist in reality. Presumably they would have the chance to influence the contents of the commands, or, of giving commands themselves, within or on behalf of the

³⁴ Ibid., 470.

³⁵ Bruce Kuklick’s lectures on Wilson at the University of Pennsylvania awakened me to the manner in which he delivered commands and expected obedience. For similar treatment of Hoover, see Clements, *Life of Herbert Hoover*, 12-13.

organization. This right would in turn relieve them of the stings incurred when the great powers or the international community ordered them to undertake some action. The result would be legitimacy, stability, and general acceptance of the system. In sum, American policymakers sought to take the sting out of the execution of power, or, where this was not possible, to mitigate against its consequences.

The Latin root of imperial is *imperium*, which translates into command.³⁶ If the sting is removed from the command, or its consequences eliminated, then it follows that an imperial structure might not feel or seem as though it is an empire. Britain might have hoped to shore up its empire with the League of Nations, as Mazower suggests, but the imperial stigma could not be removed. The American planners therefore believed European imperial power should be smashed. For this reason, UNRRA could not become a means to preserve empire; the United States, in fact, would obstruct all possible efforts by the British to use it for this end, and would instead employ the organization as an instrument to establish something purportedly new. Though outside the parameters of this study, it is an astonishing fact that when the State Department began setting up this agency's bureaucracy, its officials looked to the British Empire as a model.³⁷

The system they imagined shared attributes with an imperial structure, but turned many of the ideas associated with imperialism upside down, if not in reality, at least in appearance. Historian Paul Kramer's definition of "the imperial" offers a framework with

³⁶ Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1351.

³⁷ State Department records make it clear that the United States Government looked to how Britain administered its empire when setting up the administration for the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, which became UNRRA. See, for example, W.J. Gallman to SOS Hull, February 27, 1943; "Colonial Regulations for His Majesty's Colonial Service," Part I – Public Officers, January 1941, both 840.50/1468, Confidential File, Box C129, RG 59, NARA.

which to assess American action and the system they envisioned. It allows one to assess how distinct imperial structures influence the way commands are issued, enforced, and obeyed. Kramer writes that the “imperial refers to a dimension of power in which asymmetries in the scale of political action, regimes of spatial ordering, and modes of exceptionalizing difference enable and produce relations of hierarchy, discipline, dispossession, extraction, and exploitation.” It serves our purpose to break this definition down into its constituent parts so that their applicability to our case can be understood.³⁸

First, Kramer’s definition accounts for what he calls “scalar power,” which can be “expressed in military, economic, political, or cultural terms.” Relative weight constitutes the basis of this form of power: one country would be more powerful in economic terms, for example, if its gross domestic product exceeded that of another country.³⁹ This, in fact, was the case for the United States, which used its economic strength to secure the preeminent position in UNRRA for itself. Thus its economic weight, or ability to provide the organization with resources on a scale that exceeded all other countries combined, translated into political weight: the United States reserved a seat for itself on the four-power Central Committee, but also secured a promise from China, Great Britain and the Soviet Union that an American would serve as the Director General of the organization’s executive. American officials hoped this economic and political weight would allow the United States to increase its influence in areas where the military balance did not fall in America’s favor, as they anticipated the case would be in Eastern Europe.

Second, Kramer’s definition stresses “the material, institutional, and discursive organization of space.” But instead of limiting “the imperial to the state control of

³⁸ Kramer, “Power and Connection,” 1349.

³⁹ Ibid., 1349.

territory,” as other definitions do, it “remains open to non-territorial networked forms of spatial order.”⁴⁰ The United States exploited or manipulated each of these dimensions of power, whether in territorial or networked forms. Linkages of all sorts – military, economic, political and cultural – made it significantly easier for Washington to secure the participation and resources of Latin America; countries in the region did not want to experience the repercussions of their failure to cooperate: thus they obeyed what was called an invitation. American officials took the lead in preparing UNRRA’s institutional framework: here they worked to reduce British influence, while ensuring themselves the dominant position in the agency. In the discursive realm, Roosevelt and diverse officials employed anti-imperial language, which challenged the legitimacy of any polity that considered or referred to itself as an empire. At the same time, they spoke the language of freedom, thereby contradicting the raw use of power altogether.

Even more striking, they manipulated a third aspect of Kramer’s definition, namely that the imperial “stresses the importance of exceptionalizing difference.” Here Kramer argues that imperial regimes seek to create power by drawing contrasts between “populations that lend shape to its vertical gradations of sovereignty.” By emphasizing racial distinctions, or feminizing a population, for example, the imperial polity seeks to justify and enhance its power.⁴¹ But here the Americans did the exact opposite. China was allowed a seat on the Central Committee to counter impressions that the United States was racist towards Asians;⁴² Roosevelt insisted that women serve on the American

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1349-1350.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1350.

⁴² “China is to be regarded as having a peculiar importance in arrangements because of the special need to have determinations racially representative as well as representatives in other ways – nationally, geographically, culturally, economically, etc. Closely related

delegation to the first UNRRA conference to impress populations at home and abroad of America's commitment to gender equality.⁴³ Yet paradoxically, this was also done to exceptionalize America's values, culture, and system of government, which officials throughout the Roosevelt Administration hoped to export to the entire world.

Finally, Kramer insists that his definition focuses on the "consequences" of "the imperial," as opposed to the motivations of historical actors.⁴⁴ This approach makes sense. Systemic developments often have nothing to do with human actions. And when they do, this focus discourages the historian from assigning blame for an outcome, while still allowing for a discussion of causes. Despite these advantages, this approach has

to world stresses of economic and political character is a stress of racial character. There can be no hope of lasting world order in any arrangements which does not provide for political amalgamation – principles of participation and opportunity free from racial discrimination. Chinese placement in key positions is to be regarded as only an essential beginning." Paul Appleby to Oscar Cox, November 10, 1942, File UNRRA 1942-45, Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL. "The fundamental premises for such combined action that you point out are exceedingly well taken. Not only the Declaration of Independence, but all the experience up to date very well indicate that, on a non-emotional and non-prejudiced basis, we have got to assume, contrary to Mr. Hitler and the Nazis, that, in terms of possibilities, there is no such thing as a superior race. All peoples have and should have the opportunity for getting the same benefits of civilization and the same elements that go to make up a reasonable standard of living." Oscar Cox to Walter Nash, December 1, 1943, File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

⁴³ For the full story of how women ended up on the American delegation to the first UNRRA Council meeting, see the following documents. It was the result of Eleanor Roosevelt and a number of high-powered women's rights activists. Roosevelt to Hull, July 30, 1943; Charles W. Tillett to Lauchlin Currie, October 22, 1943; Charles W. Tillett to Marvin H. McIntyre, October 26, 1943; GzGT To Roosevelt, October 29, 1943; Kathryn McHale to Franklin Roosevelt, November 4, 1943; M.H. McIntyre to Kathryn McHale, November 22, 1943, all in File UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File, FDRL; see also Charles W. Tillett to Sumner Welles, June 8, 1943, 840.50/2058-3/9; Sumner Welles to Dean Acheson, June 10, 1943, 840.50/2058-3/9; Dean Acheson to Charles W. Tillett, June 18, 1943, 840.50/2058-3/9, all in Box 4810. See also Mary E. Woolley, July 26, 1943, 840.50/2380-4/16; R. Louise Fitch to Cordell Hull, August 9, 1944, 840.50/2380-1/16; Herbert H. Lehman to Mary E. Woolley, August 10, 1943; Dean Acheson to Mary A. Dingman, August 18, 1943, 840.50/2380-6/16; Dean Acheson to Emily Hickman, August 18, 1943, 840.50/2380-7/16, all in Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

⁴⁴ Kramer, "Power and Connection," 1350.

problems. It reduces human beings to cogs in a system, when, in fact, they sometimes play decisive roles in creating an imperial structure, and they almost always determine the contents of a command pushed through the system. The personality of the individual can and does impact outcomes, and what motivates them matters for how we interpret historical processes. It therefore seems imperative that intentions receive consideration in certain cases. In this study, the divergence between the secret motivations of officials and their publicly stated intentions sheds light on how they hoped to execute power in the postwar international system.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAELSTROM OF RELIEF POLITICS

Herbert Hoover was determined to prevent the barbarous byproducts of total war. “Starvation by blockade and killing from the air have become weapons of attack, and that [has meant] the wholesale killing of women and children,” he told the international convention of Christian Endeavor Societies on July 6, 1939. In his view, something had to be done to eliminate this needless carnage. Thus repeating a plea he made on Armistice Day in 1929, Hoover called for an international moratorium on the blockading of ships carrying food. Citing a further proposal he had made in 1932, he urged the nations of the world to end air attacks on civilian populations. In this way, the former President’s crusade to help suffering and destitute populations during the Second World War began.⁴⁵

Hoover knew the likelihood that these proposals would ever receive consideration was low, especially in July 1939, when the international situation stood at the precipice; but by advancing them, he sent a message to would-be belligerents. Under his proposals, the enforcement of these bans would fall to neutral nations, which would manage food shipments to blockaded countries and serve as observers in nations under aerial assault. If violations occurred, the perpetrators would be excoriated in the eyes of public opinion. Hoover hoped the United States would again remain aloof if conflict broke out: it could assume the moral high ground and role of adjudicator. The losers in the last war “lost not

⁴⁵ Herbert Hoover, “New Proposal for American Action,” July 6, 1939, printed on July 7, 1939, *NYT*, 6.

by lack of valor or courage,” he reminded his audience. “They lost by failure to heed the public opinion of what were originally neutral nations.”⁴⁶

For the first two years of the Second World War, Hoover was at the center of the debate over wartime relief for civilian populations. He understood the full impact of the British blockade of Europe before they did: if it aimed to deprive Germany of its war-making capacity, it would also deprive nations dependent on European markets of their livelihood. He anticipated his opponents’ arguments against him, and refuted them before they were made. The last war had revealed the fallacy “that putting the screws on the civil populations gets war over quicker.” But this attitude only “sharpened hate and hardened resolution to continue.” Hoover, in effect, created major problems for the British and American Governments, both of which bitterly resented his efforts.⁴⁷

The impact of his program was not inconsequential. In his efforts to force the British to open the blockade for food aid, the former President precipitated the debate over postwar relief, which in turn ignited discussions of the whole postwar economic system and international organization. His efforts also led Churchill to make statements that would burden the British Government until the end of the war. Inadvertently, they also facilitated Britain’s efforts to forge an alliance with the United States. But to Hoover’s dismay, both countries endeavored to undermine his program. If he waged his crusade for food relief using the instruments of public relations, the resulting propaganda war was one he lost. How did this happen? What were its consequences?

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Great Humanitarian

“It has been said, and I think correctly, that Herbert Hoover was responsible for saving more lives than any person who has ever lived.” Such is the judgment of President Hoover’s preeminent biographer, George Nash.⁴⁸ During and after the First World War, Hoover would, by his own estimation, organize relief and reconstruction assistance for more than a billion people in forty-five nations.⁴⁹ For his efforts, he would become a global celebrity and a giant in the life of his nation. Yet his importance for America’s relations with the world remains scant in the popular imagination.

Hoover’s life is the quintessential American success story. Born in West Branch, Iowa in 1874, the death of his parents left him an orphan at age nine. At seventeen, he enrolled in the first class at Stanford University.⁵⁰ After graduating in 1895 with a degree in geology, he left the United States for Australia to pursue a career as a geologist. By 1914, he held mining investments on every continent and had an estimated fortune of \$4 million, more than \$92 million in today’s terms. He had learned fluent Mandarin, written the standard textbook on mining, and translated Georgius Agricola’s 1556 classic *De re metallica* into English.⁵¹ It was an astonishing set of achievements.

⁴⁸ *The Great Famine: Soviet Russia was a Nation Dying for Help When America Answered the Call*, DVD, directed by Austin Hoyt and Aisiyuak Yumagulov (S. Dartmouth, MA: Austin Hoyt Productions for PBS American Experience, 2011).

⁴⁹ Herbert Hoover, *An American Epic*, Vol. 4, *The Guns Cease Killing and the Saving of Life from Famine Begins, 1939-1963* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), p. xiii.

⁵⁰ For an account of Hoover’s relations with his alma mater, see George Nash, *Herbert Hoover and Stanford University* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1988).

⁵¹ George Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, Vol. 1, *The Engineer, 1874-1914* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983).

With the outbreak of the First World War, Hoover's business interests, as he wrote at the time, were "absolutely shot to pieces..." He turned his attention to public service. The German requisition of food in occupied Belgium, a country that had historically relied on imports to meet its nourishment needs, provided Hoover his long desired opportunity. Ambition, to be sure, but also the humanitarian impulse of his Quaker faith drove him to establish, organize, and lead the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB), which spent \$895 million to buy and ship 11.4 billion pounds of food to 9.5 million civilian victims of the war.⁵² These efforts revealed the engineer's diplomatic and administrative skills. When the United States entered the conflict, President Woodrow Wilson appointed him head of the U.S. Food Administration. After the war, he would direct the American Relief Administration (ARA), which delivered four million tons of relief supplies to 23 war-torn nations,⁵³ most remarkably to Soviet Russia during the famine of 1921.⁵⁴

These accomplishments made Hoover a natural contender for the Presidency. Though denied the Republican nomination in 1920, he served as Secretary of Commerce under Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge. In this position, he implemented a vast regulatory regime that increased the efficiency of the economy. He revolutionized the relationship between government and business, establishing partnerships that reduced the adversarial climate of previous decades. By 1928, when Hoover finally secured the

⁵² George Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, Vol. 2, *The Humanitarian, 1914-1917* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1988).

⁵³ George Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, Vol. 3, *Master of Emergencies, 1917-1918* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996).

⁵⁴ Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia, 1921-1923* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974).

nomination, the nation considered the Republicans responsible for the roaring twenties.

Boom times and divisions among the Democrats propelled him to a landslide victory.⁵⁵

But the Great Depression shattered Hoover's presidency. However one might assess his policy response to the sharp economic collapse that turned into a global conflagration by 1932, bank failures, high unemployment, and contraction in domestic consumption and international trade mortally damaged Hoover's reputation, while his management of the press and inability to radiate anything but gloom guaranteed his plunge. The Great Humanitarian became the topic of incessant jokes, and the object of scorn for everything that had gone wrong.⁵⁶ The result was a humiliating loss in 1932 to Franklin Roosevelt, in which his share of the popular vote declined by 32 percent over the 1928 returns.⁵⁷

Roosevelt paradoxically embraced many of Hoover's domestic and foreign policies. The Good Neighbor Policy towards Latin America became his own,⁵⁸ and much of the New Deal derived from Hoover programs.⁵⁹ Yet the new President continually used his predecessor as a scapegoat, lashing out at him in the 1936 campaign even though

⁵⁵ Joan Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1975); Richard Norton Smith, *An Uncommon Man: The Triumph of Herbert Hoover* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

⁵⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Age of Roosevelt*, Vol. 1, *The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), pp. 244-245.

⁵⁷ See David Leip, "United States Presidential Elections Results," Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, <http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/> (accessed September 11, 2012).

⁵⁸ Frederick B. Pike, *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p. xi, 169, 172.

⁵⁹ Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1989); William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963).

his opponent was someone else. He also insulted him with petty acts, such as removing his name from the Hoover damn.⁶⁰ The relationship would be strained.

The importance of these developments cannot be denied, but in the wider context of America's relations with the world, Hoover's significance derives from his efforts to aid suffering populations. Of course he was not the first individual in American history to provide relief to victims of war or natural disasters. As early as the Revolutionary War, the Quakers negotiated an agreement with Generals George Washington and William Howe to permit relief into the besieged city of Boston, an act repeated with most every war and natural catastrophe in American history thereafter.⁶¹ Hoover, moreover, was not the first American to help peoples abroad: protestant missionaries had undertaken aid work throughout the world during the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.⁶²

Hoover's distinction rests on the geographic scope and the financial scale of his relief activities, which symbolized the rise of the United States in global affairs and produced the necessity for governmental involvement, if not in the actual implementation of relief schemes, certainly in the financing of them. His penchant for administrative efficiency and technocratic methods distinguished his endeavors from previous relief efforts, and led to calls for increased centralization to coordinate and synchronize the actions of diverse groups working in this field.⁶³ These methods constituted a response to the advent of total war. But the effect was that Hoover's work contributed significantly to

⁶⁰ Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 185-186, 360.

⁶¹ Rufus Jones, *The Quakers in the American Colonies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966), pp. 151-152.

⁶² William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

⁶³ It remains an odd fact that though Hoover often criticized the centralization of power, he both promoted and abetted this development.

the rise of what one historian has called “global meliorism,” or “the socio-economic and politico-cultural expression of an American mission to make the world a better place.”⁶⁴

Hoover and Roosevelt: War Relief and the Global Crisis

The deteriorating international situation of the late 1930s provided Hoover a chance to resuscitate his reputation. After having already taken Manchuria in 1931, the Japanese invaded all of China in 1937. The following year, Hitler consumed Austria and the Sudetenland, acts he would follow up with the seizure of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. This environment made Hoover’s unrivaled international experience important. He would play significant roles in the resulting foreign policy debates, first, during the Congressional elections of 1938, in which the Republicans, while failing to obtain a majority, would pick up 81 seats in the house and six in the Senate, and then during debates in Congress over various defense and foreign policy measures. Hoover’s accurate predictions and astute analysis made him a prized speaker. With his popularity on the rise, he was touted as a possible presidential nominee for the Republican Party in 1940.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), p. 173, 175-176. For a recent and sustained account of “global meliorism,” see David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁶⁵ For coverage of Hoover’s changing fortunes, see Gary Dean Best, *Herbert Hoover: the Postpresidential Years*, Vol. 1, 1933-1945 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983); Smith, *Uncommon Man*. For details on the 1938 Congressional elections, see Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia, s.v. “United States House of Representatives Elections, 1938” and “United States Senate Elections, 1938,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page (accessed September 11, 2012).

Roosevelt did not underestimate these developments. His wife, Eleanor, suggested he reach out to Hoover.⁶⁶ Thus on September 9, 1939, a little more than a week after the Nazi invasion of Poland, Myron Taylor, the former leader of U.S. Steel then serving as the President's ambassador at large, informed Hoover that Roosevelt would like to confer with him on relief measures for Europe. Hoover thereupon told Taylor that the Red Cross should assume responsibility for this task. With chapters all over the country, it had the infrastructure to raise funds. It also maintained a fully trained staff, which had proven itself during the Chinese famine of 1920-21, following the Japanese earthquake of 1923, and after the catastrophic Mississippi floods of 1927. It simply needed a "capable administrator" to head its European division. As for a meeting at the White House, Hoover claimed it "would only create speculation and unnecessary discussion in the country." After all, he had "responsibility in the Republican Party," but was sure the President would have its support if he kept the country "out of war."⁶⁷

Roosevelt was tenacious, and instructed Norman Davis, Chairman of the Red Cross, to reach out to Hoover. During a four-hour meeting on September 14, 1939, the former President reiterated his argument: the Red Cross should serve as the central

⁶⁶ For general coverage of these events discussed here, see the aforementioned notes on Hoover, but read also George Nash, "Editor's Introduction: Herbert Hoover's Mysterious Magnum Opus," in Herbert Hoover, *Freedom Betrayed: Herbert Hoover's Secret History of the Second World War and Its Aftermath* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2011), pp. xv-cxiii. Nash, by contrast with the other accounts, reveals in some detail the involvement of Eleanor Roosevelt. For coverage of Hoover's role during the Truman Administration, which is not covered here, see Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duff, *The President's Club: Inside the World's Most Exclusive Fraternity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 15-54. For an excellent overview of Hoover's role in helping destitute children, see Dominique Marshall, "Children's Rights and Children's Action in International Relief and Domestic Welfare: The Work of Herbert Hoover Between 1914 and 1950," *Journal of History of Children and Youth* 1, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 351-388.

⁶⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, Herbert Hoover and Myron Taylor, September 11, 1939, File Davis, Norman Correspondence 1933-1944, Box 45, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

coordinating and operating agency for the *whole* relief task.⁶⁸ If it agreed to do this work, then he would accept Davis' invitation to serve on the Red Cross Executive Committee. He also agreed to attend the Committee's next meeting, but only if his views were published in advance. Davis refused. And in Hoover's absence, the Executive Committee rejected his proposals on September 18, 1939.⁶⁹ The situation, according to Davis, remained too fluid "to lay out a general program of relief for the civilian victims of war." Any program "of mass feeding and relief over an extended period," he argued, would require "substantial outlays of money as to necessitate Governmental financing." Thus it could only undertake emergency relief in accordance with its traditional policy of providing medical assistance, clothing and blankets.⁷⁰ Hoover lamented the Red Cross's reluctance to undertake "one of the greatest obligations that has ever come to them."⁷¹

Poland constituted the country of immediate concern. With the Red Cross unwilling to provide more than emergency relief, the Polish Government exiled in France appealed to Hoover for assistance. On September 25, 1939, he and his WWI lieutenants organized the Commission for Polish Relief.⁷² With the assistance of the Polish Government, the Commission negotiated agreements with Britain to permit supplies

⁶⁸ Herbert Hoover to Norman Davis, September 15, 1939; Herbert Hoover to Norman Davis, September 24, 1939; in File Davis, Norman Correspondence 1933-1944, Box 45, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

⁶⁹ Note, No Date, File Davis, Norman Correspondence 1933-1944, Box 45, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

⁷⁰ Norman Davis to Herbert Hoover, September 22, 1939, File Davis, Norman Correspondence 1933-1944, Box 45, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

⁷¹ Herbert Hoover to Norman Davis, September 20, 1939, File Davis, Norman Correspondence 1933-1944, Box 45, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

⁷² Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 6-7; Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 277.

through the blockade of Germany, and with the Nazis to allow for their distribution.⁷³

Financed largely through private donations and gifts from the Polish Government, these resources provided succor to suffering Poles, both home and abroad in the case of those who fled, until mid 1940. For its part, the Red Cross delivered medical aid: the small size of the deliveries and their use of the German Red Cross for distribution allowed them to avoid negotiations with the belligerents, which had been one of the chief reasons they rejected Hoover's plan in the first place. By contrast, the size of the Commission's deliveries required shipment through the blockade, and the British would not consent to this if the German Red Cross maintained responsibility for distribution.⁷⁴

As the saga over Poland unfolded, another country's problems entered the discussion. On November 30, 1939, the Soviet Union invaded Finland over territorial disputes, igniting the so-called Winter War. Here again the Red Cross refused to undertake any program beyond its traditional activities, which drove the Finnish Government to seek Hoover's assistance. But where Hoover's men established the Commission for Polish Relief to act "as the distribution agent of [existing] fund-raising groups," they incorporated the Finnish Relief Fund on December 6, 1939 so that it could

⁷³ "Polish Relief Plan Put to the Reich," February 19, 1940, *NYT*, 7; "Polish Food Ships Win Safe Conduct: Hoover Says Allies and Reich Have Agreed to Immunity for Relief Vessels," March 13, 1940, *NYT*, 7; Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 281. For evidence of Polish participation, see Telegram No. 2 Saving, His Majesty's Ambassador to Poland, Sir H. Kennard (Angers), to Viscount Halifax, January 1, 1940, W 199/37/48, Document 192; Telegram No. 116, Viscount Halifax to Sir H. Kennard (Angers), March 19, 1940, W 4763/37/48, Document 195; Telegram No. 152, Viscount Halifax to Sir H. Kennard (Angers), April 16, 1940, W 6449/37/48, Document 196, all in FO, *BDF*, Vol. 1: World War II, January 1940-December 1941 (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1988), p. 227-230.

⁷⁴ "Hoover's Aid Sought in Relief for Poles: House Committee Studies Bill for Congress Appropriations," January 31, 1940, *NYT*, 4; "Polish Relief Plan Put to the Reich," February 19, 1940, *NYT*, 7; Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 5-7, 8.

also raise money.⁷⁵ This decision had two apparent causes. While Poland had numerous groups raising funds in the United States, Finland did not. And while Hoover took a backseat role in the Polish Commission to avoid possible “smears” from the New Dealers, he now intended to play a very public role in raising funds for Finland.⁷⁶ He also decided to begin publicly supporting fundraising drives for Poland as well.⁷⁷ Thus his organization increasingly came into conflict with the Red Cross over available funds.⁷⁸ Hoover also obtained considerable attention in the media,⁷⁹ a fact that irritated President Roosevelt.⁸⁰

Mixed motives had driven Roosevelt to turn to Hoover. The worsening international situation, for one, meant that he would need bipartisan support to conduct

⁷⁵ “Polish Relief Plan Put to the Reich,” February 19, 1940, *NYT*, 7; United Press, “Hoover Agrees to Head U.S. Relief for Finns: Accedes to Procope’s Request That He Set Up, Coordinate Plan,” December 6, 1939, *WP*, 5; “Hoover Will Organize Relief for Finland; Red Cross Appeals for Funds for Its Help,” December 6, 1939, *NYT*, 1; Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 10-11.

⁷⁶ “Finish Relief Fund”; Note, No Date; both in File Davis, Norman Correspondence 1933-1944, Box 45, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

⁷⁷ “Hoover Asks Aid to Save Starving Polish Millions: 20,000 Chicagoans Turn Out for Relief Rally,” February 11, 1940, *CDT*, 4.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Telephone Conversation, Herbert Hoover and Norman Davis, January 8, 1940; Herbert Hoover to Norman Davis, May 14, 1940; all in File Davis, Norman Correspondence 1933-1944, Box 45; see also Memorandum to Hoover by Hugh Gibson, Discussion with Norman Davis, March 27, 1940 in File Galpin, Perrin Correspondence Aug. 1940-March 1941, Box 65, all in PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

⁷⁹ “Drive to Aid Finns Opened by Hoover: He Issues Relief Appeal to the Nation as Headquarters Set Up in City,” December 9, 1939, *NYT*, 1; “Finland Relief Fund Plea Made by Hoover: Great Need of Victims in Soviet Aggression Stressed,” December 9, 1939, *LAT*, 1; “Finn Aid Pledges Pour in After Hoover Appeal,” December 9, 1939, *CDT*, 6; “Hoover Plea Stirs Nation: Ex-President’s Appeal for Courageous Finns Brings Swift Response,” December 10, 1939, *LAT*, 1; “Hoover Appeals for a Finland Day: He Asks All Governors and Mayors in the Nation to Set Aside Next Sunday,” December 12, 1939, *NYT*, 16; “Hoover Takes Hold of Relief Campaign: Hopes to Have Former Aide, Now Abroad in Finland Within 24 Hours,” December 15, 1939, *NYT*, 12.

⁸⁰ See entry for Sunday, December 24, 1939 in Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, Vol. 3: The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 96-97.

foreign policy. When seeking revisions to the Neutrality Acts of 1936 to permit U.S. firms to sell arms to belligerents, a move Hoover disliked, he reached across the aisle.⁸¹ Roosevelt began considering the inclusion of Republicans in his Cabinet, which led in July 1940 to the appointments of Henry Stimson and Frank Knox as Secretaries of War and the Navy, respectively.⁸² He had other motives as well. It served him no purpose to have Hoover, whose rising popularity made him a possible presidential candidate, repeatedly attacking his Administration for embarking on a path to war: "It is a poor national policy," Hoover would assert, "to go around the world sticking pins in rattlesnakes."⁸³ If Hoover would join his administration as a manager of war relief, it might restrict his behavior and compromise any presidential aspirations he had. Perhaps these factors led Eleanor Roosevelt to initiate the outreach to Hoover in late September 1939, and then to publicly laud his abilities and tout him as a possible American relief chief in November 1939.⁸⁴

Yet the First Lady's praise did not persuade him. Hoover harbored deep resentments. He considered Roosevelt responsible for the withdrawal of his secret service

⁸¹ On Hoover's attitude towards the revision of the neutrality act, see Best, Hoover, Vol. 1, 130-141.

⁸² On Roosevelt's interest in a bipartisan Cabinet, see entry for Saturday, September 9, 1939 in Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, Vol. 2: The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 717-718; Best, Hoover, Vol. 1, 133, 143.

⁸³ Best, Hoover, Vol. 1, 122.

⁸⁴ On Eleanor's involvement, see Nash, "Editor's Introduction" in Hoover, *Freedom Betrayed*, xxxiv-xxxvi; see also Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 276. For Eleanor's public overture in November, see "First Lady Suggests a Post for Hoover: Mrs. Roosevelt for Refugee Agency Headed by Ex-President," November 21, 1939, *NYT*, 25; "Mrs. Roosevelt's Christmas Shopping Nearly Completed: First Lady Recommends that Refugee Relief Be Consolidated Under Hoover; She Will Leave for Warm Springs Today," November 21, 1939, *WP*, 19; "Mrs. Roosevelt Praises Hoover: First Lady Urges Him as Refugee Relief Chief," November 21, 1939, *LAT*, 1.

protection the day he left office. As he apparently told Norman Davis, Roosevelt had done this at a time when he feared assassination.⁸⁵ Hoover, moreover, had no intention of sacrificing his political independence. Just days after Eleanor's public statements, he argued that if the country "became involved in the European war, liberty would perish in the United States."⁸⁶ Eleanor attributed Hoover's behavior to his presidential aspirations.⁸⁷

This view has merit. Hoover took steps to obtain the nomination. Winning the presidency, after all, was the best way for him to keep the United States out of the war. Hoover's private relief activities bolstered his image as a humanitarian, which also served a possible candidacy. But his efforts to obtain the nomination were lackluster: he never publicly stated his intent. And as one scholar explains, his relief efforts reduced the time he could devote to politics.⁸⁸ However, this fact probably stems from media attacks he weathered on account of his public involvement with the Finnish Relief Fund.

These efforts annoyed Roosevelt. In mid December 1939, someone, possibly Davis but probably Roosevelt, informed the press that the President had asked Hoover to head "all relief activities in the United States," but that he refused due to his desire to take part in the presidential campaign.⁸⁹ When Hoover denied this allegation on December 14, 1939, the White House press secretary, Stephen Early, confirmed the president's offer.

⁸⁵ Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 275.

⁸⁶ "Hoover Says War Would End Liberty; Cautions on Effect of Our Involvement," November 28, 1939, *NYT*, 2.

⁸⁷ Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 276.

⁸⁸ Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 284; Best, *Hoover*, Vol. 1, 141-142, but especially Chapter 5.

⁸⁹ Quote taken from "War Relief Story Denied by Hoover: Report That He Had Refused Roosevelt Initiative," December 15, 1939, *NYT*, 13; but see also "Hoover Denies Offer as Head of War Relief: Issues Statement in Reply to White House," December 15, 1939, *CDT*, 9; "War Relief Strife Denied: Hoover Assails Reports; Early and Red Cross Issue Statements," December 15, 1939, *LAT*, 7.

This salvo infuriated Hoover, who quibbled over inaccurate details in Early's statement, but more importantly, shared his complete correspondence with Davis to the press.⁹⁰

Though George Nash has suggested that this affair hurt the former President's standing, the letters may have rectified the controversy in Hoover's favor: they made it clear that his rejection resulted from the Red Cross's refusal to take on the relief task.⁹¹ Roosevelt, in any case, blamed Davis, who "had let [Hoover] get away with this." In his view, the Chairman of the Red Cross needed a "good publicity man."⁹²

In January 1940, the President attempted to regain the initiative. He proposed, firstly, that Congress help Finland.⁹³ Then the following month, he embraced an appropriation for Polish relief. Hoover supported both proposals and even testified in favor of the Polish measure before the House Foreign Affairs Committee.⁹⁴ The bills passed, but Hoover's testimony aggravated the President. He attacked the Roosevelt

⁹⁰ Warren B. Francis, "Letters Give Background to Finn Relief Controversy: Red Cross Refusal of Help for War Victims Shown Cause of Ex-President's Activities," December 20, 1939, *LAT*, 4.

⁹¹ The most exhaustive coverage of these events can be found in Nash, "Editor's Introduction" in Hoover, *Freedom Betrayed*, xl-xliii. It seems to me that Roosevelt interpreted the events as a success for Hoover. Otherwise he would not have expressed his ire on the day Hoover released the letters to the press, December 19, 1939.

⁹² See entry for Sunday, December 24, 1939 in Ickes, *Secret Diary*, Vol. 3, 96-97.

⁹³ "Roosevelt Backed by Hoover on Finns," January 18, 1940, *NYT*, 4; see Best, Hoover, Vol. 1, 144.

⁹⁴ "Hoover's Aid Sought in Relief for Poles: House Committee Studies Bill for Congress Appropriations," January 31, 1940, *NYT*, 4; "Hoover's Views on Polish Relief Sought in House: Will Be Asked to Testify Before Committee," January 31, 1940, *CDT*, 5; "Hoover Backs Bill for Polish Relief," March 1, 1940, *NYT*, 1; "Hoover Asks \$20,000,000 to Feed Poles: 7,000,000 Face Starvation, He Tells Congress," March 1, 1940, *WP*, 1; "The Nation: Mr. Hoover Testifies," March 3, 1940, *NYT*, 68.

Administration for its failure to take the lead on cross-blockade relief.⁹⁵ The maneuver backfired. Hoover's outfit for Polish relief never received any of the money appropriated for the country.⁹⁶ Indeed the wide discretion Congress granted Roosevelt allowed him to divert portions of the appropriation to British relief.⁹⁷ As for Finland, the President escaped further criticism when the Winter War came to an end on March 13, 1940.

But the dispute over war relief would not disappear. Following the Nazis invasion of Poland, the British and French declared war on Germany. The Germans took no further action until April 9, 1940, when, to everyone's surprise, they assaulted Denmark and Norway in Operation Weserübung. Events unfolded so rapidly that the Danish Government had neither time to declare war nor to flee. The Danes surrendered within hours; the Germans left them in power in return for their collaboration. The Norwegian capitulation would not come until early June. Meanwhile, on May 10, 1940, the Nazis unleashed *Blitzkrieg* on Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg and France. The *Wehrmacht's* success astonished everyone, especially Hoover, who had predicted a stalemate.⁹⁸ By mid May 1940, Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg had surrendered. A month later the British Expeditionary Force, which had been deployed to the Franco-Belgian border following the Nazi attack on Poland, had been captured or pushed off the continent. On June 25, 1940, France surrendered. Most all of Western Europe now lay under Nazi domination.

These developments had four effects relevant to our story. First, most of the invaded countries established a government or authority in London recognized by the

⁹⁵ James H. George, Jr. "Another Chance: Herbert Hoover and World War II Relief," *Diplomatic History* 16, no. 3 (July 1992): 393-394.

⁹⁶ This is my assessment, but we can assume that Hoover's organization received none of the funds from Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 6.

⁹⁷ "Hoover's Food Plea," August 13, 1940, *WP*, 9.

⁹⁸ For Hoover's views, see Best, *Hoover*, Vol. 1, 134.

British.⁹⁹ Second, many of these governments appealed to Hoover for assistance in relieving their home populations: Belgium and Luxemburg sought help in May; the Netherlands acted in July; and Norway requested aid in September.¹⁰⁰ Third, the British widened the blockade to include all of Europe, even the neutral countries such as Portugal and Spain.¹⁰¹ This decision, in part, resulted from the Italian assault on France and declaration of war on Britain in late 1940, which justified the move. Finally, Winston Churchill replaced Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister of Britain. A “militarist of the extreme school,” according to Hoover, Churchill unified the exiled governments under the Allied banner and defended British blockade policy tenaciously.¹⁰²

By mid August 1940, *The Washington Post* reported that relief “shipments to portions of Europe under German control” had “virtually stopped.”¹⁰³ The need for deliveries to Finland declined after Helsinki signed a peace agreement with Moscow. But in the case of Poland, where American pressure led Chamberlain to permit shipments through the blockade in March 1940, the arrival of Churchill meant a sudden reversal of this policy. These circumstances brought Hoover, who had called for an international

⁹⁹ On this process, see Eliezar Yapou, *Governments in Exile, 1939-1945: Leadership from London and Resistance at Home* (Published independently online, 1998): <http://governmentsinexile.com/> (accessed September 11, 2012). This book does not include France. See G.E. Maguire, *Anglo-American Policy Towards the Free French* (London: MacMillan Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁰ Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 1.

¹⁰¹ On the British blockade, see W.N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, vol. 1-2, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952-1959). Discussions to widen the blockade to include the neutrals began in May 1940. See “Meeting of War Cabinet,” 113th Conclusions, May 6, 1940, CAB 65/7/5, PRO.

¹⁰² Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 17.

¹⁰³ “Hoover’s Food Plea,” August 13, 1940, *WP*, 9.

convention banning food blockades in the summer of 1939,¹⁰⁴ into open confrontation with the British. They also made the Roosevelt Administration's position more complex: in addition to the Poles, the State Department now had several of the governments in exile pleading with them to advocate for relief shipments to their home populations. Hoover, for his part, rejoined the chorus after the Republican convention in June 1940, where he lost the party's nomination for president.

On July 26, 1940, Hugh Gibson and John Hartigan, Hoover's associates in London and Berlin, respectively, presented a detailed version of his relief plan to the British and German governments.¹⁰⁵ In Washington, Hoover shared the proposal with the Marquess of Lothian, Britain's Ambassador to the United States.¹⁰⁶ It requested that Britain permit food shipments through the blockade if Germany agreed to certain conditions: not to attack ships carrying the food, to take none of the domestic produce of the recipient country, to furnish the equivalent of any food already taken, and to permit imports from Russia and the Balkans into the country. To ensure the Germans upheld these guarantees, Hoover's organization would control distribution. If the Germans failed to meet their responsibilities, then the aid would cease immediately. Hoover's plan also stipulated that Holland, Belgium, Norway and Poland would finance the organization's work with their resources. Hoover designed these stipulations to meet anticipated British objections.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ "Hoover Proposes to Outlaw Wartime Food Blockades," July 7, 1939, *LAT*, 1; Best, *Herbert*, Vol. 1, 126.

¹⁰⁵ "Hoover Reveals Efforts to Feed Conquered Area," August 11, 1940, *CDT*, 6.

¹⁰⁶ "British View Bars Hoover Food Plan," August 12, 1940, *NYT*, 1.

¹⁰⁷ "Hoover Calls On U.S. to Feed Invaded Lands: Suggests Guarantees From Nazis, Britain to Ward Off Famine," August 12, 1940, *WP*, 1; "Hoover Urges Famine Relief:

At Hugh Dalton's Suggestion, Churchill Speaks

This proposal and media reports that the occupied countries would soon face famine and starvation created problems for the British. Hugh Dalton, Churchill's Minister of Economic Warfare, believed the government should not relax the blockade to permit food into Europe, but feared that if it did not, advocates of cross-blockade relief would accuse Britain of causing a humanitarian catastrophe for which it was not responsible. Dalton also worried about the unusual situation in France. While the Nazis occupied the northern areas of the country to have control of the Atlantic coastline, they allowed Frenchmen to govern the southern half from Vichy so long as they collaborated with Germany. It would be difficult, Dalton reasoned, to deny Vichy food given its status, which made it easy for neutral countries, including the United States, to maintain relations with it. But if Britain permitted foodstuffs into unoccupied France, he feared that it would precipitate demands from the exiled governments of countries under Nazi occupation, which, if denied, would weaken Britain's relationship with its natural allies.¹⁰⁸

These problems had to be confronted. But Dalton still believed that Britain should not permit food through the blockade. A "depressing and monotonous diet" in the "enslaved areas," he argued, would create "a great inclination towards discontent and even violent revolt." This threat would force the Germans to feed these people, thereby

Neutral Organization Would Send Food for Three Invade Nations," August 12, 1940, *LAT*, 5; "Hoover Maps Plan to Feed Europeans," August 12, 1940, *NYT*, 8.

¹⁰⁸ "Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare," Food and the Blockade, August 7, 1940, W.P.(G)(40)208, CAB 67/8/8, PRO.

reducing the amount of food available for their army.¹⁰⁹ The British believed the Nazis would never abide by any guarantees if the Hoover scheme were adopted. As one historian advising the British government put it: when, during the First World War, “the Germans felt that the situation had become desperate, they ignored the guarantees they had given against seizing native food.”¹¹⁰ Despite Hoover’s assertions to the contrary, historical scholarship has confirmed the view that his relief efforts during WWI abetted the German war effort, and that the balance of food and raw material resources proved decisive in that conflict’s outcome.¹¹¹ The British certainly believed this to be the case.¹¹²

Dalton proposed a propaganda effort to correct misinformation and outmaneuver the interests driving the campaign for cross-blockade relief. “The plain truth,” he wrote on August 7, 1940, “is that there will be no famine in any part of this area, unless the Germans snatch away food which is there now, or refuse to allow food which is not far away to be moved to where it is most needed.” Food supplies in Europe exceeded those in India, Africa, Japan, China, possibly Russia, and even undernourished areas of the United States. This information needed to be propagandized lest the situation “develop into a formidable obstacle to British victory.” It would serve no benefit to experiment with food shipments, only to terminate them because the Nazis failed to meet obligations.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ “Note by the Minister of Economic Warfare,” Food and the Blockade, September 30, 1940, W.P. (G) (40) 250, CAB 67/8/50, PRO.

¹¹¹ On this point, see footnote number two in George, “Another Chance,” 390. But for a more general scholarly appraisal of the importance of agriculture for the First World War’s outcome, see Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹¹² “Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare,” August 7, 1940, CAB 67/8/8, PRO.

The British had permitted food into port at Marseilles, he explained. But local authorities bragged that they had busted the blockade.¹¹³

These circumstances did not mean that Britain should not give the Allies hope. Dalton proposed that Britain declare its intention to “not only permit but to arrange in advance” the shipment of food relief into “any part of the enslaved area” when it has been “wholly cleared of German forces and has genuinely regained its freedom.” “Let us declare that food shall go in when, but only when, Hitler’s hordes go out.” He warned against “any obvious trap, such as the pretended ‘independence’ of Petain’s France.” If Britain worked to “build up... large stocks of food,” he believed it “could be advertised both to Hitler’s victims and to American citizens,” who, he implied, were subject to the humanitarian appeals of men like Hoover. The American people might even pay for it. This stockpile could then be “held in trust for the Free Europe of to-morrow.” “Such a provision,” he argued, “might inspire a great propagandist and moral appeal, on both sides of the Atlantic.”¹¹⁴ Despite his disdain for Dalton, Churchill agreed with this assessment.¹¹⁵

On August 20, 1940, he acted on his minister’s advice. But his fiery speech of that day in the House of Commons had as much to do with the wider context of the war as it did relief. In July 1940, just as the guns fell silent in Western Europe, the Nazis initiated a ferocious air assault on the British Isles, attacking the country’s assets in and along the English Channel before turning the *Luftwaffe* on the airfields of the Royal Air Force in August. These attacks were being launched from the very countries to which Hoover and

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ On Churchill’s relationship with Dalton, see Ben Pimlott, *Hugh Dalton* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1985), pp. 346-350.

other individuals with the “highest motives” proposed to provide relief. By September, the Nazis would revert to full-scale terror bombing of British cities and towns.¹¹⁶ Yet even before this tactical shift the losses were apparent: Britain incurred the highest casualty levels of the Battle of Britain two days prior to his August 20th speech.¹¹⁷ Thus while seeking to shore up his alliances and reach out to the United States, Churchill described the nature of total war and evoked the resilience of the British people.¹¹⁸

He sarcastically reminded the world that Hitler, like the Kaiser in the last war, had “proclaimed a strict blockade of the British isles.” Britain would therefore “maintain and enforce a strict blockade, not only of Germany, but of Italy, France, and all the other countries that have fallen into the German power.” He rejected the “many proposals... that food should be allowed to pass the blockade for the relief” of Europe’s “subjugated peoples.” And he refuted the claim that this decision was inhumane. “What indeed would be a matter of general complaint would be if we were to prolong the agony of Europe by allowing food to come in to nourish the Nazis and aid their war effort, or to allow food to go in to the subjugated peoples, which certainly would be pillaged off them by their Nazi conquerors.” If problems of famine or undernourishment developed in Europe, Britain was not to blame: the invaded countries had ample food when the Nazis attacked, and with the harvest only then being gathered, it would have food into the foreseeable future, unless Germany chose to steal these supplies.

¹¹⁶ Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2000), pp. 84-90.

¹¹⁷ Alfred Price, *The Hardest Day: The Battle of Britain 18 August 1940* (London: Haynes Publishing, 2010).

¹¹⁸ Winston Churchill, “The Few,” August 20, 1940, House of Commons in Robert Rhodes James, ed. *Churchill Speaks: Winston S. Churchill in Peace and War: Collected Speeches, 1897-1963* (New York: Chelsea House, 1980), pp. 724-728.

Churchill proclaimed that he would not abet the Nazi war machine so that it could in turn attack the British people. “Many of the most valuable foods,” he explained “are essential to the manufacture of vital war material. Fats are used to make explosives. Potatoes make the alcohol for motor spirit. The plastic materials now so largely used in the construction of aircraft are made of milk. If the Germans use these commodities to help them to bomb our women and children, rather than to feed the populations who produce them,” he argued, “we may be sure that imported foods would go the same way, directly or indirectly, or be employed to relieve the enemy of the responsibilities he has so wantonly assumed. Let Hitler bear his responsibilities to the full,” he thundered, “and let the peoples of Europe who groan beneath his yoke aid in every way the coming of the day when that yoke will be broken.”

Churchill concluded this section of his speech with a promise that, while serving immediate propaganda benefits, would prove a burden for the British in the future:

“Meanwhile, we can and we will arrange in advance for the speedy entry of food into any part of the enslaved area, when this part has been wholly cleared of German forces, and has genuinely regained its freedom. We shall do our best to encourage the building up of reserves of food all over the world, so that there will always be held up before the eyes of the peoples of Europe, including – I say deliberately – the German and Austrian peoples, the certainty that the shattering of the Nazi power will bring to them all immediate food, freedom and peace.”¹¹⁹

Reaction to the Prime Minister’s statement was very enthusiastic in the United States. Hoover, of course, took notice of the speech, but declined to comment or refute

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

any of its central claims until after the presidential election of November 1940. As he put it, he did not want relief to become a subject of political dispute.¹²⁰ Thus reception of Churchill's categorical refusal to permit food through the blockade aroused little if any comment in Washington.¹²¹ Indeed the only public rebuttal of it came from Vichy France, where the French Foreign Minister denounced Churchill's policy as "an inhumane dictatorship of famine."¹²² But in the United States, where Americans read daily of British heroism in the face of the *Luftwaffe's* ghastly attacks on British civilians, the policy appeared justified. On September 1, 1940, the American Institute of Public Opinion revealed that Americans opposed sending food to Nazi-occupied territories by a 62 to 38 percent margin. This opinion existed in both parties and in all sections of the country.¹²³

However, Churchill's pledge to bring aid to Europe after liberation did not resolve the dilemma many of the refugee governments faced. They had justifiable concerns over the wellbeing of their people, and worried that Hitler might exploit perceptions that they had failed to help them. This possibility, they argued, would hurt the war effort, especially if the Nazi propaganda machine used Churchill's policy to turn the people

¹²⁰ Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 22.

¹²¹ For a review of reaction to Churchill's speech, see "Britain's Solid Grounds For Confidence: Reaction to Premier's Speech," August 22, 1940, *TI*, 7.

¹²² "Brands British Blockade 'Inhuman' Act," August 23, 1940, *CDT*, 5; "France Attacks Food Blockade," August 23, 1940, *LAT*, 2; "Vichy Attack on Mr. Churchill," August 24, 1940, *TI*, 7.

¹²³ George Gallup, "Thumbs Down on Food for Nazi Victims: Majority Believes Supplies Sent Europe Would Go to Hitler," September 1, 1940, *LAT*, A5; "Sending Food to Hitler Victims Opposed by Voters, Survey Finds: Most Citizens Believe Feeding Nations Under Nazi Control Would Aid Germany, Dr. Gallup Reports," September 1, 1940, *NYT*, 9.

living in the occupied territories against the British.¹²⁴ They must have worried that it would also trigger challenges to their legitimacy after the war. Yet they recognized the validity and power of Churchill's argument. Food relief might abet the Nazi war machine and delay the liberation of Europe. For this reason, they sought ways around the quandary.

Two possible solutions emerged. The Dutch believed the British placed too much emphasis on Berlin. "It was not a question of getting a guarantee from the Germans, whom one could not trust, but rather from the United States authorities, whom one could." If the American Government could convince the British Government that they would be able to "exercise the necessary control" over the distribution of relief, then they would support a proposal for cross-blockade relief.¹²⁵ The Norwegians, by contrast, thought the British Government should place more emphasis on the Germans. Britain, they suggested, might agree to cross-blockade relief, but increase their demands over what Hoover proposed in his relief scheme. In this way, the Germans would refuse to cooperate, making it easier for them to blame any humanitarian catastrophes on Hitler.¹²⁶ The British, however, held steadfast in their decision to refuse cross-blockade relief.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Telegram No. 182, Viscount Halifax to Sir C. Dormer, September 24, 1940, W 10597/8434/49, Document 199, FO, *B DFA*, Vol. 1, 232-233.

¹²⁵ Telegram No. 261, Viscount Halifax to Sir N. Bland, August 19, 1940, W 9621/8434/49, Document 197, FO, *B DFA*, Vol. 1, 230.

¹²⁶ Telegram No. 181, Viscount Halifax to Sir C. Dormer, August 21, 1940, W 9705/8434/49, Document 198; Telegram No. 182, Viscount Halifax to Sir C. Dormer, September 24, 1940, both in FO, *B DFA*, Vol. 1, 231-233.

¹²⁷ Telegram No. 185, Viscount Halifax to Sir C. Dormer, November 1, 1940, W 10587/8434/49, Document 200; "Text of Statement issued by British Embassy at 5:30 P.M. on December 10, 1940," Enclosure to Telegram No. 1072, The Marquess of Lothian to Viscount Halifax, January 7, 1941, W 262/49/49, Document 15; Mr. Eden to the Norwegian Minister, January 14, 1941, W 11831/8434/49, Document 16 (3), FO, *B DFA*, Vol. 1, 234-235, 344-345, 346.

Economic Havoc and the Problem of Surpluses

Churchill's speech converged with another difficulty Britain faced in mid 1940. Prior to the war, a number of countries had endured problems with overproduction, particularly those with economies based exclusively on agriculture or raw material extraction. When Britain expanded the blockade of Germany to include areas overrun by the Nazis as well as neutrals, these countries instantaneously lost one of their most important markets. For many of these nations, this development spelled catastrophe. Before the war, Europe absorbed more than half of Latin America's exports; without this market, valued at more than a billion dollars annually, many of these economies risked outright collapse.¹²⁸

The implication, according to Lord Halifax, was that the blockade would arouse not only the ire of countries under Nazi occupation; it would anger areas of the world that had historically exported to Europe. As he explained to the War Cabinet on July 19, 1940: "We must expect shortly to be held up to the execration of the World as the Power responsible for starving parts of Europe (including very possibly France) at a time when North and South America had large surpluses of food-stuffs, which they were unable to sell."¹²⁹ Yet the risks were not confined to the Americas. Similar possibilities existed to varying degrees for the Dominions and Colonies of the British Empire. Indeed all of the

¹²⁸ William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), pp. 630-631.

¹²⁹ "Meeting of War Cabinet," 208th Conclusions, July 19, 1940, CAB 65/8/20, PRO.

Allied Empires – Belgian, French and Dutch – faced the threat of economic havoc due to the rapid buildup of surpluses.¹³⁰

This problem had ironic implications. The blockade aimed to deny Germany and Italy strategic materials that would allow them to wage war, but it also worked to incite unrest and revolt in the occupied territories by creating conditions of starvation.¹³¹ The British, however, quickly recognized that in pursuing this policy they might inadvertently create conditions of instability in countries producing the world's staple commodities. If the problem of surpluses could not be solved, it might lead to the "drastic collapse of the economic life of a large part of the world." The resulting "social instability" could lead to "native unrest and even revolt" in the British and Allied colonies. This possibility or even its threat might lead producing countries to blame the blockade. "Public opinion" would then "turn against the British policy of a fight to the finish." "Pro-Nazi regimes" might come to power and, with public approval, support attempts at "blockade running." The effect would be to cripple loyalty to the allied cause and undermine the war effort.¹³²

Even worse, the surplus problem, if left unaddressed, could have deleterious effects for the postwar world. The logical reaction of producing countries to the accumulation of agricultural surpluses, the British reasoned, was to reduce production. In Canada and the United States, and to a lesser extent, Australia and the Dutch East Indies,

¹³⁰ On the problem within the empires, see "Note of an Interdepartmental Meeting held in Mr. Clauson's room at the Colonial Office," June 21, 1940; "Minutes of an Informal Meeting held at MEW," July 23, 1940, both in BT 88/1, PRO.

¹³¹ "Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare," August 7, 1940, CAB 67/8/8, PRO.

¹³² Quotes taken from the following report: "The Magnitude of the Economic Problem and the Importance of Its Political Aspects," Date Unknown, Author Unknown; but see also Lincoln to Bourdillon, June 28, 1940; S.D. Waley to Leith-Ross, "Surplus Commodities," July 22, 1940, all in BT 88/1, PRO.

the anticipated decline in agricultural profits could be offset by increases in manufacturing production, which, by mid 1940, was well underway due to rearmament programs, primarily in the United States. But in countries where agriculture constituted the sole engine of economic activity, the blockade could permanently damage their economies, leading to a reduction in global production capacity. If this occurred, it might well prove impossible to meet the expected demands for food and raw materials in Europe following the defeat of Germany and Italy. “We may well find that though the war is won,” one analysis surmised, “the restoration of European civilization is impossible.”¹³³

In theory, the solution to the problem seemed obvious, but in practice, it presented difficulties. If Great Britain intended, as Churchill promised on August 20, 1940, to build up stockpiles for the immediate relief of any liberated territory, then it naturally follows that Britain would propose to buy up surpluses for that purpose. “The problem,” as one analyst wrote, was “to facilitate the accumulation of foods in producing countries without bringing temporary economic ruin on those countries, so that these accumulations may in due course be available to take a least the edge off the appetite of a starving Europe and so that the producing countries will not be faced with permanent heavy damage to their economies.”¹³⁴ But how was this to be done? Who would finance the purchase, transport, and storage of these surpluses? What would prevent affected countries from increasing production to exploit a purchasing program? Should the problem be addressed globally for each commodity, or could it be attacked at the country level?

¹³³ “The blockade of Europe means a very large decline in the effective...” June 1940, PRO, BT 88/1, Document 2 (9558).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

British officials agreed that the problem was best solved in collaboration with the United States. Washington had an interest in avoiding political and economic instability in the Western Hemisphere, and it possessed the resources to make purchases on a scale well beyond the means of Britain. With its dollar reserves diminishing, Britain had become reluctant to make purchases in Latin America. Officials also worried that if the two countries failed to coordinate action, they might undercut one another in cases where surpluses existed for a given commodity in the Americas and in the British and Allied Empires. Collaboration would also provide countries in the sterling area access to dollars, thus providing additional export opportunities for American firms holding surpluses. In return, officials thought the British and Allied Empires might be allowed to supply the Western Hemisphere with its surplus commodities, when those items were in demand.¹³⁵

In June 1940, American officials, too, began to worry about this problem, but they did not consider the issue in global terms. Instead, they tried to concoct a hemispheric solution, whereby an Inter-American Cartel would buy up surpluses, regulate production, fix prices, and enact marketing schemes.¹³⁶ But in July 1940, they abandoned the plan,

¹³⁵ On collaboration with the United States, see “Note of an Interdepartmental Meeting held in Mr. Clauson’s room at the Colonial Office,” June 21, 1940; S.D. Waley to Leith-Ross, July 22, 1940; “Minutes of an Informal Meeting...” July 23, 1940; “The Magnitude of the Economic Problem...”; “The problem of the surpluses of foodstuffs and raw materials which...”, Date Unknown, Author Unknown, all in BT 88/1, PRO. See also “Memorandum,” The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the SOS, September 18, 1940, 610.4115/45, DOS, *FRUS*, 1940, Vol. 3, *The British Commonwealth, The Soviet Union, The Near East and Africa* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1958), 135-138.

¹³⁶ On this matter see, “Statement Issued by the White House,” June 17, 1940; “Statement Issued by the President,” June 21, 1940; “Address by Assistant Secretary Berle,” June 22, 1940, all in *Bulletin*, June 22, 1940, Vol. 2, No. 52, Publication 1477 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1940), 675-676. For an in-depth internal

not so much because of opposition to it from American producers, who worried of foreign competition, or from Latin American countries, who feared American imperialism, but due to a fundamental transformation of strategic thought among key policymakers in the Roosevelt Administration. As David Haglund argues, the Administration abandoned its isolationist tendencies in July 1940, and threw its lot in with England, even though this shift might lead to war. Increasingly American officials came to consider Britain the first line of defense against Axis incursions in the Americas. If Britain collapsed, they worried of one day having to fight the Germans in Latin America without Allies.¹³⁷

Now for reasons that will become apparent, this shift in thought did not translate into cooperation with Britain over surpluses; but it did lead the United States to take steps that would make the blockade more effective. While in June 1940 Roosevelt rejected Churchill's pleas for destroyers, which the Royal Navy needed to protect British ships from Nazi U-boat attacks, by August he was ready to play ball. On September 2, 1940, the United States transferred fifty destroyers to Britain in return for land rights on various British possessions in the Western Hemisphere.¹³⁸ To keep surpluses of strategic value out of Nazi hands, Roosevelt also requested that Congress increase the Export-Import Banks lending powers by \$500 million. These funds could be used to keep the Latin American countries from selling excess production to Europe.¹³⁹ Though these unilateral

analysis of the problem, see Harry Hawkins to Grady, June 28, 1940, File #2 Postwar ER - EP 5/7/42 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁷ David G. Haglund, *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Thought, 1936-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 209-219. The story of the Inter-American Cartel is also covered in Langer and Gleason, *Isolation*, 630-637.

¹³⁸ Langer and Gleason, *Isolation*, 742-776.

¹³⁹ Haglund, *Latin America*, 212-219.

measures strengthened the British blockade, they fell short of the collaborative efforts the British urged upon the Americans beginning in July 1940.¹⁴⁰

In the meantime, the British established machinery to devise a policy and manage the problem, hopefully in collaboration with the Americans. In July 1940, Dalton suggested that the War Cabinet's Economic Policy Committee, led by the Minister Without Portfolio, Arthur Greenwood, appoint a Ministerial Sub-Committee on Exports to study and report on the problem.¹⁴¹ The War Cabinet accepted this proposal,¹⁴² but by the fall of 1940, it became apparent to Dalton that the Ministry of Economic Warfare would need to play a greater role in managing the problem. The issue of surpluses collided with Britain's policy of "control at the source," for which his Ministry maintained responsibility. Announced in July 1940, this policy sought to implement export controls overseas so that ships filled with contraband would never leave their homeport. It was hoped that this policy would relieve pressure on Royal Navy, which was in need of warships.¹⁴³

If "control at the source" made Dalton's authority over the surpluses problem logical, the ineffectiveness of Greenwood's team made it certain. In September, Dalton exploded when officials in Greenwood's office circulated to ministers a shoddy report bearing his name. Then, he excoriated the Minister for his team's failure to work on weekends during a time of heightened crisis.¹⁴⁴ By mid November 1940, Dalton, with

¹⁴⁰ British Embassy to DOS, July 3, 1940, 610.1131/442, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 134-135.

¹⁴¹ Hugh Dalton to Arthur Greenwood, July 11, 1940, BT 88/1, PRO.

¹⁴² "Note by the Secretary, War Cabinet," E.E. Bridges, July 26, 1940, W.P. (G) (40) 200, CAB 67/7/50, PRO.

¹⁴³ Medlicott, *Blockade*, Vol. 1, 430-436.

¹⁴⁴ For a full account of the dispute, see Report by the Secretariat, Ministerial Drafting Sub-Committee on Export Surpluses, S.E.P./26/37, Paper No. 1, War Cabinet, August 23,

Churchill's approval, took control of the issue by proxy. The Director-General of the Ministry of Economic Warfare, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross assumed complete control of the surpluses problem for the British Government. Though responsible to the Ministerial Sub-Committee already established, Leith-Ross would chair an inter-departmental committee of his own, the Official Committee on Export Surpluses, through which he would coordinate and manage the overlapping efforts of the various British departments and ministries involved.¹⁴⁵ A central figure in our story, we will learn more of him later.

But for now, he undertook two tasks. First, he followed up a memo Ambassador Lothian had shared with the State Department in September 1940. In doing so, Leith-Ross widened the discussion to include the postwar period. It was his belief, he wrote the American Assistant Secretary of State, Henry Grady, that "in cooperation real solutions may be initiated which, combined with temporary war-time measures, should not only tide the world over the present emergencies but also lay the foundations for a definite improvement in the economic organization of the post-war world." To avoid the failures of 1919-20, he argued that Britain and the United States should establish a "joint Anglo-American committee" to "agree to general lines of policy and to initiate action." He

1940; Hugh Dalton to Harcourt Johnstone, August 28, 1940; "Note by the Minister of Economic Warfare," Surpluses, August 29, 1940; "Draft Report by the Minister of Economic Warfare," War Cabinet, Sub-Committee on Export Surpluses, August 30, 1940, E.P. (M) (E.S.) (40) 6; Hugh Dalton to Arthur Greenwood, September 2, 1940, all in BT 88/1, PRO.

¹⁴⁵ "Note by the Secretary, Economic Policy Committee," Francis Hemming, "The Appointment of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross as Chairman of the Committee," Official Committee on Export Surpluses, November 16, 1940, E.P. (E.S.)(0)(40)12; Leith-Ross to Professor Hall, November 16, 1940; "Brief for Lord Drogheda," Export Surpluses Problem, all in BT 88/1, PRO.

thought this mechanism might in time be forged into some sort of “international committee.” But these views, he explained, remained purely personal.¹⁴⁶

Second, Leith-Ross articulated the most elaborate policy outline for the problem to date. This document is remarkable for two reasons. It formally advocated for an Anglo-American committee to manage the purchase of surpluses, and called for an international organization to direct the production, stockpiling, and marketing of these commodities. Second, it lamented the fact that so little had been done to build up reserves, provide for future marketing, or to discourage overproduction, despite the fact that Britain and the United States had begun spending large sums to relieve suffering due to the blockade. More alarming, the State Department had informed the British Government that it was unprepared to act on their “proposals for joint consideration of the whole problem,” but that it was willing to “consult... as to ad hoc measures.” The problem, as Leith-Ross explained, was that it wasn’t quite clear what the Americans meant by this statement.¹⁴⁷

Churchill’s Propaganda Efforts: A Call for Inter-Allied Action

Churchill supplemented Dalton’s efforts with a grandiose initiative of his own. On October 24, 1940, he proposed a revival of the Supreme War Council, which, following the pattern of the First World War, had been established by the British and French in 1939 to jointly oversee military strategy. The Council ceased to exist after the fall of

¹⁴⁶ DG, British MEW (Leith-Ross), to Assistant SOS (Grady), November 30, 1940, 840.48/4527 ½: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 138-140.

¹⁴⁷ “Note by the Chairman of the Official Committee” [Leith-Ross], *Surpluses: Outline of Policy*, Annex A, December 18, 1940, BT 88/1, PRO.

France, but Churchill now hoped to reconstitute this body to include Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, Norway, Poland and the United Kingdom as well as the Dominions. He also wanted to include the Czech National Liberation Committee, but declined to offer membership to the Free French Forces of General Charles De Gaulle on grounds that the exiled governments had not recognized this organization. Unlike the original Supreme War Council, this new body would not make decisions.¹⁴⁸

Rather, it would facilitate British war propaganda. Churchill believed Britain “should appear to be marching forward in a good company of nations, both Dominions and Foreign States, and that the war should not appear to be narrowed to a conflict between Britain and Germany.”¹⁴⁹ The War Cabinet agreed with this aim, but rejected allusions to the “Supreme War Council.” To avoid the impression of a decision-making body, they preferred that Churchill merely call a “Meeting of Allied Representatives.”¹⁵⁰ Inasmuch as they did not want to relinquish control over strategy, they certainly did not want any such misconceptions fueling the Nazi propaganda machine.¹⁵¹ The arguments convinced Churchill, who thought the meeting an occasion for a grand speech, and an

¹⁴⁸ “Meeting of the War Cabinet,” 276th Conclusions, October 24, 1940, W.M. (40), CAB 65/9/38, PRO; “Meeting of the War Cabinet,” 280th Conclusions, October 30, 1940, W.M. (40), CAB 65/9/42, PRO.

¹⁴⁹ Telegram 159, DS [Cranborne] to SOSEA [King], November 10, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 309, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 1939-1941 (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), pp. 224.

¹⁵⁰ Churchill to Foreign Secretary, DS, Sir Edward Bridges, November 7, 1940, CAB 120/43, PRO.

¹⁵¹ On concerns about enemy propaganda, see Telegram Circular D.553, DS [Viscount Cranborne] to SOSEA [Mackenzie King], November 1, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 304, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 216-217.

opportunity for the participating governments to pass a resolution pledging to assist one another and continue the struggle until victory was won.¹⁵²

After the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, developed the proposal, the Dominions Secretary, Viscount Cranborne, presented it to the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and South African governments.¹⁵³ With one exception, each of these countries accepted the idea, consented to the proposed resolution, and agreed to participate in the meeting. The Canadians, however, expressed severe skepticism towards the idea. In part, the hostility out of Ottawa stemmed from the fact that the telegram mistakenly referred to a “revival of the Supreme War Council.” “To set up a façade of such doubtless impressiveness might in fact lessen the effect of the great and substantial effort now being put forth by the United Kingdom and supported by the Dominions,” the Canadian Prime Minister, Mackenzie King wrote.¹⁵⁴

This expression of disapproval angered Churchill, who wanted to know how the phrase “Supreme War Council” had been used when the War Cabinet had decided against it. It was “quite easy,” he wrote, “to see how Mr. Mackenzie King was misled. With his particular isolationist tendencies, this was a puddle at which he was sure to shy.”¹⁵⁵ He then took steps to correct the misinformation in a telegram to King. But he also made it clear to the Canadian Prime Minister that he intended to hold the meeting whether Ottawa

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Telegram 197, SOSEA [King] to DS [Cranborne], November 5, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 306, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 219-221.

¹⁵⁵ Churchill to Eden, November 10, 1940, CAB 120/43, PRO. For related documentation on the use of “Supreme War Council” see Cranborne to Churchill, November 11, 1940; Cranborne to Churchill, November 8, 1940, both in PREM 3/45/1, PRO.

sent a representative or not.¹⁵⁶ This threat annoyed King, and may have played a role in the resolution of the issue.¹⁵⁷ As Churchill explained, “If the Canadian High Commissioner did not attend the meeting, Mr. Mackenzie King might find difficulty in explaining his absence to the Canadian people.”¹⁵⁸

Though Churchill’s intervention ultimately resolved the issue, it did not remove the force of Canada’s argument. According to King, the constitution of an Allied Council, irrespective of its name, could serve three possible purposes: it might influence world opinion, provide value in directing the war effort, or assist with postwar planning. He doubted whether a “Council composed largely of governments in exile which no longer control[ed] their own countries, would carry authority or impress the world...” If the Council had no decision-making powers or responsibilities for postwar planning – and he thought that it should not – then it would only reinforce the impression of a façade, which would “offset any value its establishment would have as demonstrating to the world of continuing Allied solidarity.” King also doubted whether the Allies would accept the “role of silent partner” indefinitely. While he did not dispute the need to encourage the Allied Governments, he considered victory on the battlefield the best propaganda.¹⁵⁹

King also expressed concerns over the United States. He did not believe that aid from Washington would “come within the operations of such a body.” His reasoning was

¹⁵⁶ PM to Mr. Mackenzie King, November 10, 1940, CAB 120/43, PRO. At a meeting of the War Cabinet on November 7, 1940, Churchill insisted on holding the meeting even if the Canadians refused to participate. “Meeting of the War Cabinet,” 284th Conclusions, November 7, 1940, W.M. (40), CAB 65/10/4, PRO.

¹⁵⁷ Telegram 201, SOSEA [King] to DS [Cranborne], November 13, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 311, CDEA, *DCEA*, Vol. 7, 225-226.

¹⁵⁸ “Meeting of the War Cabinet,” November 7, 1940, CAB 65/10/4, PRO.

¹⁵⁹ Telegram 197, SOSEA to DS, November 5, 1940, Document 306, DCER, Vol. 7, 219-221.

two-fold. First, the American commitment to that date had been to Britain, which the Roosevelt Administration had only recently come to view as its “first line of defense.” It could possibly make it more difficult to obtain American assistance if it appeared to serve a more offensive posture. This problem pointed to the second aspect of his argument. It remained unlikely, he suggested, that the United States would commit itself to aid a body of members if they had already attached themselves to postwar commitments, no matter how vaguely stated. In this regard, he fiercely disputed the final clause of the proposed resolution, which implied a postwar commitment to the “military, economic, and social security” of Europe. It was too early to make such commitments, and doubtful whether his country would ever agree to them. Yet he pledged to participate if the arrangements were “temporary,” and the “resolution” more appropriate.¹⁶⁰

The resolution consisted of three parts. In the first paragraph, the signatories pledged their countries to “continue the struggle to liberate Europe from German and Italian aggression until victory is won,” and to “mutually assist each other in this struggle.” The second clause claimed that “no settled peace and prosperity” could be obtained so long as “free people are coerced by violence into submission to German or Italian domination, or live under threat of such coercions.” The final phrase stated that the “only true basis for a new order in Europe” would be “cooperation of free peoples in a system of military, economic, and social security,” and it committed the signatories to “work together, both in war and peace, to this end.”¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Telegram Circular D.553, DS to SOSEA, November 1, 1940, Document 304, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 216-217.

For the Canadians, the third clause presented the greatest difficulty. Officials in Ottawa could not accept a resolution that addressed the postwar world order, and they expressed particular dissatisfaction with the language suggesting a military commitment to Europe.¹⁶² Ever eager to show imperial solidarity, the British cut references to “a system” altogether and deleted the word “military” from the draft.¹⁶³ The new version made no references to Europe. Satisfied, the Canadians accepted the resolution.¹⁶⁴

When Britain shared the revised draft with the governments in exile, they, too, requested alterations. Belgium and Poland asked that references to “Italy” be deleted from the draft. Mussolini’s fascist state had declared war on Britain and France in July 1940, and then attacked Greece on October 28, 1940. But none of the other allies were at war with Italy, and they did not want to provoke Rome into a declaration.¹⁶⁵

Quite distinct from this problem, the Poles wanted the resolution directed at the Soviet Union, and rightly so: no sooner had the Nazis stormed into their country than the Red Army joined in the fray. Thus the Poles proposed to substitute the phrase “alien domination” for the words “German or Italian domination.” But the British objected for the same reason that they refused to place the word “democratic” between “free” and “peoples” in the third clause, another Polish suggestion. They did not want to offend “actual or potential allies.” They also worried about increasing unrest in their colonies.

¹⁶² Telegram 200, SOSEA [King] to DS [Cranborne], November 13, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 310; Telegram 201, SOSEA to DS, November 13, 1940, Document 311; Telegram 1792, SOSEA [King] to HC in Great Britain [Massey], November 13, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 312, all in CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 224-227.

¹⁶³ Telegram 161, DS [Cranborne] to SOSEA [King], November 15, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 313, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 227.

¹⁶⁴ Telegram 205, SOSEA [King] to DS [Cranborne], November 15, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 314, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 227.

¹⁶⁵ R.M. Makins, “Allied Representatives’ Meeting,” November 14, 1940; Strang to Martin, November 21, 1940, both in PREM 3/45/2, PRO.

References to “alien domination” or “democracy,” they feared, might abet “enemy propaganda... engaged in seeking to stir up trouble among the different races of the British Empire.” This risk had to be avoided.¹⁶⁶

Yet in an effort to help the Poles without provoking Moscow, the British suggested the phrase “Germany and her associates.” If any of the Allies asked who these “associates” were, they could deflect the question by saying that it depended on whether they regarded themselves as associates of Germany.

This formula was not without dangers. In addition to the tumultuous events unfolding in Europe, the deteriorating situation in Asia left everyone worrying about Japan, which had invaded all of China in 1938. Holland, for example, did not want to give Tokyo a reason to attack the Dutch East Indies. But now that specific references to Europe had been deleted from the resolution due to Canadian complaints, this risk increased.¹⁶⁷ Though the Dutch withheld their criticisms of the new language, they insisted the resolution was propaganda and not legally binding.¹⁶⁸

By the end of November, all of the Dominions and Allies had agreed to the proposal. The British had also decided that the Secretary of State for India and Burma should attend the allied meeting to deflect criticism that these colonies were being “committed to war without [their] consent.” In this way, it would appear that the entire

¹⁶⁶ A. Cadogan to Count Edward Raczyński, November 20, 1940, PREM 3/45/2, PRO.

¹⁶⁷ Memorandum of Conversation, by Alexander Cadogan, November 18, 1940, PREM 3/45/2, PRO.

¹⁶⁸ Note, Author’s signature illegible, November 15, 1940; “Oral Declaration,” November 15, 1940, both in PREM 3/45/1, PRO.

British Empire, both Dominions and Colonies, were unified with the other allied nations in a war to the finish against the Germans and any Nazi accomplices.¹⁶⁹

This appearance, however, still had one problem. Though the British permitted the Czech National Liberation Committee to participate – the Nazis had consumed Czechoslovakia with a combination of diplomatic chicanery and outright occupation prior to the attack on Poland – they would only permit the Free French Forces of General Charles De Gaulle, observer status. None of the other Allied governments had recognized De Gaulle, and the British did not want to push his organization over on them, and inadvertently sabotage the show.¹⁷⁰

But another country, Greece, did just that: while many of the Allies hoped to avoid war with Italy, the Greeks did not want the Germans to use the Allied meeting as a pretext to make war on them. Thus they refused to participate, and on November 25, 1940, the War Cabinet decided to postpone the meeting.¹⁷¹ As Churchill explained, “I should not like those people in Greece to feel that for the sake of what is after all only a parade, we had pressed them into action which could be cited by Germany as justification for marching. The only thing to do is to put the meeting off until we can see a little more clearly on this very confused chessboard of Eastern Europe.”¹⁷² Halifax concurred with this assessment. To hold the meeting without Greece, he argued, would be like removing

¹⁶⁹ Sir E. Bridges to Churchill, November 19, 1940, PREM 3/45/1, PRO.

¹⁷⁰ Halifax to Churchill, November 23, 1940; Desmond Morton to Churchill, November 23, 1940; Churchill to Morton, November 23, 1940, all in PREM 3/45/11, PRO.

¹⁷¹ “Meeting of the War Cabinet,” 295th Conclusions, November 25, 1940, W.M. (40), CAB 65/10/15, PRO.

¹⁷² Churchill to Eden, November 27, 1940, CAB 120/43, PRO; Telegram Circular D.593, DS [Cranborne] to SOSEA [King], November 29, 1940, 2295-A-40, Document 316, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 228-229.

the “gilt” from the “ginger-bread house.” “It will be said,” he wrote Churchill, “that the only ally who was fighting successfully had declined.”¹⁷³

With the Presidential Elections Over, Hoover Goes on the Attack

On November 5, 1940, Franklin Roosevelt defeated his Republican rival, Wendell Willkie, to win an unprecedented third term as President of the United States. If these results renewed “Hoover’s lease in purgatory,” as one scholar interprets them, they also removed political restraints on his campaign to advocate for cross-blockade relief.¹⁷⁴ During a speech at Vassar College broadcast live on November 15, 1940, the former President resumed his crusade for wartime relief. His proposals had not changed, but the arguments had. Famine, he warned, leads to cesspools of contagion, which spreads “regardless of borders or nations or ideologies.” It was a clear allusion to the influenza epidemic of 1918: if America failed to act, the results could be catastrophic for the United States as well.¹⁷⁵ Three days later, Hoover launched the National Committee on Food for the Small Democracies, which, with the assistance of 2,500 local committees across the

¹⁷³ Lord Halifax to Churchill, “Meeting of Allied Representatives,” December 11, 1940, PREM 3/45/1, PRO.

¹⁷⁴ Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 290.

¹⁷⁵ “Hoover Urges Aid to 5 Little Democracies; Says Famine and Disease Peril War Victims,” November 16, 1940, *NYT*, 1; “Food Urged For Europe: Ex-President Hoover Asks Lifting Ban on Little Democracies,” November 16, 1940, *LAT*, 1; “Hoover Urges U.S. To Feed Beaten Nations: Calls for Action to Save 5 Democracies From ‘Possible Famine,’” November 16, 1940, *WP*, 3; “Famine in Europe,” November 17, 1940, *WP*, B8.

country, aimed to raise funds for food relief and awareness of the pitiful plight of people living in Belgium, Finland, Holland, Norway and Poland.¹⁷⁶

Propaganda played a central role in Hoover's strategy. To maximize his impact, he kept his efforts confidential until he had obtained the endorsements of as many prominent figures as possible.¹⁷⁷ When he struck in November, his target was clear. "I simply refuse to believe, and I am going to continue to disbelieve that American public opinion, when it understands, is going to condemn 15,000,000 people to die, upon flimsy arguments and informal polls."¹⁷⁸ If he could persuade the American people that food relief was in their interests and in line with the morals of Christianity it would restrict Roosevelt's flexibility and force the British to agree to his plan. For Hoover, the British were "dumb to their own interests" and "to the terrible and unnecessary suffering of the small democracies, and to American reactions." He planned to "pursue a course," as he wrote at the time, "which they will think against [their interests] until they become intelligent."¹⁷⁹

Neither Roosevelt nor Churchill could permit Hoover's appeals to go unanswered. On November 29, 1940, the President met with Cordell Hull, Norman Davis, and the J.P. Morgan banker, Thomas Lamont, who had served as mentors to President's Wilson and Hoover. The media suspected that Lamont that attended as a liaison between the Red Cross and Hoover, which was partly true.¹⁸⁰ But Lamont, a diehard Anglophile, strongly

¹⁷⁶ Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 29-30.

¹⁷⁷ Best, *Hoover*, Vol. 1, 174.

¹⁷⁸ "Hoover Urges U.S. To Feed Beaten Nations: Calls for Action to Save 5 Democracies From 'Possible Famine,'" November 16, 1940, *WP*, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Best, *Hoover*, Vol. 1, 175.

¹⁸⁰ J.C. Stark, "Relief For Europe's Children Discussed," November 29, 1940, *WP*, 3.

supported American aid to Britain.¹⁸¹ Thus he promised Roosevelt to “keep Hoover in control.” If milk could be provided to unoccupied France, he thought criticism of the Administration would be kept to a minimum.¹⁸² Roosevelt agreed. Hoover’s crusade would “fall on its own weight,” he wrote Lamont, “especially if you are able to carry out your wise plan of letting condensed milk into France.”¹⁸³ In this way, the maneuvering began. The British rehashed their arguments against Hoover’s proposal on December 10, 1941,¹⁸⁴ then they reluctantly accepted the scheme to allow milk into France in January. Roosevelt’s support remained too important to deny a scheme that had his support.¹⁸⁵

Meanwhile, war broke out in the press. Within days of Roosevelt’s conference with Davis and Lamont, supporters of the administration went to work. Led by the President of the Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, a group of prominent churchmen assailed Hoover’s plan. His assessments of the food situation in Europe, they charged in a press release of December 1, 1940, were “gravely inaccurate,” “not responsible,” and an “exaggeration.” Echoing arguments advanced by the British, they asserted that food relief would only assist the Nazis.¹⁸⁶ A week later, the well-known journalist, Dorothy Thompson, argued in *The Washington Post* that efforts to consolidate all “foreign national relief agencies – Finnish, Belgian, Polish, Dutch and Norwegian –

¹⁸¹ “Lamont Urges Speedy Passage of Lease-Lend Bill,” January 29, 1941, *WSJ*, 6; “Lamont Says U.S. Must Give British Immense, Speedy Aid to Win War,” April 29, 1941, *WSJ*, 2.

¹⁸² See entry for Sunday, December 1, 1940 in Ickes, *Secret Diary*, Vol. 3, 385.

¹⁸³ Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 291.

¹⁸⁴ “Text of Statement issued by British Embassy at 5:30 P.M. on December 10, 1940,” Enclosure to Telegram No. 1072, January 7, 1941, FO, *BDFa*, Vol. 1, 344-345.

¹⁸⁵ Medlicott, *Blockade*, Vol. 1, 573; Telegram No. 626, Viscount Halifax to Mr. Eden, February 10, 1941, W 1137/49/49, Document 24, FO, *BDFa*, Vol. 1, 352-353.

¹⁸⁶ “Churchmen Assail Hoover Food Plan: Six Bishops and Other Leading Protestants Call Warning of Starvation ‘Exaggeration’,” December 2, 1940, *NYT*, 16.

into the Hoover organization” might compromise American foreign policy. If Hoover’s movement became organized “in opposition to official policy,” she argued, it would “paralyze and confuse [American] diplomacy...”¹⁸⁷

Hoover and his associates altered their plan to make its rejection difficult. Instead of mass feeding, they would rely on existing “soup kitchens” set up by “devoted citizens” in the occupied territories to feed “children, the aged, and the destitute.” If the Germans would agree to provide 25,000 tons of cereals for these soup kitchens, an additional 20,000 tons of special foods would be permitted through the blockade for the same purpose. Imported stocks would not exceed 10,000 tons at any one time, an amount that would be less than a one day’s supply for Germany if the Nazis chose to seize it. Shipments, moreover, could be immediately stopped in this event. Initially the scheme would be undertaken on an experimental basis in Belgium. If it worked, then it would be widened to include the other small democracies.¹⁸⁸ In January and February 1941, Hoover and his men presented the plan in Berlin, London and Washington.¹⁸⁹ On February 16, 1941, Hoover shared it with the American people.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Dorothy Thompson, “European Relief: Linked to Foreign Policy,” December 9, 1940, *WP*, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 35.

¹⁸⁹ Telegram No. 3, Mr. Eden to Mr. Aveling, January 17, 1941, W 717/49/49, Document 17; Telegram No. 546, Viscount Halifax to Mr. Eden, February 5, 1941, W 1137/49/49, Document 20; Telegram No. 766, Mr. Eden to Viscount Halifax, February 10, 1941, W 1137/49/49, Document 23, all in FO, *BDF*, Vol. 1, 348, 350, 352; Conversation at the British Embassy on February 4, 1941, File Food – Food for the Small Democracies (Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Poland) Correspondence 1940-43, Box 16, PPSF, HHP, HHPL; Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 35-39; Best, *Hoover*, Vol. 1, 180-181.

¹⁹⁰ “Hoover Reveals Proposal To Feed Belgians as Test,” February 17, 1941, *NYT*, 1; “Hoover’s Appeal for Support of Food Plan,” February 17, 1941, *NYT*, 6; “Belligerents Study Hoover Relief Plan: Ex-President’s Proposal May Permit Food Going to Millions in Europe’s Democracies,” February 17, 1941, *LAT*, 1; “Europe on Edge of Starvation,

His timing presented the British with difficulties, which were exacerbated by media reports of impending starvation in Belgium,¹⁹¹ German acceptance of the plan,¹⁹² positive reactions to the scheme from the Allies,¹⁹³ and favorable newspaper coverage of it.¹⁹⁴ British officials did not want to compromise passage of the Lend-Lease Act, introduced by Roosevelt in January 1941 to permit his administration the right to provide Britain with war materials at no immediate cost to London.¹⁹⁵ Hoover, they correctly believed, disliked the bill. If they appeared to oppose his plan of aiding Europe while legislation to assist them remained before the Congress, they might cause a backlash against lend-lease. This outcome would embolden Hoover and “advance” the so-called “non-intervention movement.”¹⁹⁶ Victory over the Nazis depended on America’s entry into the war.

Consequently, the British looked to outmaneuver Hoover. Halifax, by this point, had become Britain’s Ambassador at Washington. (Lothian died unexpectedly in December 1941.) Under instructions from Anthony Eden, who now served as Foreign

Hoover Warns: Describes Test Plan to Feed Belgians,” February 17, 1941, *CDT*, 1; “Hoover’s Relief Plan,” February 18, 1941, *LAT*, A4.

¹⁹¹ “Starvation Near In Belgium, Hoover Says,” January 28, 1941, *WP*, 4; “Belgian Famine Seen By Hoover,” January 28, 1941, *NYT*, 3; “Belgians’ Food Supply Fading: Herbert Hoover Says Ration Will Be Gone in Another Month,” January 28, 1941, *LAT*, 3; Percival Knauth, “Only 2 Weeks’ Food Found in Belgium,” February 2, 1941, *NYT*, 24; Alex Small, “Predict Famine to Hit Belgium in Two Weeks,” February 2, 1941, *CDT*, D1.

¹⁹² “Say Germany Would Not Object,” February 18, 1941, *NYT*, 7.

¹⁹³ See Belgian reaction to the plan as described in documents listed in previous notes.

¹⁹⁴ “Hoover’s Relief Plan,” February 18, 1941, *LAT*, A4.

¹⁹⁵ Warren F. Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act: Lend-Lease, 1939-1941* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969).

¹⁹⁶ This logic is suggested but not explicitly stated. See Telegram No. 512, Viscount Halifax to Mr. Eden, February 3, 1941, W 1137/49/49, Document 18; Telegram No. 648, Viscount Halifax to Mr. Eden, February 11, 1941, W 1415/49/49, Document 25, both in FO, BDFA, Vol. 1, 349, 353.

Secretary, the new Ambassador confronted the former President on February 4, 1941.

Hoover disagreed with Halifax's claim that there was enough food in Europe if properly distributed, and the idea that his soup-kitchen scheme would aid the Germans. To the annoyance of Halifax, Hoover refused to back down. He "inferred that he knew more of the situation than we do," Halifax reported. "He is out to make trouble."¹⁹⁷ Back in London, Eden complained to Roosevelt's envoy, Harry Hopkins, that Hoover was causing the British Government considerable embarrassment. Eden wanted Roosevelt to make a statement attacking the Hoover scheme.¹⁹⁸ The following day, Halifax sounded out Cordell Hull, the American Secretary of State. But he thought it best to merely emphasize German responsibility, and to allow milk shipments into unoccupied France.¹⁹⁹

All the while, the State Department misled the former President. In late January 1941, officials left Hoover's aids believing that Hull was "interested and sympathetic" with cross-blockade relief. By the end of February, he had convinced one Hoover associate that Roosevelt and the Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, constituted the real obstacles. This same aid then persuaded Hoover to hold his fire on the Administration to avoid politicizing the relief issue.²⁰⁰ Then during a tête-à-tête on February 28, 1941, Hull led Hoover to believe that the Roosevelt Administration might

¹⁹⁷ Telegram No. 546, Halifax to Eden, February 5, 1941, Document 20, *B DFA*, Vol. 1, 350; for Hoover's account of the exchange, see Conversation at the British Embassy on February 4, 1941, HHP, HHPL.

¹⁹⁸ Telegram No. 69, Mr. Eden to Viscount Halifax, February 5, 1941, A 657/91/45, Document 19; Telegram No. 744, Mr. Eden to Viscount Halifax, February 8, 1941, W 1137/49/49, Document 22, both in FO, *B DFA*, Vol. 1, 349-350, 351-352.

¹⁹⁹ Telegram No. 569, Viscount Halifax to Mr. Eden, February 6, 1941, W 1137/49/49, Document 21, FO, *B DFA*, Vol. 1, 351.

²⁰⁰ Best, *Hoover*, Vol. 1, 180.

agree to his soup kitchen plan. Clearly impressed with the Secretary's candor, encouragement, and willingness to divulge highly sensitive information – the Nazis had deployed over a million troops to the Soviet frontier – Hoover refrained from initiating an assault on Roosevelt, despite incessant attacks being levied against him in the press. Apparently he believed the winds of public opinion were blowing in his favor.²⁰¹

But the journey of lend-lease through Congress dictated tactics more than he knew. On March 8, 1941, the Senate, which had held up the bill for weeks, passed the landmark act. Within hours, even before Roosevelt had signed the legislation, the British smashed Hoover for engaging in a campaign of “false humanitarianism.” In a statement released on March 9, 1941, Halifax rehashed Britain's policy, arguing that Hoover's latest scheme would “prolong the war and... add in the long run to the sum of human misery.”²⁰² Four days later, Hull made the Administration's position clear. In responding to Hoover's complaint of “increasing reports that the Administration” was “opposed to relief for the occupied democracies,” Hull suggested the Administration supported the British position, and would approach the matter on “an ad-hoc basis.” It would support certain relief schemes, such as milk for unoccupied France, but not Hoover's.²⁰³

The Great Humanitarian had miscalculated. By believing the Administration might support his soup-kitchen scheme, he sacrificed his ability to fully combat the lend-lease legislation. It was an astonishing misstep for someone who opposed America's

²⁰¹ See previous note, but also Memo of Conversation, Hull and Hoover, February 28, 1941, File Hull, Cordell Correspondence 1934-March 1941, Box 95, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

²⁰² “Statement on the Blockade Policy of the British Government; communicated by Washington Embassy to MEW,” March 10, 1941, W 6503/49/49, Document 30, FO, *BDEA*, Vol. 1, 360-362.

²⁰³ Herbert Hoover to Cordell Hull, March 5, 1941; Cordell Hull to Herbert Hoover, March 14, 1941, both in File Hull, Cordell Correspondence 1934-March 1941, Box 95, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

entry into the conflict and believed the act was “a war bill” disguised as “aid to Britain.” Hoover had refrained from denouncing the bill, reasoning that it would undermine his food relief plans if he maligned legislation ostensibly designed to assist Britain. Instead, he privately worked with Senate Republicans to secure amendments to the Lend-Lease Act construed to reduce the “near dictatorial powers” it granted Roosevelt.²⁰⁴ Yet the amendments failed; and his relief scheme came under immediate assault from Britain after the Senate approved the bill. Even worse, Hull now evinced support for the British position, yet three weeks prior, if we are to believe Hoover’s account, he encouraged the former President take up negotiations with the Germans.²⁰⁵

Yet Hull’s apparent turnabout did not convince Hoover to hang up his coat. Rather, he exploited the Lend-Lease Bill to advance his cause. During a conversation with the British diplomat Sir Ronald Campbell on March 26, 1941, and then in a letter to Hull the following day, he insinuated that the United States now had leverage over the British. The American people, he told Campbell, would expect their “government to express a definite interest in the war.” If the Roosevelt Administration “came out on the side of starvation it would be a shock” to the American people. Food assistance, he argued, could be used to win both the war and the peace. Hoover also believed the milk shipments into southern France had largely discredited British opposition to cross-blockade relief. His soup kitchen proposal would work, but with the United States more

²⁰⁴ Smith, *Uncommon Man*, 295.

²⁰⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, Hull and Hoover, February 28, 1941, HHP, HHPL.

intimately involved in the war effort, he thought a neutral country, Switzerland, should take up negotiations with the Nazis.²⁰⁶ His proposals, however, were duly rejected.²⁰⁷

Hoover considered aborting his efforts. On April 9, 1941, he learned that the Belgians had told Sumner Welles that their country needed no food aid. Under the impression that the British and Americans had pressured the Allies to oppose him, he threatened to recall his lieutenant in London, Hugh Gibson. He could not proceed if the Allies privately appealed to him, but then created obstructions. Newspapers, in fact, reported in April that Hoover had secretly connived with isolationists to defeat the Lend-Lease Bill, “which every intelligent citizen of his ‘little democracies’ hailed as the brightest hope for their future liberation.” But Hoover provided the Belgians leverage, and they convinced him to abandon the recall. Then, on April 29, 1941, they told the former President that he was a “stumbling block to their relief.” Hoover thereupon agreed to step down as Chairman of the Committee on Food for the Small Democracies if they obtained assurances from Washington that food would be shipped to Belgium if he resigned.²⁰⁸ It did not happen.

While the Roosevelt Administration refrained from using lend-lease to impel Britain to open the blockade, the British recognized the possibility that Washington might force their hand in other ways. The problem, in Churchill’s view, was that the relationship between London and Washington had not been sufficiently defined. “So far

²⁰⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, March 26, 1941, File Campbell, Sir Gerald
Memorandum of meeting: March 26, 1941, Box 27; Herbert Hoover to Cordell Hull,
March 27, 1941, File Hull, Cordell Correspondence 1934-March 1941, Box 95, both in
PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

²⁰⁷ Cordell Hull to Herbert Hoover, April 11, 1941, File Hull, Cordell Correspondence
April 1941-1944, Box 95, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

²⁰⁸ Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 61, 68-69.

all that has been agreed,” he wrote Halifax on April 10, 1941, “is that the British Empire and her Allies shall be used as the agent to do the actual fighting, while America furnishes the means in the form of material and money. How far the agent is to retain a free hand has yet to be decided.” “America,” he continued, “has appeared wanting in any recognition of the... principle that creditors must do nothing calculated to impair the earning capacity of a bankrupt and must leave his resources sufficient to finance his day-to-day living and working.” The Americans, Churchill surmised, believed that Britain had not yet recognized “that fundamental principle of parliamentary government,” namely, “that the party voting supplies shall determine how those supplies are to be used.”²⁰⁹

Although Churchill defended the American Government – it had to protect its interests and maintain public support – the evidence, even at this early date in the war, suggested the Americans planned to hustle the British. On March 11, 1941, the famous British economist then working for the Treasury, John Maynard Keynes, wrote his colleagues from Washington complaining of the American Treasury Secretary, Henry Morgenthau’s tactics. “He has been aiming, partly for political reasons to placate Congress and partly perhaps for other reasons connected with his future power to impose his will on us, at stripping us of our liquid resources to the greatest possible extent before the Lease-Lend Bill comes into operation, so as to leave us with the minimum in hand to meet during the rest of the war the numerous obligations which will not be covered by the Bill.” Upon reading these words, Churchill predicted that “America’s large holding of gold” would “prompt her to favor one method of conducting international trade [in the

²⁰⁹ Mr. Winston Churchill to Viscount Halifax, April 10, 1941, No. 233 [W 3379/37/49], BT 88/7, PRO.

postwar period], while our lack of gold will probably incline us to something different.” “Even Luxembourg and Latvia will be better off than us in this respect,” he wrote.²¹⁰

With the Administration loath to force Britain’s hand on relief, Hoover lambasted Cordell Hull. “I do not believe the American Government, in the long corridor of history, can escape the moral responsibility of making an effort on behalf of these millions of human beings who have sacrificed their all on the altar of democracy,” he wrote on April 24, 1941.²¹¹ On June 3, 1941, he accused the Administration of bowing to British preferences and turning down an immoral path. “When in Christianity or morals,” he asked, “has the idea appeared that because person A [Germany] fails in his moral responsibility to person B [Belgium] that his friends C [Britain] and D [United States] no longer have such moral responsibilities?” “History will never justify the Government of the United States siding with the starvation of these millions.”²¹² These letters he shared with Republican Senators, who leaked them to the newspapers. They had introduced a resolution supporting his plan. But Hull used his influence to obstruct it.²¹³ Roosevelt, for his part, exploited the resolution to obtain another \$50,000,000 for food relief.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Herbert Hoover to Cordell Hull, April 24, 1941, File Hull, Cordell Correspondence April 1941-1944, Box 95, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

²¹² Herbert Hoover to Cordell Hull, June 3, 1941, File Hull, Cordell Correspondence April 1941-1944, Box 95, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

²¹³ Chesly Manly, “Hoover’s Food Relief Backed by 40 Senators,” May 24, 1941, *CDT*, 1; “Hoover Assailed Hull Food Stand,” October 17, 1941, *NYT*, 24; Hoover, *American Epic*, Vol. 4, 59-61; Medlicott, *Blockade*, Vol. 2, 258.

²¹⁴ “President Requests \$50,000,000 for Food: He Would Expand Succor to More Lands, Capital Hears,” October 19, 1941, *NYT*, 2; “More War Relief Millions Asked,” October 19, 1941, *LAT*, 11.

The Problem of Surpluses Revisited: Keynes Narrows the Gap

Two factors impaired British efforts to collaborate with the United States in their endeavors to resolve the problem of surpluses. First, Leith-Ross framed the issue both in terms of its wartime *and* postwar significance. “Neither the United States nor the British Empire, acting alone, can hope to do more than supply expensive short lived palliatives,” he wrote Grady in November 1940. But “in cooperation real solutions may be initiated which, combined with temporary war-time measures, should not only tide the world over the present emergencies but also lay the foundations for a definite improvement in the economic organization of the post-war world.”²¹⁵

The State Department, by contrast, did not want to discuss postwar economic reconstruction at this point in the war. Grady, at least until the end of 1940, appears to have preferred the unilateral purchase of strategic materials, and the extension of credits to distressed Latin American countries through the Export-Import Bank. He remained lukewarm towards ambitious schemes to solve the problem, especially the British idea to construct an international organization to address the problem.²¹⁶ Though his fellow Assistant Secretary of State, Adolf Berle, remained more disposed to ambitious schemes,

²¹⁵ Leith-Ross to Grady, November 30, 1940, 840.48/4527 ½, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 138-140.

²¹⁶ State Department views are described in Hawkins to Grady, June 28, 1940, Acheson Papers, NARA; The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the SOS, December 16, 1940, 840.50/4527 2/3: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 140-141. Grady’s views are described in Airfar Telegram No. 2732, From Washington for Leith-Ross, Copy of Telegram No. 2959, December 8, 1940, Sub-Annex to Annex ‘A’, BT 88/1, PRO; Assistant SOS (Grady) to the DG, British MEW (Leith-Ross), January 2, 1941, 840.48/4527 ½, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, *The British Commonwealth, The Near East and Africa*. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1959), pp. 85-90.

he was suspicious of British motives and believed the problem would resolve itself. He gave little “impression of wishing to pursue the subject seriously.”²¹⁷

Second, disputes within the Roosevelt Administration left the American Government divided over what to do.²¹⁸ While the State Department adhered to the minimalist methods favored by Grady, the Department of Agriculture preferred an international approach. In January 1941, Leslie Wheeler, Director of the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, proposed the negotiation of international commodity control agreements, in which producing countries would commit to regulations designed to align the supply and demand for certain surplus commodities.²¹⁹

This suggestion ultimately moved official opinion in the United States closer to that of British policymakers, but it failed to close the gap. Leith-Ross mistakenly considered Grady’s departure from the State Department in early 1941 an opportunity to forge a comprehensive approach to the problem in collaboration with the United States.²²⁰ In a February 1941 letter to his successor, Dean Acheson, he welcomed the possible use of international control commodity agreements, but maintained the view that the issue required a broad approach that considered the whole postwar system of

²¹⁷ Airfar Telegram No. 2732, December 8, 1940, BT 88/1, PRO.

²¹⁸ The differences in the Administration are described in “Brief for Lord Drogheda,”; “Note for Meeting with High Commissioners,” June 3, 1941; “Export Surpluses,” Progress Report, June 11, 1941, all in BT 88/1, PRO.

²¹⁹ Address by L.A. Wheeler, US Department of Agriculture, January 31, 1941; Summary of Address by Wheeler, January 31, 1941, both in BT 88/1, PRO. For an explanation of international control commodity agreements, see “Memorandum: International Agreements for the Control of Surplus Commodities,” March 6, 1941 (Date of Cover Letter), File #2 Postwar ER - EP 5/7/42 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁰ Grady to Leith-Ross, January 2, 1941, 840.48/4527 1/2, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 85-90.

international trade.²²¹ Yet Acheson, like his predecessor, proved unwilling to discuss postwar economic issues. For nearly six months, he refrained from responding to Leith-Ross.

John Maynard Keynes broke the logjam. If Sir Frederick sought to “awaken in America a sense of her postwar responsibilities,” as Churchill advised, Keynes displayed the Prime Minister’s “sympathy for the American point of view.”²²² In Washington to negotiate the Lend-Lease Master Agreement, he told Acheson that “after reading the Leith-Ross letters” he must have been “baffled by their vagueness.” He also suspected the Roosevelt Administration did not want to embark on any scheme that would permit Britain the opportunity to peddle in the Western Hemisphere. If Acheson would only agree to discuss the matter with him, he would be able to clarify the general proposals. Since Leith-Ross wrote his letters, “much more thought had been put on the matter.”²²³

On May 27, 1941, Keynes suggested overlapping spheres of influence. “Where financial conditions and other conditions render outside help essential,” he wrote, “Great Britain is looking after the problem in her own Dominions, apart from Canada, and in Africa.” The Dutch could “deal with their own problems.” Washington should maintain “responsibility towards her own surpluses and those of Central and South America.” But

²²¹ The DG, British MEW (Leith-Ross), to the Assistant SOS (Acheson), February 14, 1941, 840.48/4844-1/2, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 90-95.

²²² Churchill did not become intimately involved in this matter, but he suggested tactics to guide the British Embassy in its interactions with the United States a few weeks before Keynes intervened. See Churchill to Halifax, April 10, 1941, BT 88/7, PRO.

²²³ Acheson to Hawkins & Pasvolsky, May 15, 1941, File #2 Postwar ER - EP 5/7/42 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA. Keynes, in his conversations with Acheson, did not specifically speak of the Western Hemisphere, but his proposals make it clear that he aimed to remove American fears of British intrusions. However, his proposals were probably formulated to deny the United States opportunities to peddle in the affairs of the British and other Allied Empires as well.

in cases “where an important commodity overlaps more than one of these areas,” he considered international control schemes preferable. In time, Keynes thought that these schemes might lead to a more ambitious program, but he concurred with the American view, namely, that the war made it difficult to finalize long-term arrangements.²²⁴

In the short-term, he believed the Allied Governments in London should “prepare a preliminary list of their probable post-war requirements in order of priority.” These needs, he suggested, should “be studied by a joint Anglo-American Committee” and “compared with the actual surpluses in hand” as well as “prospective surpluses.” This procedure, he added, would not only have “real practical significance,” especially if it were done with the long-term surplus problem in mind, it would also “form habits of association” and be of “value and importance for propaganda purposes.”²²⁵ Such efforts could be broadcasted to “the populations of occupied countries and perhaps of Germany” along with plans to “set aside specific amounts of wheat, cotton and other important foodstuffs and materials to be delivered” after liberation.²²⁶

Though Keynes made it clear that Britain would not interfere in Washington’s sphere of influence, he implicitly criticized American policy. In cases where financial assistance was needed, the Americans had employed unconditional loans from the Import-Export Bank. Britain, by contrast, had either made outright purchases or entered a

²²⁴ Keynes’ talks with Acheson on surpluses are covered in two documents. Quotes used here are taken from the first of these documents. Financial Advisor to British Government (Keynes) to Assistant SOS (Acheson), June 4, 1941, 840.48/4999, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 95-97; “Surplus Commodity Arrangements,” by Stinebower, June 5, 1941, File #2 Postwar ER - EP 5/7/42 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁵ Keynes to Acheson, June 4, 1941, 840.48/4999, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 95-97.

²²⁶ “Surplus Commodity Arrangements,” Stinebower, June 5, 1941, Acheson Papers, NARA.

partnership with the producing country. The first method provided Britain control over the surpluses for either wartime or postwar use. The second approach gave Britain the leverage needed to convince the producing country to stop overproducing and agree to orderly marketing procedures once the raw materials or foodstuffs were sold. Though careful not to insult the Americans, he suggested that British methods were wiser.²²⁷

If Acheson's conversations with Keynes led American officials to believe they should respond to Sir Frederick's letter, at least to make arrangements for addressing the relief aspects of the problem, they also raised questions pertaining to the postwar economic order. They believed nationalistic economic policies had caused the problem of surpluses even before the outbreak of war, but thought it would be difficult to avoid this tendency in the future due to the anticipated need for employment after the war. At the same time, the war strengthened their bargaining power vis-à-vis producing countries. It therefore seemed logical to pursue international commodity control agreements immediately.²²⁸ By the summer of 1941, discussions had begun on wheat, cotton, sisal, cocoa, and sugar.²²⁹

²²⁷ Keynes to Acheson, June 4, 1941, 840.48/4999, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 95-97.

²²⁸ "Surplus Commodity Arrangements," Stinebower, June 5, 1941, Acheson Papers, NARA.

²²⁹ "Export Surpluses," June 11, 1941; Summary Report by the Surpluses Department of Action Take in Connection with the Surplus Problem and on the State of Negotiations," July 5, 1941; "Summary Report by the Surpluses Department of Action Taken in Connection with the Surpluses Problem and of the State of Negotiations," August 2, 1941, all in BT 88/1, PRO; see also Keynes to Acheson, July 8, 1941, File #2 Postwar ER - EP 5/7/42 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA; Very little historical scholarship has been devoted to these negotiations, yet they provide an unexplored window into the emergence of the postwar global economy. On the wheat negotiations, see, for example, Alan P. Dobson, *U.S. Wartime Aid to Britain, 1940-1946* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 93-125.

Yet another problem worried the Americans. Unless Britain returned to a “completely free commercial and monetary system” after the war, Keynes’ proposal of dividing the world into two spheres made less sense. The result, according to one official, “would be to create enormous balances of blocked sterling” in “areas of the world outside the Western Hemisphere, with implications of clearing and preferential arrangements in order to utilize the sterling.” He thought it might be wiser for the United States to provide 60 percent of funds and the British 40 percent for schemes to mollify producing countries in the Western Hemisphere, with the proportions reversed elsewhere. Washington could then insist “upon participation on an equal basis with the British in all world markets.”²³⁰

But this never took place. The Roosevelt Administration, even after Acheson vaguely suggested the idea to Leith-Ross in July 1941,²³¹ could not stomach any arrangement that would grant Britain a stronger arm in its negotiations with the United States over trade relations in the Western Hemisphere. But more importantly, the British did not have the resources to contribute, and they were equally eager to keep the Americans out of their Empire. As a result, American officials used the Lend-Lease Master Agreement to pry open Britain’s imperial trading system.²³² For these reasons, cooperation on surpluses fell short of expectations. Increased demands due to the war effort, as Keynes and Berle predicted, helped resolve the issue as well. But this outcome, as we will soon see, had undesirable consequences.

²³⁰ “Surplus Commodity Arrangements,” Stinebower, June 5, 1941, Acheson Papers, NARA.

²³¹ The Assistant SOS (Acheson) to the DG, British MEW (Leith-Ross), July 22, 1941, 840.48/4988, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 103-107.

²³² See Randall Bennett Woods, *A Changing of the Guard: Anglo-American Relations, 1941-1946* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Dobson, *Wartime*.

CHAPTER TWO

RELIEF AND THE WARTIME ALLIANCES

Before it became an international organization, the United Nations was a military and political alliance forged to fight the Second World War. As such, its origins were initially distinct from the history of international organizations. This fact presents a problem. If we seek to ascertain the origins of the United Nations as an alliance, as opposed to an international organization, which goes back to the League of Nations, when and where shall we begin? Perhaps the creation of the Anglo-American alliance constitutes the best starting place. After all, it became the Grand Alliance in June 1941, following the Nazis attack on the Soviet Union. From here, we might then argue that it became the United Nations on January 1, 1942 with the signing of the UN Declaration.

While this proposition is true, it is also misleading. The Grand Alliance was distinct from the United Nations in several ways, even though its members were part of it. Both coalitions, to be sure, served the purpose of winning the war. But the importance of the United Nations for the war effort resided more in the domain of propaganda than in the realm of military operations: its purpose was to make a show of unity, to give the impression that there was a broad front fighting the Axis Powers. Yet this show had less to do with what the Allies were fighting against, which was the principal *raison d'être* of the Grand Alliance, than with what they were fighting for: a set of principles for the postwar era. If we follow this reasoning, then the logical starting point of our discussion should be the first articulation of principles.

This occurred on January 6, 1941 during Roosevelt's State of the Union Address. In this speech, the President made the first public declaration of what would become a larger program of Allied war aims. He articulated the famous four freedoms: the freedoms of speech and worship, and freedom from fear and want. He must have hoped that these principles might in time become the ideas around which the global alliance, or the United Nations, would coalesce. They constituted part of an ideological program, the scope of which was universal. "Freedom," as Roosevelt put it, "means the supremacy of human rights everywhere."²³³ Indeed the timing of his speech correlated with a general shift in his rhetoric: Roosevelt used the word "world" twenty-one times on January 6, many of these he added himself.²³⁴ At roughly the same time he also began referring to the conflict as a "world war."²³⁵

If Roosevelt's discourse captured the geographical realities of a "world at war," and stressed the universal applicability of an ideological program, it implicitly cast the United States in the role of world leader. Ironically, Roosevelt's aspirations exceeded the Germans'.²³⁶ This self-regard and supporting program were bound to come into conflict with the aims and views of the other nations, particularly those in the Grand Alliance, but also members of the wider United Nations. This chapter explores some of these conflicts and their impact on the emerging alliance. It reveals how great power rivalries on the

²³³ Franklin Roosevelt, "Annual Address to Congress: The 'Four Freedoms,'" January 6, 1941, FDRL, Online: <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/od4frees.html> (accessed September 11, 2012).

²³⁴ Alan K. Henrikson, "FDR and the 'World-Wide Arena,'" in *FDR's World: War, Peace, and Legacies*, ed. David B. Woolner, Warren F. Kimball and David Reynolds (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 35-61.

²³⁵ David Reynolds, "The Origins of the Two 'World Wars': Historical Discourse and International Politics," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38, no. 1 (Jan., 2003): 29-44.

²³⁶ I draw this conclusion by way of inference: Ibid.

Allied side brought the history of the wartime alliance together with that of international organization. In these developments, postwar relief constituted a driving force.

The St. James Palace Resolution: First Meeting of the Allied Governments in Exile

In late April 1941, Athens and Belgrade fell to the Nazis, and both Greece and Yugoslavia capitulated.²³⁷ With the situation in Eastern Europe now clarified, it became possible for Churchill to call a formal Allied Conference. He suggested sometime in the month July so that it would coincide with the anticipated visit of the Dominions Prime Ministers to London for an Imperial Conference.²³⁸ But Anthony Eden disliked the idea of setting a firm date. It would only take three weeks to make the arrangements: with the exception of Greece and Yugoslavia, all of the Allies had already accepted the proposed resolution. Why not wait to see if a more opportune moment arose before making such plans?²³⁹

In early June 1941, the British received their cue. From German newspapers they learned that Hitler intended to hold a “European peace parade” to be attended, as one British official wrote, “by a motley crew of Quislings, who will declare that the only hope for their countries is entry into the ‘New [German] Order.’” This official suspected that Hitler hoped to “encourage isolationists and non-interventionists, and other faint-

²³⁷ For coverage of the events in southeastern Europe, see Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 215-224.

²³⁸ Churchill to Foreign Secretary and DS, May 30, 1941, CAB 120/43, PRO.

²³⁹ A.E. (Anthony Eden) to Churchill, May 31, 1941, PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

hearted persons in America.” But the plan was directed at the exiled governments and the people living in the occupied territories as well. Thus this official suggested that Churchill “forestall” Hitler by holding “an Allied Council in London” immediately. In this way, “all the enchained countries” could “declare that their people will have no part or lot in the gangster ‘New Order.’”²⁴⁰

With German propaganda sarcastically attacking Churchill as the “friend of all the little nations,” and making plans for a grandiose show, the British decided to act.²⁴¹ On June 8, 1941, the Prime Minister informed Roosevelt of his plans to hold the first Allied meeting of the war in four days. “At a time when the Germans are trying to declare peace in Europe,” he wrote, “it will be useful to show that the inhabitants of the occupied countries are still alive and vigorous, and that their lawful Governments are carrying on the war from overseas with all the resources at their command.” He concluded his note with a plea: it would be “an accession of strength” if “the United States felt it possible to be associated in some form or another with the proceedings.”²⁴² The War Cabinet approved the meeting the next day;²⁴³ Roosevelt did not respond.²⁴⁴

But as scheduled, representatives of the Allied Governments in exile convened at the old Palace of St. James on June 12, 1941 to “cheer the hopes of free men and free

²⁴⁰ Quotes taken from B.B. to Churchill, June 5, 1941; but see also E.E. Bridges to Hardinge, June 7, 1941, both in PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

²⁴¹ “Ich bin der Freund aller kleinen Völker,” on cover of *Lustiger Blätter* 56, no. 19, (Berlin: May 9, 1941).

²⁴² Following for President from Former Naval Person, June 8, 1941, PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

²⁴³ “Meeting of the War Cabinet,” 58th Conclusions, June 9, 1941, W.M. (41), CAB 65/18/37, PRO.

²⁴⁴ Johnson to Churchill, June 12, 1941; Author signature unreadable to Churchill, June 12, 1941, PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

peoples throughout the world.”²⁴⁵ Still the official resident of the British monarchy, no sovereign had resided there for nearly two centuries. Journalists and photographers were allowed in to witness and capture the proceedings for the entire world.²⁴⁶ Churchill opened the gathering with his usual bombast and grandiloquence. He heralded the presence of the “lawful constitutional governments of Europe” and “representatives of the British Commonwealth and Empire.” Then he commenced to smash the Nazis for placing the peoples of Europe “under conditions indistinguishable... from actual slavery.”²⁴⁷

“Your excellences, my lords and gentlemen,” he cried out, “it is upon this foundation that Hitler, with his tattered lackey, Mussolini, at his tail and Admiral Darlan by his side, pretends to build out of hatred, appetite and racial assertion a new order for Europe. Never did so mocking a fantasy obsess the mind of mortal man.” Hitler, he proclaimed, may “turn and trample this way and that through tortured Europe. He may spread his course far and wide and carry his curse with him.” But the British Empire, in unity with its Allies, would “be on his track wherever he goes.” Victory was his aim. “With the help of God,” he asserted, “we shall continue steadfast in faith and duty till our task is done.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Winston Churchill, “Speech to the Allied Delegates,” June 12, 1941, A Chronological Collection of Documents Relating to the U.S. Entry Into WWII, Ibiblio: The Public’s Archive and Digital Archive (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina): <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/timeline/410612bwp.html> (accessed September 12, 2012).

²⁴⁶ As one would suspect in view of the meeting’s principal aim, the British went to great lengths to ensure the event was properly staged and covered in the press. Churchill was intimately involved with these efforts. See entire folder: CAB 21/1280 – Meetings of Allied Representatives in Britain, 1940-1942, PRO.

²⁴⁷ Churchill, “Speech to the Allied Delegates,” June 12, 1941.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

He concluded by looking across the English Channel to Europe, and then out over the Atlantic to the American people. Roosevelt, he privately lamented, had failed to respond to his plea of four days prior. According to the American Embassy, it was “inadvisable for domestic considerations.”²⁴⁹ But in no way did this shatter the Prime Minister’s optimism. “To our Allies and well-wishers in Europe, to our American friends and helpers drawing ever closer in their might across the ocean, this is the message – lift up your hearts, all will come right. Out of depths of sorrow and sacrifice will be born again the glory of mankind.”²⁵⁰ Thereupon the Allied representatives spoke and took the first step towards the creation of what would become the “United Nations.”

They signed the St. James Palace Resolution, which Churchill duly shared with the American President afterwards. This document, agreed upon in late 1940, pledged the Allies to “continue the struggle against German or Italian oppression” and to “mutually assist each other in this struggle” until victory had been obtained. It asserted that “no settled peace and prosperity” was possible “so long as free peoples are coerced by violence into submission to domination by Germany or her associates.” It also established that the only “basis of enduring peace is the willing co-operation of free peoples” in a world “without the “menace of aggression” and where “all may enjoy economic and social security.” To this end, the Allies pledged to work in common.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Johnson to Churchill, June 12, 1941; see also Author signature unreadable to Churchill, June 12, 1941, PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

²⁵⁰ Churchill, “Speech to the Allied Delegates,” June 12, 1941.

²⁵¹ To the President from the Former Naval Person, June 12, 1941, PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

If the meeting constituted a success – and the War Cabinet believed it did²⁵² – it failed to make everyone happy. Several of the Dominions expressed disappointment: they had not been given the opportunity to consider the event before it was called. Though they had no substantive complaints with the resolution, they believed this procedure could not become a precedent. The problem, in their view, was that the British had permitted the Free French to partake in the proceedings as full-fledged participants. For several of the Dominion High Commissioners, this decision was problematic: Canada and South Africa maintained relations with the Vichy regime.²⁵³ But in Eden's view, wartime exigencies trumped Britain's constitutional requirements vis-à-vis the Dominions. The decision had been taken only hours before the inter-allied meeting "for the rather exceptional reason that the Free French were about to take an active part in the Syrian campaign."²⁵⁴

Naturally the Germans ridiculed the gathering. "The meeting on Thursday to which Mr. Churchill invited Kings without countries and Prime Ministers without Governments who are in London resembled a ghost dance," one German news outlet reported. The Prime Minister was a "magician" making promises "set off by rhetorical juggling." If he boasted of Britain's tenacity and command of the air, the Germans bragged of sinking shiploads of food and arms moving across the Atlantic. How could they make such absurd promises to Europe? According to Nazi reports, even Roosevelt

²⁵² "Meeting of the War Cabinet," 59th Conclusions, June 12, 1941, W.M. (41), CAB 65/18/38, PRO.

²⁵³ Bobbety to Eden, June 16, 1941, PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

²⁵⁴ Eden to Cranborne, June 20, 1941, PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

had admitted that England is “unable to replace more than one third of the tonnage sunk.” “What Churchill convened was a death dance of the old Europe.”²⁵⁵

The Titanic Turn: Operation Barbarossa and the Blockade of Europe

On June 22, 1941, just as Herbert Hoover predicted,²⁵⁶ nearly four million German troops stormed across the Soviet frontier along a 1,800-mile front in what the Nazis called Operation Barbarossa.²⁵⁷ If Hitler endeavored to obtain *Lebensraum*, or to obliterate Bolshevism, as it is so often explained, it was also a central objective of his “to obtain by the German sword sod for the German plow and daily bread for the nation.”²⁵⁸ The pursuit of this aim granted Britain a much-needed ally. On July 13, 1941, the two nations agreed to cooperate against the Nazis and make no separate peace treaty.²⁵⁹ It also led the United States to extend lend-lease assistance to the Russians.²⁶⁰ One scholar has even argued that the Roosevelt Administration embraced policies vis-à-vis Japan to help Moscow avoid a two-front war.²⁶¹ These developments would have global consequences. But for Europe, Operation Barbarossa meant an inevitable decline in food resources: it destroyed crops in a region that had historically supplied much of the continent.

²⁵⁵ Foreign News, Stavanger, in German, for Germans in Norway, PREM 3/45/3, PRO.

²⁵⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, Hull and Hoover, February 28, 1941, File Hull, Cordell Correspondence 1934-March 1941, Box 95, PPIC, HHP, HHPL.

²⁵⁷ Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War To Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2000), pp. 110-142.

²⁵⁸ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), p. 140.

²⁵⁹ Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-73* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974), p. 318.

²⁶⁰ George C. Herring, Jr., *Aid to Russia, 1941-1946: Strategy, Diplomacy, The Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973).

²⁶¹ Waldo H. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin Roosevelt and American Entry into the World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

Anthony Eden reopened the possibility of permitting food through the blockade on July 19, 1941. But Barborossa factored little in his immediate calculations. That morning, the Belgian Foreign Minister had complained to him that the Ministry of Economic Warfare had “ignored entirely the political side of this problem.” They had repeatedly refused his requests that some scheme be devised to aid the Belgian people. If the circumstances remained unaddressed, Eden wrote the War Cabinet, public opinion would “be seriously affected.” “Children were suffering cruelly; schools were closed from 11 A.M. onwards; women and children fainted in the streets for the lack of proper food;” and “tuberculosis was already on the increase.”²⁶² Hoover, in fact, had made these conditions clear, but British propaganda refuted such claims at every step.²⁶³ Now Eden felt that an exception should be made for Belgium. Famine, he argued, has “more disadvantages than advantages.” It would be difficult for Britain to disavow responsibility for this problem indefinitely. Belgium had always relied heavily on imports.²⁶⁴

But Dalton remained unwavering. In a memorandum presented to the War Cabinet on July 28, 1941, he wrote that what Britain chose to “concede to one Ally,” it “must be prepared to concede to all.” The Germans would manipulate the situation, he argued. The harvest had only just been gathered, and it was Germany’s responsibility to see that the Belgians obtained their fair share. “The food blockade is an essential weapon

²⁶² Telegram No. 45, Mr. Eden to Mr. Aveling, July 19, 1941, W 8891/49/49, Document 31, FO, *BDF*, Vol. 1: World War II, January 1940-December 1941 (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1988), p. 362; “Memorandum by the SOSFA,” Blockade Policy, July 19, 1941, W.P. (41) 175, CAB 66/17/48, PRO.

²⁶³ For commentary on British claims, see “Hoover Plan Rejection a Blunder, Says Official,” May 20, 1941, *WP*, 4; “Hoover Aide Urges Food for Belgium,” May 20, 1941, *NYT*, 10; John Cudahy, “Belgians Starving; Hope For U.S. Help: Hundreds of Thousand of the Children Reported in Peril of Malnutrition,” May 29, 1941, *NYT*, 11.

²⁶⁴ “Memorandum by the SOSFA,” Blockade Policy, July 19, 1941, W.P. (41) 175, CAB 66/17/48, PRO.

of economic warfare. If we let in food,” he explained, “we make possible the transfer of German man power from food production to the production of munitions or service in the armed forces.” Britain stood to gain no propaganda benefits by lifting the blockade.²⁶⁵ When Eden replied with the proposal that the American Red Cross assume responsibility for Belgian relief, Dalton asked that the War Cabinet defer decision. Churchill agreed.²⁶⁶

In defense of this position, Dalton argued that his Ministry, as of April, had agreed to provisions permitting the Allies to buy relief supplies within the blockaded area, either from neutral countries or the Soviet Union. In this way, the purchases would not increase the total supplies available in Europe, but would “divert food towards the areas in greater need.” Belgium, under this scheme, had been authorized to buy Portuguese products, and the Greeks had been allowed to purchase food from the Soviet Union. The Ministry of Economic Warfare believed it would reduce the overall pool from which the Germans might benefit. But following the onset of Operation Barbarossa, the Greeks, who faced a situation every bit as dire as the Belgians, could not longer obtain supplies from Russia. Thus they requested permission to purchase food in Turkey. The British agreed to such arrangements, but two difficulties ensued.²⁶⁷

First, Greece’s dollar resources had been frozen in the United States, which restricted the country’s capacity to make purchases; second, transporting Turkish food resources to Greece by land posed challenges; the Aegean Sea offered the best

²⁶⁵ “Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare,” The Food Blockade and the Occupied Territories, July 28, 1941, W.P. (41) 176, CAB 66/17/49, PRO.

²⁶⁶ “Meeting of the War Cabinet,” 75th Conclusions, July 28, 1941, W.M. (41), CAB 65/19/11, PRO.

²⁶⁷ “Memorandum by the Minister of Economic Warfare,” Food Blockade and Occupied Territories, July 28, 1941, CAB 66/17/49, PRO; see also W.N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, Vol. 2 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1959), pp. 256-258.

alternative, but the British had blockaded this route.²⁶⁸ While Dalton initially refused to open the blockade for this purpose, he ultimately acquiesced to Eden's view. The British knew the Turks had been supplying produce to the Germans. Dalton therefore convinced himself that it would be better if these supplies went to the Greeks. Eden concurred. The Greeks had depended on imported food before the war; they had also put up a fierce fight against the Italians and Germans. But the Americans, who worried of undesirable publicity – probably as a result of Hoover – refused to release dollars for this purpose, at least until January 1942. Thus the shipments amounted to little, and they angered the Belgians.²⁶⁹

The American refusal highlights the growing power asymmetries between Britain and the United States. As we have seen, the British, at Roosevelt's request, agreed to permit milk into unoccupied France in January. But in May, only after two shiploads had arrived, they terminated the deliveries upon learning that the Vichy Government had concluded a large barter deal in food with the Germans. Roosevelt raised no protest. But when the resolution supporting Hoover's scheme came up for consideration in the Senate, he again requested that Britain permit milk into France. Both Eden and Dalton worried that they would anger the Allies, especially the Belgians and Greeks, if they acquiesced. But the need for American assistance led the War Cabinet to agree on two conditions: any deliveries would have to be undertaken by the American Red Cross; the number of deliveries would have to be kept to a minimum. To rebut allied complaints, they would

²⁶⁸ Medlicott, *Blockade*, Vol. 2, 74.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 263-267; on Belgian attitude, see Telegram No. 71, Mr. Eden to Mr. Aveling, September 16, 1941, W 11331/49/49, Document 33, FO, *B DFA*, Vol. 1, 364-365.

maintain the distinction between occupied and unoccupied territory.²⁷⁰ Ironically, the Greek relief scheme, which the Americans obstructed, undercut this argument altogether.

Second Meeting of the Allies Suggested to Discuss Relief

On June 13, 1941, one day after the signing of the St. James Palace Resolution, Leith-Ross convened a group of officials from the various British Ministries to discuss a second Allied meeting. This gathering, suggested by the Foreign Office, would provide the British an opportunity to formally explain their relief policy, and take concrete steps to meet Europe's postwar needs. The Allies would be asked to prepare and prioritize estimates of their requirements, and to commit to the principle that the relief of Europe as a whole should have first claim on shipping resources, as opposed to the needs of individual countries. Britain would also use the meeting to announce the establishment of a British Bureau under the direction of Leith-Ross, which would collate and coordinate the Allied estimates. Before the meeting, Britain would ask the exiled governments to agree to a resolution encapsulating these arrangements.²⁷¹

Sir Frederick's desire to hold the meeting in early July proved wishful thinking. Arthur Greenwood thought the United States should be consulted first if only "as a matter of tactics."²⁷² Several of the Dominions wanted more. The Australian High

²⁷⁰ "Memorandum by the SOSFA," Blockade Policy: Milk for Children in Vichy France, August 28, 1941, W.P. (41) 206, CAB 66/18/29; "Meeting of the War Cabinet," 88th Conclusions, September 1, 1941, W.M. (41), CAB 65/19/24, both in the PRO. For information on the barter deal, see Medlicott, *Blockade*, Vol. 2, 581.

²⁷¹ "Arrangements with Allied Governments for Discussion of their Immediate Post-War Needs," Note of Meeting Held at the MEW on June 13th, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

²⁷² A.G. to Leith-Ross, "Sir Frederick Leith-Ross," June 30, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

Commissioner to London, Stanley Bruce, asked Leith-Ross on July 1, 1941 whether the meeting had “been suggested for propaganda purposes,” or, if it served to manage “the ‘surpluses’ problem.” Sir Frederick confessed: the meeting “was being staged” from the “propaganda standpoint.” But, he explained, it would cover a “wider field than that of the supply of Europe of surplus products.” The Allies would pass a resolution agreeing to prepare lists of their requirements. Bruce disapproved. If propaganda constituted the primary aim, would it not be better, he asked, to obtain a resolution that included not only the consumer but the producer countries as well? “A full-dress meeting at this stage without United States participation would be of little use and might even be dangerous.”²⁷³

Leith-Ross agreed there was no need “for a full-dress meeting” if “progress could be made” in formulating “the various countries’ requirements.” But, he added, Washington had “been very slow on the ‘surpluses’ problem.” Something akin to “trench warfare.... between the State Department and the United States Treasury” had been holding up progress. A meeting on relief, he implied, would entice them along. It remained similarly important, he explained, to help the exiled governments, who were “anxious to have some public resolutions to which they could point in endeavoring to rally their peoples in the occupied countries.” A second inter-allied meeting would meet this demand.²⁷⁴

The High Commissioners from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa appeared receptive to this explanation. Bruce replied that if the Foreign Secretary

²⁷³ “Proposed Meeting of Allied Government to Consider the Provision of Supplies to Europe after the War,” July 1, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

believed the meeting necessary to help the Allies, then it should be done. Yet he still believed “the right course would be not to hold a meeting of this sort... until the Ambassador had put the whole position to the President [of the United States] and exchanged ideas with him,” or, even better, “until there was some hope of a common broad declaration made” by Roosevelt and Churchill. The High Commissioners from New Zealand and South Africa shared the view that Britain should obtain American support before calling the meeting.²⁷⁵

How to accomplish this aim constituted the question. Although Leith-Ross appears to have believed that unilateral British action would encourage the Americans to resolve their interdepartmental disputes, he worried that attempts to “press the U.S. Government for an immediate formal declaration of cooperation might well raise suspicious and prove bad tactics.” He assumed the Roosevelt Administration would prefer that Britain “work out plans before making any formal approach for their collaboration.” However, this line of thought did not necessarily mean that the British should refrain from requesting the views of the United States, or seek a statement of support to be presented at the meeting. In fact, Leith-Ross embraced a suggestion from the High Commissioners that the British exploit Roosevelt’s recent “Four Freedoms” speech to win their acquiescence.²⁷⁶ Eden therefore discussed the matter with the

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ “Proposed Inter-Allied Meeting on Post-War Relief,” by Leith-Ross to Arthur Greenwood, July 2, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

American Ambassador in London, John Winant, on July 4, 1941, and provided him a letter including the proposal and the resolution.²⁷⁷

While the six-point resolution served propaganda purposes, it also sought to resolve the tension between national action and international cooperation. It committed each of the Allies to the common aim of seeing that supplies of food and raw materials would be made available to meet their postwar needs. But while it asserted that each government would be responsible for its own requirements, and would draw up and prioritize its own estimates, it committed them to coordinate their plans with one another. It tied them to the principle that “Europe as a whole” should have priority claim on national shipping resources. Yet Britain, not an international authority, would facilitate this cooperation. In the case of requirements, the resolution called for the establishment of a British bureau headed by Leith-Ross, which would collate and coordinate the estimates. The Ministry of War Transport would work with the Allies to give effect to the shipping clause.²⁷⁸

If the British hoped the gathering would entice the Americans into speedy action on surpluses, it did the opposite. Acheson had been working on a reply to the Leith-Ross letter of February 1941 regarding surpluses, and he had also discussed and shared the draft with Keynes.²⁷⁹ But the Foreign Office failed to inform the British Embassy of the proposed allied meeting on relief, which placed Keynes in an embarrassing position vis-

²⁷⁷ Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, July 7, 1941, 840.48/4988: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, *The British Commonwealth, The Soviet Union, The Near East and Africa* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1958), 98-100.

²⁷⁸ The resolution is included in *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Leith-Ross Proposals, Division of Commercial Treaties and Agreements, No Date; Keynes to Acheson, July 8, 1941; both in File #2 Postwar ER - EP 5/7/42 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

à-vis Acheson, who complained that he should have been informed of the proposal since the subject was so closely related to the problem of surpluses. This failure only increased suspicions, and led Acheson to reconsider his letter before sending it on July 22, 1941.²⁸⁰

Though seemingly unrelated, blotched communications also angered the Canadians, who learned of the allied meeting not from the British but from the Americans. Oddly, the Canadian High Commissioner to London, Vincent Massey, neither attended the meeting with Bruce and the other High Commissioners in early July,²⁸¹ nor informed Ottawa of the proposal. As a result, the Canadians complained as well.²⁸² This failure of communication may seem unimportant, but in time, the cumulative effects of such mishaps would undermine Britain's relationship with Ottawa. This fact would have time-consuming consequences, and even dangerous impacts for the construction of the entire postwar order. But in this instance Ottawa blamed Massey, and considered announcing a contribution of wheat for postwar relief at the proposed Inter-Allied meeting.²⁸³

On July 21, 1941, the Americans responded cautiously to the proposed inter-allied meeting. By this point in the war, certain commodities previously in surplus had suddenly

²⁸⁰ Keynes to Leith-Ross, July 15, 1941; Keynes to Hall, July 15, 1941, both in CAB 117/89, PRO; The Assistant SOS (Acheson) to the DG, British MEW (Leith-Ross), July 22, 1941, 840.48/4988, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 103-107.

²⁸¹ "Proposed Meeting of Allied Government to Consider the Provision of Supplies to Europe after the War," July 1, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

²⁸² Telegram, Assistant Under-SOSEA [H.L. Keenleyside] to Under-SOSEA [Robertson], July 15, 1941, 2295-F-40, Document 320; Telegram 1057, SOSEA [King] to HC in Great Britain [Massey], July 16, 1941, 2295-F-40, Document 321; Telegram 1373, HC in Great Britain [Massey] to SOSEA [King], July 31, 1941, 2295-F-40, Document 322, all in CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 1939-1941 (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), p. 231-232.

²⁸³ Memorandum from Under-SOSEA [Robertson] to PM [King], August 8, 1941, 2295-F-40, Document 325, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 235-236.

become scarce. Attempts to accumulate supplies now or in the immediate future for relief, they worried, might impact the American and British defense efforts. They could also influence future commercial relations or plans for the postwar settlement. Current and future shipping arrangements, moreover, would have bearing on all of these factors. Thus they considered paragraph five of the resolution on shipping “too categorical.” Shipping could not be reserved exclusively for relief. It would have to be coordinated with other demands, which could not be seen at the present time. If the resolution were revised to address this concern, and if the meeting’s discussions were “exploratory,” the Americans agreed to countenance the event with a statement stipulating these views.²⁸⁴

The next day, Acheson replied to the Leith-Ross letter of February 1941 on surpluses. The idea of providing for spheres of influence suggested by Keynes only seemed logical, he wrote, if Britain and the United States returned to a “substantially free commercial and monetary system” after the war. Otherwise it made little sense. He agreed, however, that focusing on relief in the short-term seemed appropriate. Yet he believed Britain and the United States should take advantage of Europe’s present weaknesses to obtain long-term commitments. Solution to the structural causes of the surplus problem required an end to “economic nationalism” and the “preposterous trade barriers” that created it in the first place. On the demand side of the equation, relief could be used to extract concessions from Europe. On the supply side, multilateral commodity

²⁸⁴ The Acting SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), July 21, 1941, 840.48/4988; Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 100-102; Winant to Eden, July 25, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

agreements could be employed in tandem with other ad-hoc measures to obtain assurances from producing countries.²⁸⁵

Acheson then concluded his letter with a plan of action. The United States, he wrote, would continue its studies of marketing agreements between producing and stockholding countries, and in preparation for negotiations on commodity control schemes. The exiled governments, he added, should estimate their postwar requirements; Britain and the United States would simultaneously initiate studies of available supplies to meet these needs, while also investigating means of financing and holding stocks. Acheson agreed with Leith-Ross's suggestion that the two countries establish an informal joint Anglo-American committee to coordinate these efforts.²⁸⁶ With one exception, all of these steps were taken: events made the Anglo-American committee unnecessary. As a result, cooperation with Britain was undertaken on an ad-hoc basis.

Acheson's letter and the State Department's views on the proposed allied meeting provided the British the opening they desired. Eden made it clear to Winant that the meeting would be exploratory. "No position or commitments would be notified without consultation" with the United States.²⁸⁷ If the meeting produced satisfactory results, he wrote, Britain planned to approach the American Government and later other producing countries with the aim of establishing an organization to examine the supply side of the relief problem. The British then revised the resolution in accordance with the American views. Instead of giving the whole of Europe first claim on shipping resources, the new draft called for "the most efficient employment... of [all] the shipping resources" and it

²⁸⁵ Acheson to Leith-Ross, July 22, 1941, 840.48/4988, *FRUS*, 103-107.

²⁸⁶ Acheson to Leith-Ross, July 22, 1941, 840.48/4988, *FRUS*, 103-107.

²⁸⁷ The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, July 22, 1941, 840.48/5012: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 102-103.

committed the allies to collaborate towards this end.²⁸⁸ Once this revision had been settled, the British shared the meeting proposal and resolution with the Dominions,²⁸⁹ which appeased the Canadians,²⁹⁰ and all of the other concerned governments.²⁹¹

The Atlantic Charter of August 14, 1941

Meanwhile, a momentous event took place the second week of August 1941 off the coast of Newfoundland: Churchill and Roosevelt secretly met for their first conference of the war. The meeting's most enduring document, the rationale of which was pure propaganda, emerged in the form of a statement released to the press on August 14, 1941, the so-called Atlantic Charter.²⁹² A statement of principles, this eight-point declaration met what Bruce considered an essential prerequisite for a second meeting of the Allies. It implicitly linked the United States to the war effort, and directly committed the country to the construction of the postwar order. As such, it ultimately abetted the second meeting's propaganda objectives – to make a show of allied unity, embolden the exiled European governments, and incite individuals in the occupied territories to rise up

²⁸⁸ The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, August 13, 1941, 840.48/5046: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 107-109.

²⁸⁹ Cypher Telegram No. 467 Secret, DO to Governments of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, July 31, 1941, WT 519/3/2, PREM 3/45/3, PRO; From DO to Governments of Canada, Australia, NZ and SA, July 31, 1941, D. No. 467 SECRET, CAB 117/89, PRO; Telegram Circular D.468, DS [Cranborne] to SOSEA [King], July 31, 1941, 2295-F-40, Document 324, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 234-235.

²⁹⁰ Memorandum from Robertson to King, August 8, 1941, *DCER*, 235-236.

²⁹¹ Telegram No. 206, Eden to Cripps (Moscow), August 19, 1941, [C 9310/14/62], FO 954/24B, PRO. I do not have the letters communicating the proposal and resolution to the exiled governments, but this is evident.

²⁹² "Atlantic Charter," August 14, 1941, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy (New Haven: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, 2008): <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp> (accessed September 11, 2012).

against Nazi rule. But it undermined one of Great Britain's central postwar aims as well, the economic and political preservation of the British Empire.²⁹³

The most contentious aspect of the declaration concerned economic liberalization. As we have seen, the Roosevelt Administration, particularly the State Department, hoped to crack open the system of imperial preference established by the Ottawa Agreements of 1932, which reduced barriers to trade within the British Empire and erected tariff walls to prevent the entry of goods from outside into the empire. American policymakers believed these arrangements, along with protectionist policies enacted by the United States, had prolonged the Great Depression and created prewar surplus problems. The Americans hoped to remove these structural impediments to global economic wellbeing, which they believed poisoned the wellsprings of economic growth and stability: trade, consumption, and high employment. For this reason, Acheson tried to use his negotiations with Keynes over the Lend-Lease Master Agreement in July to crush imperial preference. But the talks broke down in late July 1941, when Keynes rejected Acheson's proposed agreement.²⁹⁴

As a result, Sumner Welles tried to ensconce the principles of trade liberalization into the fourth point of the declaration. This effort precipitated heated exchanges between

²⁹³ The Atlantic Charter is covered most thoroughly in Theodore A. Wilson, *The First Summit: Roosevelt and Churchill at Placentia Bay, 1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 149-175; Douglas Brinkley and David R. Facey-Crowther, *The Atlantic Charter* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994). But see also relevant passages in Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Alan P. Dobson, *US Wartime Aid to Britain, 1940-1946* (Dover, New Hampshire: Croom Helm, 1986), 62-92; William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

²⁹⁴ Randall Bennett Woods, *A Changing of the Guard: Anglo-American Relations, 1941-1946* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 24-32; Dobson, *Wartime Aid*, 35-61; Wilson, *First Summit*, 156-160.

the two parties, one of which depicts Roosevelt lambasting the system of imperial preference for undermining competition and perpetuating the economic and political backwardness of peoples living in the colonial empires.²⁹⁵ But Churchill managed to guard his flank. Though unable to expunge a clause in point four committing the countries to work towards “equal access” to the “trade and raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity,” he managed to insert qualifying clause, “with due respect for their existing obligations” into the text. If Roosevelt could not agree to this emendation, then constitutional stipulations would require him to consult the Dominions, which would prevent the immediate release of the statement to the press. Roosevelt, who was more interested in public relations than the State Department’s preferences, acquiesced.²⁹⁶

The seed had been planted nonetheless, and the American President still managed to strike at the whole political structure of the British Empire. The third point of the first draft, prepared by the British, committed the two countries to “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.” The British certainly aimed this clause at countries then under Nazi rule.²⁹⁷ But Roosevelt, without any explanation, added the phrase, “and the hope that self-government may be restored to those from whom it has been forcibly removed.”²⁹⁸ If this phrase served to make self-determination explicit, Churchill’s insertion of the words “sovereign rights” before the phrase “self-government” probably constituted an effort to make Roosevelt’s addition, as

²⁹⁵ Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 121.

²⁹⁶ Wilson, *First Summit*, 165-172.

²⁹⁷ This is mentioned in most of the works footnoted in this section, but see in particular “Conclusion of a Meeting of the War Cabinet,” September 4, 1941, W.M. (41) 89th Conclusions, CAB 65/19/25, PRO.

²⁹⁸ Wilson, *First Summit*, 168-170.

one historian writes, “inapplicable to the dependent British Empire.”²⁹⁹ But the President made no complaint. Mostly likely, he believed Churchill’s change meant little.

Roosevelt endeavored to create worldwide support for American leadership in the management of global affairs. If aspects of the British draft and subsequent revisions inadvertently facilitated this aim – and they undoubtedly did – the Americans welcomed them; they also sought changes of their own that looked beyond the traditional European system of states. The charter appealed to individuals of all races in all nations all over the world.³⁰⁰ Roosevelt clearly hoped it would entice peoples living in the occupied territories to rise up against the Nazis in accordance with British desires; but he also wanted to inspire independence movements within the colonial empires.³⁰¹ The Americans sought to fashion global public opinion towards the creation of what Roosevelt would later call a “World Civilization,”³⁰² as opposed to Churchill’s hope of preserving the preeminence of “Western Civilization.”³⁰³ Aspects of the language chosen,

²⁹⁹ Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 123.

³⁰⁰ On this point, see Borgwardt, *New Deal*, 30.

³⁰¹ Evidence of this fact runs throughout Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*.

³⁰² See, for example, “The Better World... Will Be Made Possible Only by Bold Vision, Intelligent Planning, and Hard Work – The President Addresses the International Student Assembly,” September 3, 1942, in Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Volume 1942: *Humanity on the Defensive* (New York: MacMillan, 1942), 347. I suspect the expression “world civilization” comes from Sumner Welles, who used it as early as September 25, 1939, shortly after the Germans attacked Poland. See Sumner Welles, “On the Margin of War,” delivered at the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, Panama, September 25, 1939, Folder 13, Box 194, Speech File, Welles Papers, FDRL.

³⁰³ Churchill thought Roosevelt shared his objective: “The present general objective of the United States Government happens to be roughly similar to that of the British Empire; both are convinced that it is necessary to put an end to the aggressions of the totalitarian Powers if Western civilization is to be preserved from extinction and if conditions are to be restored in which peaceful international trade can be assured.” Mr. Winston Churchill to Viscount Halifax, April 10, 1941, No. 233 [W 3379/37/49], BT 88/7, PRO. Certain figures in the Roosevelt Administration may have embraced Churchill’s view, but others

which seemed to be Roosevelt's, legitimized American leadership in this new world order.

The British draft embraced individual rights, but the language they employed served ulterior purposes. First, they aimed to topple the Axis order, and restore and stabilize the European system of states: thus they could commit to "respect the right of all peoples to choose" their "form of government..."³⁰⁴ But this right did not apply to their colonies.³⁰⁵ Second, they strove to lure Washington into the war. One clause in point three of the British draft stated that signatories were "only concerned to defend the rights of freedom of speech and thought," which the Nazis had attacked. Third, the British wanted Washington engaged in global affairs through institutions that solidified Anglo-American cooperation; this they deemed essential to salvage their global power. Churchill therefore asked Roosevelt, in the final point of the declaration, to agree to the establishment of "effective international organization," which would create a "peace" that affords "to all States and peoples the means of dwelling in security within their own bounds."³⁰⁶

While the Americans had no problem with the first aim, anything that directly linked them to the war effort, or the creation of a postwar international organization presented problems. Neither a direct reference to "freedom of speech," nor an implied

did not: though champions of an American or World Civilization rarely deployed such words, occasionally they did. See, for example, Oscar Cox to the Minister, December 1, 1943, File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL. After the meeting at Placenta Bay, even the British began using the word "world civilization." See Telegram Circular Z.259, DS [Cranborne] to HC of Great Britain [Massey], August 13, 1941, King Papers, PAC, Document 327, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 237-239.

³⁰⁴ The British draft can be viewed Wilson, *First Summit*, 164.

³⁰⁵ "Conclusions... of the War Cabinet," September 4, 1941, CAB 65/19/25, PRO.

³⁰⁶ The British draft can be viewed Wilson, *First Summit*, 164.

overture to individual “security” could trick them into accepting language that would create domestic political problems among the non-interventionists. Welles deleted the clause on the “freedom of speech and thought.” The Congress, he explained, would not want to “defend” such rights “when those rights were abrogated in every Axis country.” Perhaps he worried about offending the Soviet Union as well, where such rights did not exist. As for pledges to establish “effective international organization,” Roosevelt deleted this phrase, against the wishes of Welles. He had no intention of revisiting the Treaty of Versailles debate at this point in the war, or at all, if possible. He also believed world organization insufficiently realistic to solve the problems of global stability.³⁰⁷

The Americans then inserted the most enduring phrase of the declaration, a direct citation from Roosevelt’s four freedoms speech. Though they deleted the reference to “international organization,” as we have seen, they retained portions of the text, specifically the “hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries.” Next, Roosevelt added the phrase, “and which will afford assurance that all the men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.”³⁰⁸ In this way, Roosevelt placed his stamp on the Atlantic Charter, and appealed over the heads of the British to the entire world.

An additional paragraph suggested by the British War Cabinet allowed Roosevelt to assume even greater ownership over the document. Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labor and National Service, suggested the signatories assert their “desire to bring about

³⁰⁷ Roosevelt also eliminated much of Churchill’s “bellicose preamble,” as Theodore Wilson describes it. For the second draft, which included Welles’ revisions, and draft number three, which included Roosevelt’s revisions, see Wilson, *First Summit*, 166-168.

³⁰⁸ Roosevelt’s initial phrasing was: “which will afford assurance to all peoples that they may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.” Wilson, *First Summit*, 168.

the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, *for all*, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security.” It was a clear reference to the New Deal. Bevin attributed the suggestion to Roosevelt’s speeches, but also similar usage in the St. James Palace Resolution of June 12, 1941.³⁰⁹ Yet it seems inconceivable that he did not have his party’s own political fortunes in mind. Then in a coalition with Churchill’s conservatives, the Labor Party had its eye on the premiership, which led them to advance an agenda in accordance with their ideological program.³¹⁰

But if such phrases helped the British Labor Party in domestic politics after the war, they benefited Roosevelt globally: by guaranteeing rights to people everywhere using words first articulated by the American President, the esteem of the United States would grow. Roosevelt, as Churchill later reported, was “very pleased” by the War Cabinet’s suggestion.³¹¹ Bevin, however, shied away from the global application of such rights. He argued that the exclusion of such a paragraph “would have an unfortunate effect on public opinion in [Great Britain]... the Dominions and on the Allied Governments.”³¹² Apparently the rest of the world did not matter. Roosevelt, by contrast,

³⁰⁹ On Bevin’s role, which came to light much later, see D.F. Hubback to J.P.E.C. Henniker, September 19, 1946; E.E.B. to Sir Norman Brook, September 19, 1946; D.F.H. to Sir Edward Bridges, September 18, 1946, all in CAB 41/4005, PRO.

³¹⁰ On the relationship of British Labor (especially Ernest Bevin) to Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, see David Reynolds, *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 148-164, but see 151 in particular.

³¹¹ Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, August 19, 1941, War Cabinet, W.M. (41), 84th Conclusions, CAB 65/19/20, PRO.

³¹² I have assumed these words are Bevin’s. Quote, which is not attributed, is taken from Telegram Abbey No. 35, “The Lord Privy Seal to the PM, in reply to telegram No. (16), August 12, 1941, but see also Telegram Abbey No. 31, “The Lord Privy Seal to the PM, in reply to telegrams Nos. (11) and (12), both in War Cabinet, Conference Between The

always considered the war and the postwar settlement in terms of what he called “the world-wide arena.”³¹³

With one exception, these changes presented little controversy. Churchill preferred a pledge to construct a world organization. If he was willing to accept the line that the draft should not be phrased so as to agitate non-interventionist opinion in the United States, then Roosevelt should accept his argument that failure to reference “international organization” would arouse “extreme internationalists” in Britain. Roosevelt refused to alter his stance. He could not sanction any new “Assembly of the League” until after a transition period, during which the United States and Great Britain would police the world. Churchill ultimately retreated to phrasing that accounted for Roosevelt’s transition period, but left the door open to a future world organization without saying so: “pending the establishment of a wider and more permanent system of general security.”³¹⁴

The Atlantic Charter constitutes an odd confluence of two worldviews: one that celebrated “Western Civilization,” and one that sought to construct a new “American Civilization,” which Roosevelt shrewdly called “World Civilization.” The first view, championed by Churchill, insinuated that what had existed before the destabilization of global politics in the 1930s should be preserved, including the imperial systems of the past. But with the British too weak to accomplish this task alone, they hoped to construct an Anglo-American partnership that would work through global institutions to preserve the peace and stability of the old order. The second view, by contrast, sought to displace

PM of the United Kingdom and the President of the United States, W.P. (41) 203, August 18, 1941, CAB 41/4005, PRO.

³¹³ Henrikson, FDR and the ‘World-Wide Arena,’ 35-61.

³¹⁴ Wilson, *First Summit*, 168, 172-173.

the old order, in which Europe dominated the globe, with one led by the United States. To achieve this end, the imperial structures, both economic and political, had to be destroyed. This objective necessarily required an assault on the old empires by applying pressure on Europe in its time of weakness, and by appealing to global public opinion with promises of independence, economic development, and individual rights.

At this point in the war, the precise place of postwar relief in these vague visions remained unknown, except for the fact that it constituted a necessary prerequisite for the stability essential for the construction of the postwar order. For the British, relief also provided an avenue to construct a partnership, embedded in global institutions, with the United States. The proposed meeting of the Allies to discuss relief would work towards this objective. For the Americans, relief became a means by which to assert their leadership; the Atlantic Charter served as the master blueprint. That this document would assume importance so rapidly doubtless owes a great deal to the British, who used the second Inter-Allied meeting to obtain adherence to the charter by the Dominions and the Allies. This step abetted American aspirations and moved the Allies closer to the creation of the wartime alliance known to posterity as the United Nations.

Allied Adherence to the Atlantic Charter and the Relief Resolution

On August 18, 1941, Eden made the case for a second gathering of the Allies to the War Cabinet. "I hope that this meeting may represent the inauguration of a new phase of collaboration and that it may form part of the machinery through which victory will be won and by which [the] peace will be maintained [after the war]." The exiled

governments, Eden wrote, had shown interests in the possibility of holding another meeting as a “symbol of allied unity” and “for the discussion of specific problems.” The British had broached the matter with Dominion and American officials, who agreed with the proposal. Eden also explained that ongoing consultations with the Allies needed to be put on a “more formal footing,” and arrangements made for the coordination of future inter-allied activities. This meeting would provide such an opportunity.³¹⁵

Eden’s assessment was correct. Most of the Allies had done little to prepare for the postwar period; several had taken minimal action, but with little coordination. The Poles had drawn up and shared their requirements with the British; the Czechs had begun the process; others had done nothing. The Belgians established a Commission to study their country’s postwar relief and reconstruction needs. With minimal shipping resources, they remained eager to coordinate their actions. The Dutch, by contrast, paid lip service to inter-allied cooperation, but began purchasing postwar relief supplies independently in early 1941.³¹⁶ Such activities, we will soon see, led to disputes with the British and later the Americans. As supplies became scarce, and other Allies commenced buying as well, these purchases strained the alliance. Eden anticipated these problems, and, like Leith-Ross, wanted these and other actions coordinated.

His colleagues readily assented to a second meeting scheduled for August 27, 1941. But they expressed two concerns. First, they disliked the use of the word “territories” in a public resolution, which, they reasoned, might imply a “commitment to

³¹⁵ “Memorandum by the SOSEA,” Post-War European Needs: Proposed Allied Meeting, August 16, 1941, W.P. (41) 195, PRO, CAB 117/89; “Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet,” August 18, 1941, W.M. (41), 83rd Conclusions, CAB 65/19/19, PRO.

³¹⁶ “State of Negotiations with Allied Governments on the Subject of Immediate Post-War Supplies to their Countries,” June 11, 1941, PRO, CAB 117/89, PRO.

restore the pre-war boundaries of each of the allied Governments.”³¹⁷ The British Government, largely at the instigation of the United States, had avoided such commitments. Eden therefore deleted the word or found suitable substitutions where possible.³¹⁸ Second, they worried that the meeting would be anticlimactic following the Atlantic Conference, especially if it were limited to passing a resolution on postwar relief. For this reason, the War Cabinet decided the Allies should also sign a resolution adhering to the Atlantic Charter.³¹⁹ The War Cabinet formalized and agreed to these plans on August 21, 1941.³²⁰ But again the proposed date proved wishful thinking.

Adherence to the Atlantic Declaration presented the first problem. The Dutch and Russians requested time to discuss the proposed resolutions, which led the War Cabinet to postpone the meeting on August 25, 1941.³²¹ Officials in Moscow took their time assessing the Atlantic Charter.³²² With the Nazis at the gates of Leningrad, and Stalin pleading with Churchill to offer all assistance and open a second front, their priorities lay elsewhere.³²³ The Russians, moreover, took offense at not having been properly consulted about the Charter before its release. The Soviet Ambassador to London, Ivan Maisky, said his government might like to have altered “phrasing of some [of its principles] and to

³¹⁷ “Conclusions... of the War Cabinet,” August 18, 1941, CAB 65/19/19, PRO.

³¹⁸ “Memorandum by the SOSFA,” Post-War European Needs: Proposed Allied Meeting, August 19, 1941, W.P. (41) 196, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³¹⁹ “Conclusions... of the War Cabinet,” August 18, 1941, CAB 65/19/19, PRO.

³²⁰ “Conclusions of the War Cabinet,” August 21, 1941, W.M. (41), 85th Conclusions, CAB 65/19/21, PRO.

³²¹ “Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet,” August 25, 1941, W.M. (41), 86th Conclusions, CAB 65/19/22, PRO; Telegram Circular D.519, DS [Cranborne] to SOSEA [King], August 25, 1941, 2295-F-40, Document 335, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 243.

³²² Sargent to Leith-Ross, September 11, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³²³ Telegram No. 1092, Moscow to Foreign Office, September 4, 1941, FO 954/24B, PRO.

stiffen the phrasing of others.”³²⁴ The Russians nonetheless accepted it in late September 1941, but made it clear that “the practical application” of its “principles will necessarily adapt itself to circumstances, needs and historic peculiarities of particular countries.”³²⁵

The Dutch, for their part, welcomed the spirit of the Atlantic agreement. Yet in it they spotted an unfortunate contradiction. “The words ‘with due respect for their existing obligations’ appear to be in the nature of a reservation,” they wrote. Though they considered these words understandable in a strict legal sense, they felt that if the “object expressed in this fourth point of the Declaration is to be achieved, such existing obligations should not be perpetuated, even as exceptions.” To do so would “seriously impair or diminish the beneficial effect which is to accrue to all from the application of the general rule.” Despite this defect, the Dutch, like the Russians and all of the other Allies, agreed to the declaration, but they made it clear that preexisting obligations could not be perpetuated. Otherwise the Atlantic Charter would be no different than expressions of similar principles at the end of the First World War.³²⁶

The Canadians agreed with this view, but never complained. Time constraints, the British wrote, made consultations with the Dominions on the declaration’s content

³²⁴ Minute by A.R. Dew on policy towards the Soviet Union, November 21, 1941 in *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1941-45*, ed. Graham Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 79-81.

³²⁵ See Enclosure of the proposed “Soviet Declaration at the Inter-Allied conference of September 24, 1941” attached to Eden to Cripps, September 16, 1941, No. 247, [C 10428/14/62], FO 954/24B, PRO

³²⁶ “Note from the Netherlands to Britain regarding the resolution,” Unknown Date, CAB 117/89, PRO.

impossible; thus Churchill tried not to “prejudice [the] future of imperial preference.”³²⁷ But the Canadians, like the Dutch, disliked the imperial trading regime, and considered the reservation to point four of the declaration its “most serious defect.”³²⁸ Yet they never voted or commented on it. The British thought it would have been “inappropriate” for the Dominions to adhere to the Charter alongside the Allies: they would “prefer to be treated as being already associated” with it. This “clumsy” procedure, as one Canadian diplomat called it, presented Ottawa with a predicament. If they agreed, it would confirm their foreign policy subservience to London. If they opposed, it would reduce their stature to that of an invaded country.³²⁹ The Canadians chose not to object, and, like the other Dominions, begrudgingly played along.³³⁰

The resolution on postwar relief proved more difficult than the Atlantic Charter. A rift existed between countries preferring a national approach to relief and those hoping for an international scheme. Most of the exiled governments preferred a multilateral program because of anticipated inabilities to meet their immediate needs. These countries had little in the way of shipping, financial, or material resources. Thus internationalism seemed the best way to secure influence and meet their needs. By contrast, countries with

³²⁷ Telegram Circular Z.257, DS [Cranborne] to HC of Great Britain [Massey], August 12, 1941, King Papers, PAC, Document 326, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 237.

³²⁸ Memorandum from Under-SOSEA [Robertson] to PM [King], August 14, 1941, Skelton Papers, PAC, Document 328, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 239.

³²⁹ Memorandum from Assistant Under-SOSEA [Pearson] to SOSEA [King], September 18, 1941, 2295-F-40, Document 337; see also Telegram Circular D.511, DS [Cranborne] to SOSEA [King], August 21, 1941, 3014-40, Document 330; Memorandum from Assistant Under-SOSEA [Pearson] to Cabinet War Committee, August 21, 1941, 3014-40, Document 331; Memorandum from Under-SOSEA [Robertson] to PM [King], August 25, 1941, King Papers, PAC, Document 336, all in CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 337, 240-241, 245-246.

³³⁰ Telegram 1277, Acting SOSEA [Ernest Lapointe] to HC in Great Britain [Massey], August 22, 1941, 3014-40, Document 333, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 7, 243.

resources, notably Holland and Norway, hoped to preserve their freedom to act independently so as to avoid relinquishing control over their resources and responsibility for their affairs.³³¹ Yet ironically, these countries used the relief resolution to assert their desire to work within an international framework. How does one explain this contradiction?

The Dutch case provides a window into this problem. In an August 29, 1941 note, and then during subsequent discussions with Leith-Ross, it was apparent that they considered themselves exclusively responsible for relieving and rehabilitating the Netherlands.³³² They would only provide resources for the general cause once their needs had been met. This stipulation, Leith-Ross pointed out, accorded perfectly with point two of the resolution, which asserted that “each of the Allied Governments and authorities” would “be primarily responsible for making provision for the economic needs of its own peoples,” but that they would coordinate “their respective plans... in a spirit of collaboration.” He also argued that their viewpoint did not conflict with point five of the resolution, which called for “the most efficient employment after the war of the shipping resources controlled by each Government and of Allied resources as a whole...”³³³

The Dutch, however, disliked both provisions, and suggested revisions as guarantees against any loss of control over their resources, which, by contrast with the other allies, were significant in mid-1941. The previous year, the Dutch Government

³³¹ The distinction is drawn out in “Post-War Relief for Allied Government” by Leith-Ross, July 28, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³³² Dutch Note to British regarding Inter-Allied Resolution, August 29, 1941; “Note of a Meeting held on Thursday, 4th September 1941 at M.E.W. between Leith-Ross and Lamping and Dr. Phillipse to discuss the draft resolution for the Allied Conference,” both in CAB 117/89, PRO.

³³³ “Note of a Meeting... 4th September 1941... Leith-Ross and Lamping and Dr. Phillipse...” CAB 117/89, PRO.

requisitioned all assets held abroad by its nationals still residing in the occupied territories; it maintained a small shipping fleet and still had the resources of the Dutch East Indies at its disposal.³³⁴ Despite this position of strength, Leith-Ross convinced them to abandon their suggested revisions to points two and five of the resolution. By September 5, 1941, he could write that difficulties with the Dutch over shipping had been “overcome – though not perhaps completely solved.”³³⁵ Two weeks later, the problems with point two had been met as well. Yet they still insisted on stating reservations in a statement at the Allied meeting.³³⁶

Point six of the resolution caused the most controversy. It called for the establishment of a bureau to collate and coordinate the relief estimates. The Dutch, who disliked the idea that British officials would staff the bureau exclusively, preferred the creation of an office similar to the Economic Section of the League of Nations Secretariat, which would include allied representatives. This bureau, they argued, would provide a framework for managing the economic reconstruction of Europe on an inter-allied basis.³³⁷ The Dutch worry, according to the Norwegians, was that the proposed bureau would put Britain in a position to “settle the lines of the reconstruction of Europe” in “association with the Americans,” leaving the Allies with “nothing to do but sign along the dotted line.”³³⁸

³³⁴ Walter B. Maass, *The Netherlands at War: 1940-1945* (New York: Abelard-Schuman Limited, 1970), p. 88; “Asset Claim Here By Dutch Upheld,” May 23, 1941, *NYT*, 31.

³³⁵ Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 5, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³³⁶ Makins to Leith-Ross, September 22, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³³⁷ Dutch Note to British... August 29, 1941; see also Leith-Ross to Greenwood, September 5, 1941, both in CAB 117/89, PRO.

³³⁸ K.S. to Sir George Chrystal, September 17, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

Most all of the Allies shared this view, but only the Dutch, whose strength exceeded the others at this point in the war, advanced it forcefully.³³⁹ The Norwegians, to be sure, proved willing to accept a British bureau, but only if its terms of reference were limited, and one or more inter-allied committees established thereafter.³⁴⁰ The Belgians, who at this time sought immediate relief for their home population, played a more tactful game, trying to ingratiate themselves with the British to secure a position on the bureau should its establishment occur on an inter-allied basis.³⁴¹ The Czechs, the Free French, and the Poles said little, but shared the Dutch views.³⁴² The Russians hinted at their dislike of the British bureau, but waited until the actual meeting to state their reservations.³⁴³

For the moment, the British worried about the Dutch and Norwegian complaints. Two views emerged. Eden and Orme Sargent at the Foreign Office worried that the Norwegian proposal would lead to a multiplication of inter-allied committees. It would be better if they supported an Inter-Allied Bureau at the outset, but with terms of reference limited to preparing estimates of requirements. This proposal fell short of Dutch wishes. But they did not want to anger the Americans, who had cautioned them

³³⁹ "Note of a Meeting... 4th September 1941... Leith-Ross and Lamping and Dr. Phillipse..."; Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 5, 1941; Leith-Ross to Greenwood, September 5, 1941, all in CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴⁰ Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 5, 1941; Sargent to Leith-Ross, September 11, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴¹ "Post-War Relief for Allied Government" by Leith-Ross, July 28, 1941; "Notes of a Conversation between Sir F. Leith-Ross and Mr. Van Zeeland at M.E.W. on July 18th 1941," July 20, 1941; K.S. to Sir George Chrystal, September 17, 1941; "Note on the views expressed by Allies Governments and Authorities on Post-War Relief and Reconstruction, with special reference to the Resolutions to be placed before the Allied Meeting," September 22, 1941, E.S.(0)(41)152, all in CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴² K.S. to Sir George Chrystal, September 17, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴³ "The Inter-Allied Council Meeting in London," *Bulletin of International News* 18, no. 20 (Oct. 4, 1941): 1275-1280.

against taking actions that might prejudice the postwar economic structure. For this reason, the Foreign Office thought Britain should insist that these arrangements were not permanent. Eden, however, thought the British might invite the Americans to participate in the bureau's work as an observer. Full-fledged membership, he reasoned, would be bizarre given the bureau's mandate: to ascertain requirements, not available supplies.³⁴⁴

Leith-Ross opposed the Foreign Office vehemently. He considered it pointless to set up a bureau of allied representatives, who would jockey for the available posts and have nothing to do once they got them. They would, in turn, spend their time "putting up all sorts of suggestions" that would needlessly distract him from his responsibilities in the British Government.³⁴⁵ The bureau might also offend the United States.³⁴⁶ It made no sense. If the Allies could not trust Great Britain, then Leith-Ross believed the effort was hopeless in any case.³⁴⁷ Yet he still remained sensitive enough to their views to propose a compromise: the creation of an Inter-Allied Committee that would operate as a steering committee for the British bureau.³⁴⁸ The Dutch agreed to the proposal, and the Foreign Office did so as well, but only after Leith-Ross threatened resignation.³⁴⁹

Officials in London readily acknowledged the inadequacy of the proposed British Bureau and Inter-Allied Committee. These instruments were temporary expedients, and

³⁴⁴ Sargent to Leith-Ross, September 11, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴⁵ Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 18, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴⁶ Leith-Ross to Makins, September 12, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴⁷ Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 18, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*; Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 16, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO; for further discussion on the setup, see The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, September 23, 1941, 840.48/5115: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 109-110; Leith-Ross to Daish, September 23, 1941; Sargent to Daish, September 23, 1941, both in CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁴⁹ Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 18, 1941; H.S. to Daish, September 19, 1941, both in CAB 117/89, PRO.

they failed to address critical issues such as supplies, shipping, and distribution in war-ravaged countries. But there was a greater problem. Even if an agency were designed to meet such challenges, it could hardly address the larger questions of policy that would inevitably arise. According to one official, the relief negotiations had opened a Pandora's box. "Immediate relief has led on to economic reconstruction," he wrote, "and that in turn to the widest question of trade policy and international organization." Decisions on these complex problems, and their bearing on relief would have to be taken.³⁵⁰ For the next two years, such matters would confound American and British policymakers.

The Second Meeting of the Allies, September 24, 1941

On September 24, 1941, the Allies convened for a second time. It was the first official occasion since the commencement of Barbarossa that Britain had the chance to welcome a representative from Moscow into the Allied camp. Eden immediately turned the floor over to the Soviet Ambassador to London, Ivan Maisky, who exploited the event to maul "Hitlerite marauders" and "murderers" attempting to "dominate the world." The first task of the Allies, he asserted, was "to bring about the speediest and most decisive defeat of the aggressor." But it was also important, he explained, to lay down "the basis for the organization of international relations" and the "postwar world in such a way as to spare... future generations the monstrous crimes of Nazism."³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ H.S. to Daish, September 19, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁵¹ "The Inter-Allied Council Meeting in London," *Bulletin of International News* 18, no. 20 (Oct. 4, 1941): 1275-1280.

Maitsky, however, whitewashed over Moscow's earlier behavior towards Finland and Poland. The Soviet Union, he asserted, not only supported "the sovereign rights of people," it "was [also] guided by the principle of self-determination of nations... one of the pillars on which the political structure of the U.S.S.R. was built." He claimed that his country had "consistently and with full force denounced all violations of sovereign rights of peoples, all aggression and aggressors, [and] all attempts of aggressive States to impose their will on other peoples and to involve them in war." The Soviet Union, he implied, would continue to oppose such behavior. Maitsky therefore proclaimed Moscow's agreement with the principles of the Atlantic Charter.³⁵²

The other Allies followed suit, but, as anticipated, the Dutch drew a reservation to point four of the famous declaration, notably the phrase "with due respect for their existing obligations." If Great Britain and the United States hoped to establish a global economy based on liberal principles, they believed these countries should not hold onto the imperialistic and nationalistic policies that had aggravated economic recovery in the 1930s.³⁵³ No other ally formally endorsed this point of view, but many of them shared it. Though this fact presented the British with problems, the war effort led them to do whatever it took to create the impression of a unified front fighting stalwartly against the fascist powers: the Atlantic Charter provided the emerging United Nations alliance principles around which to coalesce.

But this focal point drove the Dominions, European allies, and colonial peoples around the world to restate and exalt ideas in the declaration to suit their purposes.³⁵⁴ In

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ As I see it, this fact is at the core of Borgwardt's argument. See Borgwardt, *New Deal*.

time, this behavior not only undermined the legitimacy of the British Empire, but also the Belgian, French and Dutch Empires. Its impact for the Soviet Union was no less consequential. By publicly embracing ideas they had violated and would continue to disregard, Moscow placed itself in the crosshairs of global public opinion, which made it far easier for the United States to win the propaganda wars of the postwar period.³⁵⁵ For the Americans, the Charter had enormous benefits, but it created risks as well. If Washington proved incapable or unwilling to effectuate its principles, it, too, might have to weather negative attacks on its credibility and global legitimacy.

Here again the Allies heightened the risks by praising the declaration's commitment to "general security," "prosperity," and "social justice," even though they knew "it would not be easy to put" these ideas "into practice," as the Yugoslavs cautioned the conference attendees. The application of these principles to the entire world, or to "all men in all lands," as the declaration put it, had enormous implications.³⁵⁶ On the one hand, everyone knew that this could not be done on this scale without the United States. If it refused, failure was inevitable; but if it undertook what it signed up to do, it risked overextension. On the other hand, the Charter opened the possibility that these rights would be applied not only at the state level, but at the individual level as well. Any development of this sort would inevitably lead to infringements on the sovereignty of states, including the United States of America. The Atlantic Charter was a radical and risky document.

³⁵⁵ M.E. Chamberlain, *Decolonization: The Fall of the European Empires* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999); Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*; Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*.

³⁵⁶ "The Inter-Allied Council Meeting in London," *Bulletin of International News* 18, no. 20 (Oct. 4, 1941): 1275-1280.

The resolution on relief constituted a modest first step towards the fulfillment of the Charter's promises. According to Eden, resources would have to be pooled to meet the needs of Europe as it transitioned from war to peace. The resolution facilitated this objective. Indeed he suggested that stocks of certain foodstuffs were being accumulated for this purpose.³⁵⁷ Yet in Britain's case, nothing could have been further from the truth. The British had bought up some surplus crops, but none of these purchases had been designated for a common pool.³⁵⁸ The Dutch, too, had begun purchases, but they made it clear that they agreed to sign the resolution only "on the condition that nothing in it would prevent them from carrying out on their own responsibility arrangements made by them for the relief of the Netherlands after the war."³⁵⁹

The resolution, in effect, fell far short of the actions required to meet the needs of postwar Europe. As we have seen, it committed the Allies to common aims, principles of cooperation, and pledges to prepare lists of their requirements. But it failed to reconcile the tension between national and international action. Point six of the resolution, to be sure, led to the establishment of a British bureau that would work with each of the Allied governments in framing their estimates, and it committed the signatories to the creation of a steering committee, the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements, as it was

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ See "Sir F. Leith-Ross's Progress Report of 25.3.41," in which he writes: "It must be emphasized that up the present no purchase of surplus commodities has yet been made with the deliberate object of accumulating stocks for the post-war needs of Europe. Purchases have been made for political reasons, or because they were necessary to ensure the economic stability of certain territories... or to maintain our trade... No purchase has yet been made, nor has any other action been taken, to implement the PM's declaration of 20th August." Included in the "Synopsis of Statements Bearing on Surplus Policy," NO DATE, BT 88/1, PRO. By November 1941, the situation had not really changed. "Export Surpluses Policy," Leith-Ross, November 8, 1941, BT 88/2, PRO.

³⁵⁹ "The Inter-Allied Council Meeting in London," *Bulletin of International News* 18, no. 20 (Oct. 4, 1941): 1275-1280.

called.³⁶⁰ But these proposals encountered obstacles. To everyone's surprise, the Soviet Union refused to adhere to the sixth point of the resolution, despite having given impressions to the contrary several days before the meeting.³⁶¹

Thus what began as an effort to make a show of unity, resulted in disunity. Absent the resolution adhering the Allies to the Atlantic Charter the meeting would have been a setback. But Eden cited a joint Czech-Polish declaration of adherence to the Charter as a sign of cooperation between the two countries, whose disputes had made them vulnerable to manipulation by their larger neighbors in the past. If stability were to be achieved in the postwar period, they would have to work together. He therefore reported to the War Cabinet that the event had "passed off satisfactorily," despite the Dutch reservation to point four of the Atlantic Charter, and the last-minute Russian decision, which denied the British Bureau and Inter-Allied Committee legitimacy.³⁶²

Russia's behavior shocked the British. To obtain Moscow's goodwill, Eden had shown Maisky the draft resolutions and invitation in August, well *before* he had shared the materials with the other Allies, and he made a point to obtain Russia's views *before* setting a date for the conference.³⁶³ Maisky reciprocated, and provided an advance copy

³⁶⁰ "Resolution Relating to Postwar Relief Adopted At Inter-Allied Meeting in London, on September 24, 1941," File #2 Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 PART 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

³⁶¹ "The Inter-Allied Council Meeting in London," *Bulletin of International News* 18, no. 20 (Oct. 4, 1941): 1275-1280; Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 18, 1941; "Note on the views expressed by Allies... on Post-War Relief and Reconstruction..." September 22, 1941, both in CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁶² "Meeting of the War Cabinet," 96th Conclusions, September 24, 1941, W.M. (41), CAB 65/19/32, PRO.

³⁶³ Telegram No. 206, Eden to Cripps, August 19, 1941; Telegram No. 230, Eden to Cripps (Moscow), September 8, 1941, [C 10128/3912/G], both in FO 954/24B, PRO.

of his statement to be delivered at the meeting.³⁶⁴ He expressed concerns over the bureau: his government preferred an international setup with the authority to work on the problem of providing economic aid to occupied Europe.³⁶⁵ As a substitute, Maisky accepted the Inter-Allied Committee, but told Sir Frederick that he still needed to obtain Moscow's approval. He also requested one meeting of the committee before the bureau began its work, which Leith-Ross granted.³⁶⁶ Thus when Maisky suddenly objected to point six of the resolution during the meeting, it took the British by surprise.

The situation worsened. On September 26, 1941, Leith-Ross requested of Maisky the name of Soviet representative to the Inter-Allied Committee.³⁶⁷ If the Russians used the committee's first meeting to reopen the question of the bureau, he would try to align the other Allies against them.³⁶⁸ This never happened. On October 15, 1941, Maisky let it be known that his Government would not participate in view of its reservation to point six of the resolution. Instead, he would submit a new relief proposal to the Allies.³⁶⁹ Leith-Ross seemed unfazed. A week later he wrote Maisky that the British Government would "be happy to consider this [Soviet] proposal," but that he hoped to see their representative at a meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee the following week to discuss a "purely statistical question."³⁷⁰ But he told Sargent he would "feel bound to oppose" Maisky's proposal.³⁷¹

³⁶⁴ Telegram No. 247, Eden to Cripps (Moscow), September 16, 1941, [C 10428/14/62], FO 954/24B, PRO.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Leith-Ross to Sargent, September 18, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁶⁷ Leith-Ross to Maisky, September 26, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

³⁶⁸ Leith-Ross to Daish, October 2, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

³⁶⁹ Maisky to Leith-Ross, October 15, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

³⁷⁰ Leith-Ross to Maisky, October 22, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

³⁷¹ Leith-Ross to Orme Sargent, October 17, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

Just before the Committee's first meeting, the Soviet Ambassador convinced Eden to postpone it. Leith-Ross speculated that the Russians preferred to delay all discussions of postwar reconstruction, an unreasonable position. As a result, he tried to convince the Foreign Office that Britain should precede *without* Moscow. Establishing the bureau on an international basis, he argued, made no sense if the United States were not on board: the Americans would ultimately have to pay for most of what would be needed after the war. For this reason, the bureau's composition and mandate had been restricted, leaving it with insufficient work to justify an international staff.³⁷² On November 17, 1941, the British Government shared these views with Maisky.³⁷³ Whether the Russians responded remains unclear, but they were conspicuously absent from the first meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee held on December 19, 1941.³⁷⁴

Power Asymmetries in the Anglo-American Relationship

While these events unfolded, Lord Halifax had the time to reflect upon the two great problems of Anglo-American relations: how could London convince the United States to collaborate with Britain and shoulder its responsibilities in international politics, and how could Britain, despite its weaknesses, maintain its strength, influence, and even equality with the United States in the governance of global affairs? In a telegram addressed to Eden but meant for Churchill's eyes, he suggested that America's

³⁷² Leith-Ross to Arthur Greenwood, October 29, 1941; Leith-Ross to Ronald, November 4, 1941; "Organization of the Bureau," November 4, 1941, all in T 188/253, PRO.

³⁷³ Aide-Memoire, November 17, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

³⁷⁴ "Minutes of the meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee on Postwar Requirements in London, December 19, 1941, to consider European Agricultural Relief," File #2 Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 PART 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

isolationist tendencies had far less to do with a desire to disengage from world affairs than with a wish “to be isolated from, and insulated against, the mismanagement of them...” But now, he believed the American people had awoken to the “realization that the United States are inescapably ‘part of the world’ for good or ill.” The war, he believed, would discredit isolationism, and make the American people aware of their interests and responsibilities in other areas of the world. The Lend-Lease Act, various public statements from government officials, and recent instances of Anglo-American cooperation made the likelihood of this development more apparent.³⁷⁵

But with regard to the second question, Halifax admitted that in American opinion there existed a “continuing though vague desire... to inherit the influence and power of Great Britain and the Commonwealth.” “I am aware too,” he wrote, “that on occasions the proposals of individual officials may seem to be based on a desire to promote such a development, and that indiscriminate acquiescence in such proposals, if cumulative, might unduly impair our position in relation to this country.” Yet despite this evidence, Halifax could “detect neither in the attitude nor in the measures of the Administration as a whole any intention to convert such sentiments into terms of policy.”³⁷⁶

At this juncture, Halifax may have been correct in his observations. But if in time he maintained this viewpoint, it had more to do with tactics than the reality of American policy: officials in Washington, as we will see, hoped to dismantle the British Empire, assume its power under an anti-imperial guise, and establish an international system ostensibly led, but in reality, dominated by the United States. Even in the face of this

³⁷⁵ Viscount Halifax to Mr. Eden, October 15, 1941, No. 976, [A 9358/18/45], BT 88/7, PRO.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

policy, it remained far more intelligent for British officials to work from positive suppositions and seek to influence the Americans than to assume sinister motives, which might have led to a deterioration of relations and complete loss of influence.

Halifax believed Britain should seek to cement its ties of cooperation with the United States. The Roosevelt Administration, he reported, wanted to conclude a series of agreements before the end of hostilities to safeguard “against a recrudescence of political and economic isolationism after the war.” The best way to achieve this end, he pointed out, was through a treaty, but this procedure required a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate. To avoid the difficulties this avenue posed, the Administration had resorted to a “new procedure” whereby it used its executive powers and domestic legislation to achieve “what otherwise would have required a treaty.” The problem herein, Halifax lamented, was that future presidents could easily reverse such arrangements. Consequently, he thought Britain should encourage “a foundation of future policy which it would be difficult for its successors to reverse” and to “frame its own action in such a way as to assist the Executive in securing its objectives by these means.”³⁷⁷

For Halifax, success depended in large part on the approach. It was unreasonable, he suggested, to think that long-term cooperation could be achieved with one broad stroke of the brush. It would have to be obtained “piecemeal, and by the gradual means of solving concrete problems as they arise.” To avoid acrimony, he believed all British officials should “demonstrate real understanding and a real wish to meet the needs of the United States.” “We must eschew any appearance of trying to impose a solution of any question by insistence on a superior British wisdom,” he advised. “When difficulties

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

arise, we must avoid recriminations that will create an atmosphere of mutual suspicion.” It was also important to avoid the impression that they sought “to promote merely selfish interests.” If in its interactions with the Americans the British Government held to these tenets, he believed it would “be in a favorable position to place” its “talents and experience at the service of the desired Anglo-American partnership...”³⁷⁸

Anglo-Soviet Relations: the Historical Context

Context illuminates events. As one of the interventionist powers during the Russian Civil War, Britain aroused suspicions in Moscow. The Labor Government had recognized the Soviet state in 1924, and then again in 1929 after the conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin severed relations in 1927. But appearances, as one scholar explains, are deceiving: “Whatever their political complexion, [all] British governments in the twenties viewed Russia as an irritant, if not quite an outright enemy.”³⁷⁹ British attitudes changed little with the Nazi rise; if Hitler could be appeased, cooperation with Moscow seemed unnecessary. But opinion changed when it became apparent that he could not. Hoping to reconstitute the Triple Entente of WWI, Britain tried to link the Soviet Union to the Anglo-French alliance.³⁸⁰ But missteps and miscalculations wounded

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Graham Ross, ed., *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin*, 1. The issues in the section are also covered in Victor Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War, 1941-1947* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), 74-221.

³⁸⁰ Here I draw on Graham Ross, but the scholarship on these efforts is enormous. It has typically focused on its implications for Soviet foreign policy and the origins of the Cold War, some of which I footnote later in my discussions of Maxim Litvinov. But for an account that focuses more on the British, see Robert Manne, “The British Decision for Alliance with Russia, May 1939,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 9, no. 3 (July 1974):

these efforts. On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Non-Aggression with Germany.³⁸¹ Not long thereafter, the British Government recalled its Ambassador in Moscow, William Seeds, who had warned London of Soviet double-dealing.³⁸²

Caution and chance kept the doors between the two countries open. A secret protocol to the Anglo-Polish Treaty of August 25, 1939 stated that Britain would only assist Poland if it came under attack by Germany, not the Soviet Union.³⁸³ Britain thus avoided legal obligations to act against the Soviet state when Russian troops invaded Poland on September 17, 1939. Equally beneficial, the war between Finland and the Soviet Union ended before the British could launch a planned expedition to seize the Norwegian city of Narvik, which risked a confrontation with Moscow.³⁸⁴ If such factors kept Britain away from armed conflict with the Russians, a desire to offset German influence in the Soviet Union led Churchill to send Stafford Cripps, an avowed Marxist who had been expelled from the Labor Party the previous year for supporting the

3-26; Robert Manne, "The Foreign Office and the Failure of Anglo-Soviet Rapprochement," *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 4 (Oct. 1981): 725-755. Of course there is also the indefatigable A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 212-16, 220-228.

³⁸¹ "The Treaty of Nonaggression Between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," August 23, 1939, Avalon Project: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/nonagres.asp (accessed September 11, 2012).

³⁸² On these points, see Ross, ed., *Foreign Office*, 6; Taylor, *Origins*, 229.

³⁸³ "Secret Protocol Attached to the Agreement of Mutual Assistance Between the United Kingdom and Poland," August 25, 1939, in Anthony Cartwright and Richard A. Smith, *Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice and the World Crisis: A Legal Adviser in the Foreign Office, 1932-1945* (Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 312. See "Agreement of Mutual Assistance Between the United Kingdom and Poland," August 25, 1939, "Atlantic Charter," August 14, 1941, Avalon Project: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/blbk19.asp> (accessed September 11, 2012).

³⁸⁴ J.A. Bayer, "British Policy Towards the Russo-Finnish Winter War, 1939-40," *Canadian Journal of History* 16, no. 1 (April 1981): 27-65.

principle of popular fronts, to Moscow. But the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, would only accept Cripps as the successor to Seeds. Churchill appointed him Ambassador.³⁸⁵

Though this strange confluence of events made it easier for Britain to build an alliance with the Soviet Union after the Nazi attack on June 22, 1941, it also had other ramifications. Cripps sought trade agreements in Moscow that would have stiffened the blockade of Germany. When these efforts failed, he suggested a *de facto* recognition of the Soviet Union's new territories, acquired after the signing of the Non-Aggression Treaty, to win countervailing influence in Moscow. The War Cabinet concurred, but excluded Poland from the territorial equation. It also agreed to consult the Soviet Union about all postwar settlements, and to avoid any anti-Soviet alliance. In return, they expected benevolent neutrality from Moscow, and would be open to a Non-Aggression Pact if circumstances permitted. The Russians proved disinterested, but the damage was done. Cripps exceeded his instructions on Poland, which caused the Foreign Office to lose confidence in him, and the British had dangled a postwar political settlement before Russian eyes, which they never forget.³⁸⁶

Operation Barbarossa brought the two powers together, but historical animosities and the peculiarities of each nation's predicament pulled them apart. For the Soviet Union, the assault constituted a monumental disaster. Within four months, Leningrad was under siege; the Wehrmacht stood within 19 miles of the Kremlin; and the Germans had

³⁸⁵ Ross, ed., *Foreign Office*, 6-7.

³⁸⁶ The ambassadorship of Cripps has received considerable scholarly attention. See Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps' Mission to Moscow, 1940-42* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). On the particulars of his relationship with the Foreign Office, see Cripps to Eden, November 5, 1941; Eden to Cripps, November 10, 1941, both in Ross, ed., *Foreign Office*, 76-78, but see also Ross's commentary, 6-7.

taken Kiev as well as Rostov-on-Don, the gateway to the Caucasian oilfields.³⁸⁷ One can only imagine the sheer panic among officials as these events unfolded. While maneuvering the Red Army to prevent a complete collapse, and transferring the whole of their industrial heartland behind the Urals, the Russians begged the Americans and British for material assistance, and pleaded with London to open a second front or send troops to the Soviet Union.³⁸⁸ They obtained assistance,³⁸⁹ but Churchill's refusal to overrule the objections of his generals to meet the Soviet Union's military requests rekindled old suspicions.³⁹⁰ As a compromise, Cripps therefore suggested Britain seek Moscow's goodwill by proposing a postwar political settlement.³⁹¹ Naturally his ideas were suspect.³⁹²

It is plausible that the Soviet Union hoped to delay discussions of all postwar matters at this point in the war, as Leith-Ross surmised in October: their military predicament suggested a position of weakness.³⁹³ But this view conflicts with Soviet attempts to secure a postwar political settlement a few weeks later. The Russians apparently believed Britain's inability or refusal to assist them with direct military

³⁸⁷ Murray and Millet, *A War*, 110-142.

³⁸⁸ Telegram No. 205, Eden to Cripps (Moscow), August 19, 1941, [N 4673/3084/38]; Telegram No. 227, Eden to Cripps (Moscow), September 4, 1941, [N 5096/78/G]; Telegram No. 1092, Moscow to Foreign Office, September 4, 1941, all in FO 954/24B, PRO. This fact is similarly evident in subsequent footnotes in this section.

³⁸⁹ See Ulam, *Expansion*, 328-330; Herring, *Aid to Russia*.

³⁹⁰ On this point, see Telegram No. 227, Eden to Cripps, September 4, 1941, FO 954/24B, PRO.

³⁹¹ Cripps to Eden, November 5, 1941, in Ross, ed., *Foreign Office*, 76-77; Telegram No. 109, Kuibyshev to Foreign Office, November 15, 1941; Telegram No. 110, Kuibyshev to Foreign Office, November 15, 1941, both FO 954/24B, PRO.

³⁹² The Foreign Office did not tell Cripps that they lacked his confidence, but see Telegram No. 159, Foreign Office to Kuibyshev, November 17, 1941, FO 954/24B, PRO.

³⁹³ Leith-Ross to Arthur Greenwood, October 29, 1941; on this point, see also Leith-Ross to Ronald, November 4, 1941, both in T 188/253, PRO.

intervention strengthened their hand with regard to postwar matters. Moscow led Cripps to believe that “relations between the two countries” were “getting worse and not better.”³⁹⁴ The Foreign Office downplayed these reports.³⁹⁵ But the Soviet military situation made it difficult to dismiss them, especially after November 8, 1941, when Stalin wrote Churchill one of the most undiplomatic letters of the war. He complained that there was neither an “understanding” between their “countries concerning war aims and plans for the post-war organization of peace,” nor a “treaty... on mutual military aid in Europe against Hitler.”³⁹⁶

Soviet Efforts to Negotiate a Harder Bargain with Britain

It is in this context that we must consider the Soviet reservation to point six of the September 24, 1941 relief resolution, and their refusals to cooperate with the Inter-Allied Committee. The Russians did not want to delay discussions of postwar matters; rather, they hoped to negotiate a harder bargain while the British, particularly individuals like Cripps, felt guilty about their inability to provide meaningful relief to Russia during its

³⁹⁴ Cripps to Eden, October 25, 1941, in Ross, ed., *Foreign Office*, 74-75.

³⁹⁵ The Foreign Office used the Beaverbrook-Harriman talks with Stalin as a gauge of their relations with Moscow, not the reports of Cripps. This was evident on November 1, 1941, when they shared accounts of these meetings with their Ambassador in Moscow. But instead of calming Cripps, the reports infuriated him. The Foreign Office had failed to inform him of the conversations' details earlier. See Eden to Cripps, November 1, 1941; Cripps to Eden, November 5, 1941, both in Ross, ed., *Foreign Office*, 75-76.

³⁹⁶ Personal Message from Premier Stalin to PM Churchill, November 8, 1941, Document No. 20 in Joseph Stalin, *Stalin's Correspondence with Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt and Truman, 1941-45* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958), 33-34.

struggle against the Wehrmacht.³⁹⁷ In this way, they could test the sincerity of Britain's commitment to their present and future security.³⁹⁸ Moscow also hoped to make a deal with the British before the United States became involved in the war or postwar planning. For this reason, Maisky promised to submit a Soviet alternative to the relief resolution of September 24, 1941; officials in Moscow prepared two treaties and a secret protocol; and Russian officials heightened the urgency of their situation.³⁹⁹

Whether a test of London's goodwill or a ruse to secure an advantageous postwar political agreement, the British had little choice but to respond to the appearance of Russian anxiety. Inasmuch as the success of the war effort depended on Soviet victories in the East, stability in the postwar period required some attempt at cooperation or accommodation with Moscow. British officials felt obliged to placate their fears. On November 12, 1941, the Soviet Ambassador "mentioned the suspicion that prevailed in Russia" and complained of the "many people" in Britain who "advocated allowing Germany a free hand in the East." Britain's failure or inability to "form a second front," Maisky told Eden, had revived these worries. The British attributed "Stalin's desire to secure a definite understanding on war aims and on plans for the post-war organization or peace" to these suspicions. But they also believed Stalin feared "an Anglo-American peace from which" they would "be largely excluded."⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁷ On the issue of guilt, see George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), p. 358.

³⁹⁸ The desire to "test" the British is discussed at length in Telegram No. 159, Foreign Office to Kuibyshev, November 17, 1941, FO 954/24B, PRO. But here it is not mentioned with regard to relief.

³⁹⁹ On the first point, see Maisky to Leith-Ross, October 15, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴⁰⁰ Minute by A.R. Dew on policy towards the Soviet Union, November 21, 1941 in Ross, ed., *Foreign Office*, 79-81.

Thus Churchill deployed Eden to Moscow in December 1941, where Stalin presented him with the two treaties and secret protocol. The first treaty was an Anglo-Soviet military alliance against Germany and her European allies; it pledged the powers to conclude no separate peace. The second treaty called for cooperation in postwar affairs. The secret protocol asked for British recognition of the Soviet Union's frontiers at the time of the Nazi attack; it harkened back to the *de facto* recognition proposed by Cripps a year earlier. The treaty proposals led the two countries to conclude the Twenty Year Mutual Assistance Agreement on May 26, 1942. But Eden rebuffed the secret protocol. Britain had promised the United States it would conclude no secret accords. The Atlantic Charter committed its signatories to seek no territorial changes "that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned" and to "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live..."⁴⁰¹

Yet these commitments meant little. Stalin thought the Atlantic Charter was "directed against those who were trying to get world domination." But when Eden cited it to reject his postwar aims, he complained that it was "beginning to look as though it were directed at the Soviet Union." He must have anticipated this moment. Russia's adherence to the declaration had been "ponderous" and stated in a "qualified way."⁴⁰² In Maisky's opinion, the Charter sounded "as if England and the USA fancied themselves as Almighty God, with a mission to judge the remainder of the sinful world, including my

⁴⁰¹ The December 1941 Eden discussions in Moscow are covered in most standard diplomatic histories of the Second World War, but one account which I found especially clear and amusing is Robert Beitzell, *The Uneasy Alliance: America, Britain and Russia, 1941-1943* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 3-13. See also Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 26-28.

⁴⁰² Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, 27, 23-24.

own country.”⁴⁰³ As for the British, Churchill never believed the Atlantic Charter applied to the dependent Empire, but in early 1942, it became apparent that he was willing to exempt Eastern Europe from its statutes as well. He asked Roosevelt to make an exception for the Soviet frontiers on March 7, 1942.⁴⁰⁴ But the President disapproved.

Whether the Americans genuinely supported the principles enshrined in the Atlantic Charter remains to be seen; here they stood by them because it served their interests; and the British, who were dependent, acted accordingly because they had no choice. The Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Richard Law, may have been correct when he confessed some years later that the Atlantic Charter “was mainly a dodge to get the U.S. a little bit further into the war,” but he was decidedly incorrect when he blamed the difficulties it caused Great Britain on the fact that “nobody at any time believed in it.”⁴⁰⁵ The difficulties had nothing to do with beliefs; they were the result of power disparities and incongruent interest structures that underlay Anglo-American relations.

The Americans also discouraged British temptations to mollify the Russians on relief. Leith-Ross informed Maisky that Britain would “be very happy to consider” the Soviet proposals to reorganize the Inter-Allied Committee and Bureau.⁴⁰⁶ But secretly he told the Foreign Office that he would be bound to oppose any Soviet plans for an Inter-Allied Staff, or any suggested reorganization that excluded the United States.⁴⁰⁷ The Americans had made it clear that they “would regard the creation of an Inter-Allied body

⁴⁰³ Ralph B. Levering and Verena Botzenhart-Viehe, “The American Perspective,” in *Debating the Origins of the Cold War: American and Russian Perspectives* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 15.

⁴⁰⁴ Ulam, *Expansion*, 334-335.

⁴⁰⁵ Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 102.

⁴⁰⁶ Leith-Ross to Maisky, October 22, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴⁰⁷ Leith-Ross to Orme Sargent, October 17, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

to distribute relief, which must largely come from the US, as premature.” For Sir Frederick, the circumstances were just fine. Britain’s financial position made American participation essential, and he did not want to be “the chairman of an inter-allied staff, who either have nothing to do or waste their time doing unnecessary work.” If these arrangements were accepted, he wrote, “I must ask that someone else be put in charge of it.”⁴⁰⁸

Thus while Leith-Ross gave Maisky the impression that Britain remained open to the Russian point of view, he obstructed their efforts. Behind the scenes he worked to turn his colleagues against the anticipated Soviet proposals. Among the Allies, he secured the support of governments who disapproved of any suggestion to internationalize the relief efforts at this stage in the war. “The French and Belgians,” he wrote Eden, “have had experience of these inter-Allied organizations, [and] are as strongly convinced as I am that it would be an absolute waste of money and energy to create such an organization at present.”⁴⁰⁹ Perhaps it was sheer coincidence, but it also bears noting that he chaired the first meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee on December 19, 1941. No Russian representative was present. Maisky, at that time, was in Moscow with Eden.⁴¹⁰

By this point, the events of the previous days had dramatically changed the context of all inter-allied cooperation. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a daring assault on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, which led the United States to declare war on Japan. Shortly thereafter, the Germans issued their own declaration of war on the United States, a decision that obliged the Roosevelt Administration to fight a two-

⁴⁰⁸ “Organization of the Bureau,” November 4, 1941, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ “Minutes... of the Inter-Allied Committee.... December 19, 1941...” Acheson Papers, NARA.

front war across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Now the conflicts in Asia and Europe were linked. Though Franklin Roosevelt, as we have seen, spoke of the erupting conflagration in global terms as early as January, it was now apparent to everyone that humanity faced a world war. These developments make Soviet behavior the following month understandable, but also bizarre.

The First Wartime Proposal for an International Organization

When the Soviet Ambassador returned to London, he delivered on his promise of three months prior. On January 13, 1942, he presented the British with his government's plan for cooperation on postwar relief. The memo he shared with Eden is remarkable for many reasons, but one is noteworthy. In the introduction, the Russians acknowledged the "international character" of many of the challenges they would face after the defeat of Nazi Germany. In so doing, they admitted that these problems could not be solved by one state alone. They therefore proposed the establishment of "an international organization," the first such proposal of the war. It would initially focus on the supply of foodstuffs and raw materials, but Maisky believed it could be expanded to cover other problems later.⁴¹¹

The Russians drew upon the Inter-Allied Committee and British Bureau advanced on September 24, 1941 when constructing their proposal. To facilitate the planning function of the committee, they suggested two commissions, one on Foodstuffs and Raw Materials, and one devoted to the problems of Transport. In time, Maisky believed the

⁴¹¹ "Memorandum on the Tasks and Organization of the Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements," January 13, 1942; for Maisky's views on the memorandum, see "Organization of European Post-War Relief," "Note by Sir F. Leith-Ross of a Conversation with Mr. Maisky," January 24, 1942, all in T 188/253, PRO.

Allies might establish additional commissions to address other problems. As for the bureau, its functions would remain “day-to-day business and technical preparatory work,” but under the Soviet plan its membership would have been widened to include a Russian and two or three representatives from the other allied countries.⁴¹²

The proposal provided no place in the organization for the United States, not even on the Inter-Allied Committee, which the Americans joined in late December 1941.⁴¹³ Equally striking, Maisky presented the plan to the exiled European governments, but did not share it with the Americans.⁴¹⁴ Yet the Russians still hoped the United States would provide foodstuffs and raw materials to the organization. The plan specified that the committee would prepare estimates of not only requirements, but of the resources in its member states as well, which included the British Commonwealth and Empire in addition to the refugee governments. The proposal then singled out the United States as a country with significant supply sources the committee would be empowered to evaluate.⁴¹⁵

Under the Soviet plan, the Inter-Allied Committee obtained the authority to allocate supplies and recommend credits and loans to obtain them. Here again the absence of the United States requires explanation: how the organization could obtain resources from the Americans without giving them influence over their allocation, or the ability to recommend the financial terms by which the recipient states would secure those

⁴¹² “Memorandum on the Tasks and Organization of the Inter-Allied Committee...” January 13, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴¹³ Berle to Hull, Memorandum, December 22, 1941, 840.50/382-3/5; Telegram No. 6262, Winant to Hull, December 29, 1941, 840.50/382-4/5, both in Box 4796, RG 59, NARA; The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), December 29, 1941, 840.50/282-3/8; Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 112.

⁴¹⁴ “Note by the Chairman on the Soviet Memorandum,” March 5, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴¹⁵ “Memorandum on the Tasks and Organization of the Inter-Allied Committee...” January 13, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

resources, remains unknown. Similarly confusing, the Soviet plan gave the Inter-Allied Committee the power to elaborate “measures” to control prices and “combat speculation on the post-war needs” of victims of Hitler’s aggression. Yet it made it clear that the “purchase and sale” of resources “should not come within the province of the Inter-Allied Committee,” thereby stripping it of the best tool to effectuate its desired price.⁴¹⁶

Finally, the Soviet proposal provided that decisions of the Inter-Allied Committee should be taken “by the unanimous vote of all the representatives taking part in the proceedings.” The Committee’s decisions would only come into effect after each of the respective governments had endorsed them. The first stipulation meant that any country could have blocked progress on any matter, whether of interest to them or not. The second meant that affected nations could have obstructed the Committee’s decisions from being implemented, even after its members had overcome the formidable hurdle of unanimity.⁴¹⁷ These rules would have made the organization’s work near impossible, unless the Soviets planned to take action through the Inter-Allied Bureau and occupying military forces. Without Soviet documents, such determinations remain impossible.

If the Soviet proposal was a ploy to derail all postwar discussions until later in the war, the evidences suggests otherwise. The previous month Stalin *had* sought territorial guarantees from London against the wishes of Washington. These efforts would continue. Per his involvement, Maisky dismissed Sir Frederick’s central criticism of the Soviet proposal: “the Russian memorandum had been prepared before the entry of the United States into the war.” But when Leith-Ross inquired about the organization’s executive

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

machinery, the Soviet Ambassador showed his colors: “The people at the top in America took broad views,” he claimed, “but there was little knowledge or understanding of European problems.” “[Capitalist] and speculative influences were very strong in business circles.” As a result, Maisky “wanted a real Inter-Allied system of control.”⁴¹⁸

This goal presupposed the exclusion of Washington. The Soviet Ambassador wanted “the relief work to be planned by the European powers... and [with] as little [American] influence as possible.”⁴¹⁹ As he told Leith-Ross, “he wanted to keep them... in the background.”⁴²⁰ And to achieve this objective, he stressed the importance of establishing the organization in Europe, as opposed to in the United States.⁴²¹

While these opinions worried Leith-Ross, the mechanics of the Soviet plan appeared impractical as well. “The objective of the Russian Government seems to be to set up a planning organization here, whose decisions would be binding on the supplying countries,” he wrote. But it was doubtful whether the Americans would provide their food and raw materials if they were not a part of the Inter-Allied Committee, which, according to the Soviet plan, would maintain responsibility for allocating supplies and recommending credits and loans to obtain them.⁴²²

Leith-Ross criticized the Soviet proposal in other ways as well. He lambasted the idea of an Inter-Allied Bureau. He attacked the two proposed commissions on grounds

⁴¹⁸ “Organization of European Post-War Relief,” “Note by Sir F. Leith-Ross... Maisky,” January 24, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴¹⁹ Leith-Ross to Ronald, January 31, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴²⁰ “Minister without Portfolio,” “Russian Memorandum on Post-War Relief,” January 26, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴²¹ “Organization of European Post-War Relief,” “Note by Sir F. Leith-Ross... Maisky,” January 24, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴²² “Minister without Portfolio,” “Russian Memorandum...” January 26, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

that they would seek “to obtain a vested interest” and “claim to constitute the final form for Inter-Allied control in these fields.” Such interests, in turn, would make negotiations with the United States more difficult. The Soviet memo also excluded the Far East, neutral countries, and enemy countries. The later fact, Leith-Ross pointed out, came into conflict with Churchill’s statement of June 1940 and the Atlantic Charter, which stipulated “that there should be no differentiation between victor and vanquished.” He criticized the requirement of unanimous voting on all decisions taken by the Inter-Allied Committee: this would make it difficult for the committee to act. The scope of the organization, too, received his opprobrium. It not only addressed the question of relief; it also suggested the Soviet formula would apply to the whole “economic life of post-War Europe.”⁴²³

Back to the United States: Regrouping for the Next Stage

The Russian proposal hardened the British in their determination to pursue the fullest possible cooperation with the United States. Within days, they shared the memo with the American Embassy.⁴²⁴ Leith-Ross also gave them records of confidential conversations he had with Maisky, in which the Ambassador made his Government’s

⁴²³ “Organization of European Post-War Relief,” “Note by Sir F. Leith-Ross... Maisky,” January 24, 1942; “Aide Memoire to be handed to M. Maisky on the Russian Memorandum,” Draft, February 20, 1942; “Note by the Chairman on the Soviet Memorandum,” March 5, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴²⁴ The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS (Hull), January 22, 1942, 840.50/412-2/6: Telegram 327, in DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General, The British Commonwealth, The Near East*. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960, 89-92.

determination to exclude the Americans apparent.⁴²⁵ Determined to forge the strongest of relations with the United States, even to the detriment of a possible treaty with Russia, Sir Frederick also provided them other documents without authorization.⁴²⁶ The Americans, of course, welcomed such breaches, but insisted that Britain should not reply to the Soviet memorandum before obtaining their views.⁴²⁷ This process took months, and aroused immense suspicion in Moscow. For the British, it delayed an impending war between pro-Russian and pro-American factions in the Foreign Office.⁴²⁸

In the interim period, they shared with the Americans a proposal of their own calling for an international relief organization, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters. In this context, we must note that Leith-Ross believed the United Kingdom should provide some estimate to the Americans of its potential contribution to postwar relief in order to embolden its leadership aspirations. It also needed to build up stocks in accordance with the Prime Minister's pledge of June 1940, which had not been done. Worse, many of the possible sources for planned stockpiles had vanished: increased war demands had turned the surplus problem into one of scarcity. Several of the exiled governments had also commenced purchasing materials for their own postwar use, a fact that taxed supplies further. Thus available resources for relief were rapidly dissipating.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁵ Leith-Ross to Steyne, January 26, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴²⁶ On January 30, 1942, Leith-Ross was instructed not to share his proposed reply to the Russians with the Americans until he had heard from the Foreign Office. See Sir E. Benthall, "Russian Memorandum on Relief Organization," January 30, 1942. On February 21, 1942, he shared the suggested reply with the Americans despite his instructions. See Steyne to Leith-Ross, February 21, 1942, all in T 188/253, PRO.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ "Mr. Ronald Rang Up," Handwritten Note, No Date, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴²⁹ Though the initial letter from Leith-Ross is missing from the file, the reply discusses these problems. S.D. Waley to Leith-Ross, "Relief," January 24, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

The Treasury believed the country could make no commitment to postwar relief from its resources due to the country's perilous financial situation. "We have to try to reconcile our desire for political and prestige reasons to take a leading part in organizing relief with the probability that after the war we shall ourselves greatly need to obtain relief." For this reason, the Treasury thought it all the more imperative that Britain should reach out to the Americans.⁴³⁰ Yet Leith-Ross disliked the idea of pursuing negotiations with the United States while evincing no willingness to make a commitment. "The question is obviously one which will have to be considered by the Ministers," he wrote, "but if the decision is that we cannot offer any definite contribution, I hope that the Treasury will arrange for someone else to take responsibility for our future leadership of relief planning."⁴³¹

The changed circumstances led to a reordering of the planning machinery for postwar relief in the British government. In January, the War Cabinet abolished the Ministerial Committee on Export Surpluses for lack of purpose.⁴³² It maintained the Official Committee on Export Surpluses, which Leith-Ross chaired, but changed the name several months later to reflect the new situation: it became the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief.⁴³³ In February 1942, Churchill transferred

For more detailed information on the disappearance of surpluses, see "Export Surpluses Policy," by Leith-Ross, November 8, 1941, BT 88/2, PRO.

⁴³⁰ S.D. Waley to Leith-Ross, "Relief," January 24, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴³¹ Leith-Ross to S.D. Waley (Treasury), January 26, 1942, T 188/253, PRO.

⁴³² "Note by the Secretary of the War Cabinet," January 10, 1942, E.E. Bridges, War Cabinet, Ministerial Committee on Export Surpluses, W.P. (42) 18, CAB 66/20/49, PRO.

⁴³³ "Note by the Secretary of the War Cabinet," April 20, 1942, E.E. Bridges, War Cabinet, Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief, W.P. (42) 165, CAB 66/23/45, PRO.

Hugh Dalton from the Ministry of Economic Warfare to the Board of Trade.⁴³⁴

Thereupon, the Minister Without Portfolio lost his seat in the Cabinet, and the new President of the Board of Trade assumed responsibility for the Official Committee. Sir Frederick's relief operation, moreover, was re-housed in the Board of Trade.⁴³⁵

Leith-Ross also directed the Bureau that facilitated the work of the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements, which he chaired.⁴³⁶ Though the Inter-Allied Committee became a clearinghouse for intelligence on the postwar needs of Europe, as planned, it served other purposes as well: it provided the British a propaganda tool vis-à-vis the Nazis and the populations in the occupied territories; it gave them a means with which to satisfy and unify the allied governments; and it became a tool with which to apply pressure on the United States and carve out a position of prominence for Great Britain in the postwar world order. With these ends in mind, the committee met four more times: on June 17, 1942; October 1, 1942; October 20, 1942; and on April 16, 1943.⁴³⁷ It also established an elaborate system of technical advisory committees that prepared estimates for agriculture, medical supplies, nutrition, and inland transport. These

⁴³⁴ Hugh Dalton, *The Fateful Years: Memoirs, 1931-1945* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1957), 382-384.

⁴³⁵ "Note by the Secretary of the War Cabinet," April 20, 1942, W.P. (42) 165, CAB 66/23/45, PRO.

⁴³⁶ For Sir Frederick's rather uninteresting description of these events, see Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, *Money Talks: Fifty Years of International Finance* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 288-317.

⁴³⁷ "Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements," Minutes of Meeting held at 5 Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, on Wednesday, June 17, 1942, 840.50/488, Box 4798, RG 59, NARA; Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Relief, Minutes of Third Meeting held October 1, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO; "Inter-Allied Committee," Draft Minutes of Meeting held on October 20, 1942, 840.50/818, Box 4800, RG 59, NARA; Inter-Allied Committee, Draft Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, April 16, 1943, 840.50/2012, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

committees met repeatedly throughout 1942 and early 1943. The Soviet Union simply refused to participate in any of these meetings.⁴³⁸

Through all of the turmoil, Leith-Ross never resigned, despite unending challenges and repeated threats. When Hugh Dalton became the Minister of Economic Warfare, he tried to undercut Sir Frederick's authority as Director-General by placing two civil servants under him, whose loyalty would be to the Minister instead of Leith-Ross. These arrangements angered Sir Frederick, and ensured their relations would be stormy in the beginning. Dalton, on one occasion, issued a peremptory order for Leith-Ross to see him instantly. When his private secretary informed the Minister that Sir Frederick was not available, Dalton reissued the order. The secretary thereupon visited the Director-General in the restroom. Upon reading the note the secretary passed under the stall, Leith-Ross replied: "Tell him that I can only deal with one shit at a time."⁴³⁹ That, we might say, was Sir Frederick's motto. How well it served him remains a question for our consideration, but it certainly captures his frustrations.

⁴³⁸ The minutes of these meetings are too extensive to list here, but they are included in the Decimal File at NARA: 840.50.

⁴³⁹ Ben Pimlott, *Hugh Dalton* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1985), pp. 283-284.

CHAPTER THREE

ROOSEVELT'S BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM

The December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor presented the Roosevelt Administration with a global opportunity. The question for officials was how best to exploit it. Obviously the President would obtain a Congressional declaration of war on Japan, but whether he should seek one on Germany remained unclear. Henry Stimson and Cordell Hull thought he should. The Cabinet, however, decided against it. Apparently several of its members had learned through intelligence intercepts that Berlin had promised to enter the fray on Tokyo's side if war broke out between Japan and the United States.⁴⁴⁰ This information turned out to be true. On December 11, 1941, Adolf Hitler saved Roosevelt much trouble by declaring war on the United States. With this step, the conflict had become a global affair in all but one aspect.⁴⁴¹

The alliance fighting the war was still European. Thus in late December 1941, the Roosevelt Administration worked with the British to craft a new declaration that would adhere a geographically more comprehensive group of nations to the Atlantic Charter.⁴⁴² It would pledge them to defend "life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands." They would also agree to exert their full resources against Germany, Italy and Japan, and to

⁴⁴⁰ Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), 557-560.

⁴⁴¹ Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 262-263.

⁴⁴² See "General: Declaration by United Nations, Signed January 1, 1942," in DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General, The British Commonwealth, The Near East* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 1-29.

make no separate armistice or peace with the enemies.⁴⁴³ To maximize the impact of this declaration, and to ensure its openness to all, Roosevelt labored over what to call it. When speaking to Congress, Churchill had “fumbled with the words ‘allied nations’ and then had called them ‘associated nations,’” as Wilson did during the First World War. These formulations could not work.⁴⁴⁴

At some point between Christmas and New Years Eve of 1941, a “bright idea” struck Roosevelt. He thereupon rolled into the Rose Room, where Churchill, then visiting the President at the White House, was taking a bath. The group of countries fighting the Axis Powers, he suggested to the Prime Minister, should be called “the united nations.” Churchill mulled over the idea for a moment, and then agreed to the proposal. Roosevelt wrote out the heading: “Declaration by United Nations.”⁴⁴⁵ On January 1, 1942, twenty-six nations signed the document, including China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States; the Dominions and India signed, as did the exiled European Governments and a handful of Latin American countries. By the end of the war, an additional twenty-one nations would adhere to the UN Declaration.⁴⁴⁶

Its name is wildly important. When Roosevelt conveyed this story to one of his chief advisors, Adolf Berle, he explained that in speaking with Churchill he had refrained from making “the analogy to the ‘United States’ – a name worked out by a somewhat

⁴⁴³ “Declaration by the United Nations,” January 1, 1942, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy (New Haven: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, 2008): http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade03.asp (accessed September 11, 2012).

⁴⁴⁴ See entry for January 6, 1942, in Beatrice Bishop Berle and Travis Beal Jacobs, eds., *Navigating the Rapids, 1918-1971: From the Papers of Adolf A. Berle* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973), 394-395.

⁴⁴⁵ Entry for January 6, 1942, in Berle, *Navigating the Rapids*, 394-395.

⁴⁴⁶ “Declaration by the United Nations,” January 1, 1942, Avalon Project: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade03.asp (accessed September 11, 2012).

similar process of mind in 1776...” The title merely suggested the nations of the world were “united in purpose,” and “if it led to a greater degree of working together, so much the better.”⁴⁴⁷ But for Roosevelt, the idea of a “world civilization” was “American civilization writ large.”⁴⁴⁸ His choice of name, “United Nations,” implicitly captures the idea. While it may be easy in the present to criticize such a grandiose project, it behooves us to remember that the self-image of the United States as well as perceptions of the country abroad were more positive than negative at this point in history.⁴⁴⁹

Consequently, a central task of the Roosevelt Administration was to ensure the maintenance of this benevolence through whatever system it constructed. This aim meant that the country would have to plan. Vague statements of principle, such as those enunciated in the Four Freedoms speech, the Atlantic Charter, and the United Nations Declaration, were insufficient to build a new international system, even if these documents provided blueprints at times. With this observation in mind, we turn to the planning process, particularly the role of Roosevelt’s administrative style in it. Although much of these matters have been discussed before, I have elected to include them here because they are so fundamental to our story.

⁴⁴⁷ Entry for January 6, 1942, in Berle, *Navigating the Rapids*, 394-395.

⁴⁴⁸ The later quote comes from an exchange with Walter McDougall.

⁴⁴⁹ If there were exceptions to this role, they existed in areas where the United States had been intimately involved: the Philippines and Latin America, for example. On the Philippines, see Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, and the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Latin America is addressed in subsequent chapters.

The Pressure to Prepare: Establishing a Planning Apparatus

On December 28, 1941, Franklin Delano Roosevelt authorized the Department of State to recommence its preparatory activities for the postwar world. The President's decision came after more than two years of uncertainty, during which the United States found itself responding to events rather than controlling them. Despite its rich resources and industrial might, the country was unprepared to deal with the global conflagration that would absorb its attention. The size of the government had expanded under the New Deal, but these programs and agencies had been designed for domestic purposes, not the global management of international relations. The State Department had weathered budget cuts and reductions in personnel throughout the 1930s. Many civil servants had left the department for the private sector, such that when storm clouds engulfed the globe, a mere 730 civil servants remained in the Foreign Service.⁴⁵⁰

Every State Department effort to plan for the future before December 1941 had ended in failure. Within four months of its creation, the Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations established following the Nazi invasion of Poland had ceased to exist. With no support staff and a few resources, the Committee met seldom and left few records.⁴⁵¹ The Committee's successor, the Interdepartmental Group to Consider Post-War International Economic Problems and Policies, which included agencies from outside the State Department, became so consumed in the problems of

⁴⁵⁰ Irwin Gellman, *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 37.

⁴⁵¹ Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), 20-22. Notter explains why the committee's records are so minimal. For more information on the committee's establishment and work, see Hugh R. Wilson Papers, HHPL.

Hemispheric defense that it had little time to think about the future, much less plan for it. By December 1940, events had so overwhelmed the United States government – the collapse of France, the Congressional fight for lend-lease, the raging battle over the skies of Britain, and the deteriorating situation in the Far East – that the Interdepartmental Group ceased meeting, and Secretary of State Cordell Hull did nothing to resuscitate it.⁴⁵²

Throughout 1941 the Roosevelt Administration accomplished little in the way of planning, despite repeated pleas from bureaucrats and several of the President's closest advisors.⁴⁵³ The Undersecretary of State, Sumner Welles, frequently urged the President to speak out about the need to plan for peace.⁴⁵⁴ The Assistant Secretary of State, Adolf Berle, wrote Roosevelt in June 1941, asking that he be allowed to begin preparing tentative outlines for the postwar world order.⁴⁵⁵ Inside the State Department, the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, Leo Pasvolsky, wrote Welles in April and the Secretary in September, urging them to create an apparatus to plan for all phases of postwar foreign policy.⁴⁵⁶ Welles privately raised the issue with Roosevelt, but not until

⁴⁵² Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 29-30, 32-33, 40.

⁴⁵³ Myron Taylor urged the President to create a study group for preparations: Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, p. 45. It is likely that a number of other top figures in the U.S. foreign policy establishment pressured him as well: Isaiah Bowman, who served on the postwar preparatory group of Colonel House during the First World War; and Norman Davis, Chairman of the Red Cross and President of the Council on Foreign Relations. On Bowman, see Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

⁴⁵⁴ Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), para. 110-181.

⁴⁵⁵ David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937-41: A Study in Competitive Co-operation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 256-57.

⁴⁵⁶ See Pasvolsky to Welles, April 11, 1941, in Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 462. See "Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy," No Date; Pasvolsky to Hull, September 12, 1941, both in File Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

early October did Hull discuss the creation of a new postwar advisory committee with him.⁴⁵⁷ Yet even after this meeting, nearly four months passed before anything was done.

For Adolf Berle, a member of Roosevelt's original brain trust and one of the architects of the First New Deal, these delays were worrisome. Like his friend and confidant, Sumner Welles, Berle feared the British might secretly cede the Baltic States to the Soviet Union. Equally disturbing, he worried that the British planned to use the Inter-Allied Committee for Postwar Requirements to channel the trade and economics of the Western Hemisphere through London when the war ended. Berle never doubted these efforts were partly humanitarian, but he was suspicious of the British and understood that this work had implications that extended beyond the relief portfolio. As a result, he believed that planning should begin at once so the United States could define its interests and be in a position to preempt British economic designs or any other ulterior motives.⁴⁵⁸

The Bureaucratic Politics of Postwar Planning

Why did the Roosevelt Administration postpone preparations for the postwar period for so long? Harley Notter suggests the answer has a lot to do with the late date on which the United States entered the war: it made little sense to expend precious time and resources planning while more pressing matters remained on the table and uncertainty

⁴⁵⁷ Formally, Welles wrote Roosevelt on October 18, 1941. See Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 59; but also O'Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*, para. 110-181.

⁴⁵⁸ Reynolds, *Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 257; Jordan A. Schwartz, *Liberal: Adolf Berle and the Vision of an American Era* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 164.

loomed in the air.⁴⁵⁹ The Administration also feared possible political fallout should postwar planning become public knowledge: political factions opposed to American participation in the war would have exploded were they to learn that Roosevelt was making plans to end a war in which the United States had not yet entered.⁴⁶⁰ Both of these explanations possess merit, but they are inadequate. The Administration had made failed attempts to plan before, and the potentially damaging effects of leaks did not vanish with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In fact, they remained throughout 1942 and much of 1943.

These explanations, moreover, accord little with the underlying character of the United States. Americans have never lacked ambition and have never been risk averse. The people of the United States, as Alexis de Tocqueville once wrote, have always been “devoured by the desire to rise.”⁴⁶¹ The aspiration for world power has been present since the nation’s founding, and has been sustained by the belief that divine Providence bestowed upon the United States a special mission in the world.⁴⁶² Thus from the moment

⁴⁵⁹ This point comes out repeatedly in the first three chapters of Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*.

⁴⁶⁰ An obvious point, perhaps, but it is mentioned in many places. See O’Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*. The point arises on numerous occasions in the first three chapters of Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*.

⁴⁶¹ Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 599-600.

⁴⁶² These themes emerge throughout the literature on American foreign relations, though few claim the United States wanted “world power” from the beginning. I take Nietzsche as my starting point: the “will to power” is the central driving force in man. When this assumption is applied at the level of the state, and then coupled with the roles played by nationalism and Protestant millenarianism in American history, you get the sentiments evoked here. For a succinct statement on U.S. foreign relations, see Walter McDougall, *Promised Land: Crusader State: the American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997). For a more exhaustive account, see George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). In the political science literature, these ideas

the Germans attacked Poland, policymakers in the Roosevelt Administration smelled opportunity. Even while worrying over the defense of the Western Hemisphere, most of them wanted the United States to begin preparing at once. So why did the United States, a country that boasted a level of economic output in 1937 that exceeded the next four countries combined, delay for so long?⁴⁶³ The answer, simply put, is that Americans, while ambitious and righteous, can also be shrewd and crafty. Franklin Roosevelt, in the latter regard, suffered no deficit.

Whether by design or incompetence, Roosevelt's administrative style meant that decisions were brought to him.⁴⁶⁴ He ignored established lines of authority within governmental bureaucracies, and assigned overlapping responsibilities to competing departments or agencies. As a result, territorial wars often erupted between various bureaucracies and fighting would break out within them, leaving but one person, the President of the United States, to arbitrate. With this administrative style in play, it is hardly surprising that the New Dealers behaved like gangsters, always engaged in territorial gunfights and protracted intramural feuds over policy.⁴⁶⁵

accord most with the tenets of "offensive realism" as developed by John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

⁴⁶³ For statistics on American economic output, see Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Vantage Books, 1989) p. 332. For an in-depth analysis of the United States economic position from 1939 to 1945, see Hugh Rockoff, "The United States: From Ploughshares to Swords," in *The Economics of World War II: Six Great Powers in International Comparison*, ed, Mark Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 81-121.

⁴⁶⁴ While Arthur M. Schlesinger believes Roosevelt's administrative tactics were by design, Dean Acheson disagrees. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Age of Roosevelt*, vol. 2, *The Coming of the New Deal*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), 527-529; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), p. 47.

⁴⁶⁵ No serious scholar working on the Roosevelt Administration since Schlesinger has not commented on the fighting: See William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the*

Once a decision came before the President, a complex intuitive process of deciding ensued. First, Roosevelt heard all sides of the issue. His administrative system and his habit of giving each of the main actors access to his office ensured that he would become well informed of the issue at hand; it also encouraged members of his administration to saddle up for the fight. Second, Roosevelt wanted to know that the decision would be executed. He usually consulted all major actors with a stake in the issue. Roosevelt, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. explains, appears to have believed “that clear-cut administrative decisions would work only if they expressed equally clear-cut realities of administrative competence and vigor.”⁴⁶⁶ And finally, the President tended to weigh into the equation a variety of external issues: the proper timing for decision, the potential reaction and role of Congress, possible partisan impacts, and the public interest.

In conformity with this approach, Roosevelt divided the State Department against itself. In July 1937, he appointed his long-time associate and friend, Sumner Welles, to the position of Undersecretary, despite protests from Hull.⁴⁶⁷ Then, to exacerbate tensions between the two men, he increased Welles’s influence and authority by giving the Undersecretary unfettered access to the White House and selecting him instead of the Secretary to undertake special missions and represent the United States at major

New Deal, 1932-1940 (New York: Harper Collins, 1963) pp. 339-341; but also Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1989). Robert Sherwood has also commented on this fact: “History will achieve not complete understanding of Franklin Roosevelt’s Administration without knowledge of the intramural feuds which so frequently beset it. (I do not believe that even history will ever be able to understand why he tolerated them to the extent that he did.) Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Enigma Books, 2008) p. 107.

⁴⁶⁶ Schlesinger, *Age of Roosevelt*, vol. 2, 528.

⁴⁶⁷ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.

diplomatic events. In September 1939, Welles, at Roosevelt's request, attended the hastily called Inter-American Conference in Panama, where the American states pledged hemispheric neutrality.⁴⁶⁸ During February and March 1940, the President sent Welles on a highly publicized but futile peace mission to Europe.⁴⁶⁹ The following August, Welles accompanied the President to Argentina, where Churchill and Roosevelt issued the Atlantic Charter.⁴⁷⁰ All of this, of course, angered Cordell Hull.⁴⁷¹

This was a risky game. A handsome soft-spoken man from central Tennessee, Cordell Hull became Roosevelt's top man at the State Department in 1933. At the age of 62, he had served in the House and Senate for twenty-three years, a factor that made him popular in Congress, especially the Senate. Though he contributed to the development of Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, he devoted most of his time to trade liberalization. Hull believed that lowering tariffs and duties prevented war and promoted economic growth.⁴⁷² His detractors often made fun of his speech impediment, mocking his "wecopwocal twade agweements progwams."⁴⁷³ But after the passing of the Reciprocal

⁴⁶⁸ See David G. Haglund, *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought 1936-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 147-149; Irwin F. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 83-85, 156-157.

⁴⁶⁹ This mission is described in most of the standard accounts of pre-war diplomacy, but for an in-depth account, see Stanley E. Hilton, "The Welles Mission to Europe, February-March 1940: Illusion or Realism?" in *The Journal of American History* 58, no. 1 (June 1971): 93-120.

⁴⁷⁰ Theodore A. Wilson, *The First Summit: Roosevelt and Churchill at Placentia Bay, 1941* (Lawrence Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1991).

⁴⁷¹ See Julius W. Pratt, "The Ordeal of Cordell Hull," *The Review of Politics* 28, no. 1 (Jan., 1966): 76-98.

⁴⁷² Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 26, 95.

⁴⁷³ See Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 33; Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 27. Doubtless these authors obtained this example from Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 10.

Trade Agreements Act of 1934, Hull concluded 27 trade agreements, mostly with Latin American countries.⁴⁷⁴ It would prove a model for the future.

His longstanding achievements notwithstanding, Hull's flaws impeded his influence and made him surprisingly dangerous. Slow, deliberate, and excessively cautious, Hull struggled to make decisions. When his Department or behavior came under criticism, he became angry and petulant, often erupting in vulgar tirades. Favoring compromise and consensus, he shied away from conflict, allowing them to brew in his mind. In doing so, he permitted small problems the time to germinate into full-scale affronts to his honor, which, in turn, led him to pursue the offender with the cold-blooded determination of a feuding mountain boy.⁴⁷⁵

Yet the reach of Sumner Welles's authority grew. Inside the State Department, he assumed enormous responsibility and obtained considerable power. Aside from his duties for Inter-American affairs, the President informally assigned Welles tasks on a wide array of matters, usually without bothering to inform Hull. Formally he put him in charge of refugee issues and Russian affairs, and made him the chief liaison officer between the White House and the State Department.

For Hull, this access must have bespoke preferential treatment. Of the crème-de-la-crème of mid-twentieth century American society, Welles attended the same schools as the President and mingled in the same crowds. At Groton, he roomed with the brother of Eleanor Roosevelt. At Harvard, he distinguished himself academically, graduating in three years, while having spent the third one abroad. Hull, by contrast, was born in a log

⁴⁷⁴ Frederick B. Pike, *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995) p. 208.

⁴⁷⁵ On this point, see Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 9.

cabin, learned to read to understand the Bible, and studied at a relatively unknown law school in Tennessee. He could not benefit from the wisdom of Franklin Roosevelt, who, as Secretary of the Navy, encouraged Welles to pursue a career in diplomacy, and then promoted him until the diplomat's time in government came to a sudden and tragic end.⁴⁷⁶

The President, however, was not exclusively responsible for Welles's heightened importance. Unknown to the public at the time, Hull had both tuberculosis and diabetes, factors that led to bouts of illness that forced the Secretary to remain away from the department for weeks at a time, particularly in 1941 and 1942.⁴⁷⁷ These absences provided Welles the room to assert his control over the bureaucracy and increase his influence in both Asian and European affairs. Such developments irritated Hull.

The President and his closest confidant, Harry Hopkins, welcomed these changes nonetheless. Hull had failed to reform the State Department. "You should go through the experience of trying to get any changes in the thinking, policy and action of the career diplomats and then you'd know what a real problem was," Roosevelt explained to Marriner Eccles of the Federal Reserve Board."⁴⁷⁸ The President was so distrustful of State that he bypassed the Department altogether when setting up the administrative machinery for lend-lease. Hopkins concurred with Roosevelt's approach. The Foreign Service, in his opinion, was a gang of "cookie-pushers, pansies" and "isolationists to

⁴⁷⁶ *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Welles, Sumner" (by Michael J. Devine), <http://www.anb.org/articles/06/06-00696.html/>; s.v. "Hull, Cordell" (by Irwin Gellman), <http://www.anb.org/articles/06/06-00299.html/> (both accessed September 11, 2012).

⁴⁷⁷ Thanks to Irwin Gellman, we now know of Cordell Hull's awful medical condition during this period. He has deposited Hull's medical records at the FDRL. By Gellman's estimations, it is a wonder that Hull lived as long as he did.

⁴⁷⁸ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 532.

boot.”⁴⁷⁹ Hull had done little to change this perception. Worse, most everyone in the Roosevelt Administration believed he had mismanaged the Department. His caution and survivor instincts had been welcomed in 1933, but, as Robert Sherwood writes, it was inevitable that the President would “become impatient with anyone whose primary concern was the maintenance of a personal record of ‘no runs – no hits – no errors.’”⁴⁸⁰ Weary of actions that might lead to war, Hull simply took too few risks.⁴⁸¹ By 1941, the President wanted in the fight.⁴⁸² Hull, by contrast, did not.⁴⁸³

Despite Hull’s weaknesses, Roosevelt could not afford to lose him. Like William Jennings Bryan in the Administration of Woodrow Wilson, the Secretary of State still wielded considerable influence in the Congress, and was very popular among the public. A nasty resignation had the potential to do serious harm to the Roosevelt Administration. Hull’s prestige, moreover, was insurance against a replay of Woodrow Wilson’s disastrous showdown with the Senate over the Treaty of Versailles.⁴⁸⁴ Consequently, Roosevelt nourished Hull’s sensitive ego and kept him at the State Department. He praised the Secretary of State incessantly in public and nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize on an annual basis.⁴⁸⁵ In the past, this tactic had worked. Despite Roosevelt’s machinations, Hull had consistently helped the President. In 1939, for example, Roosevelt abetted gossip that Hull would be his successor, even though the President had

⁴⁷⁹ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 603.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴⁸¹ For information on Hull and his fear of war, see Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 248-49.

⁴⁸² For an excellent examination of this issue, see chapter four, “Developing an Interpretation Through Textual Analysis: The 1941 Case” of Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 79-139.

⁴⁸³ On this point, see Pratt, “Ordeal of Cordell Hull.” Many of the other accounts noted here point out Hull’s reluctance.

⁴⁸⁴ Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 590.

⁴⁸⁵ Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 93, 210, 384.

plans of his own for 1940. Then, days before the election, Roosevelt brazenly called upon Hull to push for revision of the Neutrality Act of 1937 to provide for “cash-and-carry,” which allowed Great Britain to purchase war materials from the United States. Hull carried out Roosevelt’s request honorably.⁴⁸⁶

However the Secretary also had the capacity to make trouble. When Roosevelt asked the Treasury to prepare legislation for lend-lease in late 1940, Hull took offense. The State Department disliked the idea of aiding Great Britain for fear that it was throwing resources at a lost cause; and Hull reasoned that lend-lease still resided in the Department’s purview. The Secretary also thought he had been inadequately consulted during the lend-lease preparatory discussions, and that his advice on the matter had been disregarded by Roosevelt and other governmental officials. Thus when the Treasury Secretary, Henry Morgenthau, asked Hull to testify before Congress in support of the bill, the Secretary of State behaved, as Warren Kimball writes, like a “petulant little boy,” agreeing to speak only after much bickering and whining. He then undermined the Administration’s legislative strategy in his testimony by refusing to concede that lend-lease was necessary for the defense of the United States. He evaded concerns that the proposal expanded the President’s powers unreasonably and revealed that the Treasury had controlled the legislative drafting process.⁴⁸⁷

Though lend-lease passed in March 1941, the President clearly had a problem on his hands. Was there anything that could be done to ameliorate this state of affairs? How

⁴⁸⁶ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 183-185; Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 214-220.

⁴⁸⁷ Warren F. Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act: Lend-Lease, 1939-1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), 142, 156-158, 181-82. Hull confessed that the Treasury drafted the lend-lease bill in Congressional testimony. This posed serious problems: Morgenthau was Jewish and members of Congress suspected his hatred of Germany drove his behavior more than a desire to defend American interests.

long could the President continue along a path that offended his Secretary of State without precipitating a disastrous rupture? Could the President rely on Cordell Hull when the time for Congressional action arose once again? Did there remain any domain of policy where Roosevelt could concede ground to his Secretary of State? With war seemingly on the horizon, the movement for reciprocal trade agreements that had so excited Hull in the 1930s seemed a dead end. Postwar planning, perhaps, constituted one area that could be ceded to Hull, at least in the short-term. But the Secretary of State, throughout the whole course of 1941, simply refused to take the initiative.

Hull's personality and bouts of illness explain his behavior in part – he was absent from work for almost three months in 1941.⁴⁸⁸ But the Secretary also had preferences. If Hull had little desire for war, he showed equally little desire to plan for the postwar era.⁴⁸⁹ Earlier efforts to prepare for peace were couched largely in economic terms, which accorded with his risk-averse nature and obsession with trade liberalization. Nominally the Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations made no mention of the postwar era, and the press statement announcing the committee emphasized “the field of economic activity and relations” while ignoring the political and military fields.⁴⁹⁰ The mandate of the Interdepartmental Group, which succeeded the Advisory Committee, referred to the end of the war, but limited the group's activities to economics.⁴⁹¹ In this

⁴⁸⁸ Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 242.

⁴⁸⁹ O'Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*, para. 111.

⁴⁹⁰ Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 21.

⁴⁹¹ See “Interdepartmental Group to Consider Post-War Economic Problems and Policies,” May 1940-February 1942; “Interdepartmental Group to Consider Post-War Economic Problems and Policies,” December 18, 1940, both in File Interdepartmental Group to Consider Post-War Economic Problems and Policies, May 1940-Feb. 1942, Box 32, EC, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Hull saw few risks. But that was 1940 and the United States was now edging closer to war. Planning had to begin.

On June 22, 1941, as soon as Hull departed the capital – doctors had insisted the Secretary rest for a month in Sulphur Springs, West Virginia – the President immediately went to work.⁴⁹² First, he approved Berle’s request to begin tentative outlines for postwar world, but insisted the Assistant Secretary concentrate on broad objectives rather than detailed methods, and that his work remain secret.⁴⁹³ Then, to begin the arduous process of shaping public opinion, Roosevelt permitted Welles to speak on the postwar era. In a July 22 address at the Norwegian Legation broadcast nationwide and throughout occupied Europe, Welles advocated the creation of world organization that would, as Christopher O’Sullivan writes, “restore law and order and ensure peace at the close of hostilities.” Further, Welles argued that military, political, and economic planning would have to take place on a *global* scale.⁴⁹⁴ Hardly a week later, Roosevelt established the Economic Defense Board (later the Board of Economic Warfare) and put his administration’s most combative and quirky member in charge, Vice President Henry A. Wallace. This group, among other tasks, would advise the president on the establishment of sound peacetime international economic relationships.⁴⁹⁵

None of this was lost upon the Secretary’s Special Assistant, Leo Pasvolsky, who had been put in charge of the State Department’s new Division of Special Research in

⁴⁹² On Hull’s sickness, see Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 236.

⁴⁹³ Reynolds, *Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 256-257.

⁴⁹⁴ O’Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*, para. 149.

⁴⁹⁵ Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 57.

February 1941.⁴⁹⁶ A man who ostensibly shunned the limelight, Pasvolsky was the invisible bureaucrat who everyone saw: he weighed over 200 pounds, but was only five feet, five inches tall. Hull called him “Friar Tuck.” Others, for good reason, have called him the Secretary’s “think-tank.” Pasvolsky possessed a sharp analytical mind and a vast knowledge of world affairs, accumulated as a reporter during the First World War and researcher at the Brookings Institute, where he spent most of his career. Pasvolsky served two years as Hull’s assistant during Roosevelt’s first administration, and returned to the Department in 1936 at the Secretary’s request. A Russian-born economist, he had a knack for translating Hull’s folksy speech on trade liberalization into erudite policy statements, which he supported with rigorous economic argumentation.⁴⁹⁷ As such, Pasvolsky became Hull’s principal speechwriter, or, if the witty Dean Acheson is to be believed, “he wrote Hull’s principal speech.”⁴⁹⁸ The Secretary rarely spoke on anything other than trade. Pasvolsky shared his passion, and like his boss, viewed postwar planning largely, though not exclusively, in economic terms.

Just as Pasvolsky pressed Hull to pursue postwar planning in 1939, he wrote the Secretary again on September 12, 1941, urging him to create an advisory committee for preparatory work on all phases of postwar foreign policy. To frighten Hull, who had just

⁴⁹⁶ Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 1630.

⁴⁹⁷ For a reasonable portrait of Pasvolsky, see Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation, Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations: A Story of Superpowers, Secret Agents, Wartime Allies and Enemies, and their Quest for a Peaceful World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 33-35. Two additional works also provide less interesting portraits of Pasvolsky: Robert C. Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: the Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Postwar Security* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Georg Schild, *Bretton Woods and Dumbarton Oaks: American Economic and Political Postwar Planning in the Summer of 1944* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995).

⁴⁹⁸ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 55.

returned from convalescence in West Virginia, he warned that the Department of State risked losing control of an area of policy residing in its domain. He explained that other agencies of the government had begun working on these matters, and he highlighted the creation of the Economic Defense Board under the leadership of Henry Wallace. If planning for the postwar period remained decentralized, he argued, it could prove disastrous for the entire process.⁴⁹⁹ The Economic Defense Board had wartime responsibilities, and may not have the time and resources to plan sufficiently. Pasvolsky suggested the President create an advisory committee and designate the Secretary of State as its Chairman. To undertake the work of this committee, he recommended three subcommittees: one for political and territorial problems, one for armaments questions, and one for economics and financial issues. Aware of the President's preference for the interdepartmental approach, he suggested the committee's membership include individuals from outside the Department of State.⁵⁰⁰

Pasvolsky's approach to postwar planning revealed his knack for assessing power dynamics within the Roosevelt Administration, but also his ability to defend his own interests. He continued his outreach to Sumner Welles, meeting and corresponding with the Undersecretary regarding their mutual desire to reinitiate the planning process.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁹ Sumner Welles has argued that the President's Executive order giving the Economic Defense Board control over certain areas of postwar planning was responsible for delaying the planning process. But the documentary record suggests otherwise: it placed pressure on Hull and thereby accelerated the process. See Sumner Welles, *Where Are We Heading?* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), 21.

⁵⁰⁰ "Proposal for the Organization of Work for the Formulation of Post-War Foreign Policies," September 12, 1941, File The Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁵⁰¹ See Pasvolsky to Welles, October 8, 1941; "Organization of Work on Post-War Foreign Policy," October 8, 1941, File The Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Quietly he met with Norman Davis, the President of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Chairman of the American Red Cross.⁵⁰² Davis, like Hull, came from Tennessee, and was a friend of the Secretary and the President. These interactions culminated in a meeting between the President, Hull and Welles in early October, during which they discussed postwar planning.⁵⁰³ Pasvolsky welcomed these developments, for it appeared that the preparatory process would ultimately find a home in the State Department. The Division of Special Research, which Pasvolsky had been chosen to lead, had been created to backstop for the entire planning process. The bespectacled Special Assistant also wanted to chair one of the subcommittees. Yet the Secretary of State remained reluctant, distracted, bedraggled and unwilling to take decisive action.

In contrast to Pasvolsky, who worked quietly within the State Department to accomplish his objectives, Sumner Welles maneuvered outside the halls of government. As he had done in 1939-40, he looked to individuals and non-governmental institutions to work on postwar planning, notably Hamilton Fish Armstrong at the Council on Foreign Relations, but also journalists such as Anne O'Hare McCormick at the *New York Times*.⁵⁰⁴ Welles, with the President's approval, also intensified public relations efforts in favor of advance planning for the postwar era. In October, he spoke in New York City, urging that planning begin immediately. More dramatically, during his November 11th Armistice Day remarks at the tomb of Woodrow Wilson, he called for a postwar era

⁵⁰² On the involvement of Norman Davis, see Pasvolsky to Hull, September 12, 1941, File The Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁵⁰³ Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 59; Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, 1631-1632.

⁵⁰⁴ Hamilton Fish Armstrong to Sumner Welles, July 12, 1941, File The Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA; on Welles' decision to seek assistance outside the Department of State, see O'Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*, para. 110-181.

based on the Atlantic Charter and Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, but also Wilson's Fourteen Points. In addition to an American-led international organization, the Undersecretary argued for free markets, free trade, and free access to the world's resources. In these speeches, Welles warned against the "wait and see" approach to postwar planning.⁵⁰⁵ But Hull did just that: he waited, and he saw his influence diminish.

During the final months of 1941, the Secretary of State remained involved in the diplomacy that brought the United States into the war, though only in the Pacific theatre, where his views accorded with Roosevelt's. Neither he nor the President wanted conflict with Japan, at least in the short-term. Consequently Hull managed U.S. diplomacy vis-à-vis the Japanese, a privilege that left him in the awful position of having to receive the Japanese declaration of war on the morning of December 7, 1941.⁵⁰⁶ It also led to accusations that he had helped precipitate the attack.⁵⁰⁷ With respect to the Atlantic, Hull's influence plummeted after the *Greer* incident of September 1941, in which an American destroyer pursued a German submarine and broadcast its position to the British. Roosevelt wanted to use the incident to dramatize the Nazi menace, and as an excuse to implement his policy of escorting and "shoot on sight." It also provided an opportunity for him to press the Congress to change the neutrality legislation once again. Aware of these aims, Hull recommended a stern and aggressive speech from the President, but then criticized the draft prepared by Harry Hopkins and Robert Sherwood,

⁵⁰⁵ On Welles' intensified speaking agenda, see O'Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*, para. 110-116.

⁵⁰⁶ For information on Hull's role, see Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, Chapter 10; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Chapter 11; William Langer and Everett Gleason, *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941* (New York: Harper, 1953), Chapters 26-27.

⁵⁰⁷ Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 277.

which labeled the “Nazi submarines and raiders... the rattlesnakes of the Atlantic.”

The Secretary of State was the only figure in the Cabinet to oppose the speech.⁵⁰⁸

Cordell Hull’s position ironically remained far more consistent than Roosevelt’s. While Hull advocated similar approaches to the Atlantic and Pacific theatres, Roosevelt preferred an aggressive stance in the Atlantic, but a more cautious policy towards Japan. The result left the United States looking more like the double-headed eagle of ancient Byzantium than the monolithic predator that bestrides the nation’s coinage. The double-talk defied reality: Japan had allied itself with Nazi Germany in June 1940, and then found itself with a free hand in Asia once the Soviet Union became bogged down in Eastern Europe. The only remaining threat to Japan in this context was the United States. Under the erroneous assumption that Washington would seek terms to avoid a two-front global war, the Japanese launched a daring attack on American naval power at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Four days later, the undeclared war in the Atlantic became official and Roosevelt suddenly found himself at war with the Axis Powers.

Cordell Hull, who had been marginalized on the issue of war and peace, now found himself cornered on postwar planning. With the United States poised to engage in a two-front war, the uncertainty that had clouded planning in the months following the German invasion of Poland had faded. An allied victory, though far from certain, suddenly appeared more likely, and the primary focus of the previous two years, hemispheric defense, less apropos. On December 22, 1941, the Secretary of State wrote

⁵⁰⁸ James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt the Soldier of Freedom* (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1970), 140. See also Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 290-291. For an excellent discussion on providing advice to Presidents, see Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 579-580.

the President requesting the creation of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy.⁵⁰⁹ Roosevelt consented six days later.⁵¹⁰

In reading the Secretary's letter, the historian informed of the inner workings of the Roosevelt Administration cannot help but to sense the underlying tension between Cordell Hull and the President. Whereas Welles, Berle and Pasvolsky had all sought permission to take action, either by direct appeal to the President or through intermediaries, Hull informed Roosevelt that he would act in accordance with the President's "wishes."⁵¹¹ Contrary to the impression he gave in his memoirs, Hull was not the primary mover in the field of postwar planning, at least in 1941 and 1942.⁵¹² That honor belongs to his subordinates. But even this statement is misleading. Though Welles, Berle and others drove the process for a time, the President always remained in charge. The manner in which these developments unfolded is more a tribute to his Machiavellian designs than anything else.

As a result, Hull's letter of December 22, 1942 did more than simply concede to the President's "desire." It put the rules of the game in writing. From Hull's perspective, the chain of command needed clear definition. Pasvolsky had advised him to propose a committee that included individuals from outside the Department of State. For practical reasons, this approach made sense: the technical issues at hand far exceeded the Department of State's capabilities and the implementation of any postwar schemes would inevitably involve multiple actors. But for political and bureaucratic reasons, it posed

⁵⁰⁹ Hull to Roosevelt, December 22, 1941, File Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁵¹⁰ Roosevelt to Hull, December 28, 1941, File Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁵¹¹ Hull to Roosevelt, December 22, 1941, Notter Papers, NARA.

⁵¹² Hull, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, 1630-1633.

serious problems. It had the potential to weaken Hull's authority and influence further. Thus the letter insisted "all recommendations regarding post-war problems of international relations for all Departments and agencies of the Government be submitted" to the President "through the Secretary of State." Hull also prescribed similar arrangements for "all conversations or negotiations with foreign governments bearing on post-war problems." In closing, Hull asked that the heads of "the various Department's and agencies concerned be apprised" of these arrangements.⁵¹³

While the President accepted and approved of Hull's proposal, he reserved flexibility for himself and carefully guarded his power. The Secretary of State, he wrote Hull, should assume "primary responsibility for this work." But Roosevelt, for the time being, conceded no ground in the field of actual negotiations and he never formally endorsed the chain of command Hull proposed. Instead, he charged the committee "with the conduct of the necessary studies and the preparation of recommendations," which, he insisted, would be submitted to the President. In accordance with Hull's wishes, he also expressed his desire that "adequate research and other facilities... be created in the Department of State or under its leadership" to facilitate the work of the committee.⁵¹⁴

The Secretary of State must have been irritated by the President's response, for his attitude and condition deteriorated rapidly thereafter. One of his closest friends and confidants in the Department, Breckenridge Long, wrote in his diary that Hull was beaten, and clearing out his desk. On January 16, 1942, he even prepared a letter of

⁵¹³ Hull to Roosevelt, December 22, 1941, Notter Papers, NARA.

⁵¹⁴ Roosevelt to Hull, December 28, 1941, Notter Papers, NARA. Recent scholarship has missed the mark on the actual creation of the committee, saying that FDR "heartily agreed" to Hull's proposal. See Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 37-38; Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks*, 13. These authors focus on initial agreement, but do not carefully consider the contents of the documents in view of the wider context.

resignation, but could never bring himself to submit it, despite the fact that he was terribly sick. At this juncture in his career, Hull might have slid off his boots and placed his weapons on the shelf – his achievements were enough – but he did not. The affronts to his honor aggravated him. When Hull denounced the Free French for seizing the tiny island of St. Pierre in the North Atlantic, Roosevelt refused publicly to support him and his Department, a decision that left him exposed to attacks from not only the press, but also Winston Churchill. Further exacerbating the matter, Sumner Welles was winning praise in the media. Roosevelt had sent the Undersecretary to Rio de Janeiro to win an accord on hemispheric solidarity. When Welles, against Hull and the Department of State's wishes, compromised to win Argentine acquiescence, the Secretary of State exploded. But the President stood firmly by the Undersecretary.⁵¹⁵

On February 2, 1942, Sumner Welles returned to Washington D.C.; on that same day, Cordell Hull departed for Miami, where he would spend the next two months recuperating from fatigue and sickness, but also licking his wounds and brooding over the events that had besmirched his honor and taunted his pride. Hull would not be the stuff of Greek tragedy had his problems been limited to medical illness and physical exhaustion. He would have recognized slights for what they were: the inevitable elbows that are thrown among those who dare to hustle in the rough and tumble of American politics. Hull, after all, had leverage he might have used with the President. He remained the most popular figure in the Roosevelt administration, even after the assaults he withstood in the media over the previous months. But he behaved pettily. He left the nation's capital

⁵¹⁵ Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 274-278; on the Rio Conference, see Schwartz, *Liberal*, 188-89.

having never signed the order drawn up by his staff establishing the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy.⁵¹⁶

Structure of the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy

With Hull safely in Miami, Sumner Welles sought to assert his control over the planning process. The committee structure he created with Roosevelt's approval in February 1942 differed from the proposal suggested in October 1941 by Pasvolsky.⁵¹⁷ As one might expect, the power Welles wielded in the process increased under the new

⁵¹⁶ "Departmental Order No. ____" File Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. The order was never signed. Welles explained at the first meeting of the Advisory Committee that the plan was to release the order to the public at a later date, but this never took place. AC-1, Chronological Minutes, February 12, 1942, File President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. We know the order was never released from "Interdepartmental Group to Consider Post-War Economic Problems and Policies," May 1940-February 1942, Notter Papers, NARA. O'Sullivan states that Welles also exploited Hull's failure to appoint members to the postwar planning committee. I am not convinced that Welles made the decision as to the Committee's members. I strongly suspect Roosevelt made the final call. It is doubtful that Welles would have included representatives from the Board of Economic Warfare. See O'Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*, para. 194-195.

⁵¹⁷ In his personal account, Welles writes that he spoke with the President in April 1942 about the need for a postwar planning group. After this meeting, Welles claims he took the initiative and started the "preparations without delay." See Welles, *Where Are We Heading*, 20-21. This is not true. The process was officially launched February 12, 1942. See "Organization Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy," February 12, 1942, File President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. The letters inviting individuals to participate in the process were sent a few days earlier. See, for example, Welles to Benjamin V. Cohen, February 9, 1942; Welles to David K. Niles, February 9, 1942; Welles to Paul H. Appleby, February 9, 1942; File The Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy General, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. See also the description provided in "Interdepartmental Group to Consider Post-War Economic Problems and Policies," May 1940-February 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

formula, while the influence of Pasvolsky diminished. Originally, four subcommittees had been proposed to do the work of the Advisory Committee. Berle had been chosen to lead the subcommittee on political problems. Pasvolsky had assigned himself the chairmanship of the subcommittee on international economic relations. Norman Davis was chosen to head the subcommittee on security; while another friend of the President, Isaiah Bowman, a world-class geographer and President of Johns Hopkins University, was tapped to lead the subcommittee working on territorial problems.⁵¹⁸

Under the new structure, Davis and Bowman remained in charge of the committees they had been given at the outset. Welles assigned himself the chairmanship of the political subcommittee, while remaining Vice Chairman of the Advisory Committee, a position that allowed him to act as Chair in Hull's absence. The economic subcommittee was divided into two groups: a subcommittee for reconstruction, which Berle led, and a subcommittee for economics, which Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Dean Acheson, chaired. Leo Pasvolsky was not asked to chair any of the groups. Instead, he served as the Executive Officer and Director of research for the entire effort. In these capacities, he coordinated the efforts of the subcommittees, while providing essential research and administrative services. Though his ability to set the agenda was somewhat diminished, he attended most of the meetings.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸ "Organization of Work on Post-War Foreign Policy," October 8, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA. Bowman was the only chairman to have attended the Versailles Peace Conference as a participant. He served as Woodrow Wilson's chief expert on territorial questions.

⁵¹⁹ For a succinct description of the Committee structure, see Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 71-83. For a more detailed picture, see the first seven documents in the following file: File President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. To my knowledge, no document exists laying out the master plan in the manner of Pasvolsky's

To avoid the problem of inadequate resources, which had plagued the Department's efforts during 1940, Pasvolsky received funding to hire additional research staff, which widened the capacities of his office.⁵²⁰ Individuals from various other agencies and departments of the government were also called upon to partake in the planning process. In cases where the expertise of their particular home – the Department of Agriculture, for example – proved more suited to the Advisory Committee's research needs than Pasvolsky's division, that work was outsourced. Finally, the mandate of the committee was limited to postwar planning to prevent wartime imperatives from distracting the planners, as had occurred with the Interdepartmental Group to Consider Post-War International Economic Problems.

In theory, the planning apparatus should have functioned hierarchically. The five subcommittees would undertake most of the work, from brainstorming to the formulation of actual policy proposals. Pasvolsky's Division of Research would facilitate this process through scholarly investigations and analysis.⁵²¹ When necessary, various other entities of the government would be called upon to provide advice and aid in areas where their expertise might prove invaluable. Periodically, the subcommittees would report to the Advisory Committee, where the preparatory work could be coordinated into a broader strategy.⁵²² All policy proposals, including those from other areas of the government,

proposal of October 8, 1942. This, no doubt, is because Welles and Roosevelt rapidly put together the plan shortly after Welles' trip to Latin America. These events all coincided perfectly with Hull's departure for Florida.

⁵²⁰ Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 152-53, on increasing size of research staff.

⁵²¹ On the research staff, see Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy*, 149. See also Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 64. Acheson criticized the research group and dismissed the planning process.

⁵²² Randall Bennett Woods has said that before George Marshall reorganized the State Department, there "was no central policy-making staff in State." Though different in its

would then flow through the Secretary of State to the President. However, a variety of factors served to impede this design.

The President left the Board of Economic Warfare (BEW) partially in control of post-war planning. To consolidate power for planning in the State Department, Welles established the subservience of the Board's work to the Department of State's during the opening meeting of the Advisory Committee on February 12. The Vice President's group, he stated, would channel all postwar recommendations through the Secretary of State.⁵²³ In March, Wallace protested this procedure to the White House, demanding that the Board of Economic Warfare be allowed to bypass the State Department on foreign economic matters. Despite protests from Welles, the President agreed.⁵²⁴ As a result, the demarcation lines between the Department of State and BEW remained murky.

The inclusion of other departments in the planning process also posed problems. Hull had attempted to contain these individuals from other Departments by permitting them membership in the subcommittees only.⁵²⁵ But when the Secretary left for Miami, representatives from the Treasury, Department of Agriculture and the Board of Economic Warfare suddenly appeared on the roster of the Advisory Committee. Their participation at this level, made it more difficult for the Department of State to control the policy message to the President, but this, as we have seen, is how Roosevelt's administrative

design, I believe the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy and the Research Division constitute its antecedent. Randall Bennett Woods, *A Changing of the Guard: Anglo-American Relations, 1941-1946* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 76.

⁵²³ AC-1, Chronological, February 12, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

⁵²⁴ Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 292.

⁵²⁵ Hull also employed this tactic with the earlier Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Policy. See section entitled "Interdepartmental Cooperation" in the overview "Interdepartmental Group to Consider Post-War Economic Problems and Policies," May 1940-February 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

system worked. As Sumner Welles explained to the Advisory Committee on February 12, “the President had specifically asked” individuals from non-governmental organizations and other agencies and departments of the government to join with the Department of State “in considering post-war problems.”⁵²⁶

In view of these and other factors, it was almost inevitable that the work of the Advisory Committee would encounter bureaucratic obstacles at every turn. Welles and the President appear to have never even considered including the military. Other agencies and departments of the government excluded at this early stage, such as the Lend Lease Administration, would eventually seek to influence the process. The makeup of the Advisory Committee, moreover, created too many opportunities for its members to circumvent the Secretary of State. Of the subcommittee chairmen, all had direct access to the President, with the exception of Dean Acheson, who never managed to penetrate Roosevelt’s inner circle. Worse, the Department of State had descended into rival factions, with Hull (and to a lesser extent Pasvolsky) pitted against Welles, and Berle (despite his efforts to remain neutral in these fights) pitted against Acheson.

These conflicts, to a certain degree, would remain on ice until Hull returned, but their presence and importance for planning merit further emphasis. The rivalry between Hull and Welles, as we have seen, was a direct product of Roosevelt’s administrative style, which gave the Undersecretary too many opportunities to ignore his direct superior. If the Secretary’s poor health aggravated the situation, the Undersecretary’s insensitivity to Hull’s insecurities made it worse. Welles rubbed the Tennessean the wrong way. When

⁵²⁶ AC-1, Chronological, February 12, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA. See also “Joint Meeting of Subcommittee on Post-War Economic Policy and Subcommittee on Economic Reconstruction,” Chronological Minutes, February 20, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Hull learned of the Undersecretary's careless behavior in a railroad car in 1940, Welles's fate was all but sealed. The Undersecretary, in a drunken stupor, had propositioned a black Pullman for sex in the heat of a September night while the President and his Cabinet slept in neighboring railroad cars. It would take more than three years, but this incident would eventually ruin the brilliant career of Sumner Welles.⁵²⁷

The unfolding saga between Hull and his Undersecretary left Adolf Berle exposed. In 1938, the famous New Deal economists had become Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs after serving as general counsel to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). Hull admired Berle's intelligence and capabilities: a child prodigy who graduated from Harvard College and Law School before the age of twenty-one, Berle published an instantaneous classic with Gardiner Means in 1932, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, which catapulted him into Roosevelt's inner circle. But his achievements and "quicksilver" mind, as one observer wrote of him, were insufficient to save him from Hull's feuding.⁵²⁸

The Assistant Secretary remained too close to the Undersecretary. Old drinking buddies from New York, the two collaborated extensively when Welles was Ambassador to Cuba, and they worked closely in Hull's State Department. Berle, like the Undersecretary, had unfettered access to the White House, which dated back to his days

⁵²⁷ This affair has been discussed in many places. Irwin Gellman is the most sensitive. The most damning account can be found in Benjamin Welles, *Sumner Welles: FDR's Global Strategist* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 1-3. Of all Welles' achievements, it is astonishing that his son would open a biography of his father focusing on the encounter that ruined him. For what it is worth, this book is filled with factual errors.

⁵²⁸ "Mr. Richard Law's Visit to the United States," Richard Law, September 21, 1942, attached to Memorandum by the SOSFA, A.E., October 26, 1942, War Cabinet, W.P. (42) 492, CAB 66/30/22, PRO.

as speechwriter and advisor to the President during Roosevelt's first term. Though he displayed far more caution than Welles vis-à-vis the Secretary of State, Berle increased his exposure by refusing to improve his relationship with Acheson, who hated the New Yorker's guts.⁵²⁹

The longstanding conflict between the two Assistant Secretaries resulted in part from ideological differences.⁵³⁰ Acheson, who had studied law under Felix Frankfurter at Harvard, and clerked under Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, believed, like his mentors, that government policy should favor decentralization and competition. Berle, by contrast, preferred centralized planning. Under the First New Deal, the planners had held the balance of power in the Roosevelt Administration, but by 1935, when the Second New Deal arrived, the balance had changed in favor of those who preferred decentralization. Felix Frankfurter, the preeminent exponent of this view, had the ear of the President.⁵³¹ He never ceased promoting Acheson, who had purportedly resigned as Treasury Undersecretary in November 1933 over a dispute involving monetary policy.

⁵²⁹ These relationships are explored at length in: Irwin Gellman, *Secret Affairs*; Jordan A. Schwartz, *Liberal*. For an excellent description of Berle, see "Mr. Richard Law's Visit to the United States," September 21, 1942, CAB 66/30/22, PRO. Law's observations of Berle are hilarious, and his analysis is brilliant.

⁵³⁰ It was also the result of Berle's provocative treatment of Frankfurter while a student at Harvard. "The young Adolf relentless challenged Frankfurter in class, thereby making himself an unforgivable embarrassment to the professor... in the year following Berle's enrollment in Frankfurter's course Berle began attending it for a second year in a row. Frankfurter was puzzled and asked Berle if he had taken the course the previous year. Berle replied affirmatively and Frankfurter asked, 'Then why are you back?' 'Oh,' Berle responded, 'I wanted to see if you had learned anything since last year.'" Schwarz, *Liberal*, 14-15.

⁵³¹ On Frankfurter and the debate between decentralization and centralized planning, see Badger, *New Deal*, 62-64, 94-96, 100-101; Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 148-149.

By 1941, Acheson had sufficiently improved his standing with Roosevelt to win an appointment as Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.⁵³²

However the appointment came with a bureaucratic shuffle in the State Department. The economics portfolio was divided into commercial and financial matters. Berle was given the financial side of the file; Acheson was assigned the commercial side. In all likelihood, Roosevelt bore responsibility for this division; indeed he ultimately placed Berle in charge of all negotiations dealing with international postwar finance, though this arrived much later and in a different context. In the meantime, the new Assistant Secretary and his chief financial advisor, Herbert Feis, disagreed with the formula; they believed the two aspects should be coordinated and firmly under Acheson's control.⁵³³ But the division, at least at the departmental level, would persist for much of 1942. As a result, the economics subcommittee originally proposed under Pasvolsky's proposal for postwar planning was divided as well, a fact that forced the two Assistant Secretaries of State to collaborate on postwar economic matters.

The rivalry between the two men might not have been so contentious had their personalities been less distinct, but they possessed an odd assortment of similarities and differences that sensationalized the animosity between the two men. At six foot two, Acheson was stately, vigorous, and terribly funny. Some have said he resembled an

⁵³² On Acheson's relationship with Frankfurter, see Robert L. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 9. On Acheson's relationship with Roosevelt and his administration, see James Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 62-65, 81.

⁵³³ Woods, *Changing of the Guard*, 77-78.

Englishman with his black Homburg hats, dashing waistcoats and dark town suits.⁵³⁴

But the bristling moustache made him look more like a 19th century ringmaster, or the Spanish artist, Salvador Dali, than a British gentleman.⁵³⁵ His tongue could be sweet yet loose, his actions sincere yet devious, but underneath the hat, behind the bowtie, resided a brutally realistic conception of power. At the Brookings Institute to deliver a speech some years later, he requested a martini. Told that spirits were not available that evening, he evoked the Athenians at Melos: “No martini, no lecture.” Acheson got his martini.⁵³⁶

Berle was no showman like his colleague from Connecticut, but he was perfect for a show. In all, he was only five foot seven inches tall. An Englishwoman with whom he once dined commented that “he looks like a hunchback, but isn’t one.”⁵³⁷ Berle’s head was abnormally large, and sustained by a small torso, stick legs and enormous feet. If Acheson’s face resembled that of a Spanish artist, Berle’s looked like Franz Kafka.⁵³⁸ With his big ears, sharp eyes and an angular face, he came across as supremely arrogant, and he was. He sweated profusely and smoked incessantly. Berle could flatter when necessary, but more often than not he was ruthlessly blunt, a fact that led many to dislike him and miss his affable and generous side. Unlike Acheson, he was, according to one

⁵³⁴ Roy Jenkins, “To Better Order the Universe: Recalling Dean Acheson,” in *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct., 1998), pp. 136-140. The biographies on Acheson include: Gaddis Smith, *Dean Acheson* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1972); Beisner, *Acheson*; Chace, *Acheson*.

⁵³⁵ The ringmaster image is captured in the photo on the dust jacket of the biography by Smith, *Acheson*. As for Salvador Dali, just roll out the moustache and let your imagination do the work.

⁵³⁶ Beisner, *Acheson*, 623-24.

⁵³⁷ Schwartz, *Liberal*, 208.

⁵³⁸ For a hilarious description of Berle’s looks, see Schwartz, *Liberal*, 87.

report, a “misanthrope” who maintained an image of stern seriousness.⁵³⁹ Though famous for his vanity, he never wrote a memoir. Acheson did. His conception of power, too, displayed a realistic side, though he preferred persuasion and nuanced ways of executing it. For Acheson, it was about the pistol tucked away under his belt.⁵⁴⁰

On February 20, 1941, the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs maneuvered against Berle. The two economic subcommittees met jointly to allocate responsibilities between the two groups. In Berle’s absence, Acheson employed a formula for assigning tasks that permitted him to assert control over most financial issues. The Subcommittee on Economic Policy would address longer-term matters, while the Subcommittee on Economic Reconstruction would handle short-term issues. Pasvolsky had prepared a list of possible topics, which the group allocated between the two subcommittees. The group rapidly assigned relief, displaced persons, and the reconstruction of productive facilities to Berle’s subcommittee. Commercial policy, monetary relations, commodity agreements, and credit and investment became the prerogative of Acheson’s group. In this way, Adolf Berle was left in charge of postwar

⁵³⁹ See “Mr. Richard Law’s Visit to the United States,” September 21, 1942, CAB 66/30/22, PRO.

⁵⁴⁰ On Acheson’s relationship with weapons, two facts are relevant. (1) Acheson loved guns, an affection inherited from his mother, Eleanor Gertrude Gooderham. When he went to Atlantic City for the conference establishing the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, he wrote to his mother: “I have passed the shooting galleries or their successors which you and I used to frequent and where you used to so amaze the proprietors.” Dean Acheson to Eleanor C. Acheson, November 27, 1943, Series I, Box 1, f. 4, Acheson’s Personal Papers, Yale University. (2) Among the pictures selected for Acheson’s memoirs, he (or perhaps his editors at Norton) appropriately chose one of Acheson with a revolver tucked away under his belt. Photograph by James S. Wright, June 1950, Dallas Texas, Acheson, *Present at the Creation*.

relief and related issues, but on the official statement of his committee's responsibilities, it was duly noted that he would also manage the "financing thereof."⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴¹ "Joint Meeting of Subcommittee on Post-War Economic Policy and Subcommittee on Economic Reconstruction," Chronological, February 20, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA; I have been unable to relocate the exact quotation used here, but essentially the same thing is said in: "Subcommittee on Economic Reconstruction," Fields of Discussion, File President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

CHAPTER FOUR

AMERICAN PLANNING FOR POSTWAR RELIEF

It seems odd, at first glance, that politics and personalities drove so much of America's postwar relief policy. The problem had been assigned to the Reconstruction Subcommittee due to its obvious economic implications: global economic renewal seemed impossible if desperate peoples the world over were left to wither away in the wake of the war. How that relief was provided for and the manner in which it was administered would also have enormous importance for the economic position of recipient countries after the war, as well as those who provided the requisite funds and materials. If the United States bungled the task, as the postwar planners believed the country had done following the First World War, it might mean another destabilizing period of economic malaise, and with it all of the accompanying social and political fallout that led to the Second World War. Hence at the outset, many people in the State Department viewed the issue in economic terms.

However, the postwar planners quickly realized that the relief portfolio provided political opportunities. Doubtless the influence of the New Deal weighed heavily in their calculations. Its manifold programs sought to aid suffering Americans and rectify the country's economic problems. But in so doing they also earned the political allegiance of those on the receiving end of New Deal programs. This inescapable reality led the postwar planners to believe the United States might accrue tremendous political benefits, both present and future, if it undertook the implementation of relief programs with America's larger postwar objectives in mind. As a result, the planning for relief occurred

in two separate subcommittees. The Reconstruction Subcommittee discussed the underlying mechanics for the implementation of relief, while the Political Subcommittee debated their broader strategic context. In turn, the Advisory Committee for Post-War Foreign Policy coordinated and approved the work of these two subcommittees.

From the beginning, the process was beset with conflict. Personality differences and bureaucratic competition created innumerable obstacles. At times the planners looked like snakes maneuvering through a complex labyrinth of problems, hissing at one another and striking at potential rivals. Participants in the debates often contrived to undercut opposition, and stall the entire process when developments failed to suit their fancy. But this behavior in no way lessened the importance of the central problem they faced: How could the United States obtain the widest possible legitimacy for its postwar plans, while also maintaining supreme control over the institutions and processes considered necessary for the achievement of a sustainable peace? Attempts to answer this question would turn on a ferocious debate over the role of power and the place of spectacle in international affairs. What began as a narrow search for a solution to the relief problem, turned into a debate over the whole postwar international structure. How did this happen? What did the planners propose? And what did they ultimately decide?

As we will see, three little-known individuals would play a decisive role in the course of these debates. The educator and career diplomat, Harry Colvin Hawkins of the State Department, would first propose a United Nations approach to relief problem. The lifelong journalist and international correspondent of the New York Times, Anne O'Hare McCormick, would highlight the intractable nature of Joseph Stalin's regime, thereby forcing the American planners to reshape their thinking on the country's postwar plans.

And the inveterate New Deal lawyer and boy genius, Benjamin Cohen, would argue that propaganda should play a primary role in the entire effort.

The Decision to Make Relief a Political issue

When the Reconstruction Subcommittee began its work on March 6, 1942, two competing but interrelated perspectives framed the group's consideration of postwar relief. Most of the committee members viewed the issue primarily in political terms. These individuals, who might be referred to as "New Dealers," believed the relief portfolio constituted an opportunity for the United States to advance the war effort and assert its leadership in global affairs. A smaller but more conservative faction within the Subcommittee viewed the relief question somewhat differently. They preferred that the American role be defined in terms of supply and demand: what would be needed after the war and what could the United States provide? Neither of the factions disavowed the importance of the other's point of view. The dispute was over where to begin: would the United States frame its position in terms of what it wanted to do politically, or in terms of what it was capable of doing economically?⁵⁴²

Adolf Berle clearly preferred the former option. "Among the first things to be considered," he exclaimed, "was the relationship between the work of this subcommittee and the discussions now proceeding in London under the auspices of the Leith-Ross Committee." The work of the London group overlapped with the subject matter allotted to his Subcommittee and he believed the British might utilize the relief portfolio to

⁵⁴² ER-1, Chronological Minutes, March 6, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

advance their own narrow interests.⁵⁴³ Berle also hated the British. “There is nothing more second rate than a second rate Englishman,” he once grumbled. Haughty, arrogant and self-serving, they could not be trusted to handle the relief portfolio. “The salvation of the world will be the building of a system more nearly like that which we have in this hemisphere than anything which the British are likely to produce.” The United States could not permit Great Britain the opportunity to obstruct its designs. The planners should outmaneuver them politically.⁵⁴⁴

Berle also feared the Soviet Union. Although he shared their preference for centralized planning, he worried that the Russians were discussing relief in Moscow and making plans for Eastern Europe and possibly Central Europe. The Soviet Pact with Nazi Germany had confirmed his view that the Russians were immoral and untrustworthy. Now the British were courting the Soviets on relief and other matters. The United States needed to intervene to defend and advance its interests. Churchill’s apparent recognition of the Soviet conquest of Eastern Europe in 1941 had angered Berle. “If America had to fight,” he wrote, “would it fight for Britain’s imperial hegemony and an economic system of imperial preference and/or a Soviet-Pan Slavic eastern empire that obliterated the national promises of 1919?” The wartime alliance should not lead the United States to concede its interests and forget its values. Washington had to be intimately involved in the planning of postwar relief from the beginning. These problems, according to Berle, were inherently political even if their economic implications were enormous.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Jordan A. Schwartz, *Liberal: Adolf Berle and the Vision on an American Era* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 177, 146.

⁵⁴⁵ Schwartz, *Liberal*, 164.

Developments in London presented the United States with an opportunity.

Mumbling out of the side of his mouth, as Berle was known to do, he explained that conflict existed between the British and several allies over relief.⁵⁴⁶ The Russians and Dutch had expressed dissatisfaction with the Leith-Ross setup on grounds that the British dominated the arrangement. These two powers had reserved their right to act alone if they desired. The Soviet Union had made a counter-proposal to the British setup. In this Berle discerned an opportunity. But the planners, he explained, had to first make a decision: should the United States “work through the Leith-Ross Committee,” or have “post-war relief and related matters centered in Washington.”⁵⁴⁷ Berle’s explication of the situation and well-known distrust of the British and Russians left no doubt where he stood. The United States should exploit the divisions in London to assume political control over the relief portfolio and place it in Washington. But did his colleagues share this view?

The answer depended on an assessment of the Leith-Ross Committee’s work. Formally entitled the Inter-Allied Committee for Postwar Requirements, the group had been established in September 1941 to unite the governments exiled in London around a common program for postwar relief. Its mandate, according to Leo Pasvolsky, was restricted to estimating relief requirements of the various countries in Europe overrun by the Nazis. The more important question, he asked, was whether the United States should take action to have the procedure of making estimates extended to other areas.” Yet this inquiry raised more questions: how far was the United States prepared to go in providing relief? Should Washington limit the provisioning of food and supplies to Europe, or should it include other regions of the world? Pasvolsky thought the United States should

⁵⁴⁶ For a description of Berle’s mannerisms, see Schwartz, *Liberal*, 117-118.

⁵⁴⁷ ER-1, Chronological, March 6, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

contact the Leith-Ross committee. If it were producing good estimates, Pasvolsky thought it could continue in that task while the United States calculated supplies.⁵⁴⁸

No one disputed the importance of resources. Berle explained that the United States would need to consider potential production, not merely stocks on hand, when assessing its ability to provide relief. The assumption that the “Western Hemisphere would be a huge reservoir for everything that is needed by the rest of the world after the war” was no longer true. With the United States’ entry into the war, the situation had changed dramatically. Industry in the United States and elsewhere was no longer concentrating on peacetime needs, and would have to be quickly reconverted after the war. The industrialist, Myron Taylor believed private industry could do this alone if government created the right conditions and provided the right incentives. In fact, the demand for relief and related supplies might help prevent a relapse into a depression. But in the meantime, the planners would have to ascertain the future needs of afflicted societies and determine how much the United States could provide.⁵⁴⁹

Yet this was no easy task. The unpredictability of the future made it impossible to base relief planning on potential supplies or requirements. With war raging, the planners had little idea of what would be available for relief at the war’s end. On the requirements side, the uncertainty was equally daunting. When Berle’s Subcommittee revisited these issues weeks later, Pasvolsky told the Chair that it would be extremely difficult to estimate requirements within ten to fifteen percent accuracy. The Luxembourg

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

government in exile had complained to him that it was simply impossible.⁵⁵⁰ It all depended on whether the Axis forces employed a scorched-earth policy when they retreated. Berle conjectured that relief would be needed well before the collapse of the Axis powers. Planning could not wait until there was complete certainty about supply and demand. The United States would have to conceive of ways to maximize resources available for relief, and devise estimates for both worse and best case scenarios.⁵⁵¹

History underscored the wisdom of this approach. After the First World War, relief had not been delivered to most of Europe until January 1919, nearly three months after the armistice. Worse, Germany did not obtain aid until July, and Russia received no assistance until 1921. These delays permitted the seeds of instability and revolution the time to germinate. The delay did not stem from an absence of relief machinery, but from American failures to allocate funds and pledge relief stocks well in advance.⁵⁵² As a result, Europe waited for American legislators to debate relief, make required commodities available, and approve legislation authorizing the financing. With this history in mind, the planners knew they would have to set up the required machinery, and then hedge their bets on what would be needed and what could be supplied. But given the requirement for legislative support, the Subcommittee also had to conceive of ways to convince Congress to authorize machinery and resources well in advance of the war's end.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ ER-4, Chronological Minutes, April 17, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁵⁵¹ ER-1, Chronological, March 6, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

⁵⁵² "Relief Deliveries and Relief Loans, 1919-1923," November 1, 1941, File E Documents 1-25, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁵⁵³ ER-1, Chronological, March 6, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

A host of additional questions also required answers. What did the subcommittee mean by the word “relief,” Taylor asked? “Would it consist of free gifts or loans? Would it come from private or governmental sources?” Berle argued that “relief would unquestionably need to be financed on a governmental basis whether the medium were loans or gifts, since the magnitude of the amounts required would exceed the capacity of private sources.”⁵⁵⁴ But Pasvolsky suggested that it would have to be gifts. After the last war, “the major part of the war debts of many continental European countries were in reality... loans granted by the United States Treasury... for purposes of relief and reconstruction.”⁵⁵⁵ Credits financed 85% of the aid provided to liberated countries,⁵⁵⁶ and 93% of the aid that went to allied countries.⁵⁵⁷ The allies required enemy countries to pay cash for 91% of the total net value of the relief they received. Altogether, 68% of the value of deliveries was financed using low interest credits, while 32% was purchased with cash. Net gifts amounted to less than .1%.⁵⁵⁸

This approach, Pasvolsky argued, created a counterproductive situation. In cases where credits were granted, ill will arose because something dubbed an act of charity looked more like a business transaction. The monopolistic position of American suppliers assured higher prices and only exacerbated the situation. The whole arrangement damaged America’s relations with the Allies. In cases where states were required to pay cash, they depleted their foreign reserves to purchase desperately needed supplies, which

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Roumaina, Armenia and Russia

⁵⁵⁷ Belgium, France and Italy

⁵⁵⁸ “Relief Deliveries and Relief Loans, 1919-1923,” November 1, 1941, Notter Papers, NARA.

forced them to devalue their currencies. The consequent inflation wrecked the economies of former enemy states and defeated the whole purpose of the relief and reconstruction loans. Revolutionary outbreaks occurred and the seeds for the Second World War were sown.⁵⁵⁹ Gifts, it seemed, would be essential. But this conclusion did not resolve the problem of knowing how much would be needed or how much aid the United States could afford to supply. Another approach was needed.

A possible solution to this dilemma came from career Foreign Service Officer Harry Colvin Hawkins.⁵⁶⁰ Born in Reed City, Michigan, and educated at Olivet College

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Whereas most of the planners have biographical sketches in Wikipedia and other encyclopedic indexes, there is virtually nothing available on Hawkins. Here I include a brief timeline of his life: born in Reed City, Michigan on March 24, 1894; graduated from Olivet College in 1917; served in U.S. Army 1917-1919; graduated 1921 from Harvard Business School with MBA; Special Agent in the Department of Commerce 1921-22; passed Foreign Service exam June 23, 1921; Assistant Professor at University of Virginia, 1922-23; Drafting Officer in Department of State 1924; faculty and member of the School of Business at the University of Oregon 1925-27, 1930-31; returned in 1927 to the State Department as an Advisor in the Office of the Economic Advisor; remained at the Department of State for more than two decades and served in the following capacities: Divisional Assistant 1931; Assistant Chief of Division of Trade Agreements 1935; Chief of Division of Trade Agreements 1936; Chief of Division of Commercial Treaties and Agreements 1940; Chief of Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements 1941; Director of Office of Economic Affairs 1944; Economic Counselor in London with status of Minister 1944; Director Foreign Service Institute 1950-52; retired from State Department in March 1952 to become William L. Clayton Chair of International Finance at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. I am unable to determine when Hawkins died. I am unable to determine when and who he married and whether he had children. He authored of two books: *Commercial Treaties & Agreements; Principles & Practice* (New York: Rinehart, 1951); *Survey of Foreign Trade Activities of Oregon Manufacturers* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1931). This information was ascertained from a variety of sources: "Today's Birthday," March 24, 1955, *Prescott Evening Courier*; Betty Robertson, "Professors Here and There," January 1945, *Old Oregon*, (Eugene: University of Oregon Alumni Association), 6; "Board of Visitors Minutes," University of Virginia, April 26, 1922, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Library): <http://guides.lib.virginia.edu/bovminutes> (accessed September 11, 2012); United States Department of State, *Register of the Department of State, December 1, 1946*, Publication 2746 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1947),

and Harvard University, Hawkins entered the Department of State in the 1920s after short stints in the Department of Commerce and as Professor of Commerce and Trade at the University of Virginia. An affable man with a warm and generous touch, Hawkins rose to prominence in the American government during the Depression.⁵⁶¹ He is the primary architect of the postwar multilateral trading regime. He took Hull's notions of free trade and transformed them into a complex network of agreements with 27 countries during the 1930s. Later he became a central player in the creation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the International Trade Organization (ITO).⁵⁶² But in 1942, while serving as Chief of the Division of Commercial Policy and Agreements, Hawkins became one of the most important participants in the postwar planning meetings.

260-61. In particular, see "State Department Aid Named to School Post," January 18, 1952, *NYT*, 12. See other relevant coverage in *NYT* and *WSJ* as well as *Bulletins*, 1936-1942.

⁵⁶¹ On Hawkins personality, see Honoré M. Catudal, interview by Richard D. McKinzie, May 23, 1973; John M. Leddy, interview by Richard D. McKinzie, June 15, 1973, both interview scripts held at Harry S Truman Presidential Library, Oral History Interview, Independence, Missouri: <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/catudalh.htm> (accessed September 11, 2012); <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/leddyj.htm> (accessed September 11, 2012).

⁵⁶² For information on Hawkins role in the construction of the multilateral trading order, see Randall Bennett Woods *A Changing of the Guard: Anglo-American Relations, 1941-1946* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Susan Aaronson, "How Cordell Hull and the Postwar Planners Designed a New Trade Policy," *Business and Economic History* 20, no. 2 (1991): 171-179; Joanne Gowa and Soo Yeon Kim, "An Exclusive Country Club: The Effects of GATT on Trade, 1950-94," *World Politics* 57, no. 4 (July 2005): 453-478; Douglas A. Irwin, Petros C. Mavroidis, and Alan O. Sykes, *The Genesis of GATT* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Winthrop G. Brown, interview by Richard D. McKinzie, May 25, 1973; Henry L. Deimel, interview by Richard D. McKinzie, June 5, 1975; John M. Leddy, Richard D. McKinzie, June 15, 1973, all interview scripts held at Harry S Truman Presidential Library, Oral History Interview, Independence, Missouri: <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/brownwg.htm>, (accessed September 12, 2012), <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/deimelhl.htm> (accessed September 12, 2012); <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/leddyj.htm> (accessed September 12, 2012).

For someone who spent his entire life working on economics, his proposals are ironic. It would be foolish to determine the American attitude towards relief using criteria constantly subject to change; instead the United States should focus on the “political implementation” of relief. An organization “fully representative of all the United Nations” was preferable to one under American or Anglo-American leadership. In 1942, this included 26 nations, but the numbers would swell to 47 by the end of the war.⁵⁶³ The United Nations, Hawkins argued, could “show to the world a common front for the organization of peace not only in order to win the peace but also to help in winning the war itself.” His idea aroused excitement. David Niles of the War Production Board immediately recognized the public relations benefits. “We should make some announcement of our intentions soon,” he exclaimed. Berle believe this approach would help win domestic political support for relief during the war. It would also address resource concerns: the United States could contribute within its means to a “global pool for world relief.”⁵⁶⁴

No one disagreed that postwar relief should be undertaken on a worldwide basis, though they may have silently disapproved of the United Nations approach. Even Taylor,

⁵⁶³ The original signatories of the United Nations Declaration included the Big Four (United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, China), the British Commonwealth (Australia, British India, Canada, New Zealand, Union of South Africa), Latin American countries (Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama), and the governments exiled in London (Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia). As the war progressed, the following countries joined the alliance: Mexico, Philippine Commonwealth, and Ethiopia in 1942; Iraq, Brazil, Bolivia, Iran, and Colombia in 1943; Liberia and France in 1944; Ecuador, Peru, Chile Paraguay, Venezuela, Uruguay, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Syria in 1945.

⁵⁶⁴ ER-1, Chronological, March 6, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA. Hawkins had begun considering the United Nations approach as early as January 1942. See Hawkins to Acheson, January 27, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 PART 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

the most conservative of the planners, thought it would be “an error to leave any country out.” Supplies should not come purely from the United States; the rest of the world should contribute too. The New Dealers were ecstatic. Asia and Europe would need relief, especially Russia, but also Africa and Latin America! Berle therefore asked Harry Hawkins to formulate his views in a memorandum to be discussed at the group’s next meeting. To ensure cooperation from the Board of Economic Warfare, he asked Louis Bean to help.⁵⁶⁵ The committee accepted this proposal, but Dean Acheson listened in silence.

Integrating Relief into America’s Postwar Political Strategy

It was only natural that the relief issue ended up before the Political Subcommittee. From the outset, the New Dealers believed politics should precede economics on this question. For these policymakers, relief constituted a device that could be exploited to advance American interests and resolve a litany of political problems at home and abroad. From a bureaucratic point of view, it also made sense to put the issue before the Political Subcommittee. Several of the individuals most skeptical of the United Nations approach to relief, Dean Acheson and Herbert Feis, were not members of the political group, while the individual most inclined to support the proposal, Sumner Welles, was not only a member of the group, he was the Chairman. This did not mean that Berle and Welles would face no opposition. Myron Taylor, who shared many of

⁵⁶⁵ ER-1, Chronological, March 6, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

Acheson's views, was also a member of the Political Subcommittee. Other participants would find much to dispute as well.

However, the group's interest in the relief portfolio only arose inadvertently. At their first meeting on March 7, 1942, they considered two simple but perplexing questions: What must be done to obtain peace and stability? How could this be achieved in a manner commensurate with the interests of the United States? Put in more practical terms, the group contemplated the precise actions that would be required for peace and the order in which they must be undertaken. Sumner Welles wondered "whether there should be a general peace conference, regional conferences, consultations, or some other arrangements for a peace settlement immediately after the end of the war, or later after a period of armistice."⁵⁶⁶ Two factions emerged, but they would ultimately converge

⁵⁶⁶ P Minutes 1, March 7, 1942, File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part III), Box 55, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA, 1. At this point, it is important to say something on these minutes. Initially Pasvolsky's research division prepared obscure minutes, which "seemed to reveal little" about the meetings' discussions, according to Welles. Pasvolsky explained that he was trying to conceal the confidential nature of the discussions from "possible exposure." But Welles insisted that full accounts be made. "Unless that were done," he argued, "the document would not be useful to the members." Isaiah Bowman agreed, stating that "the time had already or would soon come to put timidity behind us: to clarify thought definitely and to record it definitely." As a result of this complaint, Pasvolsky's division revised previous minutes and ensured that all future accounts were exhaustive. To ensure secrecy, the documents were not distributed and committee members were only allowed to see them in "room 390" of the State Department. A similar procedure appears to have been used for the Economic and Reconstruction Subcommittees. But in the summer of 1942, when Dean Acheson took control over the entire economic planning apparatus, the procedure of producing in-depth chronological accounts of the meetings ceased. From roughly the middle of July forward, we only have analytical minutes of the meetings, which fail to attribute what was said to specific individuals. Given that this approach accords with Acheson's obsession with secrecy and repeated attempts to manipulate the historical record, the matter will arise again in future footnotes. For discussion of the purpose of the minutes and the procedures for preparing them, see P-3, Chronological Minutes, March 21, 1942, File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part III), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA, 1.

around the view that the United States should plan for an immediate armistice, followed by a transition period that might last years, which would then unfold into a period they termed, “perpetual peace,” apparently after the 1795 essay of the philosopher Immanuel Kant.⁵⁶⁷

Initially the postwar planners disagreed over whether a peace conference should be held directly after the war. Many believed that the Versailles Conference had taken place too soon. As a result, Welles and Berle advocated delaying any such conference, and then downplaying its importance if and when it occurred. After the First World War, “the pressures and compulsions toward haste,” Welles explained, “were clearly responsible... for some of the ‘unsatisfactory’ decisions in the Treaty of Versailles.” The United States should allow “sentimental and psychological” pressures to weaken before calling a conference, he argued. It will take time for military operations to cease. With armies still in the field, territorial and political dynamics will remain fluid.⁵⁶⁸ Economic forces will also have to be brought under control, lest instability and chaos wreak the peace efforts. Flux always has the potential to derail a controlled process. Consequently a “cooling off period” seemed wise.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁷ Pasvolsky’s research division hastily sketched out a similar timeline for economics in late 1941. See “Brief Outline of Economic Problems of Peace,” December 17, 1941, File Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy, Box 32, EC, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. Though Bruce Kuklick tells me that the postwar planners never read Kant, aspects of their program appear to stem from his work. See Immanuel Kant, “To Eternal Peace [1795],” in *Basic Writings of Kant*, ed. Allen W. Wood (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 435-475.

⁵⁶⁸ P Minutes 1, March 7, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 3.

⁵⁶⁹ When the Political Subcommittee was considering a “cooling off” period, Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson were thinking of the same idea in preparing their book on the postwar world: Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson, *The Problems of Lasting Peace* (New York: Doubleday, 1943). See also, Arthur Krock, “Welles’s Outline Set a Course for the Peace: Long Armistice Idea Favored,” *NYT*, June 7, 1942, E3; Arthur Krock, “Plan of

In contrast with this view, several individuals argued for an immediate peace conference. Taylor feared that the peace would be lost if a conference were postponed for any length of time. He worried of a subsequent decline in the “courage and steadiness” of the American people. “The national will to handle the peace problem, with all of its difficulties, might be dissipated.” The United States might even “show kindness to its enemies.”⁵⁷⁰ The New Dealer Benjamin Cohen worried of another matter. Following the armistice of 1918, the “victorious powers then had unquestioned moral and military power to effectuate their desires...” But the strength declined rapidly in the months following November 1918. Had the peace conference been postponed, it “might have been less satisfactory even than the one that was made.” Cohen also questioned the wisdom of delaying settlement of territorial questions. Why would anyone seek to “reestablish industrial life in any area that might be subject to dispute?”⁵⁷¹

Welles sought to subsume this opposition with an appeal to the Atlantic Charter. The phrasing of the eighth point had been carefully chosen and implied an armistice period, he explained. ““Pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security... the disarmament of such aggressor nations is essential.”⁵⁷² With regard

Long Armistice Finds Scant Opposition: With Hoover Supporting Idea Urged by Welles, Belief Grows that Old Isolationism Has Gone into Retreat,” *NYT*, June 21, 1942, E3; Arthur Krock, “In The Nation: Post-War Sans the Usual Discords,” *NYT*, October 19, 1943, 18. Americans were not the only people discussing this possibility. It appears to have been a global preference. The Chinese Nationalist wanted a “cooling off” period, but feared that if it went on too long, instability might emerge. See Gauss to Hull, August 4, 1942, and the four enclosures, 840.50/653, Box 4798, RG 59, NARA. The Norwegian parliamentarian and President of the League of Nations, C.J. Hambro, also preferred some sort of “cooling off” period. See C.J. Hambro, *How to Win the Peace* (New York: Lippincott, 1942).

⁵⁷⁰ P Minutes 1, March 7, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 2, 9, 14-15.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 2.

to the settlement of boundaries, he reminded the planners that the Charter stipulated that “territorial changes” should “accord with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned.” The peace should “respect the rights of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live, and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.” These aspects of the Charter had been fully discussed between Roosevelt and Churchill. They envisioned an interim period with an armistice throughout, “though not in the accepted technical sense of the word ‘armistice.’”⁵⁷³

To bolster this argument, Leo Pasvolsky criticized the approach employed at the peace conference after the First World War. “In 1919 the Versailles Conference regarded the establishment of general international relations as an accomplished fact through the completion of a formal peace.” The statesmen at Versailles focused on a narrow set of questions that concerned relations between the two groups of powers. This approach fatally neglected the need to create a general system of international relations. As a result, Pasvolsky thought it would make more sense to have a “transition period in which formal peace was not to be definitive and so formal, and to focus ahead on general international relations.”⁵⁷⁴ If the Atlantic Charter made this approach essential, it became apparent that the question before the committee had changed: what would have to happen as soon as the war ended and what should take place during the subsequent interim period?

Cohen accepted these points and dissected the question. The postponement of certain aspects of the peace had advantages, but in other areas, such as postwar relief and rehabilitation, it would be disastrous to delay. What was needed, he argued, was

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 4-5.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 5.

“flexibility.” Unless certain issues received prompt attention, “there would be an accentuation of unrest and rise of partisan rivalries which might become strongly disturbing factors.” Immediate disarmament might be foolish in certain instances. Economic problems would also require immediate and constant attention. If some of the larger economic problems remained unresolved, then “an ultimate general settlement might be rendered more difficult by failure to gain an early settlement of some at least of the larger economic difficulties.” He also worried that a long armistice might precipitate a counterproductive “armistice mentality.”⁵⁷⁵

These concerns led the planners to consider steps that might be taken before and immediately after the war’s end. Security and policing measures would be required behind the advancing armies. Some authority would have to be established to deliver relief rapidly. Early plans for resettlement and reconstruction would be essential.⁵⁷⁶ The occupying powers would need to return taxing, policing and other such powers to local state authorities as quickly as possible.⁵⁷⁷ Disarmament would have to begin. And where circumstances permitted, the Allies would need to make wartime arrangements with refugee governments to facilitate the entire process.⁵⁷⁸ Above all, the United States government would have to prepare public opinion at home and abroad. Most of the planners believed that the United Nations approach to many of these problems would aid this process. It would lead to the “construction of a genuine world feeling.”⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 2-3.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁷⁸ Refugees governments discussed, Ibid., 7-8.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 15. Public opinion is discussed at other areas in the minutes as well.

Taylor remained unconvinced. He still preferred a single peace conference that would occur immediately after the war. If the peace conference were delayed, territorial arrangements could only be tentative and military force would be needed to maintain stability.⁵⁸⁰ If every country in Europe were forced to disarm with the exception of France, Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union, the United States would have no choice but to maintain a military presence on the continent to convince the smaller states to disarm.⁵⁸¹ Even if this outcome were accomplished within the context of a United Nations security apparatus, the United States would still have to remain in Europe. This might endure for years.⁵⁸² The costs would require Congressional appropriations and this would be difficult to obtain: “military expenses would have to be moderated,” he insisted, and “public opinion would insist on it.”⁵⁸³

But Welles and his supporters refused to alter their position. The expenditures required for an American military presence would have to be assumed if the United States “were to proceed to any reformation of the world order” that accorded with the national interest. Permitting an extension of the armistice period would allow the President to utilize Executive Agreements, thereby avoiding the requirement that he turn to Congress at each and every step. Welles implied that the Congress, within limits, would have little choice but to fund the President’s programs if they were already in place at the end of the war. For the time being, the group should simply “assume that an international political organization would be established.” It should initiate actions to avoid the pressures placed upon “negotiations by interested groups seeking to have

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁸¹ For disarmament discussions, Ibid., 11-12.

⁵⁸² Ibid., 14.

⁵⁸³ For Taylor’s final critique, see Ibid., 15-16.

decisions made in their favor.” And it should decide what questions needed to be answered quickly and what could be left for settlement at a later date.⁵⁸⁴

The Strategic Framework for Europe Emerges

These issues became the topic of the March 14, 1942 meeting, but the discussion took an unexpected turn when Anne O’Hare McCormick of the New York Times assaulted the idea that the United States could expect cooperation from the Soviet Union. Unlike her peers, she had sat face to face with the Soviet dictator. After winning the Pulitzer Prize for her coverage of Benito Mussolini, she won interviews with Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill, the Pope, and an assortment of other world leaders. Born in the United Kingdom to American parents, McCormick studied at the College of Saint Mary of the Springs in Columbus, Ohio, where she met and married an Ohio businessman, with whom she traveled the world. These experiences whetted her appetite for foreign affairs and paved the way for her work as a journalist. In time, she became one of America’s sharpest thinkers in international affairs. Of the postwar planners, she was perhaps the most suspicious of the Soviet Union, and because of her reputation and experiences, her opinion mattered.⁵⁸⁵

Anne O’Hare McCormick was tough. “The uncertainty ahead did not revolve about how the United States and Great Britain” would work together, “but whether Russia would work with them.” She warned that if Russia were “active all over the

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁸⁵ *American National Biography Online*, s.v. “McCormick, Anne Elizabeth O’Hare” (by Betty Houchin Winfield), <http://www.anb.org/articles/06/06-00788.html> (accessed August 2, 2010).

continent of Europe, disastrous difficulties could be expected...” Welles tried to dismiss McCormick. In the fields of policing and the distribution of food and relief, it would not matter, he asserted. The feisty little woman fired back: how would the United States deal with the territory where no American or British forces were present? But Welles refused to watch his castles wash away in the tide. “The Soviet Union would have to be brought into all arrangements.” The Subcommittee, he asserted, should make the assumption that Russia will agree to cooperate. McCormick refused to bend. “I do not see how that would be possible... Russia will pursue her own objectives regardless of arrangements for cooperation.”⁵⁸⁶

On the latter point, the New York Times columnist forced Welles to concede ground. McCormick explained that the Soviet Union would most certainly claim territories for itself. Welles agreed, but he was unprepared to permit an outright surrender of Eastern Europe to the Soviets. For those territories, the United States would need its “own guidelines in the form of proper solutions.” The United States and Great Britain could not exclude the Soviet Union from Western Europe and Germany, and then expect “Russia to admit them to participation in the zone left to Russia’s primary control. We would have to try to get tripartite action all over.” But this approach, Welles conceded, would be unreasonable. The United States could not accept a Soviet presence in Western Europe and none of the countries there would permit it. In effect, he implied that those areas of Europe occupied by Anglo-American forces would remain in the American sphere of influence, but the territory under Soviet occupation would be up for

⁵⁸⁶ P-2, Chronological Minutes, March 14, 1942, File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part III), Box 55, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA, 4-5.

negotiations. But how could the United States have influence in Eastern Europe without permitting the Soviet Union into Germany and Western Europe?

The answer contained elements of a strategy that would guide the United States for the duration of the Cold War. From the moment the liberation of Europe began, Washington would pursue policies to ensure the stability and strength of Western Europe. In this way, the region would become a shining example for Eastern Europe. The planners also believed the United States needed to forge alliances with Eastern European countries that would serve as a “make-weight” against the Soviet Union. If the United States could maintain formal or informal relationships with groups or governments in Eastern Europe, it would enhance American power in the event of Russian recalcitrance. And finally, the United States would utilize its superiority in resources to win friends in Eastern Europe, and to secure at least a modicum of cooperation from the Soviet Union. In this area, relief and rehabilitation supplies would play a critical role. After the war the Americans knew the Russians would be in desperate need, and the planners believed American resources might increase American influence in Moscow and Eastern Europe.

This framework emerged piecemeal. But Western Europe was their initial concern. The United States, Berle argued, should first determine “military zones of responsibility.” With the British, it would then have to “work out the ranges of... cooperation in all the non-Russian areas.” The United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union would also need to consult the governments in exile to reach agreement on action for the armistice. Speed and coordination were essential. As Welles explained, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and France should be put “under the control of inter-Allied forces” as soon as possible. Once local governments had been reestablished, they

would quickly resume control of their respective countries. At the same time, relief and food measures would be implemented. If this approach were successful, it would have positive psychological effects on the whole of Europe.⁵⁸⁷ Hamilton Fish Armstrong of the Council on Foreign Relations believed the Soviets would be in no position to protest. “From an ideological point of view,” he exclaimed, “Russia had no claim” on the Western democracies.⁵⁸⁸

The situation in Eastern Europe required a different approach. The United States would attempt a similar program in Poland, Yugoslavia and Greece, but the planners realized the likelihood of success in these countries remained much lower. Regardless, the West could not be perceived as abandoning Eastern Europe. “All of those small countries fear Communism,” Armstrong explained, “and they likewise fear Russian nationalistic aggression.” Would it not be possible to bring them to “our side in peace talks?” If so, “they could be utilized in effect as a make-weight for us against Russia.” After the First World War, the United States had alienated many of the small countries to the detriment of peace, Armstrong explained. This had to be avoided. The planners needed to find a way to include the small countries in the armistice framework to ensure the long-term success of the peace. But how could this be done with so many countries, Welles asked? If the United States became engaged in protracted disputes over relief or policing, it could create delays and undermine the war effort.⁵⁸⁹

Here one of the Roosevelt Administration’s brightest talents intervened: Benjamin Cohen. Like Dean Acheson, Cohen owed his position and prominence in the American

⁵⁸⁷ For an explicit discussion of the psychological reasons, see *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

government to Felix Frankfurter. After obtaining a J.D. and Ph.D. in law, political economy and political science from the University of Chicago – all before the age of 22 – he entered Harvard Law School, where he earned a S.J.D. under the guidance of Frankfurter. Perhaps the most respected lawyer in the entire government, he had played a crucial role in drafting many of the New Deal’s most important pieces of legislation, including the Truth in Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934. In preparing these laws, his primary responsibility had been to outwit the most brilliant lawyers on Wall Street. Now he reframed the entire debate over postwar political strategy in an effort to outwit America’s present and future enemies. His thought, while hardly original, is important. His colleagues would use it in a scheme to outwit the entire world and Cohen would later play a role in drafting the Dumbarton Oaks agreement establishing the provisions of the United Nations organization.⁵⁹⁰

Instead of relying exclusively on power, he thought the planners should utilize blanket pretense to achieve their objectives. It would be foolish to rely solely on “who had the requisite force,” he explained. This approach “left out the entire realm of psychological factors.” By this, he meant that the United States should consider and utilize public relations when formulating and implementing its postwar program for Europe. “It might be possible to counteract or combat the propaganda of the enemy by using in such a program the term United Nations, including therein of course, the smaller countries on our side.” In this way, the United States might be able to extend its influence

⁵⁹⁰ For biographical information on Cohen, see William Lasser, *Benjamin V. Cohen: Architect of the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Jordan A. Schwartz, *The New Dealers: Power Politics in the Age of Roosevelt* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993), 143-146; *American National Biography Online*, s.v. “Cohen, Benjamin Victor” (by Nelson L. Dawson), <http://www.anb.org/articles/06/06-00788.html> (accessed August 2, 2010).

into areas occupied by the Soviet Union, while also achieving wider acceptance of the American postwar peace program. In his reference to “the propaganda of the enemy,” the context makes it clear that Cohen considered two periods and two enemies. During the war, the effort would be directed at the Axis powers; after the war, it would be turned on the Soviet Union in the event of obstinate or unruly Russian behavior.⁵⁹¹

These proposals provoked Berle to present the relief proposal of Harry Hawkins. “We ought to have a United Nations organization for relief which would accompany the United Nations troops in occupying the liberated states anywhere and everywhere.” Officials working for this organization “should comprise the commission to contact the submerged administrative units which still exist in those countries and areas.” Welles concurred: “Our primary task would be to make an exact and specific determination of the areas where machinery will be needed to handle the problem, and to establish the United Nations machinery that will be necessary.” The United States “should bring into the necessary organizations the other American Republics who will be called upon as sources of supply and in many other ways to contribute to the reconstruction solutions.”⁵⁹²

America’s possession of relief supplies provided the United States a strategic advantage. As Armstrong put it, all of the small countries and Russia will “depend on the U.S. for food and rehabilitation” after the war.⁵⁹³ Pasvolsky believed it might even lead the Soviet Union to pursue a policy of cooperation. “It would be well to remember,” he cautioned, “that Russia would in various respects be strong or weak and might find

⁵⁹¹ P-2, Chronological, March 14, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 6.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, 6.

cooperation a desirable policy.”⁵⁹⁴ But even if the Russians refused to cooperate, food could be used as a weapon: the “principal United States forces would be food and relief,” Armstrong asserted.⁵⁹⁵ Several members questioned the rectitude of this tactic, but the larger concern was whether it could work. McCormick thought moral concerns might trump political and economic considerations. Once the United States got into the business of helping suffering people, the human element would be too strong to maintain a strict adherence to America’s political and economic objectives.⁵⁹⁶

This use of relief to exact leverage was also questioned on practical grounds. The career diplomat, John V.A. MacMurray believed the “starved and exhausted people” of Europe would be “desperate, bitter, and blind.” They would “look to their own group to obtain what they desire in exact accordance with the dictates of their national traditions.” He predicted “more revolutionary activity than ever before.” Food and relief would not be sufficient to maintain the peace. In the Balkans, the Bulgarians were already “outside their borders.” They would try to “keep their gains,” which would probably provoke the Greeks and Yugoslavs into the fray. Only an Allied army could take control of the situation. If the United States sent a relief administration into the region, it would have to clearly understand America’s political objectives. During the armistice following the First World War, the Relief Administration had abetted the foreign occupation of the

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁹⁵ Here I refer back to P Minutes 1, March 7, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 7.

⁵⁹⁶ The record shows that McCormick was quite correct in this assessment. Because humanitarian do-gooders would be largely responsible for the distribution of relief, they would often simply ignore policy emanating from above. See Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

Transylvania regions in Hungary by turning supplies over to the Rumanian army.

These actions countered the political objectives of the peace conference.⁵⁹⁷

The secret was to maintain control. The United States could not permit the wrong persons to emerge out of the social and revolutionary chaos they expected, and then assume power over a region or state's military or existing bureaucracies. "Whoever would do so would probably be obeyed," Pasvolsky argued. Welles agreed, and explained that the United States "could not safely leave to chance the determination of who will rise to such power." This "would be a most inefficient way to handle the problem." The planners agreed. The United States should provide a "recognized authority to resume control in each of the states to be liberated." This would have to take place at the local level. As Welles explained, "Persons should be selected in advance to take control of the ports and various small but important administration posts." Everything needed to be planned meticulously and well in advance. If successful, the payoff would be great. As the famous geographer and President of John Hopkins University, Isaiah Bowman put it, "It would place great psychological weight behind our objectives."⁵⁹⁸

The planners therefore insisted that the relief administration have a reliable staff. It would need individuals that could be depended on to uphold political decisions, particularly those of the United States. In cases where nationals rapidly assumed control of a country or region's administrative machinery, the United Nations representatives would work in an "advisory" capacity. Their task, as Cohen described it, would be to "assure order and proper motives." In areas where no reliable nationals were available to assume control immediately, the relief agency could run the administrative machinery. In

⁵⁹⁷ P-2, Chronological, March 14, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 10.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

regions where no functioning machinery existed, the organization would construct it.

To do this work, the relief agency would need “men who had sufficient force of character, great personal ability, innate power, and common sense.” It would need “statesmen with an accurate and full knowledge” of the countries to which they were assigned. And the very best men would have to be sent to the “problem spots.” Yet there was a problem: finding these men, as Bowman predicted, would prove no easy task.⁵⁹⁹

These challenges in no way discouraged the planners away from the United Nations approach. Berle explained that he had considered four options for organizing activities in the armistice period: unilateral U.S. action, Anglo-American leadership, a tripartite arrangement between the Americans, British and Soviets, or a United Nations approach. In his view, the UN approach had clear benefits over the other possibilities. In terms of supplies, it created opportunities that may not otherwise exist, particularly in Latin America. It would also make it easier to secure supplies from countries such as Australia and Canada, and it may open the way for Argentine participation. In terms of public relations, it would shed legitimacy on U.S. leadership in the postwar era and create an environment more susceptible to peacemaking.⁶⁰⁰

But the relief agency would be a spectacular show. The organization would not be controlled by the United Nations. It would merely employ the United Nations mantra “for psychological reasons.” The presentation would work as a “façade.” It would give a “semblance of control” to the United Nations.⁶⁰¹ But concealed behind carefully managed

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 10-11.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 10-11.

⁶⁰¹ The precise quote from which these phrases were taken reads: “He [Welles] nevertheless agreed with the proposition that there should be United Nations’ control but

stagecraft, executive authority for the organization would be invested in a few nations, perhaps the United States, Great Britain and Russia. But even this, Welles explained, would probably defy reality. “In any event, the United States should dominate the relief organization.” His reasoning did not stop here. This grand experiment would provide a superb example for the future. The relief organization “would set a pattern for future world organization.” No one disagreed with this reasoning and everyone understood that the stakes were enormously high. As Armstrong reminded his colleagues: “the pattern of the future was being set by everything that was going on.”⁶⁰²

But important questions remained on the table. Who would the relief organization help? Was it designed to advance American interests alone? Would it be a humanitarian effort? The answers remain to be seen, but at this juncture, humanitarian considerations hardly found a place in the discussions. The planners were concerned with stability, control and power. The dreamers among them wanted to create conditions that would allow the United States to erect a global system of “perpetual peace.” Economically it would be based on a multilateral trading order that gave preference to full employment, expanding markets, and rising standards of living all over the world. Politically it would be based on a democratic system of states organized in a global organization led by the United States. America’s aspirations were universal. In the long run Washington would permit no competing system.

for psychological reasons as a façade or semblance of control.” Other committee members state this idea in the same documents. *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, 11.

The Problems of the Atlantic Charter

But in the short run the planners had to worry about the Soviet Union. Moscow might forcibly bring the Baltic States into its sphere of influence. In all likelihood it would also keep the Polish territories it consumed in 1939. If this occurred, East Prussia would probably become a part of Poland. These developments might then create major problems with minority groups or populations who disapprove of the regime in power. Citizens of the Baltic States might prefer evacuation from their home countries. It might even make sense to remove the German populations from East Prussia and supplant them with Poles. Scenarios of this sort frightened the planners, not because of their humanitarian implications, but because of the negative impression they would have on the world if the United States violated the Atlantic Charter of August 1941.⁶⁰³

The planners became concerned that these developments might appear to contravene points two and three of the Charter. In the Declaration of August 1941, Churchill and Roosevelt had written that they desired “to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned,” and that they intended to “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.” The two leaders also maintained that they wished to see “sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcible deprived of them...”⁶⁰⁴ Welles believed that if the United States failed to uphold such rights, it might

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 13-14.

⁶⁰⁴ “Atlantic Charter,” August 14, 1941, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy (New Haven: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, 2008): <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp> (accessed September 11, 2012).

undermine the peace agreement and anger interest groups in the United States promoting specific national groups.⁶⁰⁵

Several members of the committee wondered if the integrity of the Charter might still be preserved in the event of such undesirable developments. Welles asked if plebiscite privileges might be granted to the peoples of the Baltic States so that those unwilling to remain under Russian rule might leave? Bowman wondered whether any decision had been made “as to the size of the people which ought to be recognized as rightfully entitled to sovereignty.” The authors of the Atlantic Charter had intentionally avoided the phrase “self-determination,” but the President was now using it in public speeches. Eventually the United States would have to define what it meant by “self-determination.” Bowman believed that a narrow definition might assist the United States in upholding the principles of the Charter, at least in a strict legal sense.⁶⁰⁶

But in truth, Roosevelt never planned to uphold the Atlantic Charter. No piece of evidence supports this claim more than the existence of the so-called “M-Project,” a top secret undertaking to find a definitive answer to the problem of displaced persons and minority populations. As one historian explains, Roosevelt contemplated “the large-scale, and presumably enforced, movements of population of an immensity which makes Hitler’s and Stalin’s efforts in this direction seem quite small scale.”⁶⁰⁷ As late as October

⁶⁰⁵ P-2, Chronological, March 14, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 13-14.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 13-14.

⁶⁰⁷ D. Cameron Watt, *Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain’s Place 1900-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 79. Anyone who disagrees with Watt’s assessment might take a look at the actual report prepared by Henry Field, “*M” Project for F.D.R. Studies on Migration and Settlement* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1962). Hardly a country on the planet is untouched by this design. Most astonishing, the staff envisioned a day in which the Earth’s surplus population might be placed on Venus or Mars. See Field, 344.

1943, during a meeting with “M-Project” staff, Roosevelt made it clear that “the resettlement of millions of refugees would not only be desirable from an humanitarian standpoint, but essential from a military point of view.”⁶⁰⁸

A similar consensus emerged within the Political Subcommittee. The planners concluded that it was wiser to resettle religious and racial minorities than to leave them in an environment where the majority remained hostile towards them. Welles, who had been so adamant to seek cooperation with Russia, felt that Moscow would probably be willing to pledge itself internationally to protect individual liberties, but it was unlikely that Russia would actually fulfill these obligations within their own territory. Several of the planners contemplated an international Bill of Rights, but this was rejected as impracticable. Berle likened the idea to the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Who would enforce the doctrine, and what states would be willing to submit their sovereignty to some international Court, he asked? Most everyone agreed with his assessment. Welles maintained that, while desirable, it would be simply impossible to guarantee Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” all over the world.⁶⁰⁹

The idea of protecting minority rights as opposed to individual rights was also discussed, but rejected in favor of migration and resettlement. One participant insisted that these regimes don’t work because they leave the proclaimed minority in a subservient position. They create jealousies and rivalries that undermine the internal peace of a society. Berle shared this view. In pre-war Europe, he explained that a number

⁶⁰⁸ Field, “*M*” *Project*, 327.

⁶⁰⁹ The only person who disagreed was Hackworth, who had attended a meeting in Atlantic City put together by Philip Jessup. At that meeting, the American Institute of International Law had decided to draw up such a Bill of Rights. P-2, Chronological, March 14, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 15-16.

of men had built their careers fighting for minority rights. His implicit message was clear. What interest did these men have in ever removing the status of minority if their careers depended on its maintenance? Several asserted that it would be difficult for people to move, but that in the long run it was the best solution. Bowman, who had been intimately involved in the “M-Project,” thought the massive removal of millions of people wouldn’t be such a problem in terms of public relations. “People were getting used to the idea of moving minorities because Hitler had carried the process so far.”⁶¹⁰

In sum, the Atlantic Charter did not provide a realistic set of principles on which to base American policy towards certain populations and areas of Eastern Europe. Perhaps the United States could save face through narrow legal interpretations, but the policymakers knew there would be large-scale population movements regardless of what specific groups ideally preferred. It remained to be seen whether these people would move voluntarily or whether force would be required. McCormick thought they would move on their own. “The question today most at issue is not ‘sovereignty,’ but under what ‘system’ people will want to live.”⁶¹¹ Her assessment was remarkably prescient. Even if the United States failed to uphold the Atlantic Charter, this did not mean that it would have to overtly violate it. The Soviet Union would do that for them. The United States simply needed a system in place to relieve and facilitate the movement of people. Berle informed the group that his Subcommittee was considering a resettlement agency.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 16.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 13-14.

Harry Hawkins and the British Relief Plan

When the Reconstruction Subcommittee reconvened on March 20, 1942, the Department of State had received a report from the Leith-Ross Bureau recommending a reorganization of the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements along lines similar to those suggested by Hawkins.⁶¹² The British, as Berle explained, “are now proposing to change” the Inter-Allied Committee “from an organization to study estimates into an all-embracing organizing committee.” Should the United States agree to the Leith-Ross initiative, or should it pursue an alternative that would either compete with the British effort or simply subsume it? To guide their thinking, the committee members had agreed at their last meeting that Harry Hawkins should formulate his proposal for an international approach to relief in a memorandum with the assistance of Pasvolsky.⁶¹³

⁶¹² Matthews to Hull, February 26, 1942, No. 2954, 840.50/386; “Suggested Outline of Post-War Relief Organization Prepared by the Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau,” February 3, 1942, both in DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General, The British Commonwealth, The Near East*, (Washington United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 92-98. In early February, the British proposal was hand delivered to the State Department by the American Ambassador in London, John Winant. It appears that the State Department lost this copy and requested that additional copies be sent via diplomatic pouch. The minutes of the March 7, 1942 meeting of the Reconstruction Subcommittee give the impression that no one had even seen the British proposal. The extra copies finally arrived on March 12, 1942 – nearly a month after Winant first delivered the document. Inefficiencies of this sort were commonplace in the State Department. Henry Wallace complained in his diary of a letter from the Mexican Secretary of Agriculture, which arrived in his in-box five weeks after it arrived at the State Department. Roosevelt attributed this behavior to inefficiency and claimed that “Cordell Hull had not done a thing” to resolve the problem. See Henry Wallace diary, June 15, 1942, in John Morton Blum, ed., *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 90-91.

⁶¹³ For the actual memorandum, see Harry Hawkins, “United Nations Approach to the Problems of Relief,” March 19, 1942, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 PART 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

The Hawkins memorandum paralleled the British proposal. Both documents recommended the establishment of a Council, which would include the United Nations and Free French. Hawkins stipulated that associated powers could attend the Council as observers, and nations entering the war on the Allied side would be admitted as members. In this way, he hoped to entice other nations to participate, such as Argentina, a country with wheat resources that had refused to join the alliance against the Axis powers. But with potentially 27 members, the Council would be too wieldy for executive decision-making. It would have to be a mere “ratifying organization.” By contrast, the British proposal granted the Council powers to address “broad questions of policy.” Both proposals suggested the creation of an Executive responsible to the Council and including up to seven members, four of which, Hawkins wrote, would be “the United States, the United Kingdom, China and the Soviet Union.” The British excluded China. To aid the Executive, the British proposed the creation of technical and advisory committees to manage matters such as finance, shipping and the distribution of relief in the field. The Hawkins memorandum agreed to the necessity of committees but lacked specificity.⁶¹⁴

The proposals are surprising in that they do the opposite of what one would expect. The British plan provided for American leadership of the Council and the Executive. It proposed to internationalize the Leith-Ross Bureau and convert it into a planning section subservient to the Executive. The Hawkins proposal made concessions to the British. The Inter-Allied Committee and Leith-Ross Bureau would be maintained, and the center of gravity for relief would remain in London. The Inter-Allied Committee

⁶¹⁴ “Suggested Outline of Post-War Relief Organization,” February 3, 1942, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 93-98; Hawkins, “United Nations Approach to the Problems of Relief,” March 19, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

and the Leith-Ross Bureau would form the nucleus of the Council and Executive respectively. He even argued that Leith-Ross be named “Chairman of the Council.” Beyond these specifics, the Hawkins outline is remarkable in that it paralleled the British system of government. Like the Leith-Ross proposal, the Executive would spring from the Council just as the British government springs from Parliament. The technical committees would function like governmental departments.⁶¹⁵

How does one explain these oddities in view of the competition between Great Britain and the United States? On the British side, the answer is quite evident. In 1942, British policymakers were well aware of their country’s perilous financial situation. They knew Britain would be unable to pay significant sums for relief, and they were also terribly suspicious of the Soviet government. Unlike many of his colleagues in the British government, Leith-Ross was also pro-American. He not only preferred a close postwar alignment with the United States in geo-strategic matters, he welcomed America’s liberal ideas with regard to trade, a fact the Americans never appreciated.⁶¹⁶ Much of this remains clear in the proposal Leith-Ross sent to Washington. From the outset, he made it readily apparent that resources would constitute the most important problem, and he warned that the Soviet government would “undoubtedly claim a position of equality with

⁶¹⁵ “Suggested Outline of Post-War Relief Organization,” February 3, 1942, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 93-98; Hawkins, “United Nations Approach to the Problems of Relief,” March 19, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

⁶¹⁶ This will become apparent, but on September 16, 1941, Norman Robertson, the Under SOSEA in Canada, told Acheson that he understood that Leith-Ross was “not particularly popular among officials in Washington, notably Mr. Morgenthau, but that he really felt we would be well advised to realize that he was one of the diminishing number of English officials whose ideas coincided more or less with our own.” See Memorandum of Conversation, Dean Acheson and Norman Robertson, September 16, 1941, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 PART 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

the United States and the British Empire.” In effect, the concessions made to Washington were both genuine and tactical.⁶¹⁷

On the American side, Hawkins explained his conservatism explicitly. He proposed no major changes to the Leith-Ross setup, except to internationalize the secretariat and increase the number of countries represented. On the one hand, this approach acceded to the Soviet preference for an “international bureau composed of the various participating countries.” On the other hand, it met the American desire for a global approach while preventing the Roosevelt Administration from having to consult Congress. As Hawkins put it, “if a permanent international bureau were established in the beginning, the question of contributions for its support would immediately arise.” This would require Congressional support. Therefore it was best to leave the Leith-Ross structure in place and take “full advantage” of its facilities.⁶¹⁸ “Later developments,” he argued, “would guide further changes.” But for now, “it was impossible to make practical decisions with regard to sweeping reorganization.” The creation of an entirely new organization would be impossible “without visualizing all major problems which would need to be dealt with.”⁶¹⁹

Hawkins’ proposal encountered immediate opposition. “If we were to commit ourselves now to keep the center in London,” Bean rebutted, “it might prejudice much that we would want to do later.” In disapproval, Pasvolsky came to Hawkins’ defense. The allied governments in exile “are located in London,” and it “is at present the best

⁶¹⁷ “Suggested Outline of Post-War Relief Organization,” February 3, 1942, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 93-98.

⁶¹⁸ Hawkins, “United Nations Approach to the Problems of Relief,” March 19, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

⁶¹⁹ ER-2, Chronological Minutes, March 20, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

place to work out the requirements for European countries.” He believed there would be sufficient opportunity to mold the Leith-Ross organization into an international organization. But Berle, the obstinate Anglophobe, remained unconvinced. Even if the Subcommittee postponed consideration of the Leith-Ross proposal, as Hawkins and Pasvolsky suggested, the group should decide “as soon as possible the question of where the main center should be located.” Acheson agreed. “We may be nearer to the stage of requiring operations than we think.”⁶²⁰

The Subcommittee recognized serious risks in permitting the relief operation to remain in London. Berle believed the Leith-Ross organization lacked legitimacy. “Conquered peoples” would have “more confidence” in the United States than the British, he argued. Niles added that he “could visualize an expansion of the Leith-Ross group on all fronts to study relief needs and possibly methods of distribution.” This would reduce American influence. The United States “should not allow any international organization to determine the extent of our own contribution,” he asserted. “We should make use of the power coming to us from the possession of the principal resources; we might, for instance, wish to decide who should be the government in some country.” Taylor and the others concurred. It would be foolish to “permit the Leith-Ross Committee to expand into ‘the whole works.’” Otherwise the United States might loose control. Instead “we should place another body in authority over it and make ourselves important on that higher body.” The Subcommittee concurred.⁶²¹

Dean Acheson agreed too, but he had a different problem: “The kind of Relief League of Nations proposed in the Leith-Ross document might not correspond to the

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

realities of power.” His critique was not of the British, but of the United Nations approach. With the joker now on the table he continued: “An international corporation” should be “given a charter valid in the territories of all the United Nations” and it should “be equipped with an appropriate staff for operations.” Apparently caught off guard, Berle intervened. “I doubt whether this is appropriate... Whatever executive is set up, it must be responsible to some higher authority... The United Nations is at the present an abstract idea and not a concrete organization. The relief task... provides a favorable opportunity to knit these nations together into a real organization.” Acheson listened dispassionately, and the debate rolled on.⁶²²

Berle proposed a structure to reduce the influence of the Leith-Ross organization. He suggested the United States call a meeting of the countries who signed the United Nations Declaration. At this meeting, the countries present would establish a United Nations Committee. This committee would then set up an agency to implement relief programs. Regional entities would be established under this agency and the Leith-Ross organization would become one of those entities. Initially it would be assigned the task of estimating European requirements, but may acquire other responsibilities at a later date. Berle admitted that the UN Committee would be too unwieldy as a policy-making body. He therefore proposed the creation of a much smaller steering committee. Everyone agreed that the United States, the United Kingdom, China and the Soviet Union should be members of that smaller committee, but some formula would have to be worked out to include Australia, Canada and possibly Argentina.⁶²³

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Ibid.

With this structure now on the table, the issue of bringing the relief organization into being became a matter of debate. Herbert Feis, an ally and friend of Acheson, contended that a meeting of 25 or more states would be chaotic. How could a UN conference be called and then trusted to create the organization Berle described? To meet this concern, Berle suggested his proposed steering committee be allowed to first work out a project for relief, which would then be put before the UN Committee for consideration. Cohen wondered if separate conferences should be called to address other postwar problems such as finance and resettlement. Berle suggested they should all be dealt with at once, but that different agencies might be created to address distinct problems. Whatever the case, everyone recognized the benefits of a United Nations Conference. It would arouse public opinion at home and abroad. It would give the United States legitimacy as the global leader.⁶²⁴

The approach proposed by Hawkins was not disavowed altogether. Separate from the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements, the British had also established an Inter-Allied Information Committee in September 1940, presumably as a clearinghouse for the information services of the nations at war with the Axis powers. But in reality, the committee organized propaganda in the United States to win support for the British-led war effort.⁶²⁵ After Pearl Harbor, Britain invited the United States to join the committee. Berle recommended the United States form a committee of its own to take the group over, but instead his colleagues employed the strategy Hawkins suggested

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ See Berle to McDermott, Pell, Gordon, Hoskins, Atherton and Achilles, December 18, 1941; Memorandum of Conversation, Donald Hall and Hoskins, December 18, 1941; Memorandum of Conversation, Stephen Childs, McDermott, Fell, and Achilles, December 17, 1941, all in File Hull, Cordell, July-Dec. 1941 Memoranda to, Box 58, Berle Papers, FDRL.

for relief. The United States joined the Committee and changed its name to the United Nations Information Organization, which became the first international agency of the allied powers in the Second World War. It was also the first to bear the “United Nations” name.⁶²⁶ These developments had no consequences for relief, but they underscore the tactical flexibility of the United States in achieving its aim of complete control.

Competing pathways to international consensus

On March 21, 1942, the Advisory Committee convened to coordinate the work of the Subcommittees. Welles presented the three periods the Political Group envisioned. Aside from military arrangements, he explained that an “over-all United Nations authoritative body should be instituted” during the armistice period. Authorities to undertake relief and reconstruction would be put in place and provisional government would be set up for enemy and liberated territories. In the transition period, the individual states of Europe would be determined, governments constituted, and regional, political and economic groups established. Boundaries would be delineated, populations transferred and resettled, and various economic institutions established. In the final period, the full functioning international organization would come into being and a definitive peace treaty would be signed. Welles explained that the armistice would be

⁶²⁶ See finding aid for the United Nations Information Agency, “History and Organization,” United Nations Archive. I have searched in vain for the diplomatic records for this agency at NARA. But historical description of the UN Information Agency at the UN Archive suggests the United States employed the Hawkins approach.

relatively short, the transition period might last several years, and the final period, “Perpetual Peace,” would have “no termination.”⁶²⁷

Once this framework had been discussed and accepted by the Advisory Committee, the remaining subcommittees explained how their work would be contextualized in the broader timeline. Two unresolved issues of relevance to relief emerged in the ensuing debate. The first received virtually no discussion. Bowman of the Territorial Subcommittee explained that American resettlement plans would require elaborate transportation schemes, food support and relief. To meet these needs, Berle stated that the Reconstruction Subcommittee planned to study the problem. Its next task included the preparation of a project to create another organization in addition to the relief agency that would concentrate on the resettlement of populations, returning prisoners of war, repatriating displaced persons, and other related problems.⁶²⁸

The second issue concerned the process of achieving international consensus. The first alternative was presented in a context unrelated to relief, but would ultimately become important for this portfolio. Dean Acheson’s Economic Subcommittee had assumed responsibility for the Article VII negotiations of the lend-lease agreement. According to this article, recipients of lend-lease aid would enter into negotiations with the United States to erect a global system of free trade. The question before his Subcommittee was whether the Roosevelt Administration should negotiate with each of the states that had signed lend-lease master agreements in a multilateral setting or whether the United States should negotiate with the British first, and then bring in other

⁶²⁷ Minutes AC-2, March 21, 1942, File President Roosevelt’s Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

states one by one. Acheson wanted to exploit disequilibrium in the balance of payments between the United States and Great Britain to “persuade” the British to adopt the American system of free trade. Once this had been accomplished, he believed the United States should then bring other states into the system one by one. Otherwise individual states might use the multilateral context to obstruct American aims.⁶²⁹

With regard to general arrangements for the armistice and transition periods, two additional approaches to achieving consensus were proposed. Taylor believed a four-power body should be created, which would in turn “blaze the way for immediate international organization.” In effect, he thought the Great Powers should design an international organization, which would manage all of the anticipated problems of the armistice and transition periods. But the rest of the world would have no voice in its design. The four powers would simply force their solutions on the world. The problem with this approach, according to Welles, was that it would prejudice other international groupings, namely the United Nations. Instead, Welles believed the four powers might design the international organization of the future, but that they should derive their authority from the United Nations in order to obtain the widest degree of legitimacy. Berle voiced his agreement, but others were quick to point out shortcomings. On the one hand, the issue of achieving consensus among too many states would impede action; on the other hand, nations excluded from the four-power grouping would be angry.⁶³⁰

The United States would never settle on any one of these given paths. For weeks, they would be the source of constant argument and dispute. With Acheson’s assistance, Taylor would advocate for a four-power dictate; and with the help of Welles, Berle would

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

promote multilateralism. The bilateral approach, though it would later become important, played a minimal role in the planners' discussions. Acheson, who was excluded from the Political Subcommittee, did not push his point of view. But in the end, an odd combination of all three paths would be used, not because of a conscious decision on the part of the planners, but because of sheer coincidence and the need to reconcile competing but equally legitimate points of view. The arguments promoted by the four-power and multilateral camps possessed such merits that neither side could disavow the other's argument: thus an amalgamation of the two emerged. But when bureaucratic flux permitted Acheson more influence, he employed a bilateral approach to reach four-power agreement, and then to reach a multilateral consensus as well. In the meantime, pure multilateralism seemed to hold the upper hand.

Turning "Multilateralism" into a Misnomer

On March 28, 1942, Armstrong launched the Political Subcommittee's discussion of the prospective United Nations body with a defense of multilateralism. He worried that the Anglo-American partnership might become "vulnerable domestically" and "too weak to impose its decisions." A select grouping of the four Great Powers "might antagonize small states and regional blocs." The multilateral approach made more sense. The United States has worldwide interests, he argued, and its relations with the other United Nations are "more cordial" than with the four Great Powers. It also presented tremendous opportunity. The small states, he thought, might be developed into "a make-weight against expansionist systems such as Communism." And finally, multilateralism would

preempt complaints. Middle-sized powers like Australia already wished to participate in the decisions of the United Nations High Command. This feeling would only grow.⁶³¹

No member disputed Armstrong's argument, but they worried about efficiency. Cohen "doubted that so large a body could competently make the rapid decisions that would be necessary." Carefully constructed machinery would be required. If some sort of "small executive group did not emerge, the result would be trading blocs of United Nations with quite injurious results." Welles agreed. Including the Western Hemisphere and the Philippines, there would be "thirty-six nations," he reminded the group. That would be too many for efficient decision-making. Armstrong concurred, but argued that without "the fullest possible sense of participation," "the smaller countries would feel left out and... become resentful." As a solution, Welles suggested an Assembly with a smaller Council responsible for decision-making. But this proposal posed difficulties as well. Disharmony had too often made it difficult for the Council of the League of Nations to take speedy decisions, and often decisions were never taken at all.⁶³²

At any rate, the group agreed that the Assembly "would have to be given some form of activity that would make it feel that it was really participating." At the Paris Peace Conference, the British had given the Commonwealth countries nothing to do, and this created divisions in their delegation. By contrast, Wilson had devised a successful formula for Latin America. Bowman, who attended the Versailles Conference, explained that Wilson had planned a "systematic program of entertainment... for the Latin American delegates... to plant in them a sense of recognition." He then directed those in

⁶³¹ P-4, Chronological Minutes, March 28, 1942, File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part III), Box 55, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA, 1-1A.

⁶³² Ibid., 1A, 2.

charge of the entertainment to speak to “the Latin American representatives in his own name.” “The great need,” Bowman concluded, “was to keep a sense of unity amongst all the nations on our side, and yet to arrange for that rapid action by some small group that would make the unity able to express itself in directed and forceful action.”⁶³³

But how would 36 nations delegate power to an executive group?⁶³⁴ Welles proposed regional representation. His colleagues shot down this idea. Long-standing disputes and diverging interests would lead to delays, and the process of choosing a representative would only exacerbate tensions. The group found a system of rotational representation equally undesirable. On the one hand, these schemes create inconsistencies that lengthen the decision-making process. On the other hand, certain countries inevitably claim status as a semi-permanent representative. The Subcommittee also considered the possibility of including regional representatives when the interests of a specific country came before the executive. But this procedure, too, was rejected as too time-consuming. The executive, it was agreed, needed unity of opinion and coherence over time, and it would have to be able to make decisions rapidly, particularly in the armistice period.⁶³⁵

Yet the central dilemma remained unresolved. The Executive needed to “satisfy all the 36 United Nations.” What was required, Welles asserted, was “a sop for the smaller states: some organization in which they could be represented and made to feel themselves participants.” Berle therefore recommended the creation of a secretariat and commissions to address regional and functional problems. Welles, who never ceased

⁶³³ Ibid., 2.

⁶³⁴ It is not clear why the planners repeatedly referred to 36 nations. At this point in the war, only 29 nations had joined the United Nations.

⁶³⁵ The issue of regional representation appears throughout the debate. P-4, Chronological, March 28, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

supporting some form of regional representation, welcomed this idea. The secretariat and commissions could also handle the relief and resettlement issues. Cohen thought they might be responsible to the Executive, which would in turn be responsible to an Assembly. The Assembly would give everyone representation, and the secretariat and commissions would provide another opportunity for broad participation. But even this proposal, Welles confessed, did not address the contentious political and military issues. A secretariat and commissions could not possibly handle these matters.⁶³⁶

The issue at hand was whether it was wise to vest authority in a limited executive possessing the power to execute decisions, or was it better to have a larger committee including nations that do not have the force to carry out orders. On this matter, Welles thought it was best to “avoid a fully dictatorial aspect from the very beginning, and that provision should be made for the expression of the opinions and desires of others than the major powers having the force to give and enforce orders.” Everyone agreed. Immediately after the war, the executive would need absolute powers to manage many of the military and political problems anticipated, but it would also require a wide degree of legitimacy to minimize potential opposition. As time passed, the organization would have to be reequipped to “control difficulties arising in the war of ideas.” Popular movements in the occupied countries already had the capacity to arouse opposition. The problem would only worsen as soldiers and military officers returned home. If these groups turned communist, the group concluded, it would undermine the peace and spell disaster for the United States.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 6-7.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 11.

It was therefore essential that the executive include other powers. The State Department's Legal Advisor, Green Hayworth Hackworth, thought an executive of seven members might resolve the problem. In addition to a corps including the United States, Great Britain, Russia and China, the remaining seats might be allotted to a Commonwealth country, a West European state, and a Latin American nation.⁶³⁸ Welles believed Hackworth had gone far to resolve the problem, but broader regional representation remained his preference. In addition to the Big Four, he believed five regions should be represented: Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Latin America, the Far East and possibly the Mohammedan peoples.⁶³⁹ To evade potentially divisive and time-consuming selection procedures, he argued that the Four Powers should simply handpick representatives from each of the regions. Fierce debate ensued over this procedure, but it was reluctantly embraced and justified on grounds that certain of the allied governments in exile had also been handpicked.⁶⁴⁰ Ironically many of these same governments had problems with legitimacy.

This whole scheme worried the cautious Myron Taylor. From the outset, he had been the most forceful proponent of a Four Power dictate, but now he was slowly moving towards the view of Dean Acheson. Perhaps, he conjectured, we should "develop an understanding of the future lines of policy and then inaugurate conversations with the smaller United Nations, a small number at first and then more of them." He even

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 13. Oddly, no apparent agreement on the regions appears in the minutes, but in the minutes of the Advisory Committee, the regions listed here are put forward. It seems that Welles made the decision unilaterally. AC-3, Chronological Minutes, April 4, 1942, File President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁶⁴⁰ P-4, Chronological, March 28, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 16-17.

questioned the committee's timing. He wondered whether it was even possible at this juncture in the war to determine the kind of organization the United States should promote. Welles politely reminded the old industrialist that they were merely speaking in hypothetical terms, though Taylor knew better. He therefore insisted on arrangements that would give the organization "a palatable flavor." It should be "clearly, overtly, a temporary body to handle the immediate problems after the armistice." If the body had the "appearance of permanence," there would be a "serious public reaction."⁶⁴¹

But the New Dealers believed this could be avoided with crafty marketing. Welles gleefully proposed the title, "Provisional United Nations Authority."⁶⁴² But most everyone thought the branding power of Roosevelt's "United Nations" would be tarnished if it were attached to a body that would act without consulting the alliance. However Berle did not. The impression of broad international consensus had to be created and the "United Nations" mantra was essential. Welles concurred. He reminded the group that the executive would derive its authority from a meeting of the thirty-six United Nations.⁶⁴³ If this were the case, Bowman interjected, then the United States might employ "the tactic of having an over-all title reading: 'United Nations Authority', followed by a subtitle which could vary with the many different organizations that might be evolved." The Executive could be called "Provisional Armistice Administration." As

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 3-4.

⁶⁴² Ibid., 15.

⁶⁴³ It is not clear why Welles utilized the number 36. At this juncture in the war, there were only 29 members of the United Nations. Perhaps he assumed an additional seven members.

such, the term “armistice” would reinforce the “provisional” nature of the executive while also preserving the “symbol” of the United Nations. Welles happily agreed.⁶⁴⁴

At the end of the meeting, the Chairman summarized the Subcommittee’s conclusions. A United Nations Authority would be established, composed of representatives from all of the United Nations. This authority would create an executive committee, possibly called “Provisional Armistice Administration,” and it would be composed of representatives of the four powers, with the addition of handpicked representatives from the five regions mentioned. Commissions or committees would be created under the Executive with responsibility for on-going and temporary problems such as relief. From time to time, the Executive would report to the United Nations, but in the final analysis, the Four Powers of the Executive Committee “would from a practical viewpoint exercise the power of all the United Nations whether delegated or not.”⁶⁴⁵ But there would also be a Secretariat “keeping people active who were without responsibility.” It would be filled with “social personnel.” These people would keep the small powers in the know and “make them feel that they are participating.”⁶⁴⁶

In many ways, this meeting made the institution of relief and reconstruction programs dependent on the continued development of America’s postwar strategy. By subsuming these issues under the Executive Committee of a United Nations Authority, nothing could be officially set up until these two bodies had been established. This plan

⁶⁴⁴ P-4, Chronological, March 28, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 16.

⁶⁴⁵ The language here was used in: AC-3, Summary of Conclusions, April 4, 1942, File President Roosevelt’s Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. But see also P-4, Chronological, March 28, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 17.

⁶⁴⁶ The statements quoted here were made by Bowman, who concluded Welles’ summary. P-4, Chronological, March 28, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 18.

would require the Advisory Committee for Postwar Foreign Policy's approval.

Roosevelt would also have to study the proposals and provide his consent. But with increasing demands on his time, delays were all but inevitable. Of course the planning of relief, reconstruction and resettlement projects would continue. Berle had jurisdiction over these areas of policy, all of which were receiving attention from his Reconstruction Subcommittee. Acheson, too, could continue preparations for the various areas of economic policy over which he and his Economic Subcommittee had authority. But whatever programs they designed, it was assumed at this point in our story that they would be placed under the proposed United Nations organization.

This assumption was only partially correct. Complex bureaucratic systems operating in a world of infinite variables are rarely amenable to pre-conceived plans. If the system itself does not undermine or alter a planned policy, then an exogenous shock often will. In the case of the United Nations, it was a combination of both. For one, nothing was ever certain in Roosevelt's bureaucratic system. Policy choices were always subject to bickering, fighting, and constant bureaucratic maneuvering. These factors, along with wartime demands, led to intractable problems that created unfortunate delays. Thus when the political imperative for action suddenly arose, the planners were not sufficiently prepared to act as they originally planned. The effect, while important, did not wholly undermine the Political Subcommittee's proposals. It simply meant that the plans had to be altered so that the relief agency could be brought into being before the United Nations organization. As a result, relief became a test pilot for the postwar organization itself. For this reason, its importance should not be underestimated.

Exposing the problems of international organization

On April 3, 1942, the work of the Reconstruction Subcommittee came to a screeching halt. With Berle absent when the meeting began, Acheson decided to create a little mischief. Instead of permitting a discussion of Harry Hawkins' latest "Draft Project for International Relief" – the agenda Berle had set – he permitted a discussion of Myron Taylor's latest problems. The multimillionaire businessman had many; but on that day he was not happy with the way things were going. As Acheson explained, the New Yorker (who had supported the New Deal) opposed the creation of a separate organization for relief. He feared an unwieldy multiplication of international organizations in the postwar era that might burden the American budget and lead to chaos. There should be "one international organization to handle all international problems." From the outset it should consist of no more than four powers, and preferably only three. Acheson, in effect, was abetting someone else's war against the plans of Welles and Berle.⁶⁴⁷

The Assistant Secretary wryly explained that while he was inclined to agree with Taylor, he thought it perfectly reasonable to call a large meeting first as a constituent assembly, and then that group could set up a four-power body to make decisions. This body could be convened occasionally, perhaps once a year to have a debate. But Cohen claimed that while he also agreed with Taylor, the relief organization would require a different form of representation given the need for resources from countries not included in the Big Four, such as Argentina and Canada. Hawkins concurred and Pasvolsky explained that the United States had faced the same problem when it released the United

⁶⁴⁷ ER-3, Chronological Minutes, April 3, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Nations Declaration. “Every time new countries were added the problem then arose again until all countries at war against the Axis had been included.” Countries such as Canada and the Netherlands, he added, would want to give their views in the settlement.⁶⁴⁸

Then Berle arrived and the debate took a turn for the worse. “An approach to the solution of international problems based on power could not last. Such an approach had been the basis of the peace conference of Paris. After some years the power crumbled and the whole structure disintegrated.” No member present dared ask how power crumbles, but the group knew the system had broken down. Berle tried to explain why. “International problems” cannot “be solved without general consent.” A rancorous dispute broke out, and the group referred the question to the Political Committee and the full Advisory Committee. This proposal suited Berle just fine. He needed Sumner Welles to win the debate.⁶⁴⁹

But the following day, Acheson and Taylor trapped the Undersecretary at the Advisory Committee’s third meeting. Acheson asked Welles if “the United Nations Authority as envisaged by the political subcommittee would be the ultimate repository of power,” or if “the executive committee of four powers would be the repository of final authority?” Welles responded that the “subcommittee’s feeling was unanimous and clear that the four major powers in the last analysis must make the decisions, but that as far as possible those four powers should act in accord with the views of all the United

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid. Of course I have taken liberties in this paragraph, but the behaviors of Berle described here accord perfectly with scholarly accounts of him.

Nations.”⁶⁵⁰ The problem, according to Taylor, was that an executive committee presupposed a grant of power to it by others, but in reality, the four powers would seek no authority from any other source. It would be “improper to call that committee an executive one.” This designation would result in “serious and harmful dispute.” Welles demurred: “it was desirable and feasible for the four major powers to attempt to obtain from the United Nations Authority a delegation of power.” Taylor then put the noose around his neck: “But not to act as an Executive Committee?” he asked.⁶⁵¹

The industrialist had the career diplomat cornered. The Undersecretary wanted the Big Four to request power from the United Nations, but then to ignore the alliance when its desires contravened the wishes of the Big Four. Norman Davis of the Red Cross tried to defend Welles, but Taylor’s argument was lost upon him. Welles simply capitulated: “The four major powers must exercise... the power of all the United Nations ‘whether delegated or not.’” He then shut down the debate. But the problem was not resolved and no one appeared to understand Acheson and Taylor’s discontent. From a marketing standpoint, they thought it was foolish to assign the committee a misleading name that might arouse anger. But from a theoretical point of view, they thought it was illogical to justify the international organization and manifold agencies they envisioned on the need for legitimacy. Their critique implicitly captured the whole problem of international organization: when the interests of multiple states coincide, they are quite unnecessary if

⁶⁵⁰ It is worth noting in view of Welles word choice – “unanimous” – that Myron Taylor, who objected to the idea of including the United Nations, was a member of the Political Subcommittee; this conversation is in Advisory Committee meetings: AC-3, Chronological, April 4, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 3.

⁶⁵¹ AC-3, Chronological Minutes, April 4, 1942, 3; AC-3, Analytical Minutes, April 4, 1942; AC-3, Summary of Conclusions, April 4, 1942, all in File President’s Roosevelt’s Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942-May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

the purpose is legitimacy. But when the interests of countries misalign, diplomats and policymakers often have little choice but to ignore international organizations.⁶⁵²

For Isaiah Bowman, the Soviet Union further complicated the problem. “Russia was such an uncertain quantity that it was impossible to make up any fixed view.” It was difficult to predict Russian behavior and power given that nation’s reliance on Great Britain and the United States. The amount of leverage the United States would have on the Soviet Union after the war was not clear. If the executive committee gave cause to worry, the expectation of cooperation on the ground was equally worrisome. His Territorial Subcommittee was therefore focusing in the first instance on Eastern Europe, giving particular attention to Poland. He felt the “United States should take a final position for herself which would be held as... [the] permanent position in regard to the problems.” When considering the role of the United Nations, the prospect of world organization, and the enormous tasks of resettlement, he explained that his Subcommittee’s work became “particularly baffling.” He didn’t know if the United Nations would be competent enough to handle the tasks it would face.⁶⁵³

But as a practical measure, he proposed a system of surveillance for the entire continent of Europe. He explained that his group recognized the “grave danger of confusion after military victory was obtained.” To counter this confusion, he advocated a set of political commissions that would be deployed with the relief organization to evaluate political circumstances in occupied countries. These commissions would determine the location of populations, ascertain relief and rehabilitation needs, assess the political weaknesses and strengths of various districts of a given region, and decide what

⁶⁵² AC-3, Chronological, April 4, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA, 3-4.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 4-5.

weight should be assigned to respective groups in those regions. This information could in turn be employed to “identify the authority in the state” and procedures that might “be used to create authorities.” To facilitate this process, the commissions would create analytical reports for the decision-makers, and they would work with the relief agency and countries on the ground to achieve optimal solutions.⁶⁵⁴

But it was not purely a matter of controlling events on the ground; the Advisory Committee also worried about who would control American resources. Following Berle’s presentation of the relief agency his Subcommittee envisioned, Norman Davis expressed trepidation over the prospect of putting American “bacon in the hands of others to hand out.” By his estimates, the United States would be responsible for “at least 80 percent of the relief and Britain probably responsible for the other 20 percent.” If this were the case, American policy should “dominate” the organization. Neither a United Nations Council nor an Executive Committee should be allowed control over these funds. The former Ambassador to Italy and Assistant Secretary of State, Breckenridge Long agreed. “Relief would be so large a part of the whole problem of settlement of the world that we ought to be careful to keep all of it in our own national control.” But in his view, it didn’t matter where the money came from. “Food could be used for pacification of the disturbed areas of the world and thereby make its contribution to political settlements.” Long had no problem with Berle’s proposal “so long as we control the organization.”⁶⁵⁵

Norman Davis did not dispute the objective of total control, but he did disagree with Long on one matter. He warned the group that using relief for political purposes had a “sad history.” He thought food should be distributed “cleanly,” and that “no political or

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., 7, 9.

selfish purpose should be involved.” Yet in the same breath, he also said the United States should, for “psychological” reasons, “tell the people of the occupied countries that we are conferring on how we will provide relief for them as soon as possible.” It might be inferred from this statement that his justification for not using food for political purposes was based on the damaging propaganda effects it could have, not the inherent ethical problems it posed. But it is also possible that Davis was indeed an angel in every sense of the term. With the possible exception of Anne O’Hare McCormick, he appears to have been the only member of the postwar planning committees that shared this view. But oddly, this is the only occasion in the minutes of the postwar meetings that anyone ever objected to the use of food for political purposes.⁶⁵⁶

Throughout the meetings, most of the planners assumed that it would be impossible to separate politics from relief. It is for this reason that the issue received so much attention in the Political Subcommittee. It is for this reason that the planners decided to create an international organization to manage relief and rehabilitation. And it is also for this reason that Norman Davis expressed so much concern over who would actually control the distribution of food and supplies. To be sure, the planners feared that another power might assume control over American largess and then use it for its own political or military benefit. But at the same time, the planners understood that if they were seen to be distributing relief in tandem with the nations of the world, then the United States would accrue political benefits. Yet for men like Davis, this was not politics. It was religion. The United States was in the *right*. Its system and values were

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 9.

superior, and they were, above all, universal. The American claim on the world was moral, and the objective was to save it. As a result, time could not be wasted.

The question was whether the United Nations Authority would be constituted before the relief agency. If so, then the relief organization might be established at the same time as the Executive Committee under the UN Authority's ostensible control. If not, Berle argued that the Relief Organization should be constituted at once. The four powers would agree upon a plan, which would then be presented to the United Nations for their approval. In this case, the process would provide a trial run for the creation of the United Nations organization.⁶⁵⁷

The planners agreed that the Reconstruction Subcommittee should continue its preparations of a detailed project for an international relief organization, but that the sequencing for the project's inauguration did not need to be determined immediately. The United States should preserve its tactical flexibility. Everyone, however, recognized how context and external factors might force them to construct the relief agency before the United Nations organization. The war, at this juncture, was going badly for the Allies. The United States needed a public relations victory. A *show* of Allied unity might hold the alliance over until concrete military gains could be realized in the field. The planners also feared that the British might take the initiative if the Americans delayed too long. Quite appropriately, Norman Davis made it clear that this would be unacceptable: "Our aim should be to prevent the British from taking the lead in the organization. We would provide most of the relief and we should dominate..."⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 7, 8, 10.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BRITISH RECONSIDER THEIR POSTWAR RELIEF POLICY

The planning for postwar relief entered a new and decisive stage during the late spring of 1942. Great Britain and the United States made their final preparations for one-on-one negotiations. The impetus for this round of diplomacy, no doubt, came from the British, who had grown worried over the lengthy delays in Washington. Officials in London realized that they could not manage the postwar world without the United States, but they also knew that American participation might mean serious challenges to their prestige and power in the international system. This reality set off a ferocious debate in London, pitting the Treasury, which hoped to set serious limits on Britain's postwar commitments, against the Board of Trade and Foreign Office, which planned to use the country's remaining financial and material assets to maneuver itself into a position of leadership in the postwar era. For whatever reason, Winston Churchill failed to intervene in these disputes, a fact that left the Treasury isolated.

To understand this debate and the sources of British concern, one must consider the background to these events. On September 24, 1941, the British had convened a meeting of the Allied governments in exile at St. James Palace. The representatives present created the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements, which, as we have seen, was tasked with the responsibility of estimating Europe's postwar relief needs. However the Soviet Union refused to cooperate with this group, choosing instead to make a proposal for an international relief organization of its own. This initiative placed the British in a difficult situation. The Soviet proposal, on the one hand, had to be respected

given the need for wartime solidarity, but on the other hand, it could not be accepted because it proposed unanimous voting within the organization's policy-making body and it totally excluded the United States, even though the proposal suggested that American tax dollars would pay for most everything.

As a result, the British made a proposal for a relief organization to the United States in February of 1942. The immediate objective was to outmaneuver the Russians. But the British also hoped to elicit American support and cooperation for an international relief organization more in line with their desires. In addition, the United States maintained a stranglehold on the world's material and financial resources. Great Britain, by contrast, found itself in a perilous financial and material situation. American participation was therefore essential. Yet due to American failures to respond to this proposal in a reasonable amount of time, the Allied Governments in Exile were growing angry that nothing was being done to ensure their postwar needs would be met. They were threatening, and in some cases, undertaking actions harmful to the war effort. These delays also meant that the British had still not responded to the Soviet proposal. Both matters were cause for considerable embarrassment and concern.

Sir Frederick Leith-Ross

The man who bore responsibility for postwar relief in the British government had spent most of his career at the Treasury. Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, known to his friends and colleagues as 'Leithers', entered the civil service in 1909 straight out of Balliol College, Oxford. Within two years, he held the position of private secretary to Prime

Minister Herbert Asquith, an experience that gave him valuable insight into public affairs and started a lifelong friendship with the Asquith family. By early 1914, Leithers had returned to the Treasury, where he managed the government's unemployment program for returning soldiers. Following the war, he moved to Paris to work on the intractable problem of postwar reparations.⁶⁵⁹ This experience shaped his attitude towards relief matters following the Second World War: it would be counterproductive, he believed, to force war-ravaged countries to pay for relief and rehabilitation supplies if this policy aroused a spirit of vindictiveness and undermined economic renewal.⁶⁶⁰

After his return to London, Leith-Ross experienced both setbacks and good fortune. In 1927, his colleague, Sir Richard Hopkins, obtained the position of controller of finance, a job that Sir Frederick believed he deserved. Although Leith-Ross managed to work well with Hopkins, his burdensome workload wore on him. In 1928, he suffered an internal hemorrhage, which forced him to reduce his duties considerably. But by 1929, his luck turned. He won the praise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill, following a mission to Egypt, in which he obtained large sums of money for Britain by settling financial claims Cairo had made against the country. Later in the year, his stature mounted further. He opposed David Lloyd George's plan to solve Britain's problem of unemployment with a massive program of loan-financed public works. In doing so, he not only became the architect of the so-called "Treasury view," he earned himself a new rival, John Maynard Keynes, the program's intellectual guardian.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, s.v. "Leith-Ross, Sir Frederick William" (by Roger Middleton), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/> (accessed August 2, 2010).

⁶⁶⁰ I do not have Leith-Ross on record stating this opinion explicitly, but it is apparent in the position he took in his negotiations with the Americans and the Canadians.

⁶⁶¹ *Oxford Dictionary*, s.v. "Leith-Ross, Sir Frederick William" (by Roger Middleton).

This period bestowed Leith-Ross with a prominence that propelled him into the position of Chief Economic Advisor to the British Government in 1932, but it also strained his relationship with Hopkins and Keynes, two men who would later obstruct much of what Leith-Ross hoped to do with regard to postwar relief. In the meantime, Sir Frederick's new position afforded him the chance to grace the world's stage. He represented Britain on international bodies, served on the preparatory committee for the World Economic Conference, and conducted negotiations with the United States on war debts.⁶⁶² He also undertook a famous mission to China in 1935-36 in which he assisted the Chinese in their efforts to move from a silver-backed to a managed currency. Though the mission constituted a technical success, the unfolding strategic context in East Asia rendered his efforts a failure.⁶⁶³ In 1937, Japan attacked China. By the outbreak of the war in Europe, the ground was shifting under Sir Frederick's feet.

One day before the German attack on Poland, Leith-Ross assumed new duties at the Ministry of Economic Warfare; shortly thereafter John Maynard Keynes literally moved into the Treasury, which he dominated for the duration of the war.⁶⁶⁴ This fact placed him in a position to oppose Sir Frederick down the road. But for the time being, Leith-Ross played an important role constructing the economic blockade of Europe. More important for our task, he also worked to prevent raw materials and other supplies from

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Stephen L. Endicott, "British Financial Diplomacy in China: The Leith-Ross Mission, 1935-1937," *Pacific Affairs* 46, no. 4 (Winter, 1973-1974): 481-501; Victor H. Rothwell, "The Mission of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross to the Far East, 1935-1936," *The Historical Journal* 18, no. 1 (Mar., 1975): 147-169.

⁶⁶⁴ *Oxford Dictionary*, s.v. "Leith-Ross, Sir Frederick William" (by Roger Middleton); "Keynes, John Maynard" (by Alec Cairncross). On the role of Keynes in the Treasury, see Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes*, Vol. 3, *Fighting for Britain, 1937-1946* (London: MacMillan, 2000), Chapters 3-5.

falling into the hands of the Nazis. As such, he maintained responsibility for the Allied governments in exile making purchases of postwar supplies throughout the British Empire and the Western Hemisphere.⁶⁶⁵ These efforts, as we have seen, led to the so-called St. James Palace meeting of June 12, 1941, in which the Allies agreed to “mutually assist each other” to defeat the Germans and Italians, and to establish an “enduring peace.”⁶⁶⁶ They also provide a precursor to the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements, the creation of which Leith-Ross was primarily responsible.

Sir Frederick did not enjoy his work at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, where his job, as he put it, was to turn his “ploughshare into swords.”⁶⁶⁷ Thus when his Minister, Hugh Dalton, left the Ministry to become President of the Board of Trade, he followed him.⁶⁶⁸ Yet he continued his work with the Inter-Allied Committee and assumed the Chair of the group in early 1942. He also headed a Division in the Board of Trade that served as the Committee’s Secretariat. From this vantage point, he was well placed to turn what was initially an effort to win the war into an endeavor to prepare for peace. This objective accorded more with Sir Frederick’s desires. But his personal ambition and immense generosity towards Europe would arouse considerable opposition from his rivals.

⁶⁶⁵ Leith-Ross, Sir Frederic, *Money Talks: Fifty Years of International Finance* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1968), Chapter 18.

⁶⁶⁶ “St. James Agreement,” June 12, 1941, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy (New Haven: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, 2008):

<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/imtjames.asp> (accessed September 11, 2012).

⁶⁶⁷ Leith-Ross, *Money Talks*, 272.

⁶⁶⁸ For a hilarious account of Leith-Ross’s relationship with Hugh Dalton, see Ben Pimlott, *Hugh Dalton* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985), 283-284.

Managing the Unruly Allied-Governments in Exile

Until the spring of 1942, the British had maintained responsibility for the Allied governments in exile purchasing postwar supplies in various corners of the globe. The Dutch, one of the few governments with purchasing assets and shipping resources, had raised the issue of purchases with Sir Frederick Leith-Ross in January 1941.⁶⁶⁹ He welcomed their initiative.⁶⁷⁰ “The provision of raw materials for the revival of industry would have to be undertaken by Governments of the occupied countries, working in conjunction with the producing countries.” At this juncture in the war, this recommendation seemed wise. The blockade of Europe had severed European markets from much of the world, and surpluses were accumulating in countries that sold

⁶⁶⁹ For precise assets of Allied Governments, see “Assets of Allied Governments,” June 11, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

⁶⁷⁰ “Purchases by the Netherlands for the Relief of Holland,” Summary of Meeting, February 3, 1942; Lamping to Leith-Ross, January 31, 1941, both in CAB 117/83, PRO. Following the invasion of Holland in May 1940, the Nazis seized Dutch gold held in the Netherlands. However the Dutch government exiled in London issued a Royal Decree on May 24, 1940 assuming control over all foreign assets held by private individuals or firms in the occupied areas of their empire. The government also managed to transfer considerable assets from the Netherlands to the United States via Swiss banks. These moves left the Dutch government with \$689,000,000 in stocks and bonds, \$178,000,000 in direct investments, and \$213,086,000 in short-term depositions, all available in the United States. The Belgians undertook similar actions, which left them with \$31,000,000 in stocks and bonds, \$71,000,000 in direct investments, and \$163,675,000 in short-term deposits. These two governments faced legal hurdles accessing these assets, but they were overcome. See “Treasury Revokes Dutch License to Use Funds Held Here,” May 17, 1940, *WSJ*, 8; “Dutch, Belgian Assets Here Total \$1,400,000,000,” July 31, 1940, *WSJ*, 5; “Banking: The Chase Wants to Know,” *Time Magazine*, February 10, 1941; “U.S. Turns Loose Frozen Belgian and Dutch Funds,” May 14, 1940, *CDT*, 5; “Asset Claim Here by Dutch Upheld: Justice Shientag Says Courts Must Recognize Decree of Government in Exile,” May 23, 1941, *NYT*, 31; “Dutch Assets Suit Goes to High Court,” January 17, 1942, *NYT*, 24; Adrian F. Manning, “The Position of the Dutch Government in London Up to 1942,” *The Journal of Contemporary History* 13, no. 1 (Jan., 1978): 117-135.

agricultural and manufacturing products to Europe. Leith-Ross, however, stressed the need for coordination with British authorities. He also informed the Dutch some weeks later that the British would not requisition supplies they acquired unless an emergency made it unavoidable. Despite his best efforts, the Dutch proceeded to make purchases in South America and Canada without establishing any degree of coordination with British purchasing authorities.⁶⁷¹

This behavior, in part, convinced the British to alter their policy on purchases. In conversations with Leith-Ross, officials at the Ministry of War Transport expressed serious reservations with the Dutch purchases. If they continued, it “might prejudice the prospects of Allied shipping being used for the relief of Europe as a whole.” Countries that had stockpiled supplies during the war would tie up shipping resources at the war’s end when transporting these goods back home. Leith-Ross also heard complaints from other Allied governments in exile who had few shipping resources and limited means to make purchases during the war. These governments feared their countrymen might receive relief too late or none at all. Therefore, at a meeting with the Dutch on July 22, 1941, Leith-Ross emphasized the importance of coordinating “plans for the provisioning of Europe at the close of the war.” The British, he implied, no longer welcomed independent Dutch purchases. “Far more effective results were likely to be achieved by some measure of pooling resources, especially shipping.”⁶⁷²

⁶⁷¹ “Short note on the history of negotiations with the Dutch and Norwegians about the purchase of stocks for their post-war needs,” FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁶⁷² Ibid. For information on Ministry of War Transportation, see also “Note of Meeting held Thursday 4th September 1941 at M.E.W. between Leith-Ross and Dr. Lamping and Dr. Phillippe to discuss the draft Resolution for the Allied Conference,” File #2 Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 Part 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

The British then proceeded to win agreement for this policy shift among the Allied governments in exile. The St. James Palace Resolution of September 24, 1941, which also established the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements, accomplished this objective. In clause two of this document, the signatories agreed that “while each of the Allied Government and authorities will be primarily responsible for making provision for the economic needs of its own peoples, their respective plans should be co-ordinated in a spirit of Inter-Allied collaboration for the successful achievement of the common aim.”⁶⁷³ It was also agreed that some machinery would be created to coordinate purchases. The Dutch consented, but argued that the resolution in no way prevented them from “carrying out under their own responsibilities the arrangements made by them for the provisional relief of the Netherlands at the end of hostilities.”⁶⁷⁴

Developments during the winter altered the situation dramatically, such that by March 1942 the Norwegians were also expressing a desire to make independent purchases.⁶⁷⁵ Efforts to construct Allied machinery for purchases came to a virtual standstill due to Soviet intransigence. As we have seen, the Soviets disliked the Leith-Ross organization and sought to thwart its development, thereby forcing the British to turn to the United States with a full-scale international plan for managing relief. The

⁶⁷³ “Resolution Relating to Postwar Relief Adopted At Inter-Allied Meeting in London, on September 24, 1941,” File #2 Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 PART 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁶⁷⁴ “Short note on... negotiations with the Dutch and Norwegians...” FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁶⁷⁵ The documentation on Norwegian purchases is scattered, but several illuminating pieces highlight their efforts to begin purchasing in Britain and in South America. See Karlinski to Leith-Ross, March 24, 1942; Telegram No. 354, Rio de Janeiro to FO, March 27, 1942; S.D.W. [Waley] to Lee, April 4, 1942, all in T 160/1404/3, PRO.

United States, however, elongated the process further as it attempted to determine its postwar relief policy. As a result, the Allied governments in exile became anxious: on the one hand, they worried that they might not be prepared for the day of liberation; on the other hand, they were concerned that they might lose legitimacy with their own people if they were seen as doing nothing. Norwegian seamen, who had heroically navigated the Atlantic to bring supplies to Britain, were in an uproar: their government was assisting the war effort but seemingly doing little in anticipation of Norway's liberation.⁶⁷⁶

Yet developments in the war made independent purchases increasingly dangerous. Following the German assault on the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the Japanese attacks on the United States and Southeast Asia in December 1941, the demand for agricultural, industrial, and military supplies exploded. As the Japanese advanced across Southeast Asia in the first half of 1942, the situation grew dimmer: resources from Borneo to the Dutch East Indies were lost, and vital shipping and land routes severed at Singapore and in Burma respectively. In this context, the production of military and non-military goods soared in the United States. Industrial expansion rose at a faster rate than at any other period in American history – over 15 percent a year!⁶⁷⁷ By February 1942, lend-lease aid on a cumulative basis had increased five-fold over the previous six months, from less than \$500 million to a staggering \$2,570 million. In 2009 dollars, this sum equates to

⁶⁷⁶ On the importance of the Norwegian seamen, see Memorandum of Conversation, Acheson and Norwegian Ambassador, May 28, 1942, 840.50/545, Box 4798; EP-5, Chronological Minutes, June 5, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers. On the importance of preparations and legitimacy, see enclosures attached to Matthews to Hull, May 15, 1942, 840.50/408, Box 4796; see three enclosures attached to Dispatch No. 3801, Matthews to Hull, June 5, 1942, 840.50/453, Box 4797, all in RG 59, NARA.

⁶⁷⁷ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, (New York: Random House, 1989), 357-358.

\$27.5 billion. While aid to Britain mounted over this period, the Soviet Union received the greatest boost. By mid 1942, Russia was taking in 35 percent of the total, as much as Britain.⁶⁷⁸ This extraordinary growth in wartime production turned many of the surpluses of the previous two years into shortages.⁶⁷⁹

The British knew that something had to be done to control purchasing. Initially they reasoned that it would be best not to forbid Allied purchases altogether, but to manage them through informal arrangements. In March 1942, Leith-Ross, as he had done with the Dutch in 1941, asked the Norwegian Ministry of Supply to provide a list of the commodities and quantities that they wished to purchase. The British Ministry of Food and Supply would then determine if materials over and above actual war needs were available. If so, Norway would be permitted to make purchases, so long as they closely coordinated their actions with British authorities to avoid competition in world markets. Leith-Ross also informed the Norwegians that the British would facilitate the purchases, but this would be done on the understanding that supplies would be pooled if necessary, and that there would be no diversion of Norwegian vessels to transport the goods. The Norwegians readily agreed to these arrangements.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁸ *Report to the Congress on Lend-Lease Operations: For the Year Ended March 11, 1942* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 15-18; *Sixth Report to Congress on Lend-Lease Operations: For the Period Ended September 11, 1942* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 8-9. I have used the Gross Domestic Product Deflator Calculator provided by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to arrive at the sum of \$27.5 billion in 2009 dollars: <http://cost.jsc.nasa.gov/>

⁶⁷⁹ Even before the United States entered the war, the British came to realize that surpluses were drying up on account of U.S. mobilization: "A Review of Surpluses Policy in the Light of the Present Position and Prospects" by the Surpluses Department, MEW, November 21, 1942, BT 88/2, PRO.

⁶⁸⁰ "Short note on... negotiations with the Dutch and Norwegians..." FO 371/31501, PRO.

However it soon became apparent that this approach was unsustainable. As supplies became increasingly scarce, the British found themselves in the embarrassing position of having to obstruct or discourage the Dutch and Norwegians from making purchases, which aroused resentment.⁶⁸¹ The other Allied Governments also became resentful, either because they did not have the resources to procure their own supplies, or because they believed Norway and the Netherlands were violating the spirit of the St. James Palace Resolution.⁶⁸² When the Belgians learned that the Dutch and the Norwegians were making purchases, they informed Leith-Ross that if the buying did not cease, they would have no choice but to commence procuring postwar supplies as well.⁶⁸³ Thus it became clear that the problem could not be controlled using ad-hoc arrangements, and that the immediate demand for postwar supplies from the Allied governments in exile might become so great that it would impair the war effort and endanger Great Britain.

This realization had both direct and indirect impacts on British behavior. In virtually every department of the British government – Ministry of Economic Warfare, Ministry of Food and Supply, Ministry of Transport, the Bank of England, the Board of Trade, the Foreign Office, and the Treasury – policymakers felt that Leith-Ross could not

Outside of these formal arrangements, the British also tried to influence the Norwegians using their embassy officials in the region where the purchases were taking place: see S.D.W. [Waley] to Lee, April 4, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁶⁸¹ For the first serious instance of expressed resentment, see “Memorandum” by A.N.S. [Steyne], Conversation with Alfred Holter (Norwegian Ministry of Supply and Shipping), May 7, 1942, Enclosure 1 to Dispatch No. 3801, May 15, 1942, 840.50/408, NARA.

⁶⁸² The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, May 5, 1942, 840.50/396: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General; the British Commonwealth, the Far East*, (Washington United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 100-101.

⁶⁸³ The Belgians had been complaining for months, but on June 8, 1942, they made an official request to make purchases. See Telegram 3191, Winant to Hull, June 8, 1942, 840.50/437, Box 4797, RG 59, NARA. On the Belgians, see also Telegram No. 2388, April 11, 1942, FO to DC; S.D.W. [Waley] to Lee, April 4, 1942, both in T 160/1404/3, PRO.

manage the problem without the assistance of the United States.⁶⁸⁴ Yet by early April, the Americans still had not replied to the British relief proposal of February 1942. The delay left them fearful of a negative response, especially in view of the fact that the Americans had proved largely uncooperative in managing the surplus problem in 1940 and 1941. It also weakened Britain's hand vis-à-vis the exiled Allied governments, and caused them considerable embarrassment with regard to the Soviets, who had been waiting patiently for a response to their own relief proposal since January 1942. As a result, Leith-Ross attempted to use the issue of Dutch and Norwegian purchases to push the United States into action. As we will see, the ploy worked, but it also inadvertently triggered a heated review of British relief policy for the postwar period.

The British Reconsider their Postwar Relief Policy

The Treasury no longer believed the government's policy complied with the British national interest. Following Churchill's speech to the House of Commons in August 1940, in which the Prime Minister promised food aid to all liberated countries, including Germany and Austria, the British began plans to accumulate supplies for the liberation of Europe. It was assumed that there would be some form of supply pool to which Britain would make a sizeable contribution. But by the spring of 1942, it had become apparent that Britain, like her European allies, would be in dire need after the war. The Treasury argued that the country would have little to spare in the way of postwar relief supplies. Hubert Douglas Henderson, John Maynard Keynes and David

⁶⁸⁴ See in particular, Waley to Henderson, April 17, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

(‘Sigi’) Waley led the charge against Leith-Ross and the Board of Trade, which remained adamant that Britain should make a contribution.⁶⁸⁵ These men were not only worried about the awful supply situation; they feared a balance of payments crisis.⁶⁸⁶ In their view, the Prime Minister’s statement had been made in completely different circumstances, and the assumptions on which it was based were no longer applicable.

Britain’s external deficit became the Treasury’s most alarming concern. By the end of 1942, it had already reached 2.1 billion pounds, the equivalent of 72.9 billion pounds in 2008. Even with the introduction of lend-lease assistance in 1940, the rate at which the deficit grew only accelerated. This development forced the country to take on liabilities and sell off investments at worrisome rates. Churchill might have called lend-lease “the most unsordid act in the history of any nation,” but the Treasury knew better. The Americans had waited until Britain was bankrupt before providing assistance; they forbade the use of lend-lease grants to support British export industries that could compete with American export industries; and they forced Great Britain to sign the Mutual Aid Agreement of 1942, which the Treasury considered an overt attack on the system of imperial trade preferences. As a result, the Treasury correctly anticipated the worst. By the end of the war, the deficit would reach a staggering 10 billion pounds, despite grants from the United States totaling 5.4 billion pounds. The political leadership, primarily Churchill, paid little attention to these developments. But Keynes, who

⁶⁸⁵ Waley appears to have been the person who realized that negotiations with the United States were about to heat up, and therefore encouraged a review of the policy: S.D.W. [Waley] to Catto, Hopkins, Henderson, and Keynes, April 10, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁶⁸⁶ For a discussion of Britain’s wartime currency problems, see J. Hurstfield, *The Control of Raw Materials* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1953), 176-188.

managed British financial negotiations with the United States in 1941, knew the Americans would advance their interests at the expense of Great Britain.⁶⁸⁷

For this reason, the Treasury disagreed with the pitch Leith-Ross made in his telegram to the British Embassy on April 11, 1942.⁶⁸⁸ To be sure, they believed it imperative that Leith-Ross consult the Americans over the problem of Allied purchases, but they considered it foolish to utilize the occasion to implicitly promote the pooling of relief supplies.⁶⁸⁹ A far better approach would have been the continuation of lend-lease after the war, which would have addressed the Treasury's primary concern: Britain's balance of payments position. With lend-lease aid, Britain could reequip her industry for export markets without loosing reserves or going bankrupt. The country could then recover its exchange position through exports. The idea of a pool, however, implied a British contribution. If the country contributed Sterling, the balance of payments crisis would worsen; if it offered raw materials stocks, it would deny Britain of one of its only sources of exchange: raw materials could be exported directly or used as inputs for export

⁶⁸⁷ An excellent overview of Britain's external deficit problems and the assistance provided by the United States can be found in Stephen Broadberry and Peter Howlett, "The United Kingdom: 'Victory at all costs'" in *The Economics of World War II: Six Great Powers in International Comparison*, ed. Mark Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 52-53. I have used the MeasuringWorth.com calculator to arrive at the sum of 72.9 billion pounds in 2009 pounds:

<http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>

⁶⁸⁸ The idea of relief pool is discussed indirectly; Leith-Ross put the idea on the table as a "Belgian" idea: see Telegram No. 2388, April 11, 1942, FO to DC, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁶⁸⁹ For the Treasury point of view on pooling of relief supplies, see S.D.W. [Waley] to Lee, April 4, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

industries.⁶⁹⁰ In effect, the Treasury believed a complete review of British relief policy in order.

When Leith-Ross learned of the Treasury's plan to challenge British postwar relief policy in a letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kingsley Wood, to Hugh Dalton, the President of the Board of Trade, he tried to convince them to tone the letter down. He did not think it wise to create controversy that would precipitate intervention from the War Cabinet before he had received a reply from the United States. Yet he showed little desire to alter British policy. He believed America and Canada would only shoulder postwar relief if the British "showed a very willing spirit." By putting what Britain had to offer "in the shop window," he felt the country "could still play a very considerable part in the whole scheme." Perhaps, he added, Britain could provide 50 million in sterling and restrict its use to the Empire to offset balance of payments concerns. He also proposed a variety of commodities that Britain might contribute: wool, cotton, and cocoa, but also leftover military stocks and goods produced after the war. If such a contribution were made alongside British shipping, then he felt that Great Britain might make a "substantial showing."⁶⁹¹

These arguments received a mixed response from the Treasury. Waley displayed the most sympathetic reaction and tried to tone down the letter.⁶⁹² Leith-Ross, he wrote his colleagues, is "quite ready to recognize that our proper contribution to post-war relief

⁶⁹⁰ This is essentially the position of Keynes; the broad context for his views can be found in Skidelsky, *Keynes*, Vol. 3, chapters 4-5, but see 142 in particular. See also Keynes Memo on Draft, April 21, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁶⁹¹ Leith-Ross's views were conveyed to the Treasury via Hopkins, who put them down in a memorandum of conversation to his colleagues: R.V.N.H. [Hopkins] to Catto, Henderson, Keynes and Waley, April 17, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁶⁹² Waley to Dunnett, Henderson, Keynes and Catto, April 18, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

must be on a limited scale, but he does not think that we ought to take the line that we shall probably not be able to make any contribution at all.”⁶⁹³ Richard Hopkins concurred, but believed it foolish to make commitments before Britain figured out how to meet its “external difficulties.” What Leith-Ross proposed to contribute would not even “touch the fringe of the entire problem.” It would probably harm Britain and force the country to maintain ration controls well into the postwar period, perhaps at levels lower than those of 1941.⁶⁹⁴ Although Henderson and Keynes disagreed little with these assessments, they preferred that a forceful letter be sent to the Dalton. “This is a major decision of policy,” Keynes wrote. “May I plead that it should not be fluffed for the sake of avoiding difference of opinion?” The “whole purpose of the letter” is to “get a ministerial ruling” changing the government’s policy.⁶⁹⁵

In the end, Keynes won the argument. The letter Wood sent to Dalton on May 1, 1942 challenged the assumptions underlying British postwar relief policy of 1940 and implicitly attacked its implications for British negotiation strategy with the United States. Wood pointed out the extraordinary changes that had taken place since 1939. The war had become a global affair, surpluses had turned into shortages, and Britain’s supply and balance of payments positions had eroded considerably. Most important, the United States had entered the war. The Americans possessed resources “for post-war relief with which ours bear no comparison.”⁶⁹⁶ It seemed foolish to pledge commitments before the

⁶⁹³ Waley to Hopkins, “Relief,” April 21, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁶⁹⁴ R.V.N.H. [Hopkins] to Waley, Keynes, and Henderson, “Suggested Alterations of the Draft Letter,” April 24, 1942; R.V.N.H. [Hopkins] to Wood, “Note to the Chancellor of the Exchequer,” April 29, 1942, both in T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁶⁹⁵ Henderson to Keynes, Catto and Waley, April 20, 1942; Keynes Memo on Draft, April 21, 1942, both in T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁶⁹⁶ Wood to Dalton, May 1, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

United States had made its position known. Such an approach might unnecessarily sacrifice scarce resources; perhaps the Americans might prefer an extension of lend-lease. Premature pledges might also compromise British strategy in other negotiations. It would be disingenuous to suggest that Britain would be a major donor to postwar relief, while at the same time pleading for mercy in other financial and economic discussions, most importantly, the talks over Article VII of the lend-lease master agreement.⁶⁹⁷ Dalton would take nearly two weeks to reply.

Managing the Dutch and Norwegians

Meanwhile, the British tried to put a stop to the Allied purchases of postwar supplies. The Board of Trade proceeded to block English manufacturers from making delivery on certain goods while the Treasury blocked payment on the goods. This, of course, sent the Norwegians – who bore the brunt of these actions – into a rage. Alfred Holter of the Norwegian Ministry of Supply immediately called over to the American Embassy to complain. With considerable flair, he regurgitated the Norwegian arguments and painted a picture of tragedy and suffering in his home country. It was necessary for “psychological reasons” to permit the purchases, which were miniscule in the broader context. “It would have the most serious adverse affects upon public opinion in Norway vis-à-vis the Norwegian Government in London should there be any delay at all in shipping relief supplies to any part of Norway.” Holter’s experiences with the supply

⁶⁹⁷ The latter point was not stated so explicitly in the letter, but internal Treasury correspondence makes it clear that this is what the department wanted to imply. See Keynes Memo on Draft, April 21, 1942; R.V.N.H., “Suggested Alterations of the Draft Letter,” April 24, 1942, both in T 160/1404/3, PRO.

authorities in London had made it readily apparent that it would be utterly foolish to wait on some projected “Inter-Allied Pool.”⁶⁹⁸

The Norwegian arguments had little impact at the Embassy: Leith-Ross had already begun coordinating strategy with the Americans to force a showdown over the purchases. With the Greeks and Yugoslavs now threatening to procure supplies, action had to be taken at once to terminate this behavior.⁶⁹⁹ On May 8, 1942, the British and Americans met with authorities from the Dutch and Norwegian governments. At this meeting Leith-Ross spoke on behalf of the British and the Americans. He insisted that any purchases made by the Allies be coordinated with supply authorities in the United States and Great Britain. At the same time, he called for a complete suspension of purchases until a joint supply program could be established. The usual arguments were exchanged, but at this particular session, tempers flared. After presenting the Anglo-American position, he told the Norwegians that their behavior was a “great pity.”⁷⁰⁰

Upon hearing this, the acting Prime Minister of Norway, Trygve Lie, exploded. Despite the Nazi occupation, he insisted that Norway was a “free country.” As such, he did not want to come “hat in hand asking permission each time from the Americans or British for every small purchase contemplated.” Norway, he argued, “had money and ships,” which meant that they should be treated as “real partners.” He complained that there was an American and British Shipping Committee, on which the Norwegians had

⁶⁹⁸ “Memorandum” by A.N.S., Conversation with Alfred Holter, May 7, 1942, Enclosure 1 to Dispatch No. 3801, May 15, 1942, 840.50/408, NARA.

⁶⁹⁹ The Yugoslavs and Greeks are mentioned in the following document: Winant to Hull, May 5, 1942, 840.50/396: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 100-101.

⁷⁰⁰ “Memorandum,” by A.N.S. [Steyne], Conversation with Lie, Jul, Laping, and Philipse, May 9, 1942, Enclosure 2 to Dispatch No. 3801, May 15, 1942, 840.50/408, NARA. See also Telegram 2532, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, May 9, 1942, 840.50/412-4/6, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 106.

no representative. His country was “an important contributor to the Allied Shipping pool.” On a per-capita basis, Norway’s contribution to shipping exceeded all of the other countries in the alliance.⁷⁰¹ He reminded the men sitting there that his country “had a deep friendship with the United States and Great Britain and were Allies in the full sense of the word, but they wanted to feel that they were not fighting against a ‘New German Order’ merely to come into a ‘New Anglo-American Order’ in which they would be told what to do.” It was an alarming statement.⁷⁰²

The reaction of the Dutch government in exile was quite different. They shared the Norwegian view on most every point, but they scratched their heads in confusion the entire meeting. When asked if they had consulted the Americans before making certain purchases, Dr. Arnold T. Lamping, Head of the Dutch Ministry of Trade, Industry and Shipping, responded: “I believe they have been consulted.” When told that information just received from Washington suggested that the Americans had not been informed, Dr. A.H. Philipse, Head of the Dutch Department of Economic Policy, replied, “But I thought Mr. [C. Van] Stolk [the Dutch purchasing agent in the United States] had kept in touch with them.” When Leith-Ross asked the Dutch if they were prepared to suspend their purchasing, Dr. Lamping finally gave an honest answer: “My Government has been waiting for a considerable time already and from an propaganda point of view would

⁷⁰¹ Consider this statement alongside the fact that Norway’s population was less than 500,000 people during the Second World War. “With the merchant navy’s pre-war size of almost five million tons, amounting to about seven per cent of the world’s total tonnage, Norway ranked fourth among the shipping nations. Moreover, its ships were modern and fast, and the fleet had a large proportion of tankers – every fifth of the world’s tankers was Norwegian.” See John Andenaes, O. Riste, and M. Skodvin, *Norway and the Second World War* (Oslo: Johan Grundt Tanum Forlag, 1966) 96-100.

⁷⁰² “Memorandum,” by A.N.S., Conversation with Lie, Jul, Lamping, and Philipse, May 9, 1942, Enclosure 2 to Dispatch No. 3801, May 15, 1942, 840.50/408, NARA. See also Telegram 2532, Winant to Hull, May 9, 1942, 840.50/412-4/6, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 106.

soon have to cease feeding our people paper promises.” Leith-Ross then pleaded with the Dutch to consult the Anglo-American supply authorities and temporarily cease purchases. Just as Lie had done, they agreed to put the matter before the Dutch Cabinet.⁷⁰³

Henceforward the two Allied Governments in exile pursued distinct strategies: while the Norwegians sped up the diplomatic endgame – inadvertently perhaps – the Dutch, who possessed a combination of discretion, aloofness, and calculated obliviousness, slowed it down. They simply delayed or played dumb while engaging in all sorts of chicanery to achieve their objectives. As a result, their purchases of postwar relief supplies were largely ignored and mostly undetected.⁷⁰⁴ The Norwegians, however, played their hand less shrewdly. Within forty-eight hours of having received a formal follow-up memorandum from the Americans and British, Lie began engaging them in a petty and wholly unproductive he-said-she-said-I-told-you-so-but-did-we-not-agree sort of exchange.⁷⁰⁵ Ultimately Lie won the fight with the British – they finally permitted the

⁷⁰³ Ibid. For biographical information on Lamping, see *Biografisch Portaal van Nederland*, s.v., “Lamping, Arnold Theodoor” (by W.J.M. Klassen), <http://www.biografischportaal.nl/> (accessed September 18, 2012). Information on Philipse is more difficult to find. With the assistance of the Dutch National Archives finding aid, I have determined that he was Head of the Department of Economic Policy 1941-1942, but then served as part of the Dutch Mission for Economic, Financial and Maritime Affairs in Washington 1942-1945.

⁷⁰⁴ For evidence of the Dutch strategy, see Lamping to Leith-Ross, May 29, 1942, Enclosure 1 to Dispatch No. 4093, June 8, 1942, 840.50/416, Box 4796; for evidence of the Dutch trickery, see Telegram 3043, Winant to Hull, June 1, 1942, 840.50/478, Box 4797; see also Telegram 3191, June 8, 1942, 840.50/437, Box 4797, all in RG 59 NARA.

⁷⁰⁵ For a nice overview of the discussions the Norwegians and Dutch had with the Americans and British, see “Memorandum,” May 14, 1942, Enclosure 2 to Dispatch No. 3798, Matthews to Hull, May 15, 1942, 84050/417, Box 4796. For details of the exchange between the Norwegians and the British, see Leith-Ross to Lie, May 21, 1942, Enclosure to Dispatch 3894, May 22, 1942, 840.50/409, Box 4796; Holter to Leith-Ross,

Norwegians to make purchases with certain stipulations – but this behavior endangered the alliance and put the Norwegians under the spotlight of the Americans.⁷⁰⁶ As we will see, this seriously impaired their freedom of action and probably made it much more difficult for them to achieve their objectives.

Britain's Internal War and the Response to the American Note

When the American response to the British relief proposal was shared with Leith-Ross and Richard Law on May 11, 1942, it presented London with a fundamental dilemma.⁷⁰⁷ If Great Britain rejected the American proposal, it might harm the war effort and undermine the chances that the United States would play a significant role in the postwar era, which was considered essential for global stability and prosperity by most everyone. If Great Britain accepted the proposal, it ran the risk of being hustled by the United States and offending most all of its allies, including the Dominions, Allied Governments in exile, and possibly the Soviet Union. With the exception of Russia, none of these governments were guaranteed participation in the preliminary discussions, and Moscow was certain to protest the dominant role given to the United States in the

June 2, 1942; Leith-Ross to Holter, June 3, 1942, Enclosures 1-2 to Dispatch No. 4070, Matthews to Hull, June 5, 1942, 840.50/454, Box 4797, all in RG 59, NARA.

⁷⁰⁶ In this document, we see the British capitulating to the Norwegians; we also see them informing the Americans of what is happening: Telegram 3127, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, June 4, 1942, 840.50/399-6/8, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 109-110. See also Leith-Ross to Steyne, June 5, 1942, Enclosure 3 to Dispatch No. 4070, June 5, 1942, 840.50/454, RG 59, NARA.

⁷⁰⁷ For contents of the American response and initial British reaction, Eden to Halifax, May 12, 1942; Winant to Eden, May 11, 1942; "Memorandum," May 11, 1942, all in T 188/254, PRO. See also Telegram 2693, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, May 15, 1942, 840.50/391-1/2, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 108-109.

proposed scheme. It left policymakers wondering if Great Britain could preserve its global influence and imperial prestige in spite of its worsening financial situation and weakening geo-strategic position. It would take months to resolve these issues.

Naturally the debate reignited the controversy with the Treasury. Leith-Ross carefully maneuvered within the British bureaucracy to ensure no obstacles arose to his preference for a positive response to the American proposal, which he considered an acceptance of his own ideas.⁷⁰⁸ He urged the President of the Board of Trade to silence the Treasury, and on May 13, 1942, Dalton responded to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's letter of two weeks prior. He cited every imaginable reason why Britain could not back away from the Prime Minister's pledge of August 1940. Great Britain had a humanitarian job to do; it had a debt of honor to pay to Eastern Europe; and a deep interest in preventing social and political disruption in Europe. But above all, he wrote, Britain would be more likely to "enlist American sympathy" if "we show a real effort to help others."⁷⁰⁹ Kingsley Wood acknowledged these arguments, but returned to his view that Britain should enter into no large commitments prematurely. Britain's balance of payments is kept in equilibrium due to assistance from the United States and Canada, he

⁷⁰⁸ "They agree with the principle of the Russian note," Leith-Ross wrote, "but consider that the organization should be built up on the lines which I have suggested." Leith-Ross to Dalton, Minute Sheet, May 12, 1942, T 188/254. For further illustration of Leith-Ross' bureaucratic finesse, see Leith-Ross to Dalton, "Relief Policy," May 12, 1942, T 188/254; Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 13, 1942, T 188/254; Leith-Ross to Hopkins, May 15, 1942, T 160/1404/3; Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 19, 1942, T 160/1404/3; Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 20, 1942, T 188/254; Leith-Ross to Dalton, May 20, 1942, T 188/254; Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 21 1942, T 188/254, all at PRO.

⁷⁰⁹ Dalton to Wood, May 13, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

wrote. If this aid dries up after the war, we may need everything we have to make ends meet.⁷¹⁰

The Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, who had been privy to this correspondence, stepped into the ring on May 19, 1942 with a letter to Wood. “America,” he argued, “is not in the least likely to adopt a reasonably generous attitude towards our difficulties if we try and make too much of them in a context like this.... It was we who gave the first undertakings to the Allies in the matter of post-war relief and it would be fatal if we were now to give an appearance of trying to unload our burden on to the Americans.”⁷¹¹ Then, in a letter to Churchill, he asked the Prime Minister if it would be permissible for the matter to be brought up at the next Cabinet meeting.⁷¹² A response to the Americans needed to be sent immediately and everyone agreed that a favorable response was in order. Churchill, who was not scheduled to be at the Cabinet meeting, concurred. He was apparently unaware of the deep fissures that had emerged in the British government over relief policy. In this way, the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade prepared the way for a smooth sailing through the Cabinet. The Treasury had been cornered.

On May 21, 1942, the British War Cabinet, in Churchill’s absence, elected to accept the American proposal, but reserved the right to suggest changes. Eden told the gathering that Washington was using the relief issue to “establish under the aegis of the ‘United Nations’ the embryo of the international organization of the future.” In his view, the Americans were “acting on the thesis that the more international machinery that can

⁷¹⁰ Wood to Dalton, May 18, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷¹¹ Eden to Wood, May 19, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷¹² Eden to Churchill, May 19, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

be got into operation with their participation before the end of the war, the greater the likelihood of American public opinion being ready to continue international cooperation after the war.” No one wanted to discourage this behavior, even the Treasury. “For the success of any post-war relief scheme,” Eden argued, “the contribution of the United States will be all important. For that reason alone we should be well advised to fall in with the American proposals.”⁷¹³ Revisions could be sought at a later date, but we should obtain Dominion approval and inform Ambassador Winant of our desire to dispatch Leith-Ross to Washington as soon as possible.⁷¹⁴

No sooner had the ink dried on the prepared conclusions of this meeting than a new round of fighting erupted between the Board of Trade and the Treasury. In a memorandum written for the War Cabinet’s Committee on Reconstruction Problems, which was partly responsible for determining British postwar relief policy, Hugh Dalton tried to secure support for his department’s view of the matter. He argued that London should be prepared to pool postwar supplies and coordinate its efforts with the Allied Governments through an international organization. Discussions with Canada and the United States needed to consider what would be necessary to re-provision territories occupied by Allied forces. He suggested that rationing remain in place after the war, and that the government consider the possibility of placing a list of British requirements

⁷¹³ See “Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet,” May 21, 1942, W.M. (42) 65 Conclusions, CAB 65/26/26; “Memorandum by the SOSFA – United States Government’s Proposals on Post-War Relief,” War Cabinet, May 20, 1942, W.P. (42) 212, CAB 66/24/42, PRO.

⁷¹⁴ The War Cabinet conclusions do not mention reserving the right to make revisions, but that this was agreed upon is clear in the actual response: “His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom assume that the proposals of the United States Government are not to be regarded as a rigid plan, and that there is scope for adjustment and modifications in the organization as may be judged expedient.” See Eden to Winant, June 9, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

before the Allies. In a polite overture to the Treasury, he wrote that the precise nature of the British contribution would have to be determined at a later date.⁷¹⁵ Despite his best efforts, the document fell flat. “The President of the Board of Trade may have become accustomed to a diet of his own words,” Keynes sarcastically wrote, “but the Cabinet should be clear what words it is that they are likely to have to eat before endorsing this paper.”⁷¹⁶

In the Treasury’s view, Dalton’s plan lacked precision. It committed Britain to contribute to a “supply pool,” but failed to explain what that meant. Who would control this pool? How would decisions affecting the distribution of its supplies be made? These proposals would “appear to commit us,” Keynes wrote, “to placing in the hands of some outside body... the whole question of what supplies should be allocated to this country.” Yet the constitution of that body “is at present unknown to us.”⁷¹⁷ Waley wrote that he could certainly have confidence in the judgment of an Anglo-American organization, but that it was very difficult for him to have such an attitude if China and the Soviet Union were included. “It is conceivable,” he added, “that an international organization might work so slowly and so unfairly that we might regret having placed our destinies in its hands more than we need.”⁷¹⁸ The Chancellor of the Exchequer concurred with these views.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁵ “Memorandum by the President of the BOT,” May 22, 1942, R.P. (42) 14, CAB 117/89, PRO.

⁷¹⁶ “Post-War Relief Policy,” by Keynes, June 1, 1942, T 247/90, PRO.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

⁷¹⁸ Waley to Dunnett, Henderson, and Keynes, May 27, 1942, T160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷¹⁹ “Post-War Relief Policy,” Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kingsley Wood, June 2, 1942, R.P. (42) 17, T 160/1404/3, PRO; “Post-War Relief Policy,” by Keynes, June 1, 1942, T 247/90, PRO.

He also agreed that the document failed to make distinctions between immediate postwar needs and long-term requirements. After the war, the Allies would be concerned with “acute want” for a period of perhaps three months. If Britain chose to make extreme commitments, Keynes believed it wise to limit them to the immediate period with the option of extending them later. This view applied not only to the provision of food and raw materials, but also to the maintenance of restrictions on domestic consumption.⁷²⁰ The Treasury thought postwar rationing necessary to set Britain’s financial and economic house in order; the Board of Trade believed it would allow Britain to contribute more to postwar relief. The issue might not have amounted to much at this point in the story, but the Board also wanted to publicly announce Britain’s intent to continue rationing after the war, which in turn emboldened the Treasury in its view that there must be time limits.

However it did not resolve disputes within the Treasury over the prudence of a public statement in 1942. Several Treasury officials agreed with the Board of Trade: a public pledge to extend rationing might bolster efforts to persuade the Allies to cease making postwar purchases and convince the United States of Britain’s sincere commitment to postwar relief. It would also provide an opportunity to educate the British people, whose sacrifice would be needed to stabilize Europe and Britain after the war. It might also exempt the country from having to open up its financial books to some international body in order to obtain aid – full revelation of Britain’s financial position would be a disaster for the country’s prestige.⁷²¹ Waley did not dispute these arguments,

⁷²⁰ “Post-War Relief Policy,” Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, June 2, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷²¹ For example, see Note by Dunnett, May 28, 1942, PRO, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

but believed it unwise to prematurely forfeit Britain's tactical and strategic flexibility: even a vague commitment to extend rationing could backfire.⁷²² Keynes agreed. Would Britain maintain rationing in order to help the Germans? Was it wise to make such commitments without comparable sacrifice from the Americans? In short, he believed rationing should be linked to the extension of aid from the United States.⁷²³ The Chancellor concurred and made this point of view known in a June 2, 1942 memorandum responding to the President of the Board of Trade.⁷²⁴

Keynes was quickly vindicated in his attitude. When the American Embassy learned that the President of the Board of Trade and the Foreign Secretary planned to put a rationing statement before the War Cabinet, Winant quickly informed the State Department. An analogous statement from Washington would make for excellent wartime propaganda, he argued.⁷²⁵ Roosevelt agreed to make a statement at his weekly press conference, but made it known that the United States would not make any comparable commitment, and it would not announce any extension of lend-lease. Instead he would praise the British for their "self-sacrifice" and highlight the "depth of United Nations solidarity." But he did claim that the "innate generosity of the American people" would "manifest itself in practical measures to meet the needs of the newly-freed peoples

⁷²² Waley to Dunnett, Henderson, and Keynes, May 27, 1942, T160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷²³ "Post-War Relief Policy," by Keynes, June 1, 1942, T 247/90, PRO.

⁷²⁴ "Post-War Relief Policy," Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, June 2, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷²⁵ Telegram 2705, Winant to Hull, May 16, 1942, 840.50/399, Box 4796, RG 59, NARA. The Americans may have set the British up by suggesting a rationing statement would favorably impress the U.S. Government. See Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 13, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

of Europe.” Hull thus instructed the Ambassador in London to inform the British of the President’s decision, and to demand that they make no mention of lend-lease.⁷²⁶

If the British were aware of this decision, it appears to have had no impact on the Foreign Secretary or the President of the Board of Trade. In a meeting of the War Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Problems on June 3, 1942, they regurgitated the whole of their arguments in every aspect, and Treasury officials refuted them in every possible way. However the balance of power momentarily resided with those who preferred a statement, and it was decided that one should be made. But no agreement could be reached on what the statement should say: what exactly would Britain pledge to ration? So these men did what men frequently do in bureaucracies when a committee cannot make a decision: they set up another committee.⁷²⁷ This new committee acted with unusual speed and energy, and two days later, the “Official Committee on Post-War Relief Policy,” as the new group was called, agreed on a statement.⁷²⁸ But that was only because the Treasury arrived unprepared.⁷²⁹ Thus what appeared to be a brilliant victory for the Board of Trade would turn out to be not so brilliant after all.

⁷²⁶ See Hull to Roosevelt, May 30, 1942; Early to Hull, June 1, 1942, both in File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 80, NARA, WRPR, Acheson Papers; Telegram 2481, Hull to Winant, June 1, 1942, 840.50/399, Box 4796, all in RG 59, NARA; see also Telegram Relief No. 18, DC to FO, July 18, 1942; Telegram Relief No. 19, DC to FO, July 18, 1942, both in T160/1404/4, PRO.

⁷²⁷ “Draft Minutes of Meeting of War Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Problems,” June 4, 1942, R.P. (42) 4, CAB 117/89, PRO. These minutes rarely attribute specific statements to individuals, but it is apparent who said what given the documentation cited in previous notes.

⁷²⁸ “Report of the Official Committee on Post-War Relief Policy,” War Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Problems, June 5, 1942, CAB 117/89, PRO. Everyone argued over what was decided even after the fact. As a result, there are various versions of this document with different dates and slightly different texts.

⁷²⁹ Hopkins, who represented Treasury at the meeting, makes a confession of this sort in the following: Hopkins to Waley, Catto and Keynes, June 6, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

While this feud continued with no apparent end in sight, Leith-Ross considered a number of questions raised by the American relief proposals. None was more important to him than the implications of the “Washington scheme,” as he called it, for his beloved Inter-Allied Committee for Post-war Requirements?⁷³⁰ Leith-Ross never put it in these terms, but he knew that if his committee became irrelevant on account of the Americans, then he might also become irrelevant!⁷³¹ Thus he did everything to not only guarantee its survival, but to widen its responsibilities as well. Surely it is to his credit that he concocted such fantastic arguments to persuade people of his views, and that he used the most circuitous methods to achieve his objectives. As he put it to Ambassador Winant in late May, these were not his arguments at all: this was the perspective of South Africa. “In view of the importance of the British Commonwealth of Nations as a source of post-war supplies, they consider that a special branch of the proposed organization ought to be established to function in London.”⁷³²

He then tried to lead the Americans to believe that this too was their point of view: “The U.S. note provides that the Inter-Allied Committee in London should be maintained as an Advisory body.”⁷³³ For practical reasons, he added, a branch of the Executive organization would also be required in London. The First World War had

⁷³⁰ Leith-Ross to Dalton, May 12, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

⁷³¹ It is hardly surprising that the issue of the Inter-Allied Committee’s relationship to the American relief scheme is at the top of Leith-Ross’s priorities moving forward. See “Notes on Relief,” May 21, 1942, T 188/254, PRO. Leith-Ross had been an influential figure in the British Government during the 1930s, managing high-level financial negotiations, but his wartime decline in influence made him insecure and overconfident. He therefore sought to protect and expand his domain.

⁷³² “Notes for Talk with Mr. Winant,” May 29, 1942; Leith-Ross also mentions South Africa in his correspondence with the FO: Leith-Ross to Ronald, June 4, 1942, both in T 188/254, PRO.

⁷³³ “Note of Interview with Mr. Winant,” May 29, 1942; “Notes for Talk with Mr. Winant,” May 29, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

shown that “the nearer the centre of operations the administration was the more efficiently it worked.”⁷³⁴ Leith-Ross also underscored the political benefits of devolving more responsibility to the London organization. The Allied Governments in exile would certainly protest the composition of the Executive Committee, which, as proposed, included China, Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. If an arm of the relief agency in London assumed considerable power, and a series of technical committees were set up there as well, it might mollify the Allies.⁷³⁵

Sir Frederick’s advocacy for the Allies did not end here. He preferred that at least one or two representatives of the European governments in exile participate in the preliminary discussions in Washington.⁷³⁶ He believed the Executive Committee should be widened to include Allied nations. And he insisted that these Governments be made aware of the American proposals as soon as possible. Otherwise they would learn of them through leaks.⁷³⁷ As he put it, “there is no object in offending their susceptibilities.”⁷³⁸ Several of these Governments had shipping resources and others held assets in their

⁷³⁴ Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 20, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

⁷³⁵ Ibid. The FO did not like the idea of Leith-Ross pushing this matter before they had heard the reaction of the Russians to the British proposal. The Soviets, as we have seen, disliked the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements and it was uncertain how they would respond to this proposal: see Barring to Leith-Ross, June 1, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

⁷³⁶ Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 13, 1942. Ultimately Leith-Ross backed away from this view when he realized that pursuing it would create delays. The Allied Governments would have great difficulty among themselves picking one or two representatives: see Leith-Ross to Winant, May 22, 1942; see also Barring to Leith-Ross, June 1, 1942, all in T 188/254, PRO.

⁷³⁷ On including and informing the Allies, see “Memorandum by the Foreign Secretary on the U.S. Government’s Proposals for Post-War Relief,” by Leith-Ross, May 21, 1942; by May 22, 1942, it was clear that the Allies had begun to learn of the American proposal: Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 22, 1942. On June 6, 1942, they learned of additional leaks: Leith-Ross to Ronald, June 6, 1942, all in T 188/254, PRO.

⁷³⁸ Leith-Ross to Ronald, May 22, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

colonies that would be useful after the war. If the United States did not already agree with this point of view, he believed they could be convinced. In correspondence with his colleagues, he repeatedly reminded them: “The United States note recognizes that some of” the Allied Governments “will have claims to be represented.”⁷³⁹ Most everyone agreed – including the American Ambassador – but no one quite knew how to satisfy these claims without undermining the efficiency of the entire operation.⁷⁴⁰

The Soviet Union complicated matters further. Nearly five months had elapsed since the Russians presented their proposal for an international relief organization. The British still had not responded. The delay itself was enough to offend the Russians, but to present them with a counterproposal drawn up by the Americans introduced an assortment of new problems. It would look as though the British and the Americans were conniving against the Russians. The Russians might also find the plan offensive. “Too much power is being placed in the hands of those capitalists,” they might cry. And what was to be made of the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements and the Leith-Ross Bureau housed in the Board of Trade? The Russians abhorred these arrangements, but the British now needed the Inter-Allied Committee for reasons of prestige, power and

⁷³⁹ “First Comments on United States Note,” May 1942, T 188/254, PRO; the American views to which he refers are included in paragraph 5, sentence 4 of the memorandum sent on May 7, 1942: Telegram 1995, The SOS in the United Kingdom (Winant), May 7, 1942, 840.48/5413, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 103-105.

⁷⁴⁰ “Mr. Winant said that he saw no alternative but to put the main responsibility in the hands of the four Great Powers. One of the main causes of the failure of the League had been that it put a country like Honduras on the same basis as a Great Power. He had heard it suggested that the Allied Governments here should be asked to nominate two representatives, but he had not sent this forward to DC as he did not believe that they would agree to appoint any two of their number. Moreover, if they were represented in this way, countries like Brazil and Argentina might also want to come in and the Executive Committee would become overloaded.” Note of Interview with Mr. Winant, May 29, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

influence. How could the British prevent the Soviets from helping the United States sabotage it? How could they keep the Russians from undermining the whole effort? The British did not ask these questions so bluntly, but this is clearly what was on their minds.

Debate over these matters split along unusual lines. Leith-Ross hoped the Soviets would enhance the prestige of the Inter-Allied Committee, but he preferred that the United States do his bidding. He wanted the Americans to first present their proposal to the Russians, and to tell them of their intention to place it before a meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee. He also wished that the Americans put pressure on the Soviets to attend the meeting and support the proposal. Upon hearing of this plan, Winant undercut the entire effort. On the one hand, he would need to consult his Government, which would take time. On the other hand, he urged Leith-Ross to go to Washington at once. If he did not go while matters remained fluid, the British might have less influence.⁷⁴¹ The implications of this advice were not so clear to Leith-Ross, but the Foreign Office quickly understood them. If the Soviets and Allies were to be informed of the American proposal before Sir Frederick's departure, it must happen rapidly. Herein lay the problem: the Russians "are unlikely to give favorable consideration to the present Relief proposals if they are hustled for what may well seem to them to be inadequate reasons."⁷⁴²

In this way, Leith-Ross got little of what he wanted. The Foreign Office would not permit him to hustle the Russians. It was critical from their perspective that Britain should maintain strong relations with the Soviet Union, not only to ensure the success of the relief scheme but to retain their goodwill into the postwar period as well. In line with

⁷⁴¹ "Draft Sent to Steyne," May 1942; "First Comments on United States Note," by Leith-Ross, May 1942; "Notes for Talk with Mr. Winant," by Leith-Ross, May 1942; "Note of Interview with Mr. Winant," May 29, 1942, all in T 188/254, PRO.

⁷⁴² Ronald to Eden, June 8, 1942, T 188/254, PRO.

this objective, the Foreign Office thought the Russians should receive all the details in the American note that were submitted to the British Government. They believed that Winant should inform the Russians of the American proposal, but they would in no way press the Americans to place pressure on the Russians to appear at a meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee.⁷⁴³ Leith-Ross would have to manage that on his own: he would be permitted to tell the Allies that he was going to Washington.⁷⁴⁴ But the Foreign Office was adamant about one thing: it would be dangerous to hustle the United States or the Soviet Union.

It could only be the other way around. Winant complained incessantly that the British were taking too long to respond to the American proposal, while he conveniently forgot that his government took four months to respond to the British proposal. He pestered Leith-Ross for presenting him with ideas that needed to be discussed in Washington, not in London. Leith-Ross whined that the Canadians were holding everything up.⁷⁴⁵ Indeed it was not until June 9, 1942 – nearly a month after the Americans presented their proposal – that Leith-Ross and Richard Law, the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State at the Foreign Office, presented the British response to Winant. His reaction could not have been more revealing. After reading the document, he asked whether the reference in the last paragraph to Leith-Ross's going to

⁷⁴³ Baring to Leith-Ross, June 1, 1942; Leith-Ross to Baring, June 2, 1942; Ronald to Eden, June 8, 1942, all in T 188/254, PRO.

⁷⁴⁴ Leith-Ross informed the Allies of his upcoming visit to the United States on June 17, 1942 at a hastily called meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements: Minutes of meeting held on June 17, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁴⁵ Leith-Ross to Ronald, June 6, 1942; "Note of Interview with Mr. Winant," May 29, 1942, both in T 188/254, PRO. By June 9, 1942, even the State Department had grown perturbed over the delays. See Telegram 2610, The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), June 9, 1942, 840.50/388-6/8, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 110-111.

Washington ‘as soon as may be convenient’ referred to Britain’s convenience or America’s. The two Brits must have struggled to conceal their horror. It would be at “our mutual convenience,” they replied.⁷⁴⁶ From this point forward it was clear who was in the leadership position. The British were going to Washington, not vice-versa.

Sir Frederick Leith-Ross Must Have Instructions

One remaining matter needed resolution. Leith-Ross thought he had been invited to the United States in his capacity as Chairman of the Inter-Allied Committee, not as a representative of the British Government. The Treasury considered this view ridiculous. “In his capacity as Chairman,” Hopkins wrote, “he will be able to explain to America what he takes to be the views and wishes of his colleagues of other nations, but he will not in his capacity as Chairman express views and opinions other than those which would be agreeable to H. M. Government from whom he derives his authority.”⁷⁴⁷ In effect, he would need specific instructions from the Government. Otherwise, he should not be allowed to “enter into any commitment, but only to have conversations with a view to eliciting from the Americans the general line of action and organization they favor.”⁷⁴⁸

The Foreign Secretary thought this made no sense: Leith-Ross would have to possess the

⁷⁴⁶ “Minute of Conversation,” by Richard Law, June 9, 1942; Eden to Winant, June 9, 1942, both in T 188/254, PRO; Eden to Halifax, June 11, 1942, [W 8466/27/49], No. 454, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁴⁷ Hopkins to Waley, Catto and Keynes, June 6, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁴⁸ “Post-War Relief Policy,” by Keynes, June 1, 1942, T 247/90, PRO. In this memorandum, Keynes stops just short of calling Leith-Ross incompetent and ill suited to represent Britain in international negotiations. According to Keynes, if Leith-Ross were prepared to sacrifice British assets for relief, then he was not doing his job as an employee of the BOT: protecting British trade interests. Keynes believed those assets should be used to reinvigorate Britain’s export industries.

authority to act.⁷⁴⁹ As a result, the earsplitting conflicts of the previous weeks erupted once again around the instructions granted to Leith-Ross.

Four interrelated concerns drove the debate, but they all revolved around one problem. What contribution could Britain reasonably make to the relief of Europe in the postwar period? Although the first two concerns fell purely in the domain of public relations, they had material implications for Britain. The Foreign Minister, President of the Board of Trade, and the Paymaster General tried to resuscitate the Prime Minister's pledge of August 1940 by placing it in the instructions for Leith-Ross: if the Americans pressed him on the contribution which the United Kingdom was prepared to make, then he would simply recite Churchill's speech.⁷⁵⁰ The Treasury criticized the maneuver as misleading: at no point since the statement was delivered in August 1940 had there been any attempt to implement it. The Food Ministry, completely consumed by the events of the war, had simply ignored it as impracticable.⁷⁵¹ When Churchill's most loyal advisor, Professor Frederick Lindemann, learned of the statement's inclusion, he denounced it as "entirely inexpedient and indeed improper."⁷⁵²

The Foreign Office dismissed these arguments and explained its logic in realistic terms that would appeal to the Treasury. Leith-Ross had typically framed the debate in accordance with his desire to preserve and increase Britain's influence. The Foreign

⁷⁴⁹ Hopkins to Waley, Catto and Keynes, June 6, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁵⁰ "Memorandum by the SOSFA, the President of the BOT and the Paymaster General," War Cabinet, Discussions in DC Washington on Post-War Relief, June 25, 1942, W.P. (42) 267, FO 371/31501, PRO. Leith-Ross was behind the inclusion of the Churchill speech: "The Relief Organization – Draft Note for the Cabinet which will constitute Sir Frederick Leith-Ross' instructions," by Hopkins, June 23, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁵¹ "Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer," War Cabinet, Discussions in Washington on Post-War Relief, June 27, 1942, W.P. (42) 273, FO 371/31501, PRO; see also "Post-War Relief" by Hubert Henderson, June 26, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁵² Lindemann to Churchill, June 27, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

Office was more forthwith in its acceptance of Britain's decline. Whether the statement is included or not is irrelevant: "the Allies have not forgotten its terms." It was not a matter of pushing the Prime Minister into a corner on a promise that Britain was unable to keep. Churchill had already made the statement and was already in the corner. As Nigel Ronald wrote, "We are pleading 'frustration of contract,' and our object is to offer the best substitute we can." It is for this reason, he argued, that there needs to be a declaration about rationing. It would reassure the Allies and make it clear to the United States that Britain is no longer in a position to provide Europe relief assistance without making serious sacrifices itself. In the context of Sir Frederick's negotiations in Washington, the rationing statement might serve British interests.⁷⁵³

These arguments might have made the statement a non-issue, but conflicts are rarely settled when one disputant feels that he or she has been hustled. As a result, the rationing statement became the second source of contention. Officials within the Treasury remained angry over the outcome of June 5, 1942 ministerial meeting. Hopkins, who had attended the meeting, sought to defend his actions. "We tried to make [the statement] as general as possible."⁷⁵⁴ But Keynes and Waley were non-buyers. They hung tenaciously to the view that symbolic gestures for immediate diplomatic gain are foolish if they involve excessive political risk and have the potential to endanger the national interest.⁷⁵⁵ Thus on June 18, 1942, the Chancellor of the Exchequer appealed to the Prime Minister. "I have not been able to agree" with the "recommendation particularly that we should maintain rationing until the urgent requirements of certain other countries have been met

⁷⁵³ For the FO position, see Ronald to Law, June 29, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁷⁵⁴ Hopkins to Waley, Catto and Keynes, June 6, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁵⁵ Waley to Wood, June 12, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO; "Post-War Relief Policy," by Keynes, June 1, 1942, T 247/90, PRO.

after the war.”⁷⁵⁶ However when the Cabinet met on June 29, Churchill was absent and the Treasury failed to scuttle the plan. It did win one minor concession. It succeeded in altering the statement to prevent a scenario in which rationing was maintained in order to benefit Germany. As such, the Prime Minister’s speech of August 1940 and the rationing statement remained in the instructions prepared for Leith-Ross.⁷⁵⁷

The third concern, whether raw materials should be included in Britain’s contribution to postwar relief, evoked a degree of ambivalence from the Treasury. On the one hand, no official in the Treasury was prepared to refute the argument that raw materials would be essential to restore industry in Europe, and that Britain’s economic viability depended on Europe’s.⁷⁵⁸ On the other hand, they believed their inclusion might be politically unpopular. They also considered it imprudent to make such commitments before the United States had explained how far it was prepared to go in contributing raw materials. The United States had provided Britain few raw materials during the war, and when it did, severe restrictions were put in place to prevent English export industries from benefiting.⁷⁵⁹ It appeared misguided to aid European industry if there was no guarantee that British industry would receive similar assistance. The Foreign Office

⁷⁵⁶ Wood to Churchill, June 18, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁵⁷ Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet, June 29, 1942, W.M. (42) 83, CAB 65/26/44, PRO; see also Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO.

⁷⁵⁸ Gladwyn Jebb at the FO captured the problem best when he wrote, “We must keep our customers alive – and keep them sweet.” See Jebb to Ronald, “Minute,” July 1, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO. For Treasury point of view, see Waley to Phillips, June 19, 1942; Philips to Hopkins, June 19, 1942; Keynes to Hopkins, June 19, 1942, all in T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁵⁹ On the American restrictions placed on raw materials given to Britain, see Lindemann to Churchill, June 27, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO. On the Treasury critique, see Waley to Phillips, June 19, 1942; Philips to Hopkins, June 19, 1942; Keynes to Hopkins, June 19, 1942, all in T 160/1404/3, PRO.

apparently agreed. At the Cabinet meeting on June 29, the Foreign Secretary argued that no *specific* raw material commitments should be made in the context of Leith-Ross's negotiations. If the matter arose, he was instructed to refer back to London for guidance. Thus the Chancellor let the issue rest.⁷⁶⁰

However, this decision did not resolve the fourth and final concern, whether Leith-Ross should be permitted to discuss British stocks held abroad as a possible source of relief supplies in his talks with the State Department. Initially the proposed instructions only allowed him to discuss supplies physically held in the United Kingdom. But through all sorts of subterfuge, Leith-Ross had the instructions altered to include everything held abroad as well, including large Australian wool and Egyptian cotton stocks purchased at great cost for political reasons during the war.⁷⁶¹ The Treasury believed these materials might be the only foreign exchange assets possessed by the United Kingdom at the end of the war. Moreover, their location in remote areas of the world made it virtually impossible to ship them to Europe rapidly enough to be of any use. Thus the Treasury hung to the belief that they should be retained for financial purposes. This argument mattered little at the Cabinet meeting on June 29. Despite pleas from the Treasury, the Ministers refused to limit possible sources of supply to materials held in the United Kingdom on grounds that the United States would not take Britain seriously.

In the final analysis, the Chancellor of the Exchequer secured only one significant change to the instructions prepared for Leith-Ross. In his discussions with the Americans,

⁷⁶⁰ Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet, June 29, 1942, CAB 65/26/44, PRO; see also Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO.

⁷⁶¹ Leith-Ross claimed that limiting relief supplies to foodstuffs only leads to "Bolshevisation." See Hopkins Memo on Leith-Ross Instructions, June 18, 1942; see also Leith-Ross to Hopkins, June 25, 1942, both in T 160/1404/3, PRO.

Sir Frederick would have to make a clear analytical distinction between physical and financial contributions to the relief organization. In the least, it would ensure commitments were not made without considering their financial implications. It was one thing to contribute supplies for purchase, but quite another to simply give them away. At best, the distinction might limit Leith-Ross's authority and send a sharp message to the Americans. The financial aspects of relief concerned the balance of payments and a host of other issues relating to Article VII of the Mutual Aid Agreement, which were the prerogative of the Treasury. Drawing these distinctions in Washington would also insinuate that Britain would not be able to contribute much in the way of financing relief if the United States played hardball in the Article VII negotiations.⁷⁶² Despite this minor victory, the Treasury remained unhappy with the overall outcome.

Winston Churchill Fails to Intervene

Leith-Ross and his allies in the Foreign Office had obtained most everything they wanted. The instructions retained the Prime Minister's speech of August 1940 and authorized Leith-Ross to share the rationing statement with the Americans. In discussing Britain's possible contribution, he was not permitted to make specific promises, but there was virtually no restriction on what he could promise generally. "In so far as we hold any

⁷⁶² Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet, June 29, 1942, CAB 65/26/44, PRO; see also Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO. For the Treasury point of view, see "Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer," War Cabinet, June 27, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO; this point of view can also be ascertained in the several letters Lindemann sent to Churchill; see in particular Cherwell [Lindemann] to Churchill, June 16, 1942; Cherwell [Lindemann] to Churchill, June 12, 1942, both in PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

stocks and stores after the war which are not immediately needed for our own requirements, we shall be prepared to place them at the disposal of the international Relief Organization either as a donation or against replacement as circumstances permit.” This included both foodstuffs and raw materials held in Britain and throughout the Empire.⁷⁶³ The Foreign Office accepted this language on grounds that it contained an opt-out clause: “We are safeguarded by our original wording which included the phrase ‘which are not immediately needed for our own requirements.’”⁷⁶⁴ The Treasury believed that even with such clauses, the nature of the instructions would raise expectations in ways that were not only misleading, but also politically and economically dangerous.

The debate over Leith-Ross’s instructions contained remarkably little discussion of the “organizational aspects” of the relief organization and its operations. The Cabinet did conclude that the Executive Committee should be limited to the four great powers, but recognized that Canadian acquiescence would be essential to move forward on this point. Canada would be a major contributor to postwar relief. If any other nations were permitted membership, it would open the way for similar demands across the board. The inevitable outcome would be Geneva all over again.⁷⁶⁵ Aside from this restriction, Leith-Ross was to urge that a branch of the organization be established in London with substantial powers so long as it did not “involve the United Kingdom in undue responsibility for the provision of relief.” In essence, he was to make broad general promises that Britain could hardly fulfill, all in order to obtain power and influence for

⁷⁶³ “Memorandum by the SOSFA, the President of the BOT and the Paymaster General,” War Cabinet, June 25, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁷⁶⁴ Jebb to Ronald, “Minute,” July 1, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁷⁶⁵ Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet, June 29, 1942, CAB 65/26/44, PRO; see also Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO; “Oral Statement to War Cabinet,” by Anthony Eden, June 29, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

the United Kingdom. As for other organizational issues, he was given complete discretion to address “the problem in whatever manner” seemed “to him most likely to reconcile the divergent interests of the Governments concerned.”⁷⁶⁶

For a Government led by Winston Churchill, these instructions are not as remarkable as one might initially think. The Prime Minister, who was best positioned to have a decisive impact on the debate, appears to have been inattentive to the financial and economic aspects of the war.⁷⁶⁷ He did not attend the Cabinet meetings in May and June 1942 when relief was discussed, and he was absent from every meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction throughout the entire war, despite the presence of all his

⁷⁶⁶ “Memorandum by the SOSFA, the President of the BOT and the Paymaster General,” War Cabinet, June 25, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁷⁶⁷ A number of scholars have made this point, though they have done so in remarkably different ways. Robert Skidelsky criticized Churchill for his indifference to finance and economics, even calling the PM’s ideas on these matters “primitive.” He offers little explanation for this behavior and suggests that Churchill was childish. Skidelsky, *Keynes*, Vol. 3, 137. John Charmley’s attack remains far more sensitive to the evidence than Skidelsky’s. In his view, Churchill neglected these matters so as not to endanger the wartime alliance. When he gave them serious attention, it was very late in the game: 1944. He also falsely assumed the United States would treat Britain kindly. This assessment seems to accord perfectly with what I have seen in the archives. But I am not yet inclined to support his ultimate claim: “In the long story of British decline the part played by a failure of leadership has yet to be properly told, but that there was such a failure is hardly in doubt. Churchill’s leadership was inspiring, but at the end it was barren, it led nowhere, and there were not heirs to his tradition.” John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993), 3. See also John Charmley, *Churchill’s Grand Alliance: the Anglo-American Special Relationship, 1940-57* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1995), 89-101. Thomas Wilson admits to Churchill’s neglect of such matters, but excuses it due to the demands on Churchill’s time. Thomas Wilson, *Churchill and the Prof* (London: Cassell, 1995), 143-144. Though his work makes no assessment of Churchill’s leadership, Alan Dobson explains that Churchill had “neither read nor seriously considered the American arguments about article seven” of the Mutual Aid Agreement, which sought to undo the preferential trading system of the British Empire. Alan P. Dobson, *U.S. Wartime Aid to Britain, 1940-1946* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

senior Ministers.⁷⁶⁸ He was sufficiently detached from such matters that Keynes negotiated postwar arrangements with the Americans, the Dominion and European Allied Governments without ever having obtained the authority of the British Government.⁷⁶⁹ Thus it is hardly surprising that Leith-Ross thought he should be allowed to negotiate with the Americans without the Government's authority either.

The Treasury believed otherwise, especially Keynes. Though Chairman of the Inter-Allied Committee, Leith-Ross actually worked for the Board of Trade, whose job it was to protect British trade interests. If he bargained away Britain's remaining foodstuffs and raw materials to an international organization, Keynes feared he might damage Britain's export industries. This outcome would only exacerbate the country's impending balance of payments crisis.⁷⁷⁰ As a result, the Treasury had fought vigorously to circumscribe the powers of Leith-Ross. But with no intervention from the Prime Minister, failure was all but inevitable: Churchill's attention remained elsewhere. For ten days in late June, he summated with Roosevelt in the United States. Britain suffered enormous shipping losses the entire month, and lost its strategic hold of Tobruk along with 33,000 troops to Erwin Rommel's armies on June 21, 1942. The Treasury consequently stood alone to make its case against wide authority for Leith-Ross.

Yet it still remains an odd fact that Churchill failed to intervene in the debate. Throughout June and into July, his chief advisor, Frederick Lindemann, or Lord Cherwell, as he was known after 1941, wrote him about the matter no less than five times. A Professor of physics at Oxford, Cherwell became Churchill's personal assistant

⁷⁶⁸ Thomas Wilson, *Churchill and the Prof* (London: Cassell, 1995), 144.

⁷⁶⁹ Skidelsky, *Keynes*, Vol. 3, 137, but see 136 for Churchill's attitude towards economics and finance.

⁷⁷⁰ This view comes forth in previously cited documents written by Keynes.

at the Admiralty following the Nazi attack on Poland, and continued in this position after Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940. He is most famous for his role in planning the aerial bombing of Germany, yet his research in the 1920s won accolades from scientists such as Albert Einstein and Henri Poincaré. Cherwell was brilliant. His conservative credentials and ability to simplify complex ideas appealed to Churchill, whom he advised on matters ranging from economic to military affairs.⁷⁷¹

Yet Frederick Lindemann remains one of the more eccentric figures in British history. A piano-playing vegetarian who loved tennis and airplanes, he relished danger and displayed an authoritarian streak. He had great difficulty understanding opposing points of view, was rarely prepared to yield or admit failure, and almost always reacted to problems in disproportionate ways. An ardent traditionalist who lived his life around quirky routines and perfunctory habits, he wore the same thing every day, even when he went flying: the bowler hat and the black Melton coat. If in Churchill's hand one always found a cigar, in Lindemann's there was always a furled umbrella: apparently the sun never shone on Lord Cherwell. He was the Prime Minister's closest advisor, and his personality and brilliance shine through the record.⁷⁷²

On June 12, 1942, Lindemann informed Churchill that Leith-Ross was going to America to discuss post-war relief. In this context, he accused Leith-Ross of lumbering

⁷⁷¹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, s.v. "Lindemann, Frederick Alexander, Viscount Cherwell" (by Robert Blake).

⁷⁷² For an outstanding portrait of Lindemann's personality, see Hugh Berrington, "When Does Personality Make a Difference? Lord Cherwell and the Area Bombing of Germany," *International Political Science Review* 10, no. 1 (Jan., 1989): 9-34. This piece also provides a nice overview of the heated debate over Cherwell.

Britain into the wheat discussions that had “caused so much trouble” the previous year.⁷⁷³ This time “his powers should be very clearly circumscribed, especially as he tends to a point of view remarkable for its charity towards all and sundry, in which British interests are apt to be forgotten.”⁷⁷⁴ Then on June 15, he sent a slightly modified note to Churchill, reminding him that Leith-Ross should be given “explicit instructions and limited powers, so that he cannot be committed without reference home.” In “view of the forth-coming conversations about post-war economic problems,” the scope of his talks must be restricted.⁷⁷⁵ And then a day later, he critiqued the whole topic of Anglo-American postwar economic cooperation, expressing his fear of “unattainable Utopias” and the “Communist bogey.”⁷⁷⁶

Lindemann’s dissuasions did not stop here. On July 27, two days before the Cabinet met, he presented Churchill a line-by-line analysis of the proposed instructions. While he emphasized the breadth of British resources Leith-Ross was authorized to commit, he also underscored their possible recipients: “We are to risk our raw materials being handed over by an international organization, possibly to Germany,” he asserted incredulously. He then attacked the resuscitation of the Prime Minister’s statement of August 1940. These promises were “made in totally different circumstances... when the world was full of surpluses and shipping was still available.” But his most scathing vitriol

⁷⁷³ Scholars have generally missed the importance of the wheat discussions, which raised red flags in Great Britain. Alan Dobson writes: “Their most important effect was on the development in attitudes in London towards economic cooperation with the U.S... both during and after the Wheat Talks British policy-makers became more inclined to formulate policies in a manner which assumed an absence of good faith and an adversary spirit in their American opposite numbers.” This view does not apply to Leith-Ross, but it certainly applies to the Lindemann and the Treasury. Dobson, *Wartime Aid*, 106.

⁷⁷⁴ Cherwell to Churchill, June 12, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

⁷⁷⁵ Cherwell [Lindemann] to Churchill, June 15, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

⁷⁷⁶ Cherwell to Churchill, June 16, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

he reserved for the rationing statement, the contents of which Leith-Ross had been authorized to share with the Americans. What irked him most was the open-ended nature of the commitment. As written, Britain would be subjecting its “internal affairs to regulation by an international committee,” and this would “dishearten our people, who look forward to some alleviation when victory has been won.”⁷⁷⁷

Even after this incendiary picture, the Prime Minister still made no intervention on the matter. On July 5, 1942, nearly a week after the War Cabinet had approved the instructions, Lindemann made one last effort. He listed the three most damning aspects of Leith-Ross’s instructions – “to publish a promise to maintain rationing at whatever level it reaches at the end of the war for an indefinite period afterwards; to hand over all stocks of food and raw material surplus to our urgent necessities to an international committee; and to resuscitate your old declaration of August 1940, made in quite different circumstances...” These commitments, which “seem to me grave errors,” the War Cabinet intends to authorize “Leith-Ross to do in Washington, without any quid pro quo.”⁷⁷⁸ But by the time Churchill received this letter, Sir Frederick was in America, his instructions had been telegraphed to him, and he had shared the rationing statement with Cordell Hull.⁷⁷⁹ What would Winston Churchill do now?

⁷⁷⁷ Lindemann to Churchill, June 27, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

⁷⁷⁸ Cherwell [Lindemann] to Churchill, July 5, 1942, PRO, PREM 4/28/11, PRO; no date on this document, but a cover letter suggests it was delivered to Churchill on July 5.

⁷⁷⁹ Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO; Telegram No. 4130, Relief No. 4, FO to DC, July 3, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO; Telegram No. 3574, Relief No. 5, DC to FO, July 4, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO.

CHAPTER SIX

A DOUBLE DEAL FOR THE WORLD

The behavior of the Allied governments in exile had given London an opportunity to prod the United States into action. Now the onus was on the Americans not only to respond to their inquiry regarding independent Allied purchases, but to move the planning for postwar relief forward. Everyone agreed that the independent buying had to cease. The disagreement was over how. The bespectacled Leo Pasvolsky suggested the United States stop the transactions by freezing Norwegian and Dutch funds flowing through the United States to South America, but Adolf Berle thought it would be “far better to secure the same result through consent.”⁷⁸⁰ Sumner Welles agreed.

So on April 20, 1942, Dean Acheson informed Noel Hall of the British Embassy that the United States had no knowledge of the Dutch and Norwegian agents procuring materials in the Western Hemisphere. He made it clear that these governments should “consult with the Anglo-American Supply authorities” and “suspend their activities” until a “common program” had been developed. The Dutch and Norwegians, he implied, should be informed of this position. Acheson also promised that an American response to the British relief inquiry was imminent. “It is the intention of the United States Government to proceed as rapidly as possible to discussions.”⁷⁸¹

⁷⁸⁰ ER-4, Chronological Minutes, April 17, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁷⁸¹ Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Acheson), April 20 1942, 840.48/5563, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General; the British Commonwealth; the Far East* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 100.

But this would require rapid action and bureaucratic skill to forge consensus and maneuver proposals through the Roosevelt Administration. The United States had yet to address many important questions. What role would the Red Cross and voluntary organizations play in postwar relief? Should a separate organization for the resettlement issue be instituted? How could the State Department convince the Congress to pay for the efforts? What sum would be needed? How should the relief organization be structured to maximize American power and influence? Would the relief agency's functional scope be narrow or broadly construed? These questions, as we will see, were all interconnected, and how the Administration answered them depended on the relative power and talent of diverse players in Roosevelt's sprawling bureaucracy.

Two fights shaped the course of events. Would postwar planning remain the prerogative of the State Department or the Board of Economic Warfare (BEW)? And within the State Department, would Dean Acheson or Adolf Berle control the relief and reconstruction portfolios? These conflicts had dramatic implications for the proposed relief organization. Dominated by New Dealers, the BEW thought the relief organization's responsibilities should include rehabilitation and reconstruction, while certain individuals in the State Department, to greater or lesser degrees, did not. Although Acheson personally preferred the conservative approach, he embraced a compromise position, which in turn facilitated his successful campaign to not only usurp power from Adolf Berle, but to fend off incursions from BEW as well.

Differences of opinion had less to do with America's postwar aims: everyone adhered to the objective of protecting and advancing America's economic and geo-strategic interests. Bureaucratic power notwithstanding, the fighting concerned the

strategic position of the United States going into the postwar era. The conservatives did not want to overexpose the United States before policymakers understood how the cards would fall vis-à-vis the rest of the world and especially the Soviet Union. The New Dealers, by contrast, did not want to forfeit opportunities to shape the world in ways that would serve the interests of the United States. The two groups agreed, however, to structure the agency so the United States could monopolize control over all relief activities, but they also concluded that this would only be possible under the guise of “internationalism.” Franklin Roosevelt agreed.

Dean Acheson and the aspirations of the Board of Economic Warfare

On April 13, 1942, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9128.⁷⁸² Henry Wallace had once again convinced the President to broaden the mandate of the Board of Economic Warfare.⁷⁸³ Previously the Economic Defense Board, this interdepartmental apparatus had been set up in the summer of 1941 to “coordinate policies, plans and programs... to protect and strengthen the international economic relations of the United States in the

⁷⁸² “Executive Order 9128 – Defining Additional Functions and Duties of the Board of Economic Warfare,” April 13, 1942, File Perkins, Milo Jan. 1941-Apr. 1942, Box 56, General Correspondence, Wallace Papers, FDRL.

⁷⁸³ The Board of Economic Warfare and the attempt by Wallace to obtain additional powers for it are described in: John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry Wallace* (New York: Norton, 2000), 271-275, but see also 295-296; 309-10; 313-14; For an excellent documentary account, see the Wallace-Roosevelt correspondence and the Wallace diary entries from February 1942 through May 1942 in John Morton Blum, ed., *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 55-83.

interest of national defense.”⁷⁸⁴ After Pearl Harbor the President changed the Board’s name to reflect its role in fighting the Second World War, an occasion that led Wallace to seek an aggrandizement of his powers.⁷⁸⁵ Ultimately Roosevelt abolished the Board in mid-1943 due to the incessant bureaucratic fighting its leadership caused.⁷⁸⁶ Doubtless the order of April 13, 1942 contributed to the problem. It muddled the waters.

Acheson, who apparently preferred that Wallace shoulder the blame for any delays, informed the British of the situation.⁷⁸⁷ But he did not tell them of the conflicts undermining the State Department’s postwar planning process. Indeed that very day Cordell Hull arrived back in Washington determined to ruin Sumner Welles.⁷⁸⁸ A shrewd bureaucratic infighter, Acheson used the conflict to seize control of the entire economics portfolio, including all matters pertaining to the planning of postwar relief and reconstruction. To achieve this goal, Acheson exploited Welles to ensure relief planning was centralized in the State Department, and quietly aligned himself with Hull to see that Berle would be stripped of his responsibilities.

As this process played out, another little known figure in the American Foreign Service took the initiative. Born 1901 in Cottage Grove, Oregon, Roy Veatch studied at Oregon State University and the University of California at Berkeley, where he obtained

⁷⁸⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt: “Executive Order 8839 Establishing the Economic Defense Board,” July 30, 1941, *The American Presidency Project*, by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, (Santa Barbara: University of California, 1999-2012)

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16151> (accessed September 19, 2012).

⁷⁸⁵ “Allies Plan Unit to Unify Supply,” December 21, 1941, *NYT*, F1.

⁷⁸⁶ See “Mr. Wallace and Mr. Jones,” July 17, 1943, *NYT*, 12; see also Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969), 45.

⁷⁸⁷ Telegram No. 2335, DC to FO, April 21, 1942, T 160/1404/3, PRO.

⁷⁸⁸ Irwin F. Gellman, *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Sumner Welles* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 291. See also chapter 13, “Ruining Welles.”

a Ph.D. in economics. After stints at the Institute for Government Research, (later part of the Brookings Institute), the American University in Beirut, and Princeton University, he joined the State Department in 1931. He held a variety of positions, working for a period with Harry Hawkins and Herbert Feis in the Office of the Advisor on International Economic Affairs. In 1942, he moved to the Board, but returned to the State Department a year later where he would play a critical role in setting up the relief organization.⁷⁸⁹

In the spring of 1942, he urged his superiors at the BEW to “take the initiative in exploring the possibility” of a United Nations conference that would establish an “International Reconstruction Commission.”⁷⁹⁰ His proposal would be unremarkable if it were not for two factors: first, BEW remained involved in the planning well after the State Department had established firm control of the relief portfolio; and second, Roy Veatch would shortly return to the State Department to take charge of all relief and rehabilitation work in the Division of Special Research headed by Pasvolsky, a position that would afford him the opportunity to work closely with Acheson. Thereafter, he would become one of the central players in planning and setting up the organization, and he would also work for the agency. What Roy Veatch wrote to his superiors at BEW in April 1942 is significant and representational of the mood in Washington at the time.

⁷⁸⁹ See United States Department of State, *Register of the Department of State, October 1, 1938*, Publication 1247 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), 5, 30, 183. Veatch does not appear in the Register’s for 1942 and 1943. See also “Haskell is Named Field Relief Head,” January 17, 1943, *NYT*, 17; Philip Warden, “Rationing Plea Called Plot to ‘Needle’ Truman,” May 16, 1946, *CDT*, 7. After Veatch’s resignation from UNRRA in 1946, little is known about him.

⁷⁹⁰ Veatch’s work is in three documents: Veatch to Stone and Bean, April 16, 1942; “Proposed United Nations Conference” by Roy Veatch, April 16, 1942; “United Nations Mechanism for Relief and Reconstruction” by Roy Veatch, April 30, 1942, all in File Establishment of UNRRA, Box 34, Board of Economic Warfare, 1942-1943, Bean Papers, FDRL.

Public relations remained his foremost concern. “The United Nations,” he argued, “need very much to develop a *sense* of unity and intimate cooperation.” In many respects, there is a “general feeling” that the Soviet Unions remains “outside the United Nations.” “India feels isolated and possibly disgruntled.” The British Dominions appear upset over their relations with London and “would like to feel that they are full partners in the war effort.” Physically isolated, China needs “closer ties of cooperation and of increased prestige” to “bolster her morale.” The problem, as Veatch saw it, was that things did not *look* good. A perception exists among the enemy and Axis-occupied countries that the United Nations are nothing more than “a hodge-podge of allies with no unity of purpose or action.” The Atlantic Charter has failed to catch “the popular imagination” and has been “looked upon as merely an Anglo-Saxon pronouncement.” A message of disunity has been impressed upon “the peoples of Europe and Asia repeatedly during the last few months with almost no counter-news emphasizing United Nations unity.”⁷⁹¹

To address this problem, Veatch proposed a “dramatic meeting of the United Nations.” “If for nothing else,” he argued, it should serve the “purposes of morale and propaganda.” But if an agreement could be reached for a relief and reconstruction program in advance, he believed the conference might address that matter as well. The Board of Economic Warfare, he added, would be the logical place to center American participation. It would undertake all the preparatory work with China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and perhaps a country or two from the British Dominions. Agreement from the other United Nations would be sought, but they would *not* be charged with decision-

⁷⁹¹ “Proposed United Nations Conference,” Veatch, April 16, 1942, Bean Papers, FDRL.

making or given any administrative tasks. Instead, representatives of these nations would simply “lead their own governments and peoples to see the necessity of centralized expert direction and administration of the total war effort of the United Nations.” While the Conference agenda might include relief and reconstruction, it would firstly reaffirm the United Nations Declaration of January 2, 1942.⁷⁹²

If Veatch’s proposals are remarkable for the emphasis they placed on propaganda, his relief and reconstruction plans are astonishing on account of their scope. Up to this point in our story, the planners working in the State Department had hardly discussed what a postwar relief organization would do. They had concerned themselves with other questions, such as the organization’s relationship with the Inter-Allied Committee in London, the geographic reach of the agency’s operations, and its decision-making structure. Now Veatch turned to other matters. His proposals shed light on the comments of Richard Law, the British Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, following a visit to the United States in the fall of 1942. “It is easy to understand what critics of the Administration mean when they speak of ‘the lunatic fringe’ at Washington. For these people are not men of the world. They are children, playing with bricks and ‘making the world over.’”⁷⁹³ Such was the scope of Veatch’s proposal.

An “International Reconstruction Commission” would reconstruct the entire world. With five departments, it would manage immediate relief needs, undertake agricultural rehabilitation, and implement all sorts of engineering, infrastructure and industrial reconstruction projects. It would rebuild the banking, financial and monetary

⁷⁹² Ibid.

⁷⁹³ “Mr. Richard Law’s Visit to the United States,” Richard Law, September 21, 1942, attached to Memorandum by the SOSFA, A.E., October 26, 1942, War Cabinet, W.P. (42) 492, CAB 66/30/22, PRO.

components of economies, and undertake social rehabilitation programs addressing everything from education to health care. Veatch recognized the breath of his plan, and confessed that other international institutions might be needed, including a Commodity Corporation, Shipping Administration, Health Service, Development Corporation, Labor Organization, Technical Bureau and Monetary and Financial Authority. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations would also be essential.⁷⁹⁴

These proposals were grandiose in most every way, but grandiosity is no substitute for bureaucratic dexterity. Acheson anticipated “Henry Wallace’s Great Invasion,” as he called it.⁷⁹⁵ He convinced Welles of its foolishness. It would only cause a “duplication of effort and confusion of authority,” he wrote. “I have not been impressed by either the quality or the quantity of the work” they have done. It would be wise, he suggested, to take them up on their offer to place their men working in this field at our disposal.⁷⁹⁶ When the President reshuffled responsibility for postwar planning on April 13, 1942, Acheson led Hull to believe that his honor had been offended. As he put it in his memoirs, the Secretary had experienced a “painful, bitter, and humiliating defeat.”⁷⁹⁷ Under the new rules, the Executive Director of BEW would have the power to delegate to his assistant. When Hull learned who the assistant was – a “Jew” – he exploded. In this

⁷⁹⁴ “United Nations Mechanism for Relief and Reconstruction,” Veatch, April 30, 1942, Bean Papers, FDRL.

⁷⁹⁵ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 39.

⁷⁹⁶ Acheson to Welles, April 6, 1942, File #1 – Board of Economic Warfare Administration, Box 1, REW, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁷⁹⁷ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 41.

way, Acheson unified Welles and Hull around the proposition that the State Department should maintain primary control over postwar relief and reconstruction.⁷⁹⁸

But Roosevelt's revision of the presidential directive in May did not discourage the BEW. The President privately authorized Wallace to continue working on postwar planning but to avoid getting "caught by the State Department."⁷⁹⁹ Thus the BEW machinations continued. Milo Perkins and Louis Bean, the Executive and Assistant Directors of BEW respectively, connived with a vengeance. Their attendance at State Department planning meetings became routine opportunities to push over their agency's views, defined by Veatch, onto the committee, while the distinguished economist, Winfield Riefler, worked to influence the process in London. Their impact might have been greater, but Dean Acheson connived back at them, and eventually sucked the brains out of their operation by bringing Veatch back to the State Department. But that is beside the point: what Roosevelt desired was a check against the diplomats, especially Dean Acheson, whose skill in obtaining bureaucratic power exceeded that of his peers.

By this point Acheson controlled most economic negotiations with the British. This position, in part, stemmed from his titular status as Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. But Adolf Berle's reputation also played a role: officials in London who respected his intellect disliked his well-known Anglophobia.⁸⁰⁰ Perhaps they

⁷⁹⁸ Wallace was quite aware of what was taking place, but attributed a bit more agency to Sumner Welles, who he hated: "The trouble came... from the way in which Dean Acheson and Welles needled Cordell Hull." See Wallace diary, May 1, 1942, in Blum, ed., *Price of Vision*, 73-74.

⁷⁹⁹ Wallace diary, May 28, 1942, in Blum, ed., *Price of Vision*, 83.

⁸⁰⁰ Isaiah Berlin, who at the time was stationed at the British Embassy in Washington D.C., was primarily responsible for negative views of Berle in London. Berlin hated Berle, and he gave officials in the British government every reason to hate him as well. See Jordan A. Schwartz, *Liberal: Adolf A. Berle and the Vision of an American Era* (New

believed Acheson would treat them more kindly. Maybe they just preferred someone who would hustle them with a smile. Whatever the case, Berle remained in control of relief planning within the State Department, at least until the first of June. Thus while Acheson maneuvered to prevent a BEW takeover of postwar planning, Berle continued preparations in the Reconstruction Subcommittee. The immediate objective was to respond to the British proposal of February, but outstanding issues needed attention, the role of the Red Cross and voluntary organizations in postwar relief, and the management of displaced and stateless persons. Let us address each of these matters in turn.

The Red Cross and Voluntary Groups

On the first question, the Subcommittee concluded that it would be problematic to put the American Red Cross in charge of postwar relief operations. Experiences after the last war, Myron Taylor reminded the group, made it clear “that political considerations could not be excluded from the organization of relief.” Benjamin Cohen concurred with this assessment: “There was no doubt that major political questions would have to be considered” and it was inevitable that the Red Cross “would be accused of playing politics” if it were not “directly responsible to the United Nations.” He consequently believed that another organization would be needed. Berle, however, thought the Red

York: Free Press, 1987), 180-181. Richard Law has made the best assessment of Berle’s views on England: “Mr. Adolf Berle, who makes no secret of his distrust of Britain, yet maintains that the two countries must work together, since they have a common goal... He is generally supposed to be anti-British. And so he is, although I have already indicated, he seems to place a certain value upon Britain. But he is also, I think, anti-American. In short, he is a misanthrope and a misfit...” “Mr. Richard Law’s Visit to the United States,” September 21, 1942, CAB 66/30/22, PRO.

Cross could be useful in some countries where it possessed prestige, but the United States could not continue turning supplies over to the Russian Red Cross, which was “an agent of the Russian government.”⁸⁰¹ Hence a formula was needed to utilize the agency’s services while avoiding the downsides of total Red Cross leadership.

The problem was to delineate what the Red Cross could do from what it could not do. Leo Pasvolsky therefore divided the relief portfolio into three functions: procurement of supplies, transportation to areas in need, and distribution to destitute populations. The group agreed that the Red Cross would not be appropriate for the first two tasks. George Edward Allen, the Red Cross representative at the meeting, explained that transportation remained a political matter; and that his organization did not have the power to secure supplies. If, for example, it were desirable to persuade American farmers to stop feeding skim milk to hogs, it would not be in a position to do so. On the distribution side, however, the Red Cross could help. Allen thus assured the group that his agency would not undertake actions without the “advice and consent of the State Department” and it had gone on record “stating that it would act wherever the President might request it to act.” He also made it clear that the American Red Cross “had never recognized the International Red Cross as having any supervisory powers.” It would, for all intensive purposes, be an agent of the American government.⁸⁰²

With this in mind, the Subcommittee devised a formula to employ not only the expertise of the Red Cross, but other non-governmental entities as well, such as the

⁸⁰¹ ER-4, Chronological, April 17, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes; ER-4, Analytical Minutes, April 17, 1942; ER-4, Summary of Conclusions, April 17, 1942, latter two documents in File E. Mins. Jt. EP & ER, all in Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59 NARA. The Chronological Minutes state that Berle led the meeting, but the Analytical Minutes place Acheson in the chair.

⁸⁰² ER-4, Chronological, April 17, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

American Friends Service Committee. The head of a newly created organization would “be a politically responsible agent” who would serve as a link between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross. The Director would be responsible for securing supplies, arranging for financing, finding transportation, and managing controversial political and governmental matters beyond the abilities of other agencies, groups or individuals. It was specifically stipulated that the actions of other groups should in no way limit the Director’s authority. The Director, in fact, would have a staff of his own, and he would have the power to determine where and how to use any non-governmental entities in the field of operations. While it remained to be determined what other organizations would be asked to participate, everyone agreed that the American Red Cross would be one of them.⁸⁰³

Relief Operations converge with the Management of Displaced Persons

The Subcommittee then approached the issue of repatriation and resettlement with an analysis of the problem. Three groups would require attention. The first included individuals with a home or country to which they could return. Estimated at 20 million in Europe and 40 million in China, these people were prisoners of war, civilians who fled combat zones, individuals evicted to make room for colonists, laborers imported and forced to work, and persons relocated by the Axis powers in conquered territory. The second group consisted of individuals with no home or country at all. The size of this group remained conjectural, but the planners knew that some 50 or 60 thousand Jews

⁸⁰³ Ibid.

from Germany had been unsettled at the war's outbreak, an unknown number of Jews had been deported to the Government General of Poland, and roughly 100,000 political refugees from Spain were currently in France. The final group included individuals who had not been dislocated, but who required resettlement for political reasons. This group's size was unknowable.⁸⁰⁴

The planners assumed three general areas of work would be required to meet the needs of these people. The affected persons, firstly, would demand food, medical care, and clothing. In instances where circumstances prevented repatriation or resettlement for a period of time, these individuals would need housing, but might also require work tools, agricultural implements, seeds and stock, and even vocational training to prepare them for a new life in their final destination. Secondly, these individuals would have to be transported to their home country or place of resettlement. Immediately after the war, competing demands on limited rail lines would require careful coordination to ensure that the movement of people did not impair the transport of relief supplies or vice versa. Railways, roads and other transportation routes would also be in need of repair and reconstruction. Finally, the planners anticipated the need for a tracing service to help displaced persons find their families and loved ones: a system of identification, registration, and possibly advertising would be required.⁸⁰⁵

The Subcommittee then considered possible means of fulfilling these needs. The President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees had been established in 1938 to provide recommendations to Roosevelt, but this entity had no capacity to undertake any

⁸⁰⁴ "Problems of Resettlement," April 14, 1942, File E Documents 1-25, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. This document served as the basis for the Reconstruction Subcommittee's discussions.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.

of the required tasks. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, set up at the July 1938 refugee conference at Evian-les-Bains, France, likewise had little machinery, though a director and four vice-chairmen had been authorized to negotiate with Germany and other states to improve the conditions related to the exodus of Jews from the Reich.⁸⁰⁶ The League of Nations had machinery, but had ceased functioning after the German withdrawal from the organization in 1934, and the United States did not want its efforts stigmatized by the League's legacy. Thus the Intergovernmental Committee constituted the only option, and Taylor, who represented the United States on that body, explained that it would need considerable revamping if it were to undertake the required tasks.⁸⁰⁷

Two aspects of the problem perplexed the committee. Distinct from settled residential populations, displaced persons would require assistance while waiting in holding areas and during transition to their final destination. This task, it seemed, was sufficiently distinct from the work of supplying aid to other populations to suggest the need for a second organization to manage the problems of displaced and stateless persons. A second aspect of the problem made this option appear even more sensible. "While relief is essentially an emergency problem which must be tackled even before the

⁸⁰⁶ Here the notes are confusing; the minutes conflate the Advisory Committee and the Inter-Governmental Committee, which the Subcommittee treated as one entity. I have divided them for historical accuracy. See Telegram 21, The Chairman of the American Delegation (Taylor) to the SOS, July 14, 1938, 840.50 Refugees/523, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), 754-757.

⁸⁰⁷ For information on the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, see Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 170-173, 182, 216, 285-286, 340; Malcolm Proudfoot, *European Refugees: 1939-52: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 30. Marrus is quite critical of Roosevelt's handling of this matter. For a generous view, see Conrad Black, *Franklin Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 486-490.

end of the war in recaptured territory, resettlement may not start to be undertaken until some time after the war is ended and will probably proceed over a period of several years and possibly even of several decades.” After the First World War, it took five years to repatriate prisoners of war. An organization to manage these problems seemed logical.⁸⁰⁸

Myron Taylor argued that his experiences on the Intergovernmental Committee suggested otherwise. It was extremely difficult to find homes for refugees and secure funds to finance resettlement. Virtually no country had been willing to make land available, with the exception of the Dominican Republic. At the Evian Conference, most “of the representatives had gone... with the intention of passing some resolutions of sympathy and then winding up the whole affair.” They feared being called upon to provide land and were wholly uncooperative. Had nations agreed to provide land, there was no guarantee that the refugees would have agreed to move: too often they refuse to resettle in remote agricultural colonies, and forcing them is “barbarous.” It was better to convince countries to liberalize their immigration laws, but difficult to accomplish in cases where it appeared that Jews would be the primary beneficiaries. Before setting up an organization that would pursue extreme measures, Taylor thought it wisest to convince Jews to return home and take whatever measures possible to make those countries safe.⁸⁰⁹

At the time, his argument seemed reasonable. No one could predict where boundaries would lie and how minority populations would be situated within them, and no one could anticipate how newly constituted governments would treat minorities. Thus it was impossible to know how many candidates for resettlement would exist after the

⁸⁰⁸ ER-4, Chronological, April 17, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

war. The number of displaced persons had reached alarming heights, and the group figured the war would only aggravate the situation. It was better to assume that everyone had a home to which they could return, and frame the issue as an emergency. Berle therefore proposed that the relief organization undertake the ‘task of repatriating all persons with a ‘natural habitat’ to return to.’ It would provide facilities to individuals who might become stateless, but it would not enter into the field of ‘resettlement.’ Everyone accepted this arrangement except for Acheson, who faced reality: what was to come of the stateless persons if the relief agency could not negotiate on their behalf?⁸¹⁰

The American Counterproposal to the British

At this juncture, American plans for postwar relief were sufficiently advanced to respond to the British proposal of February. The Roosevelt Administration could now say that it agreed with the international approach proposed by the Russians and British. The Americans had their own narrow reasons for agreeing on this point, but they also realized that relief efforts would need to link countries of supply with those in need all over the globe. The planners had a vague idea of how the agency might work and a pretty clear conception of the American place in it. A Council would give the member states a voice at the table; an Executive Committee would make the most important decisions; and an operational arm would implement the agency’s programs. Entities such as the Inter-Allied Committee and the Red Cross would play a subservient role, the former as an advisory committee and the latter as an agent of the Relief Organization.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid.

The absence of a comprehensive postwar policy constituted the only remaining problem. But on May 1, 1942, Berle's Subcommittee decided that relief could not wait on the development of a larger program. Something had to be done to forestall competitive purchases by the exiled governments and prevent the British from turning the Inter-Allied Committee into an operational organization along lines that suited their own narrow interests. The creation of a larger program would most certainly require the studied attention of the President and Prime Minister, which would create undesirable delays. These men needed to focus on the war. The relief organization could expand its activities at a later date. In the meantime, it would provide a valuable trial run for the establishment of a more permanent international organization. Thus the State Department prepared a telegram to be sent to the British, in which they expressed their views and invited Leith-Ross to Washington to work out a plan in advance of a meeting of the Big Four.⁸¹¹

To win Roosevelt's speedy approval, Cordell Hull wrote the President a guarded letter on May 5, 1942 suggesting that the proposal in no way restricted American power. The British, he explained, had taken steps to prepare for postwar relief, but hoped America would assume a position of leadership. The Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy was now proposing a United Nations Relief Council with an Executive Committee consisting of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and

⁸¹¹ See ER-5, Analytical Minutes, May 1, 1942; ER-5, Summary of Conclusions, May 1, 1942, both in File E mins. Jt. EP & ER; ER Mins & EP Mins, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA; Telegram 1995, The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), May 7, 1942, 840.50/5413, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 103-105. The Americans feared the British would move forward without them: see Telegram 2397, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, May 5, 1942, 840.50/396, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 100-101.

China. Hull made it clear that the response in no way committed the United States to compromise its sovereignty, and the plans called for American leadership of the Council, Executive Committee, and operational arm.⁸¹² The letter shrewdly appealed to the President's views on the standing of states in the postwar era: he considered Great Britain an "old and tired power" that deserved to be in "second place behind the United States, Russia and China."⁸¹³

Dean Acheson Maneuvers and Cordell Hull Sabotages the Planning Apparatus

When the State Department commenced preparations for the visit of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross in June, it remained unclear who or what agency would serve as the American focal point for the negotiations. In Roosevelt's Administration, the President always reserved the right to change his mind. As late as June 6, 1942, Dean Acheson worried that the Board of Economic Warfare might overtake responsibility for not only planning, but for the relief negotiations as well.⁸¹⁴ In urging Welles to take the matter up with the Secretary, he ensured the Undersecretary would also present the matter to the President.⁸¹⁵ Acheson instinctively understood that Roosevelt was prone to reassign responsibility within the bureaucracy suddenly, and with little or no advance warning to

⁸¹² Hull to Roosevelt, May 5, 1942, File: UNRRA, 1942, Box 1, Official File, OF 4966, FDR Papers, FDRL.

⁸¹³ Wallace diary, June 15, 1942, in Blum, ed., *Price of Vision*, 91.

⁸¹⁴ Doubtless Acheson worried given Louis Bean's repeated efforts to exert the Board's control over the relief agenda during meetings of the Reconstruction Subcommittee. EP-5, Chronological Minutes, June 5, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁸¹⁵ Acheson to Welles, "Responsibility for Discussions with Other Governments on Relief Organization," June 6, 1942, File #2 Post-War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

the individuals it would impact. He therefore worked to preempt this undesirable outcome.

Acheson sensed opportunity on the horizon. While Berle remained Chairman of the Reconstruction Subcommittee, Acheson took on more responsibility for the relief portfolio. His own Subcommittee for Economic Policy began discussing relief and he assumed the task of managing day-to-day interactions with the British on these matters. Whether he did this on his own volition or with the authority of someone else remains somewhat of a mystery, but his increased assertiveness coincided with British overtures pertaining to the Allied purchase of postwar materials in the Western Hemisphere. Economic defense, to be sure, constituted one of his areas of responsibility, but this in no way entitled him to duplicate the work of Berle. More likely, the return of Cordell Hull to Washington explains Acheson's behavior. With the Secretary now back in town, the Department of State and the whole postwar planning process came apart. These developments widened the possibilities for bureaucratic initiative.

On May 2, 1942, Hull took control of the Advisory Committee for Postwar Foreign Policy, but after the meeting he would never assemble the group again.⁸¹⁶ Henceforward there was no central coordinating body for postwar planning, with the possible exception of the Division of Special Research headed by Pasvolsky. But Hull, as we will see, undercut this operation as well. Consequently coordination was largely done

⁸¹⁶ Minutes AC – 4, May 2, 1942, File President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942 – May 1942), Box 54, ACPFP, RG 59, NARA. When compared with the minutes to previous meetings of the Advisory Committee led by Welles, this session is remarkable for its brevity. Hull thanked everyone for their work, spoke briefly of the challenges of planning for the postwar, and asked the members if they had any comments. After a few statements of no particular importance, Hull closed the meeting.

on an ad-hoc basis and far fewer persons had access to the planning process as a whole. This, in turn, undermined the Department's ability to fashion a coherent postwar foreign policy strategy, and it almost guaranteed that the United States would stumble into the postwar period ill-prepared to meet the challenges it faced. Why did Hull do this? According to the official record, meetings of the Advisory Committee were no longer called to ensure "secrecy on policy recommendations... pending their final review by the Secretary and the President," and to avoid "the rapid reaching of decisions, which might involve fatal gambles."⁸¹⁷ But unofficially Hull wanted Welles out of the equation.

Yet it was inconceivable that he would be able to manage everything on his own. Hull was a sick and exhausted man. Even in his prime, he never possessed the talents of Sumner Welles. An adroit administrator with a knack for grasping complex ideas quickly, Welles maneuvered swiftly and efficiently. Hull, by contrast, was slow, deliberate and laborious. He would have to rely on others to a far greater extent than Welles. Assistant Secretary Berle was not an option. By righteously anointing himself mediator between the Secretary and Undersecretary, he aroused Hull's suspicions. Leo Pasvolsky remained a possibility, and his importance would grow. He had served the Secretary well as Special Assistant, but failed to prevent Welles from modifying the postwar planning structure to enhance his own power.⁸¹⁸ The final option was Dean Acheson. Whether by chance or raw intelligence, Acheson avoided the conflict between Hull and Welles, and took great

⁸¹⁷ Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), 92.

⁸¹⁸ It is clear, however, that Pasvolsky was utilized to undermine Welles' authority. Hull authorized the creation of a Technical Committee on Economic Problems, which would be chaired by Pasvolsky. No individual closely related to Welles can be found on this committee. See Hull to Hawkins, June 15, 1942, File E Mins. Jt. EP & ER; ER Mins & EP Mins, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

care to ingratiate himself with the Secretary while not offending the Undersecretary.

Thus his power in the Department grew immensely, and it would not wane until 1944.

The Reconstruction Subcommittee considers Resources and Finance

But when the Americans learned on May 15, 1942, that Sir Frederick Leith-Ross would come to the United States, Berle appeared in control of relief policy.⁸¹⁹ His midnight obsession had not changed. The relief organization needed to be put into operation as soon as possible, not so much to guarantee preparation for the day of liberation, but to preempt the British.⁸²⁰ Otherwise London might commence operations independently of Washington, placing “the United Nations organization in a secondary role of a resolution-passing and policy-ratifying body.” With the Allied Governments in exile now making independent purchases, Berle believed the British had a strong motive to press ahead.⁸²¹ So visceral was his worry that he convinced the Reconstruction Subcommittee to suggest the President write the British Prime Minister urging him to postpone relief operations. This came to nothing, but it highlights one fact: Berle

⁸¹⁹ Telegram 2693, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, May 15, 1942, 840.50/391-1/2, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 108-109.

⁸²⁰ ER-6, Analytical Minutes, May 15, 1942, File E Mins. Jt. EP & ER, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA; ER-5, Summary of Conclusions, May 15, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

⁸²¹ There is clear evidence that the British were moving ahead, but they were keeping the Americans fully informed of everything they were doing. See, for example, Matthews to Hull, May 26, 1942, NARA, 840.50/420, Decimal File, Box 4796, Document 78 (4519). This document includes six attachments, which outline in detail the plans of the British for various technical committees and an operational field organization.

underestimated the importance of American participation in Great Britain's plans.

Finance and resources were too important.⁸²²

Yet the Reconstruction Subcommittee had given these matters scant attention. The lone conservative in the group, Myron Taylor, had repeatedly used these issues to urge restraint upon the Subcommittee. If political aspirations exceeded the country's financial capabilities, he argued, the results would be disappointing. His warnings fell upon deaf ears. But with Roosevelt's acceptance of the general plan and the impending visit of Leith-Ross, finance could no longer be ignored. Everyone knew that an appropriation from the Congress would be required. The question was whether the matter should be raised before, during or after the UN Conference. If it took place too early, it might create the impression that a plan had been decided upon before consultations with the United Nations Governments had taken place. If it occurred too late, hopes might be raised without any assurance of Congressional approval. To balance these forces, the planners decided that the appropriation should be put before the Congress during the United Nations Conference. In this way, the public relations affects of the Conference could be brought to bear on the Congress.⁸²³

The group faced another dilemma. "Would it be desirable to give Congress some idea of the magnitude of funds which might be required later for procurement?" Without any indication of future costs, the Subcommittee worried that the Congress might be unwilling to embark on a large undertaking. Yet they also believed it would be

⁸²² Apparently the idea of a Presidential telegram to Churchill was not pursued. Instead, Hull asked Winant to put pressure on the British to delay in setting up operational committees. See Telegram 2610, Hull to Winant, June 5, 1942, 840.50/388-6/8, Box 4796, Document 45 (4417-4419). This document is also in FRUS but the date is wrong.

⁸²³ ER-6, Analytical Minutes, May 15, 1942; ER-5, Summary of Conclusions, May 15, 1942, both in Notter Papers, NARA.

impossible to make an overall estimate of relief needs at the present time, and if an accurate approximation could be made, it might discourage the Congress. As a result, the group could only agree to solicit an appropriation to cover the salary of the Director and his staff. In the meantime, it was determined that an estimation of the director's requirements should be made. Then a survey of available supplies for relief should be ascertained so that precise cash requirements might be calculated. The State Department would also prepare legislation to be submitted to Congress that would permit the use of raw materials accumulated but no longer needed for the war effort.⁸²⁴

With the hope of consolidating and centralizing the control of all resources for postwar relief, the State Department also began estimating the assets and potential contribution of private relief agencies. Thanks to the Neutrality Act of 1937, which required these groups to report monthly on their activities, the American government had amassed considerable data on their activities by September 1939. But with the outbreak of war, the number of agencies exploded, placing demands on limited resources required for defense and domestic relief. Roosevelt set up a Committee on War Relief Agencies to investigate and monitor the situation. By the spring of 1942, an estimated 700 agencies based in the United States had undertaken relief activities and some 300 remained in operation. Varying in size and scope, these agencies had amassed \$66.5 million by the spring of 1942, \$39 million of which had been sent abroad. The planners intended that the American government control these agencies so that their efforts at home and abroad did not overlap or come into conflict with the proposed relief organization.⁸²⁵

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ "Private American Agencies for Foreign War Relief," May 8, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers; see also E Minutes 16,

Dean Acheson moves American preparations forward

For three weeks, postwar relief preparations hung in abeyance. The documentary record leaves no clear explanation as to why. But on June 5, 1942, Dean Acheson took the initiative. With no apparent authority, his Economic Subcommittee resumed the conversation over relief. Berle was in Canada.⁸²⁶ The tides had changed, but they appeared to be shifting in London as well. Myron Taylor asked Acheson whether he had been disturbed by the rumors that Leith-Ross had lost the confidence of his government. No high-level diplomat desires to negotiate with someone who has no authority. Acheson sought to understand the rumors. It was perhaps an overstatement to “say that Leith-Ross was out of favor.” Previously he had been a person of “outstanding importance,” but now he was “playing a secondary role.” This, he added, “might be due in part to the nature of the task entrusted to him, but it might be that he would not be the person to continue in charge of work on relief at a later stage.” Yet Acheson assumed that Leith-Ross would represent Britain if a meeting of the Four Powers were called to negotiate a relief agreement to be presented to the United Nations.⁸²⁷

In preparation for such discussions, Acheson argued that the powers of the proposed relief organization needed to be defined. As suggested to the British, the organization would consist of a Council, an Executive Committee, and an operational

June 19, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, both in RG 59, NARA.

⁸²⁶ I have deduced this from comments Berle made at the Reconstruction Subcommittee on June 12, 1942. ER-7, Chronological Minutes, June 12, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁸²⁷ EP-5, Chronological Minutes, June 5, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

arm led by a Director of Relief. The functions and powers of each of these bodies needed to be determined. Everyone agreed that the Council should have very limited powers if any at all. Otherwise the entire organization would get bogged down in interminable debate. The Council's membership would include the United Nations and it would meet no more than twice a year. From time to time, it might make decisions, but it would really do little more than comment on the organization's progress. The Council would nominate the Director of Relief and formally set up the executive authority, but this would be well choreographed among the Great Powers, primarily the United States, to ensure the desired outcome. To appease its members, council members would be permitted to sit on a series of "advisory committees." The New Dealer Benjamin Cohen likened the arrangement to the stockholders of a corporation. Acheson, however, was far more eloquent. The Council's primary function would be to "kick off, and let off steam."⁸²⁸

The Executive Committee aroused ambivalence. Its function, Acheson facetiously commented, would be precisely what its name suggested, an "executive." Yet when the committee members considered the implications of such an arrangement, they became weary of the idea. Presumably the United States would contribute roughly seventy percent of the agency's budget. If the Executive Committee had control over how the organization's funds would be spent and where its supplies might go, it was conceivable that the other Great Powers might pursue objectives using American resources that conflicted with desires of the United States. It seemed far more intelligent to place real executive responsibility in the hands of the organization's operational arm, even if

⁸²⁸ Ibid.

nominal responsibility rested with the Executive Committee. In this way, the Director of Relief, certain to be an American, could prevent undesirable outcomes. He would draw up budgets and operational plans. The Executive Committee would merely approve or disapprove of them.⁸²⁹

The United States had every intention of retaining as much power for itself as possible. The organization would be international only in appearance. At the operational level, the Americans intended to run the show. Through the Director of Relief they would set the agenda, engage relevant authorities in areas of operation, and control the presentation of the organization to the world and Council. For this reason, the Director “would be a person of unusual importance.”⁸³⁰ He would be involved in three interrelated functions: the collection of information on needs and available supplies, the construction of mechanisms to assemble the required materials, and the design of methods to distribute them in accordance with American objectives. While it was believed that no harm could be done in giving the organization a free hand to collect information, the Subcommittee reasoned that extreme caution would be needed when it came to assembling and distributing supplies. These crucial tasks converged with the national interests and sovereign prerogatives of states all over the world.⁸³¹

By what authority could the organization step into a country with a relief program? Everyone agreed that the consent and cooperation of relevant military authorities would be essential in areas they occupied. The problem concerned countries with a legitimate national government. If they refused to cooperate, then it was

⁸²⁹ Ibid.

⁸³⁰ On this point, “Pasvolsky said the formula of setting up the executive authority should be very broad.” Ibid.

⁸³¹ Ibid.

inconceivable that the organization could be effective. The only solution was to obtain the cooperation and consent of the particular government in question. It must therefore have the right to negotiate with the agency. If that government refused to cooperate, it would receive no assistance. The Americans, however, did not believe all governments should be entitled to a veto over relief operations in their respective territories. In some instances, the recognized government of a given territory might be unable to exercise its authority. In other cases, such as Austria and Germany, the government would not deserve such rights. For this reason, the Americans believed the Director should “have the obligation to consult rather than the obligation to obtain prior consent.”⁸³²

The great difficulty, Acheson suggested, was to bring an organization into being that adequately met all of these requirements. How could this be done? Harry Hawkins, possibly the most experienced “multilateral” negotiator in the American government, proposed that a series of resolutions be put before a meeting of the United Nations.⁸³³ The first resolution would outline and formally set up the organization. The second resolution would authorize the participating countries to contribute to the organization. Acheson welcomed this idea but wondered whether they should take the form of a “corporate charter” or a “covenant” like that of the League of Nations. He preferred the latter model, but thought it unwise to spell out all of the powers. “We might follow this general outline

⁸³² Ibid.

⁸³³ On the talents of Harry Hawkins, see John M. Leddy, interview by Richard D. McKinzie, June 15, 1973, Harry S Truman Presidential Library Oral History Interview, Independence, Missouri: <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/leddyj.htm>; see Henry L. Deimel, interview by Richard D. McKenzie, June 5, 1975, Harry S Truman Presidential Library Oral History Interview, Independence, Missouri: <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/deimelh1.htm>.

until we get into trouble,” he suggested. Would it be intelligent to state that the Director would be an American, he asked? Whatever the case, “it would be necessary in our own requirements to distinguish how the organization would work from how it would look on paper. We might wish to reassure our public and Congress on various things.” Acheson did not want the extent of America’s powers to be apparent.⁸³⁴

No one disputed his logic, but Leo Pasvolsky thought it dangerous to leave the question of contributions open. It would be insufficient to simply authorize member states to make contributions. Real commitments were essential. Otherwise the United States might be left to foot the entire bill. The international approach to relief had been chosen in part as a means to tap the resources of the entire globe. If the American people believed they would have to carry the burden alone, they might reject the plan altogether. Here history was important. The United States had provided relief to Europe after the First World War, funded the Dawes plan, and felt utterly cheated by the “imperialist” Germans and Russians. Thus it was reasonable that the postwar planners would want control commensurate with their contribution.

But it was also believed that if other countries sacrificed their resources, then the United States was more likely to make a significant commitment. Thus some formula would have to be arranged with the Council so that every nation contributed within its means. Other countries would have the ability to make considerable contributions. England and the Dominions would have resources; Argentina, Brazil and Chile could provide supplies; and several European countries with shipping facilities and colonial resources might contribute as well. The secret was to win commitments and use the

⁸³⁴ EP-5, Chronological Minutes, June 5, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

Executive Committee to hammer out the details. Once the supplies had been obtained, they would then be “turned over to the Director of Relief,” who would have the responsibility of ensuring “equitable distribution.”⁸³⁵

The following day Acheson’s bureaucratic maneuvering continued. He informed Welles that Berle’s Subcommittee on Reconstruction had reached a consensus on the steps necessary to bring the relief organization into being.⁸³⁶ But in truth, it had been his Economic Subcommittee making the decisions. With Leith-Ross scheduled to arrive on June 22, authority for relief negotiations needed to be centralized in the State Department.⁸³⁷ Acheson sought approval to send London a telegram reassuring the Norwegians and other exiled governments that action was being taken. It conveyed the nature of the discussions to the British so that Leith-Ross arrived with the power to negotiate. Implicitly, Acheson also sought authority to prepare a draft agreement that would bring the organization into existence. It would include statements establishing the organization, explaining its purpose, and defining its membership. It would describe the executive authority, delineate the organization’s powers, and provide for contributions. Notably, it would provide an outline of the agency to ensure countries that they could play a role and that their nationals would be utilized in the administration of relief.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁵ The Council might determine some general formula, but the Director would do the actual planning and implementation of relief programs. Ibid.

⁸³⁶ Acheson to Welles, “Responsibility for Discussions...” June 6, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

⁸³⁷ The Americans learned of Leith-Ross’s arrival date on or just before June 5, 1942. See Telegram 2610, Hull to Winant, June 5, 1942, 840.50/388-6/8, Box 4796, Document 45 (4417-4419). This document is also in FRUS but the date is incorrect.

⁸³⁸ Acheson to Welles, “Responsibility for Discussions...” June 6, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

When the Subcommittee on Reconstruction met again on June 12, 1942, it was clear that Adolf Berle had lost control. Acheson politely pushed him aside, and asked Harry Hawkins to present the draft agreement prepared in light of the results of the Economic Subcommittee's June 5 meeting. The text written and read aloud by Hawkins would become the so-called "Acheson draft agreement."⁸³⁹ Henceforward Berle was a participant in his own committee's discussions. He had shaped the American government's attitude towards relief decisively, and he would continue influencing the debate, but he would do nothing to disrupt Acheson's ascendancy. An academic and intellectual by nature, Berle emphasized the power of ideas without giving adequate attention to the precarious position he occupied in the American bureaucracy.⁸⁴⁰

His decline had little immediate significance for American relief planning. Acheson and Berle agreed that the construction of an international relief organization would require a sizeable appropriation from the American Congress. The question, as always, had been how much would be needed. The line between relief and reconstruction constituted the problem. Hundreds of millions of dollars would be needed for relief, but billions would be required for reconstruction. Harry Dexter White of the Treasury believed it would be much easier to obtain funds from Congress if the project were nominally confined to relief. But by defining relief broadly enough to include many

⁸³⁹ It is a testament to Hawkin's humility that he took no credit for writing the so-called "Acheson draft." This behavior accords perfectly with what his colleagues have said of him. "Harry Hawkins, himself, wasn't trying to get any particular award. He was just getting a job done, and I knew this from being his assistant." "In all the agreements that Harry Hawkins had negotiated himself, you won't find his name on a single one of the them." Honoré M. Catudal, interview by Richard D. McKinzie, May 23, 1973, Harry S Truman Presidential Library Oral History Interview, Independence, Missouri:

<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/catudalh.htm>.

⁸⁴⁰ ER-7, Chronological Minutes, June 12, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

things commonly thought of as reconstruction, they might increase the chances of obtaining a large appropriation. Relief, in fact, would depend on the reconstruction of hospitals and the renovation of transportation systems. If the Germans retreated using scorched-earth practices, this conception of relief would be all the more apropos. Acheson explained that it might even be necessary to rebuild houses, sanitation facilities and other infrastructure essential for the administration of relief services.⁸⁴¹

This strategy for dealing with Congress presented additional possibilities. The Board of Economic Warfare had been advocating for an organization with broad functions for weeks, but Acheson had ignored the idea. Now, with an apparent rift in the committee, Louis Bean tried to present the idea again. If the relief organization's scope were not explicitly defined in the agreement but the Council were given the power to determine the agency's functions, then it might be possible to expand into other fields at a later date. Berle sympathized with Bean. The relief agency, he argued, could be used as an "entering wedge" into other fields. Implicitly he believed that if an initial appropriation were secured, then additional funds for other functions could be obtained later.⁸⁴² To capture this idea, Bean thought the word "rehabilitation" could be substituted for "reconstruction" in the text of the agreement. But White feared that words like "reconstruction" or "rehabilitation" might set off alarm bells in Congress, though he

⁸⁴¹ Ibid.

⁸⁴² Berle believe the question of reconstruction was closely related to employment in the United States, which could be used as an argument to secure funds for other functions later.

agreed the relief agency might expand at a later date. The secret was to conjure up the idea of an “emergency” to get an appropriation out of the Congress.⁸⁴³

These proposals brought the conflict between the two Assistant Secretaries into the open. Unlike Berle, Acheson disliked direct confrontation and tried to outmaneuver his opponent through subtle acts of legerdemain. He inquired whether the name “United Nations War Relief Administration” would be an appropriate title for the organization. But Berle refused to take the bait. This construction, he argued, indicated a time limit and suggested the relief of soldiers, sailors and their families. Instead, he preferred the title “United Nations Relief Administration.” Acheson let the matter rest and moved to more overt attempts to block the inveterate New Dealer. He proposed the omission of the word “reconstruction” and other phrases that might imply a wide mandate, such as “improvement of standards of living and health.” He also argued that the organization’s objectives should be explicitly defined to include the estimation of needs, procurement of supplies, and construction of distribution facilities. When Berle objected on grounds that these statements would make it more difficult for the organization to expand into other fields, Acheson simply changed the subject and appears to have rewritten the text after the fact to accord with his point of view.⁸⁴⁴

Moving forward the Subcommittee worked to ensure the draft left the United States with as much control and power as possible while avoiding appearances that might trouble Congress or offend other countries. The group deleted a provision allowing for majority votes in the Council on grounds that it might be “interpreted as placing the

⁸⁴³ White was worried on account of a conversation he had recently overheard in Congress in which a Congressman stated: “We won’t be suckers this time.” ER-7, Chronological Minutes, June 12, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

American Treasury at the mercy of the majority of countries.” As Berle argued, the Pan-American Council used majority voting despite the absence of any such provision in the Charter. But in practice, the United States permitted no vote on a question unless the minority was insignificant and the majority shared the American view. On grounds that it would send the wrong message, the group also removed a provision stipulating that the President of the Council and Executive Committee should be an American. The group decided no harm could be done if small countries were permitted the right to preside over the Council. Like the League of Nations, the Council’s decisions would carry no weight unless the President was a representative of a Great Power. As for the President of the Executive Committee, the group reserved that position for the Director of Relief, who, thanks to a gentleman’s agreement among the Big Four, would be an American.⁸⁴⁵

The organization’s design allowed the United States to obtain the cooperation of the United Nations while preserving the American tradition of unilateralism.⁸⁴⁶ In the event of non-cooperation, recalcitrance, or outright obstructionism, the Americans had no intention of permitting the relief organization to impede their freedom of action. The Council would maintain nominal power over policy, but the Executive Committee would carry out that function when the Council was not in session. The draft agreement stipulated that the Council would meet once a year, but that the Executive Committee might call a special session if necessary. As Pasvolsky explained, “a routine meeting attracts less attention and can obtain results without unnecessary splash.” As a stopgap

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁶ It has been repeatedly stated that the United States was isolationist for much of its history, but considerable research has debunked this idea as myth. For a survey of the debate, see Walter McDougall, *Promised Land Crusader State* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), Chapter 2, but see especially William Appleman Williams, “The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920s,” *Science and Society* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1954): 1-20.

against the possibility of an unruly Executive Committee, executive authority would always be vested in the Director of Relief, who would be a puppet of the U.S. government. To appease the Council, it would have the annual responsibility of choosing three countries to sit on the Executive Committee with the Big Four. To give the small countries a sense of importance, they would participate in permanent committees to advise the administration. Their nationals could also work for the organization.⁸⁴⁷

The draft Acheson revised and pushed through the Subcommittee for Reconstruction on June 15, 1942, evoked the United Nations Declaration and the Atlantic Charter.⁸⁴⁸ Like these two documents, it conjured up images of hope and highlighted the promise of American leadership in the postwar era. “Victory shall bring relief as well as freedom from oppression and cruelty.” The draft promised food, clothing and shelter to “any area liberated by the United Nations.” It vowed to rehabilitate agriculture, resume basic services and restart essential industries. It bound its signatories to the task of preventing pestilence, nursing people back to good health, and repatriating exiles and prisoners of war. And it pledged to restore “the essential foundations upon which a liberated world may build anew.”⁸⁴⁹ But it did all of this under the pretense that the organization would be a United Nations effort and that American motives were purely humanitarian and apolitical, when the postwar planners – Acheson above all – were as

⁸⁴⁷ ER-7, Chronological Minutes, June 12, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

⁸⁴⁸ Discussion of the draft agreement took place on June 15, 1942 and June 19, 1942. However, it is more difficult to ascertain precisely what occurred at these meetings. The State Department appears to have ceased preparing chronological minutes of the Economic Subcommittee meetings at this juncture, I assume, to ensure secrecy. E Minutes 15, June 15, 1942; E Minutes 16, June 19, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁴⁹ “Acheson’s Draft of June 15, 1942 as revised by the Economic Reconstruction Subcommittee,” June 16, 1942, File E Documents 1-25, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

concerned with increasing American power and advancing the country's economic and geo-strategic interests as any nation of Old Europe.

A New Deal for the World?

Is it appropriate to call the organization that resulted from this draft a plank in what has been referred to by several historians as a New Deal for the world?⁸⁵⁰ The rationale for such arguments is nuanced, complex, and different depending on the scholar. But they share certain features. They implicitly suggest that postwar planners in Washington, either inadvertently or explicitly, acceded to the principle of cooperation among nations for the promotion of the common good, what is frequently called “internationalism.”⁸⁵¹ To achieve this end, the United States set up a world order based

⁸⁵⁰ As far as I know, there are two articulations of the New-Deal-for-the-World argument; David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-41: A Study in Competitive Co-operation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1982), chapter ten; Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005). Borgwardt's work focuses primarily though not exclusively on human rights. Reynolds' work concentrates more on security and economics. Borgwardt's argument is stated best in her 2006 article: Elizabeth Borgwardt, “When you state a moral principle, you are stuck with it,” The 1941 Atlantic Charter as a Human Rights Instrument,” *Virginia Journal of International Law*, Vol. 46, No. 3, November 2006, 501-562.

⁸⁵¹ I have used the expression “inadvertently or explicitly” to account for a distinction between the arguments Reynolds and Borgwardt present. Reynolds raises the possibility of an explicit application of the New Deal to the world, but backs away from his own idea by framing the argument as a question. He has apparently done this to account for factors that suggest the United States had imperial aspirations, but he intelligently argues, as I do here, that multilateral systems work best when they have a leading or hegemonic power. Borgwardt, on the other hand, equivocates on the matter. While suggesting that America's postwar planners prepared a New Deal for the world, she also claims that the postwar international human rights regime only emerged inadvertently. Perhaps her starting point – the Atlantic Charter – forces her into this position. Human rights were of secondary concern for the authors of the Atlantic Charter. The marginal importance of

on multilateral institutions modeled after Roosevelt's New Deal, which constructed a system of domestic agencies and programs to confront the political instability and economic havoc wrought by the Great Depression. The agency that resulted from Acheson's draft certainly sought to address the political and economic problems left in the wake of the Second World War, but the multilateralism it suggested – the relief planners never actually used this word – was more guise than a genuine effort to forge the cooperative arrangements associated with this term. The Americans planned to run the show.

Yet this does not necessarily mean that references to the New Deal by scholars working on the postwar international system are wholly misplaced. Rather it suggests that the relationship between multilateralism and the New Dealers is not clearly understood.⁸⁵² If a kind of New Deal multilateralism exists – and that *is* debatable – it begins with the Good Neighbor Policy, Roosevelt's attempt to secure more friendly

human rights played is also made clear in the postwar relief discussions. As I have revealed in the previous chapter, Berle attributed the whole idea to the "Kellogg Briand Pact." Perhaps a better starting point for a discussion of the modern human rights regime resides somewhere in the history of Christianity, but I suspect secular ideas of the present have shaped Borgwardt's choices. For an excellent account of the birth of human rights in the postwar era, see John S. Nurser, *For All Peoples and All Nations: The Ecumenical Church and Human Rights* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2006). To my knowledge, the relationship between relief and human rights has not been researched. But one idea appears plausible. From the Christian conquest of the Roman world up through the modern era, relief or "philanthropy," as Stephen Neill refers to it, was done for one of several reasons: to stabilize a chaotic situation, increase one's influence, or to fulfill one's duty to a higher power. Perhaps I am mistaken, but the idea that domestic and international relief is a right appears to have emerged in the twentieth century, and I suspect Borgwardt's logic is applicable here. It was an inadvertent consequence of something else: the New Deal.

⁸⁵² Reynolds' study is bilateral and it gives no attention to the New Deal as a domestic event in American history. Borgwardt's focus is more on the the history of ideas than the institutional development of the New Deal.

relations with Latin America.⁸⁵³ By renouncing military intervention, constructing a series of overlapping trade agreements, promoting cultural exchange, and instituting a variety of multilateral formulas for addressing disputes, the Roosevelt Administration sought to reduce anti-Americanism throughout the region in order to increase its clout and preserve its power. Doubtless this policy was a direct result of the Great Depression, which humbled and weakened the United States, making it more sympathetic to Latin America. It was also a subtle effort to confront revolution and the fascist threat in the Hemisphere.

Yet this approach to the region, as Frederick Pike and others have argued, was not what it seemed. “While paying lip service to equality,” it “realistically accorded *de facto* primacy to the mighty.”⁸⁵⁴ Though Roosevelt avoided intervention in most Latin American conflicts, he continued his predecessor’s interventionist policy in Nicaragua and undertook his own in Cuba. When these methods backfired, Roosevelt turned to “cultural diplomacy.”⁸⁵⁵ One might call it propaganda, or, if you like the euphemism,

⁸⁵³ The scholarship on the Good Neighbor Policy is extensive, but the best place to begin is: Frederick Pike, *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin: University of Texas, 1995). See also Irwin Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979). On the debatable nature of New Deal multilateralism, it has been established that the Roosevelt Administration, at least during the 1930s, was one of the most isolationist of American history.

⁸⁵⁴ Pike, *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy*, 223.

⁸⁵⁵ Both Pike and Gellman discuss cultural diplomacy, but the most recent iteration comes from Antonio Pedro Tota, *The Seduction of Brazil: The Americanization of Brazil During World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009). Tota’s primary contribution is in the area of government’s ability to create popular culture. This, of course, is an international extension of the cultural aspects of the New Deal. Roosevelt’s Administration paid cultural icons such as Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly to produce recordings promoting the government’s efforts. Perhaps the greatest masterpiece of American folk music, *The Columbia River Collection* of Guthrie, was a product of these efforts. Yet this was actually not as American as may seem. The Nazi regime pioneered

public relations. Whatever the case, the purpose was the preservation of American hegemony in the Hemisphere. As for the multilateral trading regime, it was constructed using bilateral negotiations, a procedure that prevented any individual state from allying with another to obtain leverage in negotiations with the heavy-handed Americans. The dispute mechanisms and cooperative measures instituted in Latin America usually left the United States with a litany of procedural tricks they could employ to achieve their objectives. The sum of these efforts might have meant nothing on a global scale, but scholars have repeatedly argued that this approach, which we might call New Deal multilateralism, was the basis for America's postwar plans.⁸⁵⁶

Linking multilateralism to the New Dealers and agencies and programs they constructed in the United States presents additional problems. Like the proposed relief organization, many New Deal agencies and programs were authoritarian and even arbitrary in their design and implementation, an attribute that runs counter to the spirit of multilateralism.⁸⁵⁷ This fact was the result of power politics, but also the necessity of meeting crisis situations with speed. At the same time, the creation and administration of

and perfected these techniques. The most alarming example is Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. The Nazis, in fact, undertook extensive propaganda efforts in Latin America, which left the Americans with little choice but to do the same.

⁸⁵⁶ Pike and Gellman discuss these matters, but the most disciplined argument can be found in chapter six, "'Baffled Virtue... Injured Innocence': The Western Hemisphere as Regional Model" of Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 107-125.

⁸⁵⁷ While this interpretation certainly constitutes an oversimplification, it is difficult to dispute the authoritarian and arbitrary nature of many New Deal initiatives. For such reasons, the Supreme Court ruled a number of them unconstitutional: the Frazier-Lemke Emergency Farm Mortgage Act and the National Recovery Administration in 1935; and then the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the Bituminous Coal Conservation Act in 1936. In instances where the court did not strike down controversial measures of the New Deal, such as Roosevelt's gold confiscating scheme, the National Labor Relations Act, and the Social Security Act, the principle in question was upheld on one vote. Yet each of these pieces of legislation was authoritarian or arbitrary in some way.

many of these agencies involved negotiations with relevant stakeholders. But this was required to rectify competing interests among the powerful. It was neither a procedure administration officials preferred, nor one that involved the weak, even if they ultimately benefited. Roosevelt's administrative system generated competing policy ideas, which forced New Dealers to negotiate in a multilateral fashion, but the ultimate arbiter in these debates was a single hegemonic force, the President.⁸⁵⁸ His decisions rarely deviated from a realistic reading of the power dynamics at play. When a conflict found resolution before it reached the Presidential level, it was usually the logical outcome of a bureaucratic concentration of power or the consequence of raw trickery. At the most basic level, the mentality of the New Dealer stood in conflict with multilateralism. No administration in American history has fought itself so much. To be sure, this fact is a result of Roosevelt's administrative style, but it is also a consequence of the people he chose to lead his bureaucracy. Righteous and arrogant, they loved power almost as much as he did.

⁸⁵⁸ The Roosevelt's Administration's proclivity for producing competing policy proposals has received considerable attention ever since Arthur Schlesinger Jr. first made this point. Generally this has been framed as a positive outcome of Roosevelt's administrative style, which is undisputable if one seeks options. Borgwardt, however, goes further by arguing that the New Dealers openly embraced these arrangements. As she writes, "New Dealers tended to embrace chaos as a creative force." But in terms of power, this point is debatable. Administrative chaos inevitably means constant incursions onto one's bureaucratic turf from power-hungry rivals. For this reason, the historian working in Roosevelt's files repeatedly stumbles upon letters from Cabinet members and other officials beseeching him to clearly define lines of authority. This would be a moot point here, but Borgwardt also suggests that Roosevelt's Administrative style was a source of New Deal multilateralism. It constituted a "political expression of a broader cultural shift toward pluralism," and a "response to the incommensurability of different value systems." In general terms, this may be true, but in practical terms, the New Dealers disliked chaos. The whole purpose of the New Deal as well as the proposed relief organization was to prevent chaos, not create it. The tendency to allow dissenting views a voice was more a necessity than an intellectual desire. See Borgwardt, *New Deal*, 72-74.

While the pursuit of power may create turmoil in political and economic systems, its execution does not necessarily lead to the same outcome. If it is used cautiously, it can provide stability. Roosevelt implicitly understood this fact. Scholars have also recognized the merits of this argument. While there is some debate on the point, the stability of any multilateral system, whether economic or political, depends on the willingness of a single leading power, or a concert of Great Powers, to intervene in times of upheaval. In effect, stable multilateral systems are necessarily imperial or hegemonic. Otherwise they fall apart.⁸⁵⁹ Problems tend to arise when there is not a sufficient concentration of power to exact a solution in times of crisis. The European Union constitutes a case in the present. Problems also arise when the existence of multiple great powers with competing visions makes cooperation impossible. It is for this reason that the American postwar planners were so obsessed with American power and challenges to it, which begets a question: Should we call the American postwar planners imperialists?

In principle, imperialism may appear to be profoundly different from internationalism, but the step from one to the other is not as drastic as it may seem.⁸⁶⁰ Internationalism seeks to achieve many of the same ends as imperialism: order, stability, and predictability, but above all, the preservation of one or more of the Great Powers. By

⁸⁵⁹ David Reynolds makes this point precisely in his articulation of the New Deal for the World argument. See his footnotes for a list of theoretical works making this case. Reynolds, *Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 280-282.

⁸⁶⁰ Mark Mazower recently made a similar assessment when asking how it could be that Jan Smuts, the South African imperialists, wrote the stirring preamble to the United Nations Charter. His answer: the United Nations – itself an outgrowth of the League of Nations – was an effort to preserve the imperial order of the nineteenth century. See Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

giving all states an opportunity to participate, affording them the chance to voice their views and concerns, and seeking their cooperation through consent as opposed to brute force, internationalism also attempts to take the sting out of the inevitable and necessary execution of power. Imperialists can do these things as well, but often they do not. The big distinction is to be found elsewhere. Internationalists rely on grand masquerades like the United Nations to achieve legitimacy and conceal the underlying mechanics of power from the awakened masses. Spectacle is often required to achieve stability. But often shows have unintended consequences that lead to dangerous outcomes.

This might read as an indictment of the planners, but hard facts make it apparent that their choices remained far more restricted than one might assume. Policymakers feared a relapse into depression once the war ended, which would reignite the fires that precipitated the war in the first place. American economic health, they believed, depended on the economic revival of the rest of the world, especially Europe. Once wartime demands plummeted, American manufacturers would require export markets for their products and returning soldiers would want jobs. Otherwise policymakers predicted low growth and high unemployment, a sure recipe for instability in a society that has always had high aspirations for itself. “The financing of reconstruction,” as Berle aptly put it, was “closely connected with the internal problem of maintaining employment.”⁸⁶¹ But to arrive at the point where reconstruction could take place, the United States had to keep the world alive, and it had to give people a reason to live. Consequently the planners had little choice but to embark on some program to relieve and rehabilitate societies afflicted by the war. But they had to do it in a way that would convince the Congress and

⁸⁶¹ ER-7, Chronological Minutes, June 12, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

the American people of its merits. The beauty of it all is that what served American economic interests could also serve the interests of the world.

The planners also worried about Soviet objectives for Central and Western Europe. It is no coincidence that, when the draft agreement for the relief organization was under final consideration in the State Department, Acheson's Economic Subcommittee was also making plans for an economic federation in Eastern Europe that might evolve into a full-fledged political union.⁸⁶² To the degree possible, the United States hoped to keep the Soviet economic and political system out of Central and Western Europe. A federation or union in Eastern Europe could supply inputs to industry in the West and work as a bulwark against Soviet power. The Americans believed the relief organization might facilitate the construction of this system. Both Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union would need American assistance after the war, a fact that would give the United States leverage. The international approach would give Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union a voice at the table, which might translate into goodwill and cooperation. The plan, however, suffered one major flaw. After the war the Red Army would occupy Eastern Europe, which was divided against itself and overtly hostile towards the Soviet Union.⁸⁶³

⁸⁶² This topic constitutes a dissertation unto itself. The following documents detail some of the more important discussions of a federation or union for Eastern Europe: P Minutes 11, May 16, 1942; P Minutes 12, May 23, 1942, both in File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part II); P Minutes 13, May 30, 1942, File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part I), all P Minutes in Box 55; E Document 17, "Some Economic Aspects of a Possible Unification of Eastern European Countries," June 25, 1942, File E Documents 1-25; E Minutes 19, July 24, 1942; E Minutes 20, July 31, 1942; E Minutes 22, August 22, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46; EP-5, Chronological Minutes, May 22, 1942, all E Documents and Minutes in Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁶³ The idea for a federation came from the East Europeans. Jan Masaryk, the most visionary of the East European leaders, dreamed of a nation state consisting of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece, under an arrangement open to adherence by

Despite these unfavorable circumstances, the United States had little choice but to try. In moral, economic and geo-strategic terms, the Americans could not abandon Eastern Europe without an attempt to help the region, or some effort at cooperation with the Soviet Union. In the short run, it would have done irreparable harm to the Grand Alliance fighting valiantly to defeat the Axis powers. In the long run, it would have damaged the moral clout of the United States and tainted its claims to global leadership. Yet it also made little sense to needlessly pour funds into a region without a strategy for stabilizing it or some assurance that the money would be reasonably well spent. An American or Anglo-American relief organization was not possible. The Russians had first proposed the creation of an international relief organization and they made it clear that they would never accept another Hoover relief mission like the one sent to the Ukraine in

Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania. In effect, he wanted to construct an altered version of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. See Acheson to Hull, Welles, and Atherton, November 5, 1941, 840.50/272-1/2, Box 4796, RG 59, NARA. The East Europeans, above all, worried that the United States and Great Britain would abandon them. In July 1942, the Poles conveyed information obtained by Polish agents on Soviet postwar plans to American officials. According to Polish sources, the Russians were gleeful that the Nazis had ousted virtually all Anglo-American political and economic influence in Europe. They hoped to prevent the return of any "principal capitalist power" to the continent and were appealing to the Free French in order to achieve their objectives. The Poles, no doubt, hoped to lure the Americans into Eastern Europe. See Biddle to Hull, July 31, 1942, 840.50/539, Box 4797, RG 59, NARA. The Czechs, however, were so worried about fighting among East Europeans that they turned to the United States for help. Ladislav Feierabend, the Czech Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Polish-Czechoslovak Economic Commission approached Leo Pasvolsky in July 1943 to express his desires for an East European Union. What interested him most, was not the form the federation would take, but whether the United States would be willing to exert pressure on any country or countries that refused to cooperate or join. See Memorandum of Conversation, "Economic Unification of Eastern Europe," Feierabend and Pasvolsky, July 3, 1943, 840.50/2172, Box 4811, RG 59, NARA.

1921.⁸⁶⁴ A unilateral or bilateral effort might also have led to charges of imperialism.

The only possibility was to construct an international organization that sustained America's independence of action, preserved the country's strategic flexibility, and provided it options or a way out in the event of disaster or unintended consequences.

It is for these reasons that Acheson's draft agreement looks more like a high-stakes masquerade than the mythical New Deal agency of the popular imagination. Surely it is a tribute to Roosevelt's genius that he adopted expressions such as the "New Deal" and the "United Nations," which have retained their glamour among so many for so long. But behind the euphoria and myths that have sustained the allure of these words and the sentiments they excite, one too often finds a history that disappoints. For better or worse, the Roosevelt Administration believed it would have to deceive the world in order to save it, and it would have to mislead the American people to make this possible. The planners knew, as Herbert Hoover would soon preach, that an international organization could not administer relief.⁸⁶⁵ A fast-operating authoritarian structure is needed;

⁸⁶⁴ For the Russian point of view on a Hoover-like mission, see "Note of Conversation with Maisky," by Leith-Ross, November 19, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁶⁵ Herbert Hoover would make his opinion known in a wide variety of private letters and public statements, but the best indication of his beliefs are captured in statements made during a May 23, 1945 meeting he had with the representatives of the War Department. Hoover preferred that the United States Army take over relief operations from UNRRA. He believed that one man with "dictatorial" powers should oversee the economic life of "the liberated countries from Italy to Norway, with Shipping, Transportation, Food, Coal and other divisions under strong men." Otherwise he feared that the liberated countries would go communist. This example is from a different context, but it accords wholeheartedly with Hoover's personality and ideas about administration. For this specific example, see Gary Dean Best, *Herbert Hoover: The Postpresidential Years, 1933-1964*, Vol. 1, 1933-1945 (Stanford: Hoover University Press, 1983), 269.

otherwise people just wilt away and die while men in dark suits grandstand and debate.⁸⁶⁶ They also knew that opponents to excessive spending would obstruct their efforts if the message to Congress were not carefully managed. It would fall to Dean Acheson to see the effort through.

The Torch Passes, but Roosevelt remains Master of his Administration

Adolf Berle surrendered the relief portfolio to his archrival in July 1942.⁸⁶⁷ More than anyone, Berle defined the broad lines of America's postwar relief policy, and he worked relentlessly to guard against British guile. A member of Roosevelt's original Brain Trust, he was always more suited for constructing policy than the process of navigating it through political systems and diplomatic discussions. Surely it is an irony to say that Berle loved his country more than himself. But he risked his influence and career to bring peace to the State Department. In doing so, he created an opportunity for Acheson. It is not clear whether he bowed out under pressure from Hull, or whether he was wise enough to have known that his rival was more suitable for negotiating with the British and Soviets. Berle's approach was always too crass, too blunt and too honest for the diplomatic art, which requires the deceitfulness of a world-class poker player. It certainly made no sense to sit him at the negotiating table with the British. He hated them

⁸⁶⁶ The British complained that the Director-General position, as proposed by the American planners, would have power "far in advance of those of Mr. Hoover, who was the relief administrator at the end of the last war." See "Telegrams Relief 11 and 12," by R.V.N.H. [Hopkins], July 16, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO.

⁸⁶⁷ See E Minutes 18, July 17, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

and they knew it. Acheson, by contrast, had the reputation of an Anglophile, even though he shared many of Berle's ideas towards the British.

The Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs also displayed the necessary dexterity for maneuvering within the bureaucratic labyrinth of the Roosevelt Administration. At this point, the Board of Economic Warfare constituted Acheson's only serious obstacle. The Lend-Lease Administration, under the leadership of Edward Stettinius, would make an attempt to obtain some responsibility for postwar relief, but its efforts would come too late and to little avail.⁸⁶⁸ Acheson concentrated on BEW. To appease the agency, he acceded to Bean's suggestion that "rehabilitation" be included among the proposed relief organization's responsibilities, despite the inevitable problems this language would cause. More intelligently, he promoted Paul Appleby, one of Henry Wallace's old lieutenants at the Department of Agriculture, as the best choice to fill the position of the relief organization's first Director-General.⁸⁶⁹ He personally proposed Appleby to Welles, and he appears to have utilized a fellow Yale graduate, Oscar Cox of the Lend-Lease Administration, to suggest Appleby to Harry Hopkins.⁸⁷⁰ This was no lighthearted decision. Appleby, the Assistant Secretary for Agriculture, had the talents to

⁸⁶⁸ See "Memorandum to Mr. Harry L. Hopkins" from Edward Stettinius, June 24, 1942, Book 7: Post-War Planning, Box 328, Hopkins Papers, FDRL. Stettinius tried to change the lend-lease legislation so that it would give his Administration the authority to supply relief and reconstruction articles in addition to war materials.

⁸⁶⁹ For a detailed account of Appleby's relationship with Wallace, follow the Appleby entries in the index of Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*.

⁸⁷⁰ Acheson to Welles, "Responsibility for Discussions..." June 6, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA; Oscar Cox to Harry Hopkins, June 26, 1942, Book 7: Post-War Planning, Box 328, Hopkins Papers, FDRL. I have little information on Acheson's relationship with Cox, but suspect they worked closely together on lend-lease issues well before Acheson re-entered government service. It is also notable that the two men represented Yale University at the five-hundredth anniversary of the concordat between King's College, Cambridge and New College, Oxford on the opening evening of the Bretton Woods discussions. See Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 83.

do the job and was considered by many to be the most brilliant administrator in the entire government bureaucracy.⁸⁷¹

But even this was not enough to subdue the power-hungry Vice President. No less than twenty-four hours after the Reconstruction Subcommittee approved Acheson's draft, Wallace informed the President of the plan. Outraged, he demanded a meeting with Roosevelt and Hull.⁸⁷² Unlike Churchill, who ignored repeated warnings from one of his most important advisors, Roosevelt immediately asserted his authority. "I know nothing about this," he wrote the Secretary of State. "Will you speak to me about it?"⁸⁷³ The meeting that took place with Wallace and Hull some days later did nothing to alter the course of events, but it did confirm three things. Roosevelt remained master of his administration; he blessed the general approach that emerged from the postwar planning committees; and the State Department – read Acheson – now had authority to move swiftly ahead.⁸⁷⁴

⁸⁷¹ On Appleby's organizational and administrative talents, see Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 197, 229. See also Henry A. Wallace, *The Reminiscences of Henry Agard Wallace, Columbia University Oral History, 1951* (New York: Columbia University, 1976), 1110-11. It is also noteworthy that Appleby would become the Dean of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University after retiring from government service. In this capacity, he would write a several books on administration and the welfare state. Paul Appleby, *Citizens as Sovereigns* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962); Paul Appleby, *Public Administration for a Welfare State* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1961).

⁸⁷² Wallace to Roosevelt, June 17, 1942; Wallace to Hull, June 17, 1942, both in File UNRRA 1942, Box 1, Official File, FDR Papers, FDRL.

⁸⁷³ Roosevelt to Hull, June 24, 1942, File UNRRA 1942, Official File, FDR Papers, FDRL.

⁸⁷⁴ It is not clear to me when the meeting took place as it was cancelled on several occasions, but my notes suggest it was July 7, 1942, well after the arrival of Leith-Ross. Further research at the Roosevelt Library will be required to confirm the precise date. Whatever the case, Roosevelt received a copy of the Acheson draft. Had he disagreed with its content, it is unlikely that he would have permitted Hull and Acheson to move forward.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SIR FREDERICK LEITH-ROSS GOES TO WASHINGTON

During the late summer and the fall of 1941, the possibility of a visit to Washington by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross had been contemplated on both sides of the Atlantic.⁸⁷⁵ The British and Americans wanted to discuss the coordination of efforts to accumulate surpluses for postwar relief. But in a letter of July 22, 1941 to Leith-Ross, Dean Acheson inadvertently sabotaged the visit by trying to link surpluses and postwar relief to negotiations on America's plans to erect a global free trading regime after the war.⁸⁷⁶ This he did before the Atlantic Charter and the Master Lend-Lease Agreement had been signed. With Article VII of the Master Agreement under consideration during the fall of 1941, Leith-Ross rebuffed the invitation on grounds that Britain needed to consider the issues Acheson had raised in his letter of July 1941.⁸⁷⁷ Fierce disputes had

⁸⁷⁵ On the possibility of a Leith-Ross visit, see Noel Hall to Dean Acheson, September 17, 1941; "Memorandum of Conversation," September 30, 1941; Acheson to Noel Hall, October 9, 1941; Dean Acheson to Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles, October 22, 1941; Harry Hawkins to Dean Acheson, October 29, 1941, all in File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 PART 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA; see also Dean Acheson to Cordell Hull, December 10, 1941, 840.50/272-1/2, Box 4796, RG 59, NARA. The matter had even been leaked to the media. See "Move to Set Up Materials Pool For Post-War Use," September 28, 1941, *NYT*, 1.

⁸⁷⁶ The Assistant SOS (Acheson) to the DG, British MEW (Leith-Ross), July 22, 1941, 840.48/4988, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, *The British Commonwealth, The Near East and Africa* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1959), 103-107; in this letter, Acheson was responding to The DG, British MEW (Leith-Ross), to the Assistant SOS (Acheson), February 14, 1941, 840.48/4844-1/2, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 90-95.

⁸⁷⁷ Sir Frederick Leith-Ross to Dean Acheson, October 3, 1941; Leith-Ross to Acheson, October 4, 1941, both in File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 5/7/42 PART 4, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

erupted in the British Government over American efforts to smash the system of preferences that governed trade in the British Empire.⁸⁷⁸

The visit might have taken place after the Master Agreement was signed on February 23, 1942. But by this point, the Soviet Union and Allied Governments had muddied the waters. The Russian proposal of January 1942 for an international relief organization widened the scope of the discussions. The British had shared the Soviet note with American authorities along with views of their own. It took the State Department more than two months to formulate its reaction. While internal deliberations took place, the problem of surpluses turned into one of shortages for many commodities and products. At roughly the same time, the Norwegians joined the Dutch in making purchases for the postwar relief of their country, which threatened to exacerbate these problems. In turn, this development increased the necessity to construct an international relief organization, which would centralize the procurement of supplies, as rapidly as possible. On May 11, 1942, the U.S. Government urged Leith-Ross to visit Washington immediately.⁸⁷⁹

He would not arrive until June 27, 1942. In the meantime, the British War Cabinet accepted the general lines of the American plan shared with them in early May. The ministers also began the process of crafting Sir Frederick's instructions, but these

⁸⁷⁸ For discussion of the debate over Article VII of the Master Lend-Lease Agreement, see Randall Bennett Woods, *A Changing of the Guard: Anglo-American Relations, 1941-1946* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 33-61.

⁸⁷⁹ Leith-Ross proposed the visit again on May 5, 1942. Telegram No. 2397, The Ambassador to the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, May 5, 1942, 840.50/396, DOS, FRUS, Vol. 1, *General, The British Commonwealth, The Near East* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 100-101. For the invitation, see Telegram No. 1995, The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), May 7, 1942, 840.50/5413; Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 103-105.

discussions would not be completed until after his arrival. Leith-Ross also took steps to reassure the European allies and bring the problem of independent purchases under control. In Washington, the Americans took similar steps while finalizing the proposal they would discuss with Leith-Ross. In preparation for their talks, Acheson assembled an interdepartmental committee to discuss their proposals with Leith-Ross. The group included representatives from the State Department, Treasury, Department of Agriculture, the Red Cross and the Board of Economic Warfare. This committee met with Leith-Ross on six occasions during July and August. This chapter examines these events up through Sir Frederick's five-day sojourn to Ottawa in late July 1942.

Norway and the Problem of Allied Purchases

Before Sir Frederick Leith-Ross arrived in the United States, the conflict with Norway over postwar purchases escalated. As we have seen, the British and Americans demanded that Norway and the Netherlands coordinate their procurement with supply authorities in London and Washington. They also asked these nations to suspend all purchasing until a joint procurement program could be established among the Allies. The Anglo-American authorities wanted to ensure that materials in short supply would be available for the war effort, and they hoped to prevent competitive bidding that might drive prices upward. The British worried that other allies might commence purchasing if these activities persisted, and countries with few or no resources would become angry if

the richer allies bought up limited supplies.⁸⁸⁰ Despite these arguments, the Anglo-American efforts failed. In the case of Norway, two factors are to blame.

First, Norway only agreed to cease purchasing for a few weeks while the Anglo-American authorities established a joint purchasing program. But nothing had been done. According to Trygve Lie, his country had already “waited for more than six months since the Inter-Allied meeting” of September 1941 “before taking any separate action.”⁸⁸¹ Now circumstances had elevated the stakes. The Germans had begun a propaganda campaign to persuade Norway’s seamen assisting the war effort to return home. The Great Powers, according to this propaganda, were exploiting the smaller allies, and would cast them aside when peace came. The Norwegian Government believed it imperative to avoid any impressions of this sort. If the seamen realized the British Government was preventing Norway from buying the necessities of which their wives and families were deprived, it might undermine the war effort. It was essential that the Norwegian government “assure them truthfully and categorically that the moment Norway is free of the Hun,” they will “be able to pour into the country supplies of everything that is now lacking.”⁸⁸²

⁸⁸⁰ “Memorandum” by A.N.S. [Steyne], Conversation with Alfred Holter (Norwegian Ministry of Supply and Shipping), May 7, 1942; “Memorandum” by A.N.S., Conversations with Lie, Jul, Lamping, and Philipse, May 9, 1942, Enclosures 1 and 2 to Dispatch No. 3801, Matthews to Hull, May 15, 1942, 840.50/408, Box 4796, RG 59, NARA; Leith-Ross to Lie and Lamping, May 14, 1942; “Memorandum,” May 14, 1942, Enclosures 1 and 2 to Dispatch No. 3798, Matthews to Hull, May 15, 1942, 840.50/417, Box 4796, RG 59, NARA; Telegram 2532, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, May 9, 1942, 840.50/412-4/6, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 106.

⁸⁸¹ Lie to Leith-Ross, May 14, 1942, included in Telegram 2748, Winant to Hull, May 18, 1942, 840.50/396-1/2, Box 4796; on the delays, see Lie to Leith-Ross, June 16, 1942, Enclosure 1 to Dispatch No. 4469, Matthews to Hull, July 7, 1942, 840.50/481, Box 4797, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁸² On propaganda, see Holter to Leith-Ross, June 2, 1942; “Broadcast Monday, 18th May, 1942,” Enclosures 1 & 2 to Dispatch No. 4070, Matthews to Hull, June 5, 1942,

Second, Norway made its willingness to suspend purchases dependent on Britain's readiness to approve licenses for orders placed in the United Kingdom.⁸⁸³ The Board of Trade had refused to issue export licenses, thus preventing British manufacturers from completing a number of orders. The Board cited limited raw materials, labor, and manufacturing capacity, but also Norway's failure to notify British supply authorities of their purchasing plans. Leith-Ross took this concern to the Board, which agreed to approve all orders placed before March 17, 1942 with the exception of several contracts for boiler suits and overalls. The Norwegians, furthermore, would have to agree to turn over these supplies at cost if required for the war effort, and they would refrain from placing future orders without the Board of Trade's consent. As for those orders placed after March 17, the Board blocked them.⁸⁸⁴ This decision and the failure to promptly establish a joint procurement program infuriated the Norwegians.

As a result, they refused to cease purchasing. Dean Acheson had told them that procurement machinery would be established in a matter of "weeks rather than months."⁸⁸⁵ But the Norwegians concluded that his promise was empty.⁸⁸⁶ Furthermore, they resented British attempts to obstruct their purchasing in the United Kingdom. Export licenses, they argued, had been permitted for goods to be sold to Holland, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Switzerland and other countries in North and South America. They also

840.50/454, Box 4797, RG 59; Lie to Leith-Ross, June 16, 1942, Enclosure 1 to Dispatch No. 4469, 840.50/481, NARA.

⁸⁸³ Lie to Leith-Ross, May 14, 1942, included in Telegram 2748, 840.50/396-1/2, NARA.

⁸⁸⁴ Leith-Ross to Lie, May 21, 1942, Enclosure to Dispatch No. 3894, May 22, 1942, 840.50/409, Box 4796, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁸⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, Acheson and Norwegian Ambassador to the United States [Morgenstierne], May 28, 1942, 840.50/545, Box 4798, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁸⁶ Lie to Leith-Ross, June 16, 1942, Enclosure 1 to Dispatch No. 4469, 840.50/481, NARA.

maintained that on a per-capita basis Norway's trading relationship with Great Britain had been more important than with any other country in the world, and the British position imperiled the prospects of continuing this relationship after the war.⁸⁸⁷ More importantly, Norway had considerable Sterling reserves that could only be spent in the British Empire. If the purchases were not allowed to go through, Lie wrote on June 16, 1942, it "would be a very hard blow" for Norway.⁸⁸⁸

This conflict might have been less bitter, if Leith-Ross had not lambasted the Norwegians for violating the spirit of the St. James Palace Resolution. In return, they attacked British insensitivity towards the plight of their countrymen and complained of being excluded from Anglo-American discussions impinging on their interests. Sir Frederick retorted that Norway had been inconsiderate of the broader alliance and had backtracked on its pledge to suspend purchases and consult with British supply authorities about their procurement activities. The Norwegian denied having promised either.⁸⁸⁹ When the fitful dispute led Leith-Ross to meet Lie in June, the Norwegian Foreign Minister attributed his country's recalcitrance to political divisions within the Cabinet, but claimed a resolution could be found if Britain would only approve the

⁸⁸⁷ Holter to Leith-Ross, June 2, 1942, Enclosures 1 to Dispatch No. 4070, 840.50/454, NARA.

⁸⁸⁸ Lie to Leith-Ross, June 16, 1942, Enclosure 1 to Dispatch No. 4469, 840.50/481, NARA.

⁸⁸⁹ These accusations appear in many of the documents cited previously, but also in Leith-Ross to Holter, June 3, 1942, Enclosure 2 to Dispatch No. 4070, 840.50/454, NARA; Leith-Ross to Lie, June 19, 1942; Lie to Leith-Ross, June 25, 1942, Enclosure 2 and 3 to Dispatch No. 4469, 840.50/481.

contracts made after March 17, 1942. Leith-Ross pointed his finger at the Board of Trade and the problem appeared irresolvable.⁸⁹⁰

Thus he turned to Washington. First, Sir Frederick asked the Americans to approve a “note from the Chairman” to the Inter-Allied committee, which he would present during a meeting before his departure. It would insist that countries making purchases consult with allied supply authorities and suspend these activities until the establishment of a common program. In this way, he could win support for their “efforts to restrain the Norwegian and Dutch activities.” Second, Leith-Ross suggested Great Britain and the United States would have to permit the purchases if delays prevented the immediate construction of common machinery. So long as the Allies consulted with the relevant Anglo-American authorities, agreed to make their supplies available at cost if needed for the war, and permitted the relief organization to requisition them if they might be used to greater effect outside the owning country, then he thought the purchases could be allowed.⁸⁹¹

The Americans thought purchases should only be permitted as a last resort, but agreed to the note, which Leith-Ross shared with the Inter-Allied Committee on June 17, 1942.⁸⁹² As anticipated, most of the represented nations spoke out against independent purchases, including Belgium, France, Greece, Poland and Yugoslavia. The Dutch and

⁸⁹⁰ “Memorandum,” by Leith-Ross, June 19, 1942, Enclosure 4 to Dispatch No. 4469, 840.50/481, NARA.

⁸⁹¹ Telegram 3127, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, June 4, 1942, 840.50/399-6/8, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 109-110; “Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements,” Note by the Chairman, June 1942; Leith-Ross to Steyne, June 3, 1942, Enclosures 1 & 2 to Dispatch No. 4095, Matthews to Hull, June 8, 1942, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁸⁹² Telegram 2610, Hull to Winant, June 5, 1942, 840.50/388-6/8, Box 4796, RG 59, NARA. This document is also in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, but the editors of this volume got the date wrong on account of a stamp mark on the original document, 110-111.

Norwegians maintained their position, restating their arguments with the usual vigor, but the meeting left them temporarily isolated. The Norwegians, however, fought back, asking Leith-Ross whether the European allies would be invited to partake in the Washington discussions at any point. Sir Frederick, who had opened the meeting with a vague explanation of his trip to the United States, could not and did not answer the question.⁸⁹³ Thus his plan to refute the idea that London and Washington disregarded their concerns backfired.⁸⁹⁴ He promised to keep their views before the American Government nonetheless.⁸⁹⁵

Allaying the Fears of the Soviet Union

Prior to Sir Frederick's departure, another matter of importance sat on the British diplomatic table. Six months had passed since the Soviet Union delivered their relief proposal of January 13, 1942. But at the request of the United States, which needed time to consider the Soviet ideas and formulate its own, the Foreign Office had refrained from formally responding to the Russians. If the Americans had moved more rapidly, this request might have amounted to nothing, but, as we have seen, it took the Roosevelt Administration months to get its act together. Naturally the delays aroused suspicions in Moscow, and left Great Britain in an embarrassing position.

For both countries, the context made the matter worrisome. Churchill's hostility towards the Soviet regime was well known, and the Stalinists had long considered the

⁸⁹³ "Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements," Minutes of Meeting, June 17, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

⁸⁹⁴ On his plans, see Leith-Ross to Ronald, June 6, 1942, T188/254, Document 30 (5958).

⁸⁹⁵ "Inter-Allied Committee..." Minutes, June 17, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

British Empire a “mortal enemy of Communism.” Even the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 could not remove this mutual animosity. It might be possible to conveniently forget when faced with a common enemy, but the past could not be erased. The Soviets *had* concluded a Non-Aggression Pact with the Nazi regime in 1939. They *had* occupied large portions of Eastern Europe and launched an unprovoked attack on Finland. As a result, the British refusal to open a second front in Europe at the moment of Russia’s greatest peril left Stalin to suspect ill will. So long as the Wehrmacht remained outside Moscow, British counterarguments mattered little. Yet the two enemies needed one another, and British diplomats saw no reason to let postwar relief turn a difficult relationship into an unmanageable one.⁸⁹⁶

Their worries mounted when the Soviet Ambassador to London, Ivan Maisky, raised the issue with the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, on June 26, 1942. He wanted to know whether the Soviet Union might shortly receive a reply to its memorandum of six months prior.⁸⁹⁷ Perhaps he felt as though Russia was being ignored. Sir Frederick had neglected to tell Maisky of his impending visit to Washington. He remained furious over the Russian refusal to participate in the Inter-Allied Committee, which they considered “a sham and camouflage” for a “purely British Committee.”⁸⁹⁸ Eden hoped to ease the situation with a reply to the note of January 13, but the Americans had still said nothing of their own proposals to the Russians. The Foreign Office therefore instructed Leith-Ross to do everything possible to expedite this communication.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁶ On the historical context, see Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-73* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974), 314-338.

⁸⁹⁷ Telegram No. 4107, Relief No. 1, FO to DC, July 1, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

⁸⁹⁸ Keynes to Ronald, July 8, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁸⁹⁹ Telegram No. 4107, Relief No. 1, FO to DC, July 1, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

The Americans also worried about Soviet suspicions. Like the British, they had exhibited contempt for the Soviet regime dating back to the Russian Revolution, and had expressed outrage at the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact. Moscow harbored resentment towards Washington as well. But following the attack on Pearl Harbor and German declaration of war on the United States, the two powers found themselves in alliance with one another. Wartime imperatives made cooperation essential and the Americans hoped this would persist into the postwar world. Suspicions had to be repressed. Thus on July 1, 1942, Cordell Hull and Dean Acheson met with the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Maxim Litvinov, and explained the purpose of Sir Frederick's visit and the process they envisioned for the future, but they provided no details of their proposals.⁹⁰⁰

Why did the United States fail to include the Russians in the Leith-Ross discussions? Stalin, to be sure, had never protested Moscow's exclusion from the Anglo-American war councils. As Adam Ulam tells us, he feared they might demand reciprocation, which would have given the "Anglo-Saxons" influence on Russian war strategy and access to information on Soviet force capabilities. These dynamics, however, had little bearing in the case of relief. Russia made the first proposal for an international relief organization. But the Americans, it seems, planned to shackle Britain before integrating the Russians into the negotiations, and they wished to avoid the Soviet tactics that frustrated Leith-Ross's efforts to set up the Inter-Allied Committee. Everyone also expected the Russians to delay the process. Stalin distrusted his diplomats and kept them

⁹⁰⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation," Hull and Litvinov, July 1, 1942; "Memorandum of Conversation," Acheson, Litvinov and Shih, July 1, 1942, both in File #2 Post War – ER and EP May PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

on a short-leash, which forced them to obtain instructions from Moscow on almost every point.⁹⁰¹

The Americans still felt obliged to keep the Russians at ease.⁹⁰² “We have been much impressed” with your proposals and “the thought” which has gone into them, Acheson told Litvinov on July 1, 1942. Hull assured him that the United States had “no definite plans.” Everything was “purely tentative.” Acheson further explained that the State Department had been “attempting to formulate proposals” along lines suggested by Russia, but “lacked the knowledge of the actual experience which had been gained from the work of the Committee in London.” Thus the State Department had invited Sir Frederick to Washington to ascertain and assess all of the relevant facts. Officials hoped “to test” their ideas on him. Once they grasped the situation, proposals would be formulated “for discussion with the British, Russian and Chinese Governments.” But any ideas reduced to paper, Hull promised, would be shared with Russia when available.⁹⁰³

While these efforts reassured Litvinov, London’s predicament persisted. On July 6, 1942, the Foreign Office informed Leith-Ross of a plan to hand Maisky a response two days hence unless advised otherwise.⁹⁰⁴ But Hull insisted that the British defer action until he had spoken with the President.⁹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, Maisky approached Eden again on

⁹⁰¹ See Ulam, *Expansion*, 314-338.

⁹⁰² On this point, see “Memorandum on Emergency Relief,” Acheson to Hull, July 6, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁹⁰³ “Memorandum of Conversation,” Hull and Litvinov, July 1, 1942; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Acheson, Litvinov and Shih, July 1, 1942, both in Acheson Papers, NARA; Telegram No. 3576, Relief No. 3, DC to FO, July 4, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO; Telegram 3151, The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) July 9, 1942, 840.50/457, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 115-116.

⁹⁰⁴ Telegram No. 4176, Relief No. 5, FO to DC, July 6, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁰⁵ Telegram No. 3625, Relief No. 7, DC to FO, July 7, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

July 7, 1942. The Foreign Secretary promised a response soon, and blamed the delays on Washington. “The informal talks now taking place between Sir Frederick Leith-Ross and American representatives in Washington were started on American initiative, and it would be the United States that would have to make the major contribution to relief.” He suggested Maisky speak with the American Ambassador in London, John Winant. But Maisky had already done so; he had received the barest of outlines.⁹⁰⁶

Dean Acheson Corners the Norwegians

In the meantime, Acheson cornered the Norwegians. For weeks, Sir Frederick had kept him informed of the independent purchases, and had made no attempt to conceal his contempt for Norway’s behavior. “I just heard that the Norwegians have placed an order for coffee in Brazil, again working through devious, and apparently unnecessary, intermediaries,” he wrote. “Needless to say, the information did not come to me from the Norwegians!”⁹⁰⁷ The tactic paid off. On June 22, 1942, Acheson ordered the Chief Cable Censor to suspend delivery of telegrams between banks in New York and various banks and firms in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay regarding credits totaling five million dollars on behalf of the Norwegian Shipping and Trade Mission for the purchase of supplies. This action forced a showdown. For ten consecutive days, he requested that

⁹⁰⁶ Eden to Kerr, July 7, 1942, U 86/12/73, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁰⁷ Leith-Ross to Steyne, June 3, 1942, Enclosure 3 to Dispatch No. 4070, 840.50/454.

the Norwegian Ambassador, Wilhelm Morgenstierne, and the Minister of Supply, Arne Sunde, provide detailed information on the purchases, but they ignored the requests.⁹⁰⁸

By the end of June, Norway's procurement program in the Western Hemisphere had come to a standstill: they had little choice but to face the Americans. On July 1, 1942, Acheson asked Morgenstierne to suspend his country's purchasing in the region until a joint solution for postwar relief had been devised. He demanded all information on future procurement and the purchase orders that were the subject of the stopped cable traffic "in order that appropriate arrangements may be made with the censorship authorities." Otherwise, he implied, the United States would block the transmission of their cables. Finally, he insisted that Norway make any postwar supplies already purchased available for the war effort if they were suddenly needed. The Ambassador agreed, provided that the suspension would be lifted after one month if a joint purchasing program had not been established. Acheson accepted this stipulation, and instructed the cable censor to transmit the cables held up at the end of June.⁹⁰⁹ In this way, the Assistant Secretary temporarily resolved the problem.

In April 1942, Leo Pasvolsky had suggested the State Department stop the purchases through its control of foreign funds in the hemisphere, but Adolf Berle

⁹⁰⁸ Telegram 3062, Washington to London, July 3, 1942, 840.50/389-1/2, Box 4796; Telegram No. 3516, Relief No. 2, DC to FO, July 1, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁰⁹ SOS [Hull] to Norwegian Ambassador [Morgenstierne], July 3, 1942, 811.731/935, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 114-115; Telegram No. 3575, Relief No. 4, DC to FO, July 4, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

objected, arguing that it “would be far better to secure the same result through consent.”⁹¹⁰ Acheson clearly thought otherwise.

The British expressed shock at the heavy-handed approach of the United States, but welcomed it. “Mr. Acheson’s way seems to be even shorter than that of Sir F. Leith-Ross! But, if anybody is to hit them on the head,” Gladwyn Jebb wrote his colleagues at the Foreign Office, “I think it is preferable that the Americans should do so rather than we.”⁹¹¹ At a meeting called to discuss the matter on July 8, 1942, representatives of the Foreign Office and the British-run Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau cautioned the Board of Trade, which wanted to block all Norwegian orders placed in Great Britain after March 17. It would be a grave mistake to “exasperate” the Dutch and Norwegians, they argued. England needed Norwegian shipping to win the war, and would require their cooperation on a host of other issues in the postwar period.⁹¹² Apparently Acheson did not feel this way, yet he also knew the dynamics of power were stacked in America’s favor.

The Foreign Office similarly rejected the argument that the Dutch and Norwegian purchases violated the St. James Palace Resolution of September 1941. This document stipulated that the Allied governments maintained primary responsibility for “for making provision for the economic needs of its own peoples,” they argued. The Dutch, in fact, had made their willingness to sign the resolution contingent on the “understanding that

⁹¹⁰ ER-4, Chronological Minutes, April 17, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁹¹¹ “Minute” by Gladwin Jebb, July 3, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹¹² For accounts of the arguments presented at the July 8, 1942 meeting, see “Minute” by Baring, July 8, 1942; Ward [Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau] to Jebb [Foreign Office], July 9, 1942; “Memorandum: Norwegian Purchases of Manufactured Goods in the U.K. for Post-War Requirements,” all in FO 371/31501, PRO; G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Fraser, July 9, 1942, T150/1404/4, PRO.

nothing therein” would “be deemed to preclude them from carrying out under their own responsibility the arrangements made by them for provisional relief of the Netherlands at the end of hostilities.” Eden had also agreed to this stipulation.⁹¹³ But the United States had been a mere observer at these events: thus their hands remained free. While Britain’s declining power left it at the mercy of rump governments, which it needed to show strength, America’s ascendancy permitted it far more freedom of action.

Great Britain Develops Its Response to Norway

Acheson’s initiative did not resolve the problem of purchases in the United Kingdom. Due to raw material shortages, a strained labor force, and limited manufacturing capacity, the Board of Trade and Ministry of Supply considered the orders undesirable.⁹¹⁴ Even if British industry were able to fulfill them, it would be wiser to limit production to war-related products and domestic consumption.⁹¹⁵ Orders placed after March 17 should be vetoed on supply grounds, and British manufacturers forbidden to enter into new contracts. But the Foreign Office and Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau thought this approach extreme. It implied “no further orders could be placed” and would only anger the Allies.⁹¹⁶ They proposed a case-by-case review of orders. If some

⁹¹³ For information on the FO view of independent purchasing and the St. James Palace Resolution, see “Minute” by Nigel Ronald, July 4, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹¹⁴ These arguments were made at the July 8, 1942 meeting; see relevant documents already cited.

⁹¹⁵ Lintott [BOT] to Ward [Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau], July 10, 1942; “Minute” by Lintott to Overton, July 1942, both FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹¹⁶ G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Fraser, July 9, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

were rejected, it could be done on supply and political grounds: it was not in the “general allied interest” to permit orders with the relief issue under discussion in Washington.⁹¹⁷

Only after two weeks of wrangling did a compromise emerge. The Foreign Office believed there would be “grave political objections to an outright cancellation of all outstanding contracts placed after March 17th,” but the Board refused to review orders on a case-by-case basis, and rejected other proposals that would have permitted limited purchases.⁹¹⁸ Ultimately they reached an agreement allowing orders already in production to be completed, but other orders would be stopped.⁹¹⁹ The Ministry of Supply and Office of the Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau concurred.⁹²⁰ The Treasury thought the proposal “very drastic, but agree[d] that it should be made.”⁹²¹ On August 6, 1942, Nigel Ronald of the Foreign Office presented the new policy to the Norwegians. “The main trouble,” he told them, “had been found to be the shortage, not so much of raw materials, as of labor and manufacturing capacity.”⁹²² A prepared memorandum also stated that it was not in the “general interest of the Allies that independent purchases should continue” while the relief organization was under discussion at Washington.⁹²³

⁹¹⁷ Ward to Jebb, July 9, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹¹⁸ Jebb to Lintott, July 15, 1942. On the issue of arguing on a case-by-case basis, see Lintott to Ward, July 10, 1942, both in FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹¹⁹ Lintott [BOT] to Jebb, July 17, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹²⁰ Agreement by these parties can be ascertained from: Rink to Jebb, July 21, 1942; Jebb to Ward, July 22, 1942, both in FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹²¹ Waley to Fraser and Lee, July 31, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

⁹²² Ronald to Ward, August 6, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

⁹²³ The memorandum went through multiple drafts. See “Draft Aide Memoire,” July 22, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO; Jebb to Lintott, July 28, 1942; “Draft Aide Memoire,” Draft by Dudley Ward to Jebb, Lintott, and Dunnett, July 1942, both in T160/1404/4, PRO. On August 8, 1942, Leith-Ross was informed of the memorandum given to the Norwegians: Telegram Relief No. 21, FO to DC, T160/1404/5, PRO.

The Norwegians accepted the policy, but wanted to know when Leith-Ross would return from Washington and tell the Allies what he had been doing there. After some “disingenuous fencing,” as Ronald described the conversation, he told them that the Americans “would be reluctant to come out in favor of any general plan for post-war relief until after the [November, 1942] elections.” It was essential not to embarrass the Americans. “Anything which could be twisted into implying that they proposed to saddle the American taxpayer with the whole burden of post-war relief could hardly improve the chances of our friends at an election.” The Norwegians concurred, but disliked the idea of a three-month delay. Thus Ronald encouraged them to consult with the Belgians and Dutch to see if it made sense of broach the matter with the American Government. The one-month moratorium on purchasing imposed upon Norway by the Americans had expired, and he redirected their dissatisfaction to Washington.⁹²⁴

Sir Frederick Leith-Ross Attempts to Decentralize the American Relief Proposal

When Sir Frederick arrived in the American capital, he quickly learned of the limits on what he could accomplish. “Responsible authorities,” Cordell Hull politely told him, “realized that the United States would necessarily have to bear a large part of the burden” for postwar relief. As a result, the relief organization would have to be constituted in a manner that suited American interests, and did “not to excite ill-disposed critics in Congress” inclined to “attack the Administration on the ground that it was

⁹²⁴ Ronald to Ward, August 6, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

promising to carry the whole world on the back of American taxpayers.”⁹²⁵ This fact, Acheson told Leith-Ross, meant that the “method of dealing with the relief problem and the timing of any announcement concerning it were of considerable importance and should be cleared with the President.”⁹²⁶ These circumstances left Leith-Ross in a weak position from the outset. Yet he in no way abrogated his responsibilities. He attempted to influence the structure of the relief organization and the general course of events in a manner commensurate with British interests and his own preferences.

On July 2, 1942, Sir Frederick presented the interdepartmental committee a proposal to devolve power in the relief organization to London and strategic outposts in the British Empire. As he saw it, the draft Acheson shared with him the previous day centralized too much power in “the Director General’s office and his operational organization.” This setup, he argued, would pose political and practical difficulties. To appease the Allied governments and maximize efficiency, he preferred that separate organizations be established in London, Cairo and New Delhi, which would manage relief operations in Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East respectively. Regional directors would oversee operations in each of these areas “within limits prescribed by the Director General and approved by the Executive Committee.” He proposed the creation of regional committees to advise the organizations and cooperate with local governments.

⁹²⁵ Telegram No. 3515, Relief No. 1, DC to FO, July 1, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO. See also Memorandum of Conversation, by SOS, June 30, 1942, 840.48/5621, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 113-114.

⁹²⁶ Telegram No. 3516, Relief No. 2, DC to FO, July 1, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

He also suggested that the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements serve this function in London.⁹²⁷

The Americans disliked Sir Frederick's proposal. For months, they had made it clear in internal discussions that they would permit no arrangement that legitimized the British Empire, or compromised America's control of the relief organization.⁹²⁸ As such, they rebutted the proposals on grounds that they would impair efficiency. Field offices would be essential, but they would have to "be under definite control of the central organization." "The Director General would have plenty of troubles with the Council and the Executive Committee," the Undersecretary of Agriculture, Paul Appleby argued, "and his subordinates in the field should be protected from similar difficulties as far as possible." Permitting regional committees direct access to the agency's operational arm would undermine its effectiveness. As Milo Perkins put it, "Committees could not administer." They debate, dispute and make decisions slowly. Harry Hawkins believed the Inter-Allied Committee might be maintained, but it should advise the Council, not the agency's operational divisions.⁹²⁹ Even with this concession, America's aims were evident: the United States intended to dominate the relief organization.

Leith-Ross couched his rebuttal in political terms, but failed to adequately address the practical concerns of the Americans. "The Allied Governments would not be satisfied

⁹²⁷ "Memorandum of Conversations," Interdepartmental Group and Leith-Ross, First Meeting, July 2, 1942, FO 371,31504, PRO. For the notes on Leith-Ross's approach to the discussions, see "General Comment" on the June 18, 1942 draft agreement; "Tentative Suggestions on Draft of United Nations Agreement on Relief," both in T188/255, PRO. On the exchange of information, see Acheson to Leith-Ross, July 1, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁹²⁸ See previous chapters.

⁹²⁹ "Memorandum of Conversations," First Meeting, July 2, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

with the existing London committee if it were merely an advisory body,” he told the interdepartmental committee. “The members of the London committee were most dissatisfied with its lack of progress and... they would not be pleased by a proposal for a United Nations organization unless it gave them a very real responsibility in the general direction of policy.” If the Americans failed to meet their desires, the Allies might refuse to cooperate. “Many of these governments had funds and could operate independently.” It made sense to provide a direct link between the committees and the regional directors, who might preside at their meetings and provide them with a Secretariat. He thought their voice would not extend to the details of operations, but his American interlocutors remained unconvinced: these proposals would open the way for obstructionism.⁹³⁰

The Americans justified their ideas with reference to their system of government. According to Milo Perkins, the “Council would lay down lines and limits of policy,” but the “Director General should be free to carry out those policies without hindrance. It would work like the Congress and Presidency. But it remained important that the Director General retain as much freedom as possible.”⁹³¹ Appleby agreed. He told Leith-Ross that the “Department of Agriculture would be helpless if it had to consult state legislatures at every turn.”⁹³² This view hardly implied that committees should not be erected, or that U.S. officials opposed decentralization altogether. It simply meant that the committees should relate to the Council in a manner akin to committees in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and that the Director General alone should control operations without interference. On these points, the Americans remained adamant. “The pattern set in this

⁹³⁰ Ibid.

⁹³¹ Ibid.

⁹³² “Memorandum of Conversations,” Interdepartmental Group and Leith-Ross, Third Meeting, July 7, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

organization would have far-reaching implications,” Perkins asserted. If successful, it will win “popular acceptance of some form of international government.”⁹³³

America’s Relative Power gives it the Upper Hand

The relative superiority of the United States in material and financial assets emboldened the Americans in their conversations with Leith-Ross. On July 3, 1942, the interdepartmental committee focused on resources. Leith-Ross had told the Americans that certain Allies had the financial means to operate alone, but Acheson wanted to know if they would help others. “I do not wish to give an over-optimistic impression,” Leith-Ross replied. “The attitude of the Governments in London was rather reasonable,” but he did not think it wise to “have them expend the greater part of their resources on relief when there would be pressing needs for reconstruction.” Although the Dutch and Norwegians had resources, the Belgians, French and others would need assistance and “were accordingly interested in the wider scheme.”⁹³⁴ Taken with the proposals he made the previous day, the situation was abundantly clear: these Allies would want influence incommensurate with what they could reasonably contribute to the organization.

Sir Frederick’s answers also made Britain’s decline apparent. When Acheson asked him if Britain intended to make a contribution in the form of goods or funds, Leith-Ross followed his instructions: “Great Britain was prepared to cooperate in a joint world effort, primarily in terms of goods.” Harry Dexter White, the Treasury’s Chief Advisor

⁹³³ “Memorandum of Conversations,” First Meeting, July 2, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

⁹³⁴ “Memorandum of Conversation,” Interdepartmental Group and Leith-Ross, Second Meeting, July 3, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

on Foreign Affairs, immediately deciphered the response: “Contributions in goods would only involve questions of foreign exchange when they reduced the country’s capacity to export or the demand for its goods or when they necessitated additional imports.”⁹³⁵ In effect, Britain’s weak balance of payments position restricted what the British government could contribute to physical goods. But if donating these goods had any bearing on the ability to export or import requirements, then a material contribution might also be harmful to Britain’s balance of payments situation.

With these facts on the table, Acheson struck. Would Britain participate as “a supplying or a processing nation?” he asked. Leith-Ross replied carefully. London would assist “to the fullest extent of its ability.” The country had already agreed to contribute to the wheat pool. It might have cotton, wool, and possibly cocoa; army stores, motor transport and uniforms might also be useful. But it could make no detailed commitment until its financial position became clear and the general postwar arrangements clarified. His mandate, the Americans knew, did not include the Article VII negotiations of the Lend-Lease agreement, and regardless, Leith-Ross explained, Britain would most certainly “need very extensive imports.”⁹³⁶ London, in effect, stood at the mercy of Washington. But to remove doubts of his country’s intentions, Leith-Ross shared with Acheson the statement Britain planned to make announcing postwar rationing.⁹³⁷

⁹³⁵ Ibid.

⁹³⁶ Ibid. On June 27, 1942, the British Embassy informed Dean Acheson that Sir Frederick Leith-Ross would not be entitled to discuss Article VII of the Lend-Lease Master Agreement, “Memorandum of Conversation,” Redvera Opie and Dean Acheson, June 27, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁹³⁷ Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 3, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA. Leith-Ross received the statement the

London Finalizes Sir Frederick's Instructions

When Leith-Ross left London, the War Cabinet had not debated his instructions. The matter aroused fierce competition between the Treasury, on the one hand, and the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade, on the other. The Treasury did not want Leith-Ross to pledge Britain's remaining assets, which Keynes and others believed could be used to revitalize the country's export industries, a necessity in view of the country's weakening balance of payments position. By contrast, the Foreign Office and Board of Trade hoped to utilize these assets to gain influence in the proposed organization. The matter obtained heightened importance due to America's plans to use the relief organization as a model for the future United Nations organization. Yet the Treasury considered this approach misguided. It made little sense to pledge Britain's remaining material assets at the outset of negotiations. Instead, they hoped concessions would only be made once it became clear that Britain would receive assistance in return.

As we have seen, Winston Churchill's chief advisor, Lord Cherwell, shared this point of view, yet his efforts to convince the Prime Minister to intervene before Leith-Ross departed failed. He wrote Churchill a series of scathing letters, attacking the instructions prepared for Leith-Ross from every possible angle. He criticized the use of the Prime Minister's speech of August 1940 promising relief to Europe after liberation. He lambasted efforts to commit Britain's remaining resources to an international authority. And he expressed complete opposition to the proposal that Britain should

previous day. See Telegram No. 4117, Relief No. 3, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

publicly announce plans to continue rationing after the war. These instructions did not serve the interest of the United Kingdom, he argued. Rather, they entailed the submission of Britain's internal affairs to an international organization that might turn the country's raw materials over to Germany. Yet Churchill's absence from the country, preoccupation with setbacks in the war effort, and general inattention to financial matters, decreased the urgency of Cherwell's concerns.

As a result, the Treasury suffered a defeat at the Cabinet meeting on June 29, 1942. The Prime Minister's statement of August 1940 remained in the instructions, and Leith-Ross received authorization to share with the Americans a draft statement of Britain's plan to maintain rationing after the war, which he did on July 3, 1942. The Treasury managed to secure agreement in the Cabinet that no specific commitments would be made with regard to raw materials without further ministerial approval. Yet they failed to win support for language in the instructions that would have prevented Leith-Ross from making general promises, and they were unable to exclude stocks Britain held abroad from the pool of supplies that might constitute a part of Britain's contribution. With no support from the Prime Minister, they agreed to sign off on the instructions once the Cabinet agreed to draw a distinction between the financial and material aspects of the question. Leith-Ross received his revised instructions on July 3, 1942; the same day he shared the rationing statement with the Americans.⁹³⁸

However on July 5, 1942, the Prime Minister's personal secretary, Sir Thomas Rowan, finally captured Churchill's attention. He reminded him of Lord Cherwell's most

⁹³⁸ Telegram No. 4130, Relief No. 4, FO to DC, July 3, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO; see also Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO To DC, July 2, 1942; Telegram No. 4117, Relief No. 3, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, both in T160/1404/4, PRO; Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 3, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

recent note, and explained that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's position accorded fully with Cherwell's views, but that his arguments had been rejected at a meeting of the Cabinet on June 29, 1942. "If Sir Frederick Leith-Ross' instructions are to be further revised," Rowan wrote, "action must be taken as soon as possible."⁹³⁹ Upon reading this letter, Churchill wrote the following note to the Cabinet:

"We ought not to be precipitate in agreeing to melt down English means to living and standard of life to the average level of all the countries that have been unable to defend their soil and independence. Such an act of supreme self-sacrifice might be done consciously by the will of the people after the war, but we ought not to tie ourselves down now to such obligations. We have no authority from Parliament to inflict such privations on the masses of the British people on the morrow of a victory in which their tenacity will have saved the world."⁹⁴⁰

The Prime Minister insisted that the issue of Sir Frederick's instructions come before the Cabinet again, and he requested that Rowan prepare him a brief on postwar relief.⁹⁴¹ Even after learning that Leith-Ross had already shared the rationing statement in Washington, he remained adamant that relief remain on the Cabinet's agenda.⁹⁴²

How the Prime Minister's note of June 5, 1942 would impact the instructions sent to Leith-Ross remained unclear. Treasury officials assumed the note referred to the rationing statement, but Richard Hopkins believed it applied to other components of the instructions as well, particularly the promise to commit stocks and stores not needed for

⁹³⁹ "Discussions in Washington on Post-War Relief," by T.L.R. [Rowan], July 5, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

⁹⁴⁰ "Discussions in Washington on Post-War Relief," War Cabinet, Note by PM, July 5, 1942, W.P. (42) 282, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

⁹⁴¹ "Note to PM," by T.L.R. [Rowan], July 5, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

⁹⁴² E.E.B [Edward Ettingdene Bridges] to Churchill, July 7, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

Britain's immediate requirements. The language used in the instructions, Hopkins argued, actually provided Britain a "get-away" from a burdensome contribution. According to the instructions, Britain could demand "payment or replacement as circumstances permit." However, he believed that resorting to this language to justify these courses of action would be criticized as "tricky." Hopkins thought Churchill's note might provide an avenue to dump the circuitous language in favor of something more blunt but less likely to create resentment.⁹⁴³

The discussion took place on July 9, 1942. Churchill told the War Cabinet that both the Parliament and nation should know before the British Government made "such a far reaching commitment." Eden immediately countered this interpretation: "We only say that there should be a system of rationing after the war." But an incredulous Kingsley Wood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, suggested that Eden also wanted to commit British stocks to the relief organization. The Foreign Minister disputed this claim, but then reminded the Prime Minister that he had already committed Britain to contribute stocks with his statement of August 1940. Thereupon the Minister of Production, Oliver Lyttelton, reframed the issue in Churchill's defense. Would Britain obtain more assistance by providing its stocks to the relief organization than if it were to sell them in hopes of improving its exchange position? Absent an answer it seemed foolish to make

⁹⁴³ On the Treasury view, see P.D.P. [Proctor] to Chancellor of the Exchequer, "Post-War Relief," July 6, 1942; for Hopkins view, see Hopkins to Fraser and Proctor, July 6, 1942, both in T160/1404/4, PRO. The full sentence from which I have taken the "get-away" quote is: "On the whole, we are just satisfied, and no more than satisfied, with the formula agreed for the instructions to Sir Frederick Leith-Ross on this subject. It is not so much that the formula 'by way of donation or for payment or replacement as circumstances permit' is insufficient as a get-away, but rather that, if used as a get-away it is apt to be criticized hereafter as tricky."

commitments. Eden, however, thought Britain would not be able to meet its food demands by selling its goods. Shortages would be too dire.⁹⁴⁴

Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labor and National Service, initiated the move against Churchill, arguing that the promise of postwar rationing did not imply a specific level. Churchill replied: “We can’t tie our people up in this suffering bureaucratic machinery.” Then Lord Halifax intervened: “Would our people hesitate to accept rationing... if there are starving people in the countries” in the countries we have fought to liberate? The Secretary for Dominion Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee accused Churchill of wanting an “unregulated scramble” after the war. “We will maintain a system of rationing to control the position,” he insisted. But Churchill was unmoved. Ironically as we will soon see, he contended “Canada could supply us if we needed it.” Bevin mocked this idea as having failed after the last war when two to three million people were unemployed. But Churchill remained defiant: “At the end of this war I will submit to no inequality with the United States.”⁹⁴⁵

Hugh Dalton, President of the Board of Trade, implied that Churchill’s note had nothing to do with the United States, but was an effort to keep British standards of living above countries that had been unable to defend their territory. The Lord Privy Seal, Stafford Cripps, turned this objective against Churchill. If Great Britain failed to pledge postwar rationing, it had very little else to contribute, and might, in the eyes of Washington, appear little different than the “other ‘distressed’ countries.” Lyttelton, who sided with Churchill on the issue of pledging stocks, now attacked the Prime Minister for

⁹⁴⁴ See W.M. (42) 89th Meeting, July 9, 1942, in Sir Norman Brook Notebook: War Cabinet Minutes, WM (42) 156th meeting – WM (43) 99th meeting, CAB 195/1, PRO.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid.

his refusal to promise rationing. Stocks of clothing in Europe, he argued, were so low that if Britain failed to maintain rationing for at least two years, prices would skyrocket, preventing the poor from even buying a shirt. Bevin readily concurred, and Halifax suggested the American people would contribute through higher taxation even if they failed to maintain rationing. They will provide “most of the food,” he argued. But Churchill was unmovable: “If we contribute, let our people do so as a generous gift.”⁹⁴⁶

Eden, inadvertently perhaps, opened the way for a temporary solution. “The whole thing is governed as part of a common plan,” he asserted. “We are not committed unless we like” the final program. Cripps reminded him that they were obliged due to the Prime Minister’s statement of 1940, and that Wood now believed they should do nothing. Churchill, upon hearing this claim, immediately disavowed his earlier statement. Britain’s “position has deteriorated now,” he grumbled. Cripps cleverly sought to exploit even this statement: in order for the country to backtrack on the 1940 pledge, it was best to “make some contribution now,” he argued. Clearly eager to settle the debate, Wood insisted that they “avoid [a] public declaration at this stage, until we have seen the common plan.” Bevin reluctantly agreed, whereupon Wood suggested that Leith-Ross enter into no commitment, permit no publication of a rationing statement, and make it clear that London would make up its mind once it had seen the entire plan.⁹⁴⁷

Churchill jumped on the suggestion. Britain should not commit to the maintenance of rationing unless the Washington agreed to an equal level. He ordered Wood to prepare a new telegram to Leith-Ross outlining the points articulated.⁹⁴⁸ Eden

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid.

said nothing, but then disputed the meeting's prepared conclusions and the revised instructions for Leith-Ross.⁹⁴⁹ In his view, the instructions did not accurately convey the decisions reached by the Cabinet. The Foreign Office prepared another draft telegram, which Wood rejected as unacceptable. While Eden's draft indicated that Britain would make the rationing statement provided a satisfactory relief scheme emerged from the discussions in Washington, Wood's draft deferred the decision for later.⁹⁵⁰ The Foreign Office, however, had no allies in its interpretation, which Dalton and the Paymaster General rejected. Thus when Wood wrote Churchill about the matter on July 11, 1942, Eden quickly agreed to a version in line with the Treasury's view.⁹⁵¹ Most likely, he sought to limit the damage of Churchill's intervention. The rationing statement had already been shared in Washington.

Sir Frederick Leith-Ross Fails to Decentralize the Agency

It had absolutely no impact. The Americans not only rebuffed Sir Frederick's plans to decentralize the agency, they did everything possible to strengthen the Director

⁹⁴⁹ Ronald to Proctor, July 10, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO; Wood to Churchill, July 11, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO. The comparison of notes from Sir Norman Book's Notebook and the official conclusions make it clear that Eden's assessment was wrong. See W.M. (42) 89th Meeting, July 9, 1942, in Sir Norman Brook Notebook: War Cabinet Minutes, CAB 195/1, PRO; "Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet," July 9, 1942, W.M. (42), 90th Conclusions, CAB 65/27/6, PRO.

⁹⁵⁰ For Eden's view, see FO Draft Telegram, July 1942; for Wood's view, see "Draft Telegram for Sir Frederick Leith-Ross," attached to letter P.D.P. [Proctor] to Preston, July 9, 1942; for Treasury commentary on the two drafts, see Wood to Eden, July 11, 1942; S.D.W. [Waley] to Wood, July 14, 1942, all in T160/1404/4, PRO; Wood to Churchill, July 11, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

⁹⁵¹ Wood to Churchill, July 11, 1942; T.L.R. [Rowan] to Churchill, July 13, 1942; Wood to Churchill, July 14, 1942, all in PRO, PREM 4/28/11; Proctor to Harvey, July 14, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

General's powers. The draft of June 19, 1942 defined the Director General's relationships with the Council and Executive Committee ambiguously, but revisions following Sir Frederick's proposals gave the Director General "full powers and responsibility for carrying out relief and rehabilitation operations." He only had to operate "within the limits of available resources and broad policies determined by the Council and [Executive] Committee."⁹⁵² The earlier draft forced the Director General to consult the Committee when choosing his staff, but the Americans deleted the provision.⁹⁵³ As Milo Perkins argued, "Administration requires a man with clear-cut authority, money, and the right to hire and fire."⁹⁵⁴ The Americans similarly placed the Director in charge of the agency's relationship with military authorities and voluntary societies. Leith-Ross accepted the latter revision, but failed to secure a modification providing the regional committees operational influence.⁹⁵⁵

The draft that emerged after Sir Frederick's discussions gave the committees far less influence than they had in the version of June 19, 1942. The earlier version provided that standing committees, which included both regional and technical committees, would "advise and participate in the making of plans and the formulation of policy." These committees would "report to the Director General, the Executive Committee or the

⁹⁵² See Article 4 of the July 10, 1942 draft agreement, as reported in Telegram No. 3703, Relief No. 12, DC to FO, July 14, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO. The quote here uses "Policy Committee," but as I have not yet explained the name-change, I have used "Executive."

⁹⁵³ For earlier draft, see "Draft of United Nations Agreement on Relief as Revised by the Subcommittee on Economic Reconstruction at the Meeting of June 19, 1942," T188/255, PRO.

⁹⁵⁴ "Memorandum of Conversations," First Meeting, July 2, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

⁹⁵⁵ On Leith-Ross's view of the DG's relationship to military authorities and voluntary societies, see "Memorandum of Conversations," Third Meeting, July 7, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

Council.”⁹⁵⁶ But Leith-Ross inadvertently reduced their influence by shining light on the arrangements. His persistence aroused American fears and forced them into a position of obstinacy. Consequently, the July 10, 1942 draft stipulated that the regional and technical committees would only have powers to advise the Council. Leith-Ross nonetheless managed to secure agreement that the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements would constitute the European Committee, but in obtaining legitimacy for the London group, he all but guaranteed that it would have little real power.⁹⁵⁷ The Americans, who remained determined to dominate the organization, would have it no other way.

No matter how hard Leith-Ross tried, the Americans shot down his proposals. He suggested that functional committees be duplicated at the regional level.⁹⁵⁸ He proposed that the United States and Canada be placed on the committees in return for more power at the regional level.⁹⁵⁹ He asked that the location of regional organizations be specified in the agreement.⁹⁶⁰ He tried to break down the specific functions of the organization, proposing that certain powers be given to the regions while others remain in Washington. And he recommended that the regional committees be given the power to make “sub-allocations within allocations made by the Council.”⁹⁶¹ All were rejected. Acheson reacted to Leith-Ross with bewilderment: “I had not considered that the regional

⁹⁵⁶ Article 5 of “Draft of United Nations Agreement on Relief as Revised by the Subcommittee on Economic Reconstruction at the Meeting of June 19, 1942,” T188/255, PRO.

⁹⁵⁷ See July 10, 1942 draft agreement reported in Telegram No. 3703, Relief No. 12, DC to FO, July 14, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁵⁸ “Memorandum of Conversations,” First Meeting, July 2, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁰ “Memorandum of Conversations,” Third Meeting, July 7, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

⁹⁶¹ “Memorandum of Conversations,” First Meeting, July 2, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

committees would have any administrative functions.” Sir Frederick was undoubtedly disappointed, but he knew why. “The main question was whether Congress would agree to finance an international organization and this would depend on the form of presentation and the degree of control which the United States would have in the management.”⁹⁶²

In his telegrams, Sir Frederick emphasized America’s readiness to recognize regional committees and the existing Inter-Allied Committee; but he conveniently neglected to report the presence of such committees in the draft presented to him upon his arrival. At Cordell Hull’s request, he never shared the June 19, 1942 version with London.⁹⁶³ It was, he told the Foreign Office, nothing more than an agenda. The relationship between the regional committees and the operational organization “will cause some difficulty,” he wrote,⁹⁶⁴ but he left the Foreign Office to believe the situation remained fluid, when the Americans had given him every impression that they would never accept strengthened regional committees.⁹⁶⁴ Apart from cosmetic and legalistic changes, they had summarily rejected most of his proposals and questioned his motivations. Does not your position at least “derive in part from” the mere “existence of the London committee?” Paul Appleby audaciously asked him. Of course not, Leith-Ross replied.⁹⁶⁵

⁹⁶² Telegram No. 3578, Relief No. 6, DC to FO, July 4, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁶³ The draft only appears in his personal Treasury files, but the specific requests not to share the June 19, 1942 version can be found in Telegram 3151, July 9, 1942, 840.50/457, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 115-116.

⁹⁶⁴ See Telegram No. 3578, Relief No. 6, DC to FO, July 4, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁶⁵ “Memorandum of Conversations,” First Meeting, July 2, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

The Executive Committee and Sir Frederick's Successes

Sir Frederick's efforts succeeded elsewhere, though not in ways that accorded with his preferences. On July 2, 1942, he received instructions from London insisting that the Executive Committee be limited to China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. Leith-Ross disliked the position, but the Foreign Office considered it essential to avoid "the experience at Geneva." If "there is to be any hope of attaining the necessary degree of unanimity and of discharging business expeditiously," then the committee must be limited to four. The British also believed the organization would establish a precedent. "Any defects allowed to appear in the first will inevitably be reproduced in the others."⁹⁶⁶ When explaining the position on July 3, 1942, Leith-Ross suggested countries excluded from the Executive Committee might receive invitations to participate in its meetings when questions affecting their interests arose. Full representation on regional committees with powers to discuss plans might also win their acceptance of the four-power scheme.⁹⁶⁷

The Americans reacted ambivalently. Initially they agreed with the four-power setup, but the June 19, 1942 draft provided for seven members, four permanent representatives from China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States, and three additional members to be chosen annually by the Council.⁹⁶⁸ The record does not explain why the Americans shifted their views just before Leith-Ross arrived, but the

⁹⁶⁶ Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO To DC, July 2, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

⁹⁶⁷ "Memorandum of Conversation," Second Meeting, July 3, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

⁹⁶⁸ Article 3, Paragraph 3, "Draft of United Nations Agreement on Relief and Revised by the Subcommittee on Economic Reconstruction at the Meeting of June 19, 1942," T188/255, PRO.

interdepartmental meetings suggest the Treasury and the Board of Economic Warfare bear responsibility. Harry Dexter White told the group that it “might be worth sacrificing some efficiency to obtain wider support.” If the smaller powers were excluded from the committee, it might lead them to disrespect the organization. Perkins agreed, but was inclined to support a different formula. He thought it would be easier to exclude smaller powers if membership were based on specified criteria, such as the quantity of relief a nation could contribute. White agreed. He and Perkins thought it would be more acceptable in domestic political circles and make it easier to secure an appropriation for relief from the Congress.⁹⁶⁹

Until Leith-Ross intervened, differences of opinion left the group divided. Several officials disliked the idea of basing membership on a nation’s potential contribution, as it would deny China and the Soviet Union a seat on the committee. “If the organization were to be democratic in the widest sense,” Appleby argued, then “China should be included on racial grounds.” If the United States hoped to secure Soviet cooperation in the postwar era, then Moscow should receive a seat as well. Thus a number of members agreed with the Foreign Office: the group should consist of only the four great powers. Yet other members of the group, particularly White and Perkins, thought it would be equally counterproductive to deny smaller nations membership if the objective was to obtain wide legitimacy for the organization. These differences of opinion forced the group to defer decision on the matter.⁹⁷⁰ But on July 9, 1942, Leith-Ross received further

⁹⁶⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” Second Meeting, July 3, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid.

instructions urging him to secure the four-power setup while officials remained divided.⁹⁷¹

He succeeded, but still disliked the arrangements. The Americans favoring the four-power setup exploited the British position and won the point. They also accepted Sir Frederick's recommendation that the committee be renamed the Policy Committee.⁹⁷² Acheson and others believed the title misleading: executive powers would reside with the Director General. Yet the new title highlighted the irrelevance of the Council, which, according to the draft, would be the organization's "policy-making body," but would meet only once a year. When it was not in session, the four powers would make policy. Leith-Ross therefore proposed that the Council meet at least four times a year. But the Americans would only accept biannual meetings.⁹⁷³ To ensure favorable outcomes at Council sessions, Acheson suggested that Director General appoint and provide a staff

⁹⁷¹ On July 4, 1942, Leith-Ross informed London of divisions in the American government over whether the Executive Committee should include four or more members. See Telegram No. 3578, Relief No. 6, DC to FO, July 4, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO. On July 9, 1942, the Foreign Office instructed Leith-Ross to exploit divisions in the interdepartmental committee to win approval for the four-power arrangements. See Telegram No. 4241, Relief No. 6, FO to DC, July 9, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁷² The interdepartmental committee minutes are incomplete and do not place Leith-Ross on record proposing this name change, but it appears in his list of recommendations in his personal files and in the July 10, 1942 draft. See "Tentative Suggestions on Draft of United Nations Agreement on Relief," T188/255, PRO.

⁹⁷³ Leith-Ross proposed that the meetings should take place four times a year at the end of the third interdepartmental meeting. He did not explicitly link this proposal to his proposal to change the name of the Executive Committee, but it is evident that he was doing everything possible to ensure Allied acceptance of the draft agreement; see "Memorandum of Conversations," Third Meeting, July 7, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO. The record provides no account of the decision to call meetings twice a year, but these arrangements appear in the draft of July 10, 1942 and we know of America's intent from the preparatory meetings covered in previous chapters. See Article 3, Paragraph 2 of the July 10, 1942 draft agreement included in Telegram No. 3703, Relief No. 12, DC to FO, July 14, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

for the Executive Secretary of the Council.⁹⁷⁴ Leith-Ross worried that this setup would elicit outrage among the Allies.

The exiled governments in London remained at the forefront of his concerns. They had not been permitted to partake in his round-table talks in Washington; there were no plans to invite any of them to participate in future four-power discussions; and the Dutch and the Norwegians, who well knew what was occurring, had made their contempt for this approach apparent.⁹⁷⁵ Now these Allies had been excluded from possible membership on the Policy Committee, and the Americans had sabotaged all hope that the Allies would have any power over relief operations via the regional committees. It looked as though Washington also had plans to dominate the Council through ulterior means.

Harold Caustin, Secretary of the Inter-Allied Committee, believed these arrangements would not survive. While assisting Leith-Ross, he witnessed the discussions first hand. In a letter to Dudley Ward at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, he reported the successful developments, but predicted fierce opposition from the Allies, especially the Europeans. The population of the Europe numbered over four hundred million people, he wrote, and it seemed unlikely that they could be excluded from the Policy Committee indefinitely. He thought the Americans would reverse course again.

⁹⁷⁴ Acheson made this suggestion at the third meeting of the interdepartmental committee, but did not explain his proposal. This can only be inferred from the committee discussions that took place before Sir Frederick's arrival. See previous chapters, but for Acheson's proposal, see "Memorandum of Conversations," Third Meeting, July 7, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

⁹⁷⁵ Acheson reported to the interdepartmental committee on July 10 that the Netherlands were expressing their desire to join the discussions as soon as possible: "Memorandum of Conversation," Interdepartmental Group and Leith-Ross, Fourth Meeting, July 10, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO. The Norwegians had made their anger over exclusion in the letters Lie and Holter exchanged with Leith-Ross. See footnotes for first part of this chapter.

Those who only reluctantly accepted the four-power setup thought it would have to be changed after the war.⁹⁷⁶

The United States Decides to Delay the Process

But it would take time. Due to setbacks in the war, the American officials thought it inopportune to call a United Nations conference to discuss postwar relief. The Red Army remained in retreat on the Eastern Front; in North Africa, Egypt stood exposed due to Erwin Rommel's successes in Libya; and in the Far East, the Japanese had not only captured Bataan and Burma, they seemed poised to assault Australia. With Congressional elections scheduled for November, it seemed ill advised to make an announcement on postwar relief lest they risk their plans by making them the subject of campaign attacks. Cordell Hull and Henry Wallace agreed that the President would have to make the final decision, but both men preferred postponement.⁹⁷⁷ The success of America's postwar relief plans would depend on Congressional support, and it seemed foolish to run such risks at this stage in the war, even if it stood to anger the Allies and protract the problems of independent purchases.

This reasoning worried Sir Frederick. He feared the Americans might "pigeon hole the draft and defer any meeting of the United Nations." But the Americans thought the four great powers might secretly set up a political council with a planning committee

⁹⁷⁶ Caustin to Ward, July 14, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

⁹⁷⁷ On the collaboration between Hull and Wallace, see Hull to Wallace, July 3, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA; Henry Wallace diary, July 9, 1942, in *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946*, ed. John Morton Blum (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973), 95-96.

to examine the subject. Alternatively the four powers might set up an interim organization to provide for relief. Leith-Ross rejected this proposal. As he wrote the Foreign Office, it reflected “the tendency here to attach exaggerated importance to fluctuations of local sentiment and to neglect the importance of keeping the Allies in good heart.” If a United Nations conference could not be convened in the near future, he believed the draft should be shared with the allies so they could consider it and provide their views. It would reassure them and keep “centrifugal tendencies” under control. The possibility of leakages, however, led him to promote a meeting of the United Nations despite the war situation.⁹⁷⁸

Sir Frederick’s colleagues back in London recognized the “political dynamite” in the “American Relief Plan.” It would be “dangerous” to underestimate this fact, one Foreign Office official wrote. It was “the League of Nations new style.”⁹⁷⁹ “A campaign in Congress against the Relief Administration – the first international organization in which the United States has been asked to participate – might have deplorable results.”⁹⁸⁰ Congress had already begun complaining that “the lend-lease agreements are a surreptitious and unconstitutional way of getting the United States entangled abroad.”⁹⁸¹ “Americans must be the best judge of feeling in their own country and Congress.”⁹⁸² In any case, it would take time for the American departments to reach agreement on the draft, and several more weeks for the Chinese and Russians to consider it. London would

⁹⁷⁸ Telegram No. 3693, Relief No. 9, DC to FO, July 13, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁷⁹ “Minute,” by Butler, July 15, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁸⁰ “The Machinery of Relief,” FO Document, No Date, T160/1404/5, PRO.

⁹⁸¹ “Minute,” by Butler, July 15, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁸² “The Machinery of Relief,” FO Document, No Date, T160/1404/5, PRO.

also have to ascertain the views of the Dominions. By the time this had taken place, the elections might have already passed.⁹⁸³

Yet everyone understood the importance of massaging the allies and being prepared. The Treasury, however, thought it might serve Britain's interest if the agency were *not* prepared to follow the Allied armies across Europe. In this case, the military would provide relief and presumably they could utilize the existing lend-lease machinery.⁹⁸⁴ But Treasury officials still agreed that the Allies needed to be informed. As an alternative to Sir Frederick's proposal, Waley thought the Allies might be issued a short statement of progress if the threat of leakages made it impossible to share the draft immediately.⁹⁸⁵ Officials at the Foreign Office considered it weak not to voice Britain's preferences, and thought Waley's suggestion inconsiderate of the Allies.⁹⁸⁶ Thus Leith-Ross received instructions to present his proposal to the Americans, but was told not to press them if they felt it wise to defer the conference or delay communicating the draft to the allies.⁹⁸⁷

Well-established patterns made American acquiescence to this procedure unlikely. On July 11, 1942, Acheson sent the draft agreement in its most recent form to Hull.⁹⁸⁸ Three days later, with the Secretary's consent, he transmitted it to the Russians and Chinese.⁹⁸⁹ These maneuvers, as we will see, had internal bureaucratic implications,

⁹⁸³ "Post-War Relief," July 17, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁵ "The Machinery of Relief," FO Document, No Date, T160/1404/5, PRO.

⁹⁸⁶ "Minute," by C.F.A.W., July 16, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁸⁷ Telegram No. 4378, Relief No. 11, FO to DC, July 17, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

⁹⁸⁸ "Memorandum by the Assistant SOS (Acheson) to the SOS, July 11, 1942, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 118-120.

⁹⁸⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, [with Russian Ambassador] by Assistant SOS (Acheson), July 14, 1942, 840.50/572, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 117-118; "Memorandum of

but vis-à-vis Leith-Ross they revealed Acheson's preference for the four-power approach. The transmission also upstaged the British, who were given no opportunity to consider the proposal in advance. Yet they had faithfully refrained from replying to the Soviet note of January 1942 at the request of the United States. The British had also permitted the Americans to review and revise the contents of their reply to the Russian memorandum. But the State Department delayed.⁹⁹⁰ Not until the Americans had shared the draft with the Chinese and Russians, did the British finally convey a formal reply to Maisky. It said little that the State Department had not already revealed.⁹⁹¹

Anglo-American Tensions and the Retraction of the Rationing Statement

The War Cabinet received a copy of the agreement the very day it instructed Leith-Ross to retract Britain's postwar rationing pledge.⁹⁹² On July 16, 1942, Sir Frederick informed Acheson: "It is felt that public opinion in the United Kingdom can be got to accept such a declaration only as part of a common plan for international organization of post-war relief." He told the Assistant Secretary that the British Government would not be able to "reach a final decision on the point until such a plan

Conversation," [with Chinese Ambassador] by Assistant SOS (Acheson), July 14, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁹⁹⁰ "Minute," by Ronald, July 10, 1942; Winant to Eden, July 10, 1942; Eden to Winant, July 17, 1942, all in FO 371/31501, PRO; Telegram No. 4281, Special Relief, FO to DC, July 12, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

⁹⁹¹ Eden to Maisky, July 17, 1942; "Organization of Post-War Relief," July 17, 1942, both in FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁹² Telegraph No. 3700, Relief No. 10, DC to FO, July 14, 1942; Telegraph 3702, Relief No. 11, DC to FO, July 14, 1942; Telegraph 3703, Relief No. 12, DC to FO, July 14, 1942, all in FO 371/31501, PRO; Telegram No. 4322, Relief No. 10, FO to DC, July 15, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO.

has taken definite form.”⁹⁹³ By linking the rationing statement to the creation of a relief organization, he left Acheson with the impression that the British were unhappy with the progress of his negotiations in Washington. Yet officials in London were unaware of the events that had taken place. While Leith-Ross had informed the Foreign Office of the general direction of his discussions, he had not revealed the extent to which the Americans had blocked his proposals.

These circumstances embarrassed Britain. Roosevelt had already been informed of the pledge to continue rationing. Although he refused to commit his country to postwar rationing, he agreed to issue a statement praising the British for their selfless behavior. Acheson conveyed this decision to Leith-Ross on July 17, 1942, and he refused to accept the retraction. “I would suggest that your Government advise us when it thinks the time ripe for such a declaration and we will then immediately ascertain the President’s views as to its timeliness.” Acheson’s letter may read as an optimistic prediction for the future: namely, that the British and Americans would reach agreement on postwar relief. Yet it may suggest the United States expected Britain to make the rationing statement if it hoped to receive American assistance or maintain influence.⁹⁹⁴ The ambivalence troubled Sir Frederick and he requested guidance from his government.⁹⁹⁵

⁹⁹³ Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 16, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

⁹⁹⁴ Acheson to Leith-Ross, July 1, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

⁹⁹⁵ See Telegram Relief No. 17, 18, 19, all DC to FO, all July 18, 1942, all in T160/1404/4, PRO.

London's Reaction to the Draft Agreement of July 10, 1942

British officials had long worried that the United States would use aid as leverage to crack the preferential trading system of their empire. The Americans had forced them to sign a Master Lend-Lease Agreement, Article VII of which pledged Britain to negotiate for an open postwar trading regime. In early 1942, Britain had pressed the Americans to begin these discussions, but bureaucratic infighting in Washington meant that little had been done.⁹⁹⁶ Now London suspected the Americans also planned to use relief as a tool to force Europe to accept their economic plans. While British officials hoped to keep the two matters separate, they tried to use the relief portfolio to provoke the Americans into starting the economic discussions. But pessimism reigned. Nigel Ronald of the Foreign Office argued that Britain should prepare for failure. Anglo-American cooperation in the postwar period was not guaranteed, and he even contemplated “secret discussions with the Dominions and European Allies” to erect a “non-American system” after the war.⁹⁹⁷

⁹⁹⁶ Regrettably I have had to infer much of this information from allusions to the Article VII negotiations in the documents on postwar relief and published documents on the American side. See documents from spring and summer 1942 in “Discussions Regarding Postwar Economic and Financial Arrangements,” *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 163-242. See also “Post-War Relief,” S.D.W. [Waley], July 6, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO; Law to Crookshank, “Draft Note,” FO 371/31501, PRO; “Post-War Relief,” S.D.W. [Waley], August 4, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; British Supply Council to Leith-Ross & Campbell, August 12, 1942, T 188/255, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 35, DC to FO, August 13, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

⁹⁹⁷ I have been unable to find the original letter of June 30, 1942 Nigel Ronald wrote to R. Fraser at the BOT in which he proposed the creation of a non-American system, but have been able to deduce what it said using letters reacting to his proposal. See Fraser to Ronald, July 4, 1942; Keynes to Ronald, July 8, 1942, both in FO 371/31501, PRO.

The Treasury lambasted this idea. Britain “should show no signs of any doubt that there will be full co-operation with the U.S.A.,” wrote Lionel Fraser, the Treasury’s liaison with the exiled allies. “We think it would be unwise and [possibly] disastrous to have secret discussions with the Dominions and European Allies on what you call a ‘non-American system.’”⁹⁹⁸ Such “conversations would... inevitably get round to the Americans, [and] they could only appear, even in the eyes of the Dominions and the Allies, as an attempt to build ourselves up at the expense of the Americans.”⁹⁹⁹ Keynes was prepared to let his “mind play on the nature of the solution if America returns to isolationism,” but thought Britain should wait until it knew “more what the American principles are.” If Washington turned to heavy-handed tactics, it would be best “to try to persuade the Americans not to interpret their principles too dogmatically” and “not to try to put across anything by coercion which could not be obtained by peaceful persuasion.” As he put it, “There is a difference between sweetening the peaceful persuasion with benefits and coercion by a threat to withdraw all favors to come.”¹⁰⁰⁰

Keynes believed the agreement of July 10, 1942 far more coercive than convincing. Two days after receiving the draft, he distributed a bold critique of it to his colleagues. Article VI of the agreement, he noted, pledged each member government to contribute “its fullest possible support within the limits of its available resources and subject to requirements of its constitutional procedure.” Because the Americans would provide most of the agency’s resources, the U.S. Congress would determine whether the agency could operate or not. Keynes argued that the draft failed to settle major areas of

⁹⁹⁸ Fraser to Ronald, July 4, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

⁹⁹⁹ Keynes to Ronald, July 8, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Keynes to Playfair, Waley, Hopkins and Henderson, July 3, 1942, T 247/90, PRO.

policy, such as the Director General's relations with the allied militaries, supply and shipping authorities, and governments in areas where the agency would operate. If these matters devolved to the Policy Committee "without further instructions and narrower terms of reference," it seemed unrealistic to assume that the agency would "be allowed to rule Europe" while the American Congress held the power to "withhold all manner of foodstuffs and supplies."¹⁰⁰¹ The result must be American domination or stalemate.

Keynes' colleagues at the Treasury shared his view that the agreement was "an empty show."¹⁰⁰² For practical matters, the Council would "hardly count."¹⁰⁰³ It was little more than a "debating society."¹⁰⁰⁴ If it only met twice a year, it would not be in a position to settle issues of policy. Which countries would receive relief? How would supplies be allocated? Would they to be made as gifts or supplied on credit? These and other issues would fall to the Policy Committee.¹⁰⁰⁵ But if the four powers disagreed, then the Director General "would be the real motive power." With deputies in various parts of the world, he "would control not merely the getting together and transport of supplies and the means of paying for them but also their actual distribution among and in the distressed countries." For practical purposes, "he would be ruling Europe." His powers,

¹⁰⁰¹ "Draft Agreement for Post-War Relief," by Keynes, July 16, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰⁰³ "Telegrams Relief 11 and 12," by R.V.N.H. [Hopkins], July 16, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰⁰⁴ S.D.W. [Waley] to Keynes and Hopkins, July 20, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰⁰⁵ These views are expressed in a Treasury paper entitled "Post-War Relief," July 17, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO. The author of this document remains unclear, but it appears to be a document prepared by multiple officials for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Many of the arguments used were put forth in the Keynes note of July 16, 1942.

Sir Richard Hopkins wrote, were “far in advance of those of Mr. [Herbert] Hoover... the relief administrator at the end of the last war.”¹⁰⁰⁶

How should the British government approach these proposals? If it forced a debate, it might divide the alliance. It would be better to wait, one Treasury memo argued, to see if the Americans might change the proposal on their own for practical reasons. But if they did not, the agreement would at least encourage populations in the occupied territories.¹⁰⁰⁷ David Waley disputed the wait-and-see approach. Perhaps “we ought to react somewhat more strongly against the idea of the post-war world being run by an American dictator acting in the name of an international debating society with a committee of four as the executive...” Keynes agreed.¹⁰⁰⁸ “It would be impossible to run relief by an Executive Committee of the four great powers in Washington.” Strong machinery would be needed in Europe. Britain should “pour cold water on the American ideas and play for time.”¹⁰⁰⁹

The Foreign Office disagreed. At the outset, its officials ignored the policy issues and focused on the organization’s structure.¹⁰¹⁰ Sir Frederick had left them in the dark. They preferred to telegraph a series of follow-up questions to Washington with proposals

¹⁰⁰⁶ “Telegrams Relief 11 and 12,” by R.V.N.H., July 16, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰⁰⁷ These views are expressed in a Treasury paper entitled “Post-War Relief,” July 17, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰⁰⁸ S.D.W. to Keynes and Hopkins, July 20, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO. In the margins next to the quote, Keynes has written “Yes” and provided his customary “K” signature.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Keynes made these comments at a meeting held in his office on July 22, 1942 with officials from the Foreign Office, BOT, and the Paymaster General’s Office. See “Minute” by Jebb, July 22, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹⁰¹⁰ For the initial reaction of the Foreign Office, see “Minute,” by E. Baring, July 16, 1942; “Minute,” by Jebb, July 16, 1942, both in FO 371/31501, PRO.

to strengthen the regional committees.¹⁰¹¹ If the organization's chief benefactors served on the committees, they thought the Americans might accept their proposals, namely, that the regional committees should assume some of the executive powers as well as the right to hear complaints and recommend changes to the administration. If disagreement prevented a unified set of suggestions from a committee, or the Director General's representatives in the region rejected their proposals, then the Policy Committee in Washington would arbitrate the dispute.¹⁰¹² But conflicts with the Treasury and other intervening factors prevented the British from pursuing this course of action.¹⁰¹³

The New Dealers Strike Back With Plans to Expand the Scope of the Organization

By mid-July, another matter had aroused concerns at the Treasury and Foreign Office. The agreement telegraphed to London on July 14, 1942 left most officials believing the organization would only address immediate relief needs and basic rehabilitation, not long-term issues such as finance and reconstruction.¹⁰¹⁴ Officials, nonetheless, wondered where "rehabilitation" ended and "reconstruction" began. Several

¹⁰¹¹ For the follow-up questions, see "Minute," by E. Baring, July 16, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹⁰¹² The specific proposals are laid out in "The Machinery of Relief," FO Document, No Date, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹⁰¹³ Evidence of the conflict over what to do emerged in conversations that took place between Foreign Office and Treasury officials on July 22, 1942. "Minute," by Jebb, July 22, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO. "It was suggested on the other hand that our objective, even if we accepted something on the lines of the American plan, would be to ensure a strong 'regional' organization in Europe; but Lord Keynes was by no means convinced."

¹⁰¹⁴ "Minute" by E. Baring, July 16, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO; S.D.W. [Waley] to Hopkins, July 16, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

civil servants wanted “rehabilitation” defined to include nothing more than restarting the most essential services and industries. But others believed it impossible to draft clear distinctions between the two.¹⁰¹⁵ It was also becoming apparent among officials in London that the Board of Economic Warfare hoped to expand the functions of the Council in ways that would impinge upon postwar financial issues and long-term reconstruction. Officials in the Foreign Office and the Treasury opposed the idea that an international body might determine the general direction of discussions on these issues, which they hoped to confine to the United States and Great Britain via the Article VII negotiations.

The New Dealers had long advocated a UN Council that would oversee a number of functional agencies. The relief agency, they hoped, would constitute the first of these organizations, but might be followed by others focused on everything from food and agriculture to finance and reconstruction. In part, Acheson and Hull had outmaneuvered the chief proponents of this view within the State Department, Adolf Berle and Sumner Welles. But in July, these men struck back. Berle complained to Welles and Pasvolsky that the economics subcommittees had achieved no concrete results and argued that they be restructured.¹⁰¹⁶ He then managed to wrestle many of the long-term economic issues from Acheson, including planning for Eastern Europe. His subcommittee began to discuss the region’s reconstruction and making plans for capital infusions into the area

¹⁰¹⁵ For documentation on British views of the distinction between “rehabilitation” and “reconstruction,” see especially G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Waley, July 17, 1942; Maud [MOF] to Dyson [Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief Department], July 23, 1942, both in T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰¹⁶ Berle to Welles and Pasvolsky, July 10, 1942, File Post-War Problems: Economic and Political 1942-1943, Box 65, Berle Papers, FDRL.

for large-scale transportation and hydroelectric projects, all, of course, under the assumption that diverse agencies of the United Nations would assist in these efforts.¹⁰¹⁷

Outside the State Department, the Board of Economic Warfare had never abandoned its hopes of a United Nations organization with broad powers to work in a wide array of fields. Dating back to Roy Veatch's proposals up through Louis Bean's more recent critique of the Acheson draft, BEW supported a single organization that would manage everything from relief to social, educational and even intellectual rehabilitation.¹⁰¹⁸ Due to Acheson's dexterity, they had never achieved sufficient influence to win acceptance of their agenda. But they refused to concede, and used the discussions with Leith-Ross to make another effort. On July 10, 1942, at the fourth meeting of the interdepartmental committee, they made their first move. Milo Perkins suggested the Council study the problems of economic reconstruction. He hoped to create a window through which the United States could later expand the organization's operations. Leith-Ross rejected the proposal, arguing that reconstruction should be left to other machinery.¹⁰¹⁹

On July 15, 1942, the proposal came under fire at a meeting of the interdepartmental group. Harry Dexter White argued that reconstruction was necessary, but that it could not be undertaken by the relief organization. He believed the preamble of

¹⁰¹⁷ On these developments, see E Minutes 18, July 17, 1942; E Minutes 19, July 24, 1942; E Minutes 20, July 31, 1942, all in File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁰¹⁸ The Veatch proposal is covered in the previous chapter. The ideas of Louis Bean are seen most poignantly in Louis Bean to Stone, May 28, 1942; Louis H. Bean to Stone, Fischer, and Coe, June 6, 1942; "Comments on the June 10th Draft of Resolutions on Relief and Rehabilitation," all in File BEW Survey and Developmental Projects, Box 34, Board of Economic Warfare, Bean Papers, FDRL.

¹⁰¹⁹ "Memo of Conversation," Fourth Meeting, July 10, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

the July 10th draft defined the agency's functions too broadly and wanted references to the resumption of production deleted entirely. "Relief," he argued, "could properly... embrace the building of hospitals, sanitary facilities and possibly... essential transport links, but not factories." Norman Davis of the Red Cross agreed. "The American people were always sympathetic to relief needs, but... an undertaking to rebuild Europe might jeopardize the whole program." White concurred. "If the Administration tried to go too far Congress would react against it." Acheson emphasized the importance of restoring agriculture and other basic economic functions. The problem, simply put, was that the distinction between "rehabilitation" and "reconstruction" remained difficult if not impossible to define.¹⁰²⁰

The debate worried Leith-Ross immensely, not because members of the group wanted to exclude "reconstruction" from the organization's functions, but because so many of them displayed an apparent disregard for the importance of raw materials in revitalizing war-torn economies. The following day, he expressed his concerns in a letter to Acheson, who had carefully navigated the debate to maintain his influence. "I was surprised," Sir Frederick wrote, "that so many of the members of your group seemed to think that relief could be limited to foodstuffs." He reminded the Assistant Secretary that the St. James Palace resolution provided that "raw materials and other articles of prime necessity" would be made available. He also included a report by the British Director of Relief after the First World War, which explained how the absence of raw materials rendered relief irrelevant. "Without wool and cotton for the factories," Jan Masaryk told the British Director, "it was impossible to put his people to work..." All across Europe

¹⁰²⁰ "Memo of Conversation," Interdepartmental Group and Acheson, Fifth Meeting, July 15, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

instances of this nature left the continent demoralized and under the constant threat of anarchy.¹⁰²¹

Important, to be sure, but the American economy constituted the Board of Economic Warfare's main concern. On July 18, 1942, Milo Perkins and Winfield Riefler, the Board's Director and Chief Economist, respectively, presented their case to Acheson and Leith-Ross. The cessation of government spending after the war, Perkins argued, would result in unused labor and productive capacity disruptive for the entire American economy, even if a rapid turnover to peacetime production took place. To avert this possibility, he believed reconstruction projects in war-torn countries would provide an outlet. He agreed that projects could not be presented to Congress at the present time, but that plans should be prepared and brought forward at the moment when government expenditures slackened. Perkins made it clear that he had "no interest" in a simple twelve or 24-month relief program as such: "it was necessary and would be done." "But only if it was so planned as to lead on to active reconstruction on bold and imaginative lines would he regard it as an adequate response to the situation."¹⁰²²

How to accomplish this aim without angering Congress or the Treasury remained the central question. Riefler agreed that the executive functions of the organization should be limited to relief. In this way, neither Congress nor the Treasury would have

¹⁰²¹ Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 15, 1942; "Extracts from the Report by the British Director of Relief on Economic Conditions in Central Europe Dated January 1, 1920;" both in File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁰²² Telegram Relief No. 20, DC to FO, July 18, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO. In all likelihood, this meeting took place thanks to Perkins, who wanted the relief agreement put before the Board of Economic Warfare at its next meeting. But Acheson sought to avoid anything that would make the process of reaching agreement more difficult. See Perkins to Acheson, July 17, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

cause for complaint. But the proposed Council, he thought, should be empowered to “look further ahead, and to undertake the preparation of plans, not only for relief but also for reconstruction.” If another UN Council were set up to address these concerns, Riefler feared there would be undesirable delays, unnecessary overlap, and divided responsibility between the two councils. He believed funds would be forthcoming when the economic implications became apparent.¹⁰²³ In line with this thinking, he proposed substitute language for Article I of the agreement, which would have allowed the Council to plan broadly and to use other agencies for tasks related or unrelated to relief.¹⁰²⁴

When Leith-Ross informed the Foreign Office that interdepartmental disputes over the scope and role of the Council had emerged,¹⁰²⁵ the Treasury insisted that finance and reconstruction be excluded from the Council’s prerogatives.¹⁰²⁶ But the telegraph with instructions to this effect arrived *after* Sir Frederick’s meeting with Acheson, Perkins and Riefler.¹⁰²⁷ Leith-Ross conveyed the proposed changes to Article I of the agreement to London.¹⁰²⁸ But the arrival of this news coincided with Sir Frederick’s telegram explaining the American reaction to the War Cabinet’s decision to retract their pledge to issue a statement on postwar rationing.¹⁰²⁹ These two factors, along with dissatisfaction with the draft agreement – it failed to resolve most of the major policy

¹⁰²³ Telegram Relief No. 20, DC to FO, July 18, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰²⁴ Telegram Relief No. 21, DC to FO, July 18, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰²⁵ Telegram No. 3693, Relief No. 9, DC to FO, July 13, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO. Officials in London also learned of these developments from Caustin. See Caustin to Ward, July 14, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰²⁶ R.V.N.H. [Hopkins], July 16, 1942; S.D.W. [Waley] to Hopkins, July 17, 1942; S.D.W. to Keynes and Hopkins, July 20, 1942, all in T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰²⁷ Telegram No. 4377, Relief No. 12, FO to DC, July 17, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰²⁸ Telegram Relief No. 20, DC to FO, July 18, 1942; Telegram Relief No. 21, DC to FO, July 18, 1942, both in T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰²⁹ Telegram Relief No. 17, 18, 19, DC to FO, July 18, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

issues and it left America in a position of dominance – aroused serious concern in London.

Fear and the Recall of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross

When on July 18, 1942, officials in London received news of the American reaction to Britain's decision to retract the proposed statement on postwar rationing, the matter escalated up the chain of command. Churchill worried that Roosevelt might still make a press statement citing British plans for postwar rationing. But the Foreign Secretary informed him otherwise, and urged the Prime Minister not to write Roosevelt on the matter.¹⁰³⁰ Doubtless Eden hoped Churchill would change his mind and publicly commit Britain to postwar rationing after hearing his colleagues regurgitate their arguments before the War Cabinet once again on July 21, 1942. But the Prime Minister refused to budge. With the American elections on the horizon, he and others believed the relief negotiations would go slowly: there was no reason to feel embarrassed and certainly no need to revise Sir Frederick's instructions again.¹⁰³¹

But the issue would not disappear. The following day, the Foreign Office learned from the British Embassy in Washington that Cordell Hull intended to make an important broadcast on postwar policy later in the week.¹⁰³² Churchill immediately requested

¹⁰³⁰ R.M.J. Harris to G.E. Millard, July 19, 1942, CAB 117/89, PRO; Eden to Churchill, July 20, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

¹⁰³¹ War Cabinet "Conclusions of a Meeting of the War Cabinet," July 21, 1942, W.M. (42) 93rd Conclusions, CAB 65/27/9, PRO.

¹⁰³² Telegram No. 3791, DC to FO, July 21, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

assurances from the Foreign Secretary that nothing would be said of postwar rationing. Eden assured him not.¹⁰³³

Yet harsh criticism continued to pour into the Prime Minister's office. Everyone of relevance in Whitehall and the Embassy in Washington believed Britain should publicly commit itself to maintain rationing, including the Ambassador, Viscount Halifax.¹⁰³⁴ It had become a matter for public relations. "I do not think American spokesmen should be left much longer in almost sole possession of the field of idealistic utterances about the future of the world," one cable wrote. "We should not in any way pour cold water on high hopes and sentiments expressed in speeches here but on the contrary show we are not by any means behind hand as is shown by our record for a great many years past and in the heat of the present war."¹⁰³⁵

With Churchill refusing to alter his stance, officials began to worry that Britain might "be getting at cross purposes with the Americans."¹⁰³⁶ On July 24, 1942, the Foreign Office had instructed Leith-Ross to reject as premature any interpretation of the agreement or language in it suggesting the Relief Council would "be the right body to supervise long-term aspects of post-war recovery."¹⁰³⁷ They also told him that the British position on the rationing statement stood firm: decision on it would only be made once the British Government had considered the United States relief plan as a whole.¹⁰³⁸

¹⁰³³ Churchill to Eden, July 22, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

¹⁰³⁴ Halifax comes on record supporting the statement in the handwritten account of the Cabinet meeting of July 9, 1942. W.M. (42) 89th Meeting, July 9, 1942, in Sir Norman Brook Notebook: War Cabinet Minutes, CAB 195/1, PRO.

¹⁰³⁵ Telegram No. 3792, DC to FO, July 21, 1942, CAB 115/558 PRO.

¹⁰³⁶ Richard Law to Kingsley Wood, July 25, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰³⁷ Telegram Relief No. 15, FO to DC, July 24, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰³⁸ Telegram No. 1660, Relief No. 16, FO to HC Ottawa, July 28, 1942, T 160/1404/4, PRO.

But to fully understand the agreement, American intentions, and “what exactly [had] been happening” in the Washington, officials at the Foreign Office, Treasury, and Board of Trade thought Leith-Ross should come home for consultations.¹⁰³⁹ They had not resolved their disputes over how to respond to the draft. They also feared that the Council might obtain wider powers than desirable, and that the Americans planned to use the Director General as an agent to rule over Europe. These and other factors led to the recall of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross on July 28, 1942.¹⁰⁴⁰

¹⁰³⁹ Views of the Foreign Office are made clear in: Law to Wood, July 25, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO; views of the Treasury can be seen in: G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Waley, August 7, 1942, T 160/1404/5, PRO; we know of BOT complicity from: Telegram Relief No. 19, FO to DC, August 8, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Telegram No. 1661, FO to HC, Ottawa, July 28, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHEN THE NEW AND THE OLD WORLDS COLLIDE

On July 28, 1942, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross emerged from the home of the British High Commissioner in Canada. Ottawa must have been a welcome respite from the suffocating humidity and sizzling heat of Washington in July. With its charming canal and majestic Parliament overlooking the Ottawa River, the Canadian capital is both quaint and grand. But in the 1940s, as one historian tells us, the city also maintained a “frontier and ramshackle flavor.”¹⁰⁴¹ Leith-Ross did not fare well here. He rubbed most of its officials the wrong way. According to the Canadian Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, he was like “those Englishmen who antagonize by their mere appearance and manner.” He called it the “tranquil consciousness of effortless superiority.”¹⁰⁴² Over the course of five days, the Canadians, who were resentful of the wartime treatment they received from London, trampled all over Sir Frederick, who was dealt a weak hand by his government. His exchanges in Ottawa would interject a new dynamic into the relief negotiations that would fundamentally alter the trajectory of our story.

Here we will dissect Sir Frederick’s visit to Canada, but also his discussions upon returning to Washington at the first of August. With one exception – the postponement of his recall to London – virtually nothing went Sir Frederick’s way. Officials at the State Department hustled him at every turn. They put forward measures to resolve the problem of independent purchases without bothering to consult with him or any of his colleagues

¹⁰⁴¹ John English, *Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson*, Vol. 1, 1897-1948 (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1989), 242.

¹⁰⁴² See diary entry, July 30, 1942, in Mackenzie King, *The Diary of William Lyon Mackenzie King*, LAC, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/index-e.html>.

in London. They renewed their assault on his efforts to decentralize the agency, and they widened the scope of the organization's mandate irrespective of Britain's concerns. The situation forced Leith-Ross and his colleagues to rethink Britain's strategy. He even turned to the Soviet Ambassador at Washington, Maxim Litvinov, in hopes of finding support. His hopes were dashed. Nothing perturbed him more than the American refusal to approve a strong statement explaining his discussions to the European allies and reassuring them that something meaningful was being done. He would return to London beaten and disappointed, but still prepared to accept what the Americans had given him.

Why did Sir Frederick Leith-Ross fail to achieve so much of what he had hoped for? What explains the outcome of his talks in Ottawa and Washington, but also his willingness to accept it? The answers, to be sure, are complex and varied. But a number of factors clearly played a role. Bureaucratic conflicts in both London and Washington complicated the ability to reach agreement on all sides, thus making the adherence to rigid agendas impossible. Widening power asymmetries between the old and the new world, however, turned Britain's position into one of dependence, and made brinkmanship virtually impossible. Time constraints prevented the use of dilatory tactics, and conflicts between wartime demands and future desires increased the dangers of taking risks. The American habit and preference for unilateral action, moreover, often made it difficult to know what State Department officials were doing. Even more frustrating, a divergence between Sir Frederick's views and British policy eclipsed his freedom of action. As a result, Leith-Ross departed Washington with dashed hopes and a little to show for his efforts.

Global War and the Transatlantic Triangle

Throughout the twentieth century, English-speaking Canadians began to shy away from the British. Political power in Ottawa increasingly required the support of French Canadians, most of whom not only opposed participation in Britain's wars; they disliked English rule altogether. During the First World, the problem erupted into a full-fledged crisis. Between January and May 1917, Canada suffered nearly 57,000 war casualties, which forced the Government in Ottawa to initiate conscription. Protests broke out in Montreal and Quebec City, forcing authorities in the latter to call the federal government for assistance. Battalions sent from Toronto charged mobs and returned fire on violent protesters, leaving four dead and many more wounded. The government suspended *habeas corpus* to inject order into the province.¹⁰⁴³ But the damage was done: the age-old fissure between English and French Canadians had erupted once again.

Mackenzie King had vigorously tried to avoid war. But unlike Robert Borden, who had been Prime Minister during the First World War, he possessed a degree of freedom: the 1931 Statute of Westminster had granted Canada foreign policy independence.¹⁰⁴⁴ Yet English speakers remained devoutly pro-British, a fact that came into conflict with Quebec's tempered admiration for the fascist states. For this reason, King became a shameless supporter of Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, as

¹⁰⁴³ Mason Wade, *The French Canadians, 1760-1945* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 733, 764-765.

¹⁰⁴⁴ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, *The Mackenzie King Era, 1921-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 118, 129-32, 133-135.

James Eayrs tells us.¹⁰⁴⁵ Following the Nazi invasion of Poland, the old British sympathies surfaced. With promises of no conscription and appeals to the fact that France was at the center of the struggle, King managed to bring Quebec into the war. His commitment, however, remained halfhearted not only in terms of resources pledged and provided, but even in terms of his desire to see the war pursued. During the winter of 1939-40, Mackenzie King lobbied for peace, but to no avail.¹⁰⁴⁶

The collapse of France the following summer altered events and Canadian support for the war increased. Britain would take advantage of Canada's renewed commitment. It would accept Canadian troops, material, and financial aid. Yet Great Britain gave Canada no place on the Supreme War Council, which had been restricted to France and Great Britain.¹⁰⁴⁷ The British subsumed Canada's limited navy into their own, set up a recruiting scheme for the Royal Air Force in Canada disguised as the British Commonwealth Air Training Program, and then duped Ottawa into paying for most of it. To be sure, the resulting Canadian contributions went far in winning the Second World War – Canada provided an astonishing \$3,043,000,000 in assistance to Britain by 1945 and it contributed over a million troops: 42,000 never came home.¹⁰⁴⁸ Regardless, the arrangements for Canadian participation in the war's strategic direction left Ottawa with

¹⁰⁴⁵ James Eayrs, "'A Low Dishonest Decade': Aspects of Canadian External Policy, 1931-1939," in *Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1990), 488-505. See also James Eayrs, *In Defense of Canada: Appeasement and Rearmament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 48-80.

¹⁰⁴⁶ On the peace efforts, see Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 276. On King's efforts to manage the French Canadians as he carried the country into the war, see Wade, *The French Canadians*, 931-945.

¹⁰⁴⁷ "Some Thoughts On Provision For Dominion Representation in the Machinery for the Higher Direction of the War," DO, September 5, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 359, 370.

influence incommensurate with the country's overall contribution. Between 1940 and 1942, Canada made no formal complaint.

The reasons for this behavior are apparent. Much of Canada's contribution came late in the war and no policymaker could envision the future. Canada, moreover, had not grown accustomed to its newfound independence. Mild and conservative, the Canadian temperament remained that of a British colony despite its freedom and potential might. Certain Canadian diplomats – notably the Canadian Official at London House, Lester Pearson, and the Minister to France, Lt. Col. G.P. Vanier – suggested the idea of making complaints to the British during the winter and spring of 1940, but these proposals were not pursued.¹⁰⁴⁹ With the disasters that befell France and England in the summer of that year, the Canadians apparently had no such urge. Yet with France occupied and the Luftwaffe coming up the Thames River, this was perhaps the best time to make such demands. The United States had not yet entered the war. But Canada was neither Japan nor was it Russia; it was reluctant to do anything that might undermine Allied unity in the face of grave threats to the British Empire. But this would change.

Like the United States, the Great Depression had devastated Canada: the outbreak of war had been a welcome boon for Canadian agriculture, manufacturing and unabashed profit-seekers. Unemployment dropped and profits reappeared on company balance sheets across the country.¹⁰⁵⁰ Yet this economic renewal came under constant threat. Britain's financial malaise forced Canada to raise taxes and run deficits to finance the war effort and aid to London. Many inputs to Canadian industry came from American

¹⁰⁴⁹ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 282-283.

¹⁰⁵⁰ On unemployment, see Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, *Canada 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 352.

sources, which weakened Canada's balance of balance of payments position vis-à-vis the United States. The passage of the Lend-Lease Act on March 11, 1942 led Canadian policymakers to worry that Britain might divert orders from Canada to the United States, thereby hurting Canada's economic recovery. Mackenzie King, obviously alert to the problem, set out for the United States with a proposal in his satchel. At Roosevelt's estate in New York on April 20, 1941, the two men released the so-called Hyde Park Declaration, in which the United States and Canada not only agreed to coordinate production programs, but also to a procedure permitting the procurement of materials in the United States using lend-lease for outputs produced in Canada for Britain.¹⁰⁵¹

The resolution of Canada's economic troubles did not resolve the country's defense worries. With their navy now working to aid Britain, the country's coastline remained defenseless. The resulting vulnerability worried civil servants in Washington and Ottawa. Thus on August 16, 1941, Mackenzie King and Franklin Roosevelt met again and released the so-called Ogdensburg Declaration, which created a Permanent Joint Board on Defense. Neither Winston Churchill nor the Foreign Office welcomed this development. But the British, who were overwhelmed by the Luftwaffe's assault on their country, had failed to show any sensitivity to Canada's economic and military security. They simply took their Dominions for granted.¹⁰⁵² The Canadians, at least for a period, took it on the cheek, even while their own men were slaughtered during the Japanese

¹⁰⁵¹ See Chapter 21, "The War Economy" in Bothwell, Drummond, and English, *Canada 1900-1945*, 349-373. See also J.L. Granatstein, *How Britain's Weakness Forced Canada into the Arms of the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 32-40.

¹⁰⁵² Granatstein, *Britain's Weakness Forced Canada*, 26-32; Eays, *In Defense of Canada*, 206-210.

assault on Hong Kong.¹⁰⁵³ As a result, fear and expediency pushed them decisively into the American economic and military spheres of influence.¹⁰⁵⁴

The importance of these developments was not lost upon the American President. Roosevelt privately acknowledged Canada's power and potential, but appears to have believed the country lacked the will, fortitude, and audacity to assert itself.¹⁰⁵⁵ On January 2, 1942, one day after the signing of the United Nations Declaration, he explained to his Cabinet that it was "significant that Canada did not want to be included in the same group with the four big powers and wished to be listed with India and the other Dominions."¹⁰⁵⁶ This comment might suggest Roosevelt's concern that Canada still considered itself a British Dominion, but more likely, it reveals his recognition that Ottawa did not perceive itself as an equal with the other Great Powers, which it did not. For reasons that will become apparent, Canada's reticence and reluctance might have undermined its long-term ability to advance its interests. The capacity to achieve one's

¹⁰⁵³ "The minutes of the Cabinet of war Committee for December 29, 1941, record Churchill as saying with respect to Hong Kong: 'In spite of the tragic circumstances, there has been no 'whimper' from Canada; none of the bitter and harmful criticism which had come from Australia.'" See Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 339.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Granatstein considers these arrangements critical. Granatstein, *Britain's Weakness Forced Canada*.

¹⁰⁵⁵ When I present this argument to Canadians, they almost always attribute their relative weakness to population size, as if they are Norway. They seem to forget how often it has been the case in history in which countries with relatively small populations achieved the status of Great Power and then dominated countries infinitely larger than their own: Portugal, Holland, Great Britain, Spain, France, Japan, Germany, etc. It was not so much a function of population size, but rather how that population perceived itself and what it or its leaders aspired to do.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Cabinet Meeting Notes, January 2, 1942, File Roosevelt, Franklin D. Jan.-June 1942, Box 61, General Correspondence, Wallace Papers, FDRL.

aims in international politics is driven as much by self-image and external perceptions as by reality.¹⁰⁵⁷

It is hardly surprising that Mackenzie King received no invitation to the Arcadia Conference held in Washington during the winter of 1941-42. At this meeting, Great Britain and the United States established the Combined Chiefs of Staff. But Canada learned of this development in the newspapers. Here it is worth noting the astonishment of one eminent Canadian historian: "It is an extraordinary fact that, although it is evident that it was expected that Canada's forces should be put at the disposal of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and the lives of her soldiers, sailors, and airmen hazarded in accordance with their decisions, the Canadian government never received so much as an official notification that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had been set up." If Winston Churchill bears responsibility for this lack of notification, as C.P. Stacey asserts, Mackenzie King must shoulder the blame for failing to set a different tone in London and Washington. The Australians and New Zealanders complained incessantly and were consequently welcomed into the Pacific War Council.¹⁰⁵⁸

If this were not enough, Great Britain and the United States also failed to notify Canada of their intention to establish a series of Boards to coordinate and allocate shipping, munitions, and raw materials among the Allies until after the decisions had

¹⁰⁵⁷ France provides an excellent example of how to exploit this principle. De Gaulle and the Free French not only projected themselves as the legitimate leaders of France; they also made the case that France was a Great Power, even though the country was occupied. Mackenzie King, in part, understood the importance of perceptions. Aware that he was far less popular in Canada than Churchill and Roosevelt, he exploited every opportunity to have his photograph taken with them. Yet this behavior was for a domestic audience. He did little to alter perceptions of Canada in the world. See Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 334-335. See also the discussion of King at the Quebec Conference in Bothwell, Drummond, and English, *Canada 1900-1945*, 340.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 327.

been announced on January 26, 1942.¹⁰⁵⁹ On the British side, this failure of policy rests with Churchill, who assumed that he was entitled to represent the Dominions while providing them little or no information. The Americans possessed no formal responsibility for conveying such information to the Canadians, but their failure to do so ran counter to the collaborative spirit that had emerged between the countries over the previous two years. In addition to the Hyde Park and Ogdensburg Declarations, an elaborate series of formal and informal arrangements had emerged to synchronize production, prevent unnecessary duplication, and maximize industrial output for the war.¹⁰⁶⁰ Even if Canada's military and economic contribution did not warrant inclusion in these Anglo-American efforts at this point in the war, surely they provided reason to at least consult Ottawa.

The Hurdles for Canadian Action

These developments might have aroused Canada to action, but the first conscription crisis of the Second World War occupied the government's attention. When it became apparent that the country did not have enough volunteers for five overseas divisions, individuals began to call for conscription. The liberal government came under assault from conservatives, and King faced pressure from several of his own ministers to

¹⁰⁵⁹ The British communicated the scheme to the Commonwealth countries on January 28, 1942. See Memorandum by Assistant Under-SOSEA, February 2, 1942, Enclosure to Memorandum by Assistant Under-SOSEA, February 2, 1942, DEA/3265-B-40, Document 141, in CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 1942-1943 (Hull, Quebec: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1980), 118-124.

¹⁰⁶⁰ For details, see Bothwell, Drummond, and English, *Canada 1900-1945*, 367. See also Press Release No. 569, December 1, 1942, DOS, 840.50/905, Box 4800, RG 59, NARA.

reverse course. The debate resulted in a plebiscite that split the country along ethnic lines. The English overwhelmingly supported conscription, while the French did not. Although the measure did not lead to an immediate draft, it ignited mild protests in Montreal and precipitated a rapid decline in support for the war in Quebec.¹⁰⁶¹ With these matters at the forefront of Mackenzie King's attention, foreign policy had to be put on the back burner. King had named himself Secretary of State for External Affairs when he assumed the Premiership in 1935, and had always refused to relinquish control of the portfolio. This fact had unfortunate consequences for his foreign policy.¹⁰⁶²

It explains why Canada recognized the importance of postwar relief for the country's interests so late. For years King refused to permit the Canadian High Commissioner in Britain, Vincent Massey, to even attend informal meetings of the Commonwealth countries. He disliked and distrusted him. He wanted power in his own hands. As a result, Massey spent most of his time socializing with the English upper class and promoting Canadian culture. When the war broke out, the situation improved, but King maintained his hostility towards Massey; thus the High Commissioner's influence increased very little.¹⁰⁶³ In early 1941, King exacerbated the problem by recalling the country's ablest official in London, Lester Pearson, back to Ottawa to assist him and the new Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, Norman Robertson.¹⁰⁶⁴ As a result, the Canadians played a marginal role in the debate over relief in London. It is hardly

¹⁰⁶¹ Wade, *The French Canadians*, 947-953. Bothwell, Drummond, and English, *Canada 1900-1945*, 324-325.

¹⁰⁶² Adam Chapnick, *The Middle Power Project: Canada and the Founding of the United Nations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁶³ Claude Bissell, *The Imperial Canadian: Vincent Massey in Office* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), p. 119; Eayrs, *In Defense of Canada*, 29.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Lester Pearson, *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honorable Lester B. Pearson*, Vol. 1, 1897-1948 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1972), pp. 181-201.

surprising that, when the High Commissioners met to discuss the proposed meeting of the allied governments in exile to discuss postwar relief in July 1941, Massey was absent.¹⁰⁶⁵ He also failed to attend any of the meetings of the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements. Instead, low-level officials represented Canada, while Australia, New Zealand and South Africa sent their High Commissioners.¹⁰⁶⁶

With Vincent Massey constrained by King's dominance, and Ottawa consumed by the first conscription crisis of the Second World War, the only place where anyone took an immediate interest in the country's position vis-à-vis the Allied war machinery was in Washington D.C. Humphrey Hume Wrong, the First Secretary at the Embassy, and a member of the diplomatic corps since 1938, fired the first shot. In a letter to the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, Norman Robertson, Wrong articulated what has been called the functional principle: "Each member of the grand alliance should have a voice in the conduct of the war proportionate to its contribution to the general war effort. A subsidiary principle is that the influence of the various countries should be greatest in connection with those matters with which they are most directly concerned."¹⁰⁶⁷ By Wrong's estimation, Canada ranked third after the United Kingdom and the United States in the supply of war materials; in terms of "trained fighting men,"

¹⁰⁶⁵ "Proposed Meeting of Allied Governments to Consider the Provision of Supplies to Europe After the War," by P.A.C., July 1, 1941, CAB 117/89, PRO.

¹⁰⁶⁶ For invitation to Canada, see "Telegram No. 467, DO to Governments of Canada, Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and Union of South Africa," July 31, 1941. For a list of the participants, see "Draft Communiqué for the Inter-Allied Meeting on September 24th, 1941," both in CAB 117/89, PRO. It is not clear why Massey did not attend these meetings.

¹⁰⁶⁷ H.H. Wrong to Under-SOSEA (Robertson), January 20, 1942, DEA/3265-A-40, Document 135 in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 106-109.

Canada ranked fifth or sixth.¹⁰⁶⁸ As such, it would be “justified” for the Canadian government to put a complaint before the American and/or British governments.

Wrong then set out to explore options to resolve the problem. His friend and competitor, Lester Pearson, who had expressed concerns over Canada’s marginal status early in the war, also made a proposal. In a meeting with Britain’s representative on the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Sir John Dill, Wrong presented a proposal for a British Commonwealth mission to London that would have partially ameliorated his concerns over the Anglo-American war machinery. The British accepted the plan, but revised it to ensure that London maintained ultimate control. Wrong believed Ottawa would reject the revised scheme and decided to pursue other alternatives with authorities in Washington.¹⁰⁶⁹ In the meantime, Pearson put forward a proposal to resolve the problems,¹⁰⁷⁰ but Wrong opposed it on grounds that “the plan would not be acceptable to

¹⁰⁶⁸ The record shows that Canada ranked fifth, behind the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain, and India. The Soviet Union contributed the most troops, amounting to an astonishing 34,476,700. See G.F. Krivosheev, *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century* (Greenhill Books: Barnsley, UK: 1997), 85-87. The United States contributed 16,596,639. The United Kingdom and the Crown Colonies contributed 5,896,000, while India contributed 2,582,000 and Canada contributed 1,100,000. See John Ellis, *World War II: A Statistical Survey: The Essential Facts and Figures for All the Combatants* (New York: Facts on File, 1993), 253-254. This data is compiled on Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties.

¹⁰⁶⁹ This affair is recounted in a series of documents. “Memorandum from Under-SOSEA (Pearson) to PM (King), January 17, 1942; “Memorandum from Assistant Under-SOSEA (Pearson) to Under-SOSEA (Robertson), January 19, 1942; “Minister-Counsellor, Legation in United States (Wrong) to Under-SOSEA (Robertson),” January 20, 1942; “Minister-Counsellor, Legation in United States (Wrong) to Under-SOSEA (Robertson), January 27, 1942, all in DEA/3265-A-40, Documents 133-135, 137, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 103-109, 112-114.

¹⁰⁷⁰ “Memorandum by Assistant Under-SOSEA (Pearson),” February 2, 1942, DEA/3265-B-40, Document 141 in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 118-124.

the United States authorities.”¹⁰⁷¹ As a result, the two diplomats were unable to produce and agree on a solution that would resolve the problem. Anglo-American planning continued apace, with very little input from Canada.

This fact worried Wrong. On February 3, 1942, in a letter to Pearson, he complained of a lack of leadership coming from Ottawa. He lamented that Canada had lost its chance. “With the entry of the United States into the war we are not as well placed to influence the conduct of the war as we were when the United States was neutral... If we had sought earlier to undertake more extensive political responsibilities, it would be easier now to maintain our status. We have tended, however, to be satisfied with the form rather than the substance.” Yet in the same stroke of his pen, Wrong also argued that it was useless to be resentful and querulous. “We must not now endanger our direct contribution by indulging in recriminations and charges that we have been left out.” Apparently, he believed the British and Americans would just as well do without Canada’s contribution than to listen to peevish complaints. The purpose of his letter, as he put it, was “to blow off some steam.” Wrong was hard pressed to know what to do.¹⁰⁷²

The Canadian War Cabinet could do no better: disputes between the Minister of Defense, James Ralston, and the Minister of Munitions and Supply, C.D. Howe, resulted in delays and no action. Ralston wanted the Government to express a protest, but Howe argued that Canada should simply refuse to pool the country’s war resources with the Anglo-American authorities, and let initiative come from the United States. The Prime

¹⁰⁷¹ “Minister-Counsellor, Legation in United States (Wrong) to Assistant Under-SOSEA (Pearson), February 10, 1942, DEA/3265-A-40, Document 144, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 127-128.

¹⁰⁷² Assistant Under-SOSEA (Wrong) to Pearson, February 3, 1942, DEA/3265-A-40, Document 142, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 124-126.

Minister agreed. At their meeting on February 4, 1942, he acknowledged “the practical necessity of limiting representation upon combined bodies for the efficient conduct of the war” and told his colleagues that he would not “seek to complicate the situation by unreasonable requests.” Yet he complained that “Canada had been in the war for more than two years and Canadians would expect that their interests would not be ignored in any of these fields.” Still, he lamented: “The present position was unsatisfactory but there was, at present, no useful initiative that Canada could take.” By February 12, 1942, the Cabinet agreed that a telegram should be sent to the Americans and British, but no note was ever sent.¹⁰⁷³ King’s diary suggests his attention remained on the conscription crisis.¹⁰⁷⁴

Meanwhile, developments at the Canadian Embassy in Washington created another hurdle to action. As one historian put it, Hume Wrong “did not possess that extraordinary capacity for self-effacement.” His acidulous wit and high regard for himself had irritated the Canadian Minister to the United States, Leighton McCarthy. The relationship deteriorated and Wrong reached out to Pearson for assistance. Pearson, in turn, urged Norman Robertson, to engineer a reorganization of the Canadian mission in Washington, in which the Minister would be recalled. But McCarthy outmaneuvered the two men with a letter sent to King, who decided to deploy Pearson to Washington and bring Wrong back to Ottawa.¹⁰⁷⁵ King had already offended the two men the previous year when he chose Robertson to replace O.D. Skelton as Undersecretary. Now, he

¹⁰⁷³ “Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee,” February 4, 1942; “Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee,” February 12, 1942, both in PCO, Documents 143 and 146, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 126-127, 129-130.

¹⁰⁷⁴ See diary entries, February 4-12, 1942, *The Diary of William Lyon Mackenzie King*, LAC: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/king/index-e.html>

¹⁰⁷⁵ Eayrs, *In Defense of Canada*, 32-33.

forced both of them to relocate. This bureaucratic shuffle might have amounted to nothing, but it occurred at an inopportune moment; it also angered the man King would need to implement his foreign policy in Washington, Lester Pearson. These facts, as we will see, would have extraordinary consequences for the negotiations over the postwar relief organization, and they would alter Lester Pearson's life.

But at this juncture, they made it more difficult for Canada to devise a policy and strategy to achieve its aims. Efforts to obtain membership on the Raw Materials Board and the Munitions Assignment Board failed. The Americans blocked Ottawa's ambitions and the Canadians had neither the nerve nor the strategy necessary for brinkmanship.¹⁰⁷⁶ Despite this setback, Britain remained aware of Canada's potential contribution to relief and consulted Ottawa over the proposed organization. In a May 23, 1942 letter to Mackenzie King, Massey explained that Great Britain had finally received the American views on postwar relief and wished to obtain Canada's concurrence before accepting them.¹⁰⁷⁷ But before the Canadians could properly consider the proposal, London began putting pressure on Ottawa to respond at once.¹⁰⁷⁸ The decision-making apparatus in Ottawa remained so confused that King's team simply accepted the American views and

¹⁰⁷⁶ This matter is covered in most standard accounts of Canada and the war, but see Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 327.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Telegram 1388, HC in London to SOS for External Affairs, May 23, 1942, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 661, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 768-769.

¹⁰⁷⁸ The Canadian War Cabinet met on May 28, 1942, but failed to address the issue. I examined these minutes in Ottawa, but portions of them can be seen in: "Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee," May 28, 1942, PCO, Document 1026, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 1243-1244. By May 29, 1942, New Zealand and South African had responded to the American views: Telegram 1429, HC to SOSEA, May 29, 1942. By June 2, 1942, Australia had also accepted the American views: Telegram 1457, HC to SOSEA, June 2, 1942. By June 6, 1942 the British had become anxious and another message was sent: Telegram 1505, HC to SOSEA, June 6, 1942, all in File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

noted that the “proposed organization does not provide for Canadian representation on [the] Executive Committee.” This matter would have to be raised later, but should be expressed to the British authorities.¹⁰⁷⁹ Speed had overwhelmed Ottawa.

In sum, a conglomeration of factors had impaired Canada’s ability to impact events in ways that accorded with its interests. King’s determination to maintain complete control over foreign policy had prevented his own diplomats from serving him at the very moment when he needed them most, during the conscription crisis of 1942. Massey remained aloof and provided King little guidance from London. The men most suited to devise a strategy, Wrong and Pearson, received no guidance from King, while Robertson remained on a short-leash. Making matters worse, Wrong and Pearson were uprooted and shuffled around. Pearson moved from London to Ottawa and then to Washington in less than 18 months. He arrived in the American capital with little knowledge of the inter-workings of the place. Wrong, who knew Washington as well as anyone, was brought home to Ottawa. The effect was a lack of influence. As Lester Pearson put it years later when discussing Canada’s relationship with the United States and Britain: “[Our] difficulty was more often to avoid being squeezed out, rather than squeezed between.”¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁷⁹ Telegram 1105, SOSEA to HC, June 6, 1942, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 662, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 769. See also Cabinet War Committee, Meeting No. 168, June 4, 1942, C-4874, Vol. 5675, RG2, LAC.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Pearson, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, 212.

The Turning Point in Canadian Diplomacy

June 1942 marked a turning point in Canadian diplomacy. The dust from the conscription crisis had settled, but with French-Canadian support for the war declining, King now faced a new problem. What would happen if the Canadian public learned of his government's poor position in the decision-making structures of the Allied war machinery? What would happen if the Canadian Parliament concluded that the United States and Great Britain were taking Canada's contributions to the war effort for granted? It might threaten the stability of his Government, and it might even further weaken the population's support for the war. These possibilities aroused King to action. The country's independence had to be protected and its sovereignty asserted. King and his Ministers therefore decided to utilize the proposed relief organization to take a stand. In their view, if Canada failed to achieve proper representation on the relief organization, it would undermine the country's standing well into the postwar era. Like the British, the Canadians realized that Washington considered the organization a pattern for the future.

However the British remained adamant that the Executive Committee should include only the Four Great Powers. The Foreign Office had taken note of Ottawa's reservations to the American proposal, but they were not sure if the Canadians were "staking out a claim for membership [on] the Committee."¹⁰⁸¹ To buy time, they would try to persuade Massey not to press Canadian claims too much, thereby providing sufficient time to convince the Americans to embrace a four-power Executive Committee. If the Americans agreed, the power dynamics would be squarely set against

¹⁰⁸¹ "Minute," Nigel Ronald, June 30, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

the Canadians, and the United States could be blamed for the outcome. According to Richard Law, Britain's main interest was "not so much to prevent Canada from sticking to her reservations as to prevent Leith-Ross from encouraging the American's to enlarge the Executive Committee." Yet he had to be kept "on the rails without administering a snub to Canada."¹⁰⁸² As a major supplier of foodstuffs, Ottawa could not be offended.

On July 2, 1942, the Foreign Office had informed Leith-Ross that the British Government adhered to the four-power formula. "In light of the experience at Geneva," where too many members on the League of Nations Council hampered efficient decision-making, "they felt there was "an overwhelming prima facie case in favor of limitation of the directing body to the four principal powers..."¹⁰⁸³ According to the Foreign Office, a small executive remained essential "if there [was] to be any hope of attaining the necessary degree of unanimity and of discharging business expeditiously." The Foreign Office also believed the "relief executive [would] be [a] pattern for other analogous organs to be set up... under the aegis of the United Nations." And they worried that "any defects... in the first [international organization for the postwar period would] "inevitably be reproduced in the others." For this reason, the British opposed increasing the size of the Executive Committee to include the Dominions.¹⁰⁸⁴

To meet the concerns of Canada and Australia, the British proposed that these nations be permitted to participate in meetings of the Executive Committee on an ad hoc basis when discussing commodities that they might supply. These countries would also

¹⁰⁸² "Minute," Richard Law, June 30, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹⁰⁸³ Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO. On the inefficiencies of the League of Nations Council, see Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919-1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), see the many entries for the council in the index.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Telegram No. 4115, Relief No. 2, FO to DC, July 2, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

be appointed full members of any local branches of the Executive where their interests are of concern. Leith-Ross would have to manage Canada with extreme care if Ottawa was to be persuaded not to pursue “what appears to be her present intention to press for full membership on the Executive.” Leith-Ross was instructed to reserve Britain’s position on the matter while advocating a four-power directorate.¹⁰⁸⁵

But it soon became clear that Ottawa intended to play hardball. By contrast with the other Dominion Delegations in Washington, the Canadians displayed a focused interest in the Leith-Ross conversations.¹⁰⁸⁶ Lester Pearson requested that Canada be kept informed, and he extended an invitation for Leith-Ross to visit Ottawa. He also explained Ottawa’s unsympathetic attitude to British arguments designed to keep Canada off the Executive Committee. While he appreciated the problems Canadian membership would create with other countries, he told Leith-Ross that Canada had a “special claim to representation.”¹⁰⁸⁷ His complaint received further force in late July. Under instructions from the Canadian War Cabinet, Massey delivered a letter to the British stating Canada’s concerns over the establishment of the Combined Food Board and the Combined Production and Resources Board, which the United States and Great Britain had announced in June 1942 without consulting Canada.¹⁰⁸⁸ Massey’s letter made it clear that

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Telegram Relief No. 22, DC to FO, July 20, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Telegram No. 3640, Relief No. 8, DC to FO, July 9, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO; Telegram WA-1778, Minister in USA to SOSEA, July 20, 1942; Leith-Ross to Pearson, July 20, 1942; Pearson to SOSEA, July 20, 1942, all in File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Cabinet War Committee, Meeting No. 177, July 15, 1942, C-4874, Vol. 5676, RG2, LAC.

Canada preferred tripartite arrangements. Provision “should be made for full Canadian membership” on these Boards.¹⁰⁸⁹

Yet Massey’s letter also linked Canada’s demands to the country’s wartime contribution. Since 1939, Canada’s exports of farm products to Great Britain had more than doubled. In 1942, the export of food products to Britain would constitute 25 to 30 percent of overall Canadian production, compared with a mere six to eight percent from the United States. Now Canada supplied one-third of Britain’s “total food imports, including virtually all wheat and flour, three-quarters bacon, one half canned salmon, one quarter cheese, one sixth eggs” and much more. Massey complained that Britain had diverted orders from Canada to the United States utilizing lend-lease without properly notifying Ottawa, which made it difficult to plan production well in advance. Coordination between Canada and the United States had also been inadequate. Ottawa had made no protest over the war machinery set up earlier in the year, but this time Canada’s demands could not be met by reducing the country’s participation to the inclusion of Canadian experts on technical subcommittees. Next to the United States, Canada was the most important contributor of foodstuffs to the common pool of the United Nations.¹⁰⁹⁰

¹⁰⁸⁹ Copy of letter included in Telegram No. 1614, DO to Canada (HC), July 22, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ibid.

Britain's Strategic Foibles Vis-à-vis Ottawa

The British attitude towards Canada's assertiveness was ambivalent. The Ministry of Food disliked the idea of providing Ottawa full membership on the Food Board. The Combined machinery had only just begun to work: additional members might not only impair the Board's operations, it would lead to similar demands from other countries.¹⁰⁹¹ By contrast, Gladwyn Jebb, head of the economic and reconstruction office in the Foreign Office, preferred that Britain satisfy demands with respect to the Combined Food Board to make it easier for Ottawa "to agree not to be represented on any central executive committee for the Relief Organization." Because the Food Board was an "Anglo-American body," Canadian membership would not "give rise to great jealousies on the part of other states." But Jebb believed the relief organization constituted "a different kettle of fish." If Canada obtained membership on the executive committee, it would "give rise to acute political difficulties" with respect to other states and would undermine the agency's efficiency.¹⁰⁹²

These different views led to an incoherent strategy for managing the Canadian demands. While the Foreign Office hoped to link the two issues, the Ministry of Food controlled discussions of the Combined Food Board, and sent R.H. Brand of the British Food Mission in the United States to Ottawa for discussions at the very moment when Leith-Ross visited the city. Instead of negotiating from a point of view that would allow Britain to meet Ottawa's demands for membership on the Food Board in return for

¹⁰⁹¹ "Memo Handed to Mr. Norman Robertson by Mr. R.H. Brand in Ottawa," July 28, 1942, T188/252, PRO.

¹⁰⁹² Jebb to Liesching [DO], July 25, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

Canadian acquiescence to a four-power directorate of the relief agency, he did everything possible to encourage Canada to accept anything but full membership on the Board. He downplayed the Board's importance; proposed other means of linking the Canadian food agencies to authorities in Washington; and offered them the right to sit in on discussions of the Board when their interests were concerned. But with efficiency at the forefront of his mind, he not only neglected the issue of Canadian prestige, he offended their honor and thwarted his own efforts: the Food Board was not a North American entity; it was a global affair, and as such, Canada's interests were less than they assumed.¹⁰⁹³

This tactless approach denied Britain its most promising option and left Leith-Ross with little flexibility. According to his instructions, he had no ministerial authority to deviate from the Government's line. Ottawa would have to accept a four-power directorate with provisions permitting Canada membership on regional and functional subcommittees, and the right to attend meetings of the executive committee on an ad-hoc basis when matters of interest to them arose. He was also instructed to join Brand in his discussions of the Food Board with Canadian officials, but given no authority to digress from the Ministry of Food's position. As a result, Leith-Ross had no cookies to offer Canada apart from proposals of which they were already aware. If the Canadians reacted strongly against anything short of full membership, he was asked to report the matter fully to London.¹⁰⁹⁴ As we will see, this approach placed Great Britain in a precarious diplomatic position. By permitting the Ministry of Food's short-term concerns to override

¹⁰⁹³ "Memo handed to Mr. Norman Robertson by Mr. R.H. Brand in Ottawa," July 28, 1942, T188/252, PRO.

¹⁰⁹⁴ "Outward Telegram" No. 1635, DO to Canada [HC], July 25, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

long-term strategic considerations, Great Britain not only reduced its ability to appease Ottawa, it endangered its relationship with Canada.

Yet the problem posed risks for Canada. According to Leith-Ross, “only by a deliberate policy of making gifts could the Canadian economy be kept working at full capacity.”¹⁰⁹⁵ Wartime production had lifted the nation out of the depression, and to prevent degeneration after the war, the Canada would require outlets for its surplus production capacity. Relief constituted an option. However the need for export outlets remained linked to the country’s foreign exchange position vis-à-vis the United States and Great Britain. The Hyde Park Agreement had resolved the problem with the United States, but this would not apply after the war. To rectify the imbalances with Britain, Canada had made a one billion dollar gift to London in 1942, but this gesture, too, posed problems.¹⁰⁹⁶ The resulting budgetary constraints left the Government exposed politically. This situation would worsen if the Canadian people learned of the country’s marginal status in the allied wartime machinery. These dynamics left officials in Ottawa in a tricky position: they had to seek political satisfaction without risking economic stability.

Thus the Canadians approached their discussions with Leith-Ross carefully. On Monday, July 27, 1942, they gently warned him that a four-power directorate of the relief organization might lead to isolationism in certain countries, which would force the Great Powers or countries in need to pay cash for relief supplies from nations such as Canada.

¹⁰⁹⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation, Leolyn Dana Wilgress [Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce] and Leith-Ross, July 30, 1942, T188/252, PRO.

¹⁰⁹⁶ For a background discussion of the one billion dollar gift that explains Canada’s relations with Britain in financial and resource-related terms, see J. Hurstfield, *The Control of Raw Materials* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1953), 181-188.

A day later, the Canadians made it clear that this possibility ran counter to the interests of everyone involved. Norman Robertson and the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Graham Towers, argued that it would endanger Great Britain's foreign exchange position with Canada. Robertson told Leith-Ross that he "did not see how Canada would renew the billion dollar gift" to Britain. Towers maintained that Canada "could not decide what contribution she could make for relief until the general exchange position with the U.S. and the U.K. could be more clearly seen." Leith-Ross, in turn, highlighted the implications of relief for the Canadian economy. No official disputed this claim.¹⁰⁹⁷

However one Canadian official argued that this aspect of the question could not be considered in isolation of other problems. Douglas Alexander Skelton, the son of the former Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, O.D. Skelton, crystallized the whole dilemma in language that was both brutally realistic yet inoffensive. An economist and former Rhodes Scholar, Skelton had become Chief of the Research Department at the Bank of Canada at 29 years of age.¹⁰⁹⁸ The problem, in his view, was not economics – that could be solved – the problem was politics. Gifts of surpluses would certainly be the most effective method," he argued, but "it would be far from easy to get this accepted by the public – or by the political interests." For this reason, he thought the Relief Council "unsatisfactory." It "did not provide Canada with representation corresponding to its potential assistance to relief." If the "Relief Council was to be the pattern or the germ of

¹⁰⁹⁷ "Summary of Leith-Ross meetings in Ottawa, July 27-28, 1942," T188/252, PRO.

¹⁰⁹⁸ On Skelton, see W.A.M., "Douglas Alexander Skelton (1906-1950)," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 17, no. 1 (Feb., 1951): 89-91.

other and larger post-war organization,” he concluded, then it “would be very necessary for Canada to have more adequate representation.”¹⁰⁹⁹

On Wednesday, July 29, 1942, the discussions took a turn for the worse. The British position on Canada’s demands for full membership on the Combined Food Board proved decisive. At a meeting of the Canadian War Cabinet, Norman Robertson read a memorandum Brand prepared for the group, and the Ministers rejected the British proposal outright.¹¹⁰⁰ Apparently the document angered everyone. Even King evinced shock at the force of his Minister’s opposition.¹¹⁰¹ Experiences with the other Combined Boards had shown that representation must be provided for at the top level, not on insignificant subcommittees. According to Robertson, Brand’s proposal aroused such resentment that it negatively influenced the Cabinet’s opinion of the proposed relief organization. Neither arrangement provided Canada representation commensurate with the contribution everyone expected the country to make. As he put it, the Cabinet believed “a spirit of dictatorship inspired” both schemes.¹¹⁰² These sentiments awoke a furry that spilled over into Sir Frederick’s subsequent meetings with Canadian officials, first with Clifford Clark, Deputy Minister of Finance, and then with Norman Robertson.

Up to this point, the conversations with Leith-Ross had been subtle, measured, and polite, but Clifford Clark employed an abrupt, angry and threatening tone. He

¹⁰⁹⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation, Alex Skelton [Chief of Research Department at the Bank of Canada] and Leith-Ross,” July 30, 1942, T 188/252, PRO.

¹¹⁰⁰ Cabinet War Committee, Meeting No. 181, July 29, 1942, C-4874, Vol. 5676, RG2, LAC.

¹¹⁰¹ Minute of Meeting, Leith-Ross and Mackenzie King, July 30, 1942, PRO, T188/252, PRO.

¹¹⁰² “Memorandum of Conversation, William Clifford Clark [Deputy Minister of Finance], Norman Robertson [Under-SOSEA] and Leith-Ross, July 30, 1942, T188/252, PRO.

attacked the Combined Food Board vigorously. The United States and Great Britain had set up the “Board with complete disregard for Canada.” If the Canadian people became aware of what was taking place, he insisted there would be “a complete outburst.” Support for the war in Quebec had dropped precipitously.¹¹⁰³ The “attitude of the French Canadians” made it “all the more necessary” that Canada obtain proper representation on the Combined Food Board as well as the relief organization. “If it got about that Canada was being dragged at the heel of an Anglo-American dictatorship, Canadian public opinion might lose interest in the war.” Canada might also refrain “from active participation in relief work.” “It was a fact,” Clark explained, “that an isolationist tendency already existed in Canada and this could only be held in check by giving Canada both a position and responsibilities commensurate with its resources and its potential contribution.”¹¹⁰⁴

Clark warned of unfortunate consequences if the four-power Executive Committee stood as proposed. “Canada might not be one of the Great Powers,” he asserted, “but her position could be distinguished from that of the other United Nations. No other of these Nations had contributed so much... in the way of food, munitions and shipping.” Canada had been the only member of the United Nations to refuse lend-lease assistance. But now the Great Powers were ignoring Canada’s “special position.” Of the four powers to be included on the Executive Committee, three of them would be in dire need of the very assistance they expected Canada to provide. If these proposals were pursued, Clark warned, Ottawa would face “great difficulties” renewing “the billion

¹¹⁰³ Wade, *French Canadians*, 952-953, 956.

¹¹⁰⁴ “Memorandum of Conversation, William Clifford Clark, Norman Robertson and Leith-Ross, July 30, 1942, T188/252, PRO.

dollar gift” to Britain, and would have to purchase British industrial assets in Canada to keep London’s exchange position in balance. “Canada was not satisfied that the Four Powers had shown sufficient altruism to guide the destinies of the world,” he argued. “They had shown themselves in the past both selfish and meddling.”¹¹⁰⁵

Sir Frederick’s subsequent meetings with Norman Robertson and Mackenzie King were anticlimactic. The Undersecretary and Prime Minister simply reiterated Clark’s views, though with less panache. Political concerns would trump economic concerns no matter how detrimental it might be for Canada’s own economic interests: the country could only go as far as Parliament and public opinion would permit it. Canada should be given representation on the relief organization commensurate with its potential contribution. When Leith-Ross proposed that Canada be permitted membership on Subcommittees, Robertson argued that this formula had been tried elsewhere but failed.¹¹⁰⁶ When he proposed inviting Canada into meetings of the Executive Committee only on matters of interest to them, King confirmed what Clark had already said: “Canada would not be satisfied with being admitted by the back door while the Great Powers occupied the four-poster bed.”¹¹⁰⁷ The British Treasury official’s meetings in Ottawa ended in fiasco. As the British High Commissioner to Canada, Malcolm MacDonald put it, “Nothing that Sir Frederick Leith-Ross could say would modify the Prime Minister’s view.”¹¹⁰⁸

¹¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁰⁸ “Minutes of Meeting, Leith-Ross and Mackenzie King,” by Malcolm MacDonald, July 30, 1942, T188/252, PRO.

Though Sir Frederick remained far more sympathetic to Canada's position than it appeared, King made it clear that Britain would pay a hefty price if it failed to support Ottawa's demands. In addition to the cessation of wartime gifts to Britain, he threatened to play the United States and Great Britain off one another to Canada's advantage. "Opinion in some of the Dominions," he told Leith-Ross, "was tending to be alienated from the United Kingdom." As a result, these countries were looking to the United States for assistance. In fact, he claimed, there "was not the opposition to [Canada's claims to better representation on the Post-War Relief Organization] in Washington that they made out." Britain was the problem. Australia and New Zealand would certainly accept Canadian membership on the Executive Committee even if they were excluded.¹¹⁰⁹ Leith-Ross knew these assessments were true.

Before departing Ottawa on July 30, 1942, he visited the American Ambassador, Jay Pierrepont Moffat. With no freedom to make proposals of his own, he privately revealed the cleavage of opinion in the British government over the composition of the Executive Committee. He explained the problems Canada presented, and conveyed the views of Anthony Eden, who feared a return to Geneva if too many countries ended up on the Executive Committee. Yet personally he had "doubts as to whether the European nations would consent to giving Russia a quarter voice in their fate, or to giving Russia and China a half voice." This view, he said, accorded with Ottawa's. Canada had been adamant that the Great Powers could not expect others to "make their full contribution unless they are brought into the picture as principles." Ottawa, he argued, would most certainly make a big contribution if their views were met. It was in their interests to do

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

so. Otherwise their surpluses and industrial capacity would be of no economic benefit to the country. Sir Frederick knew the contents of his conversation would end up on Dean Acheson's desk, and that is precisely what happened.¹¹¹⁰

Acheson and Leith-Ross Maneuver to Postpone the Recall

But the immediate concern was Sir Frederick's recall. Leith-Ross and Acheson disapproved of this decision. The Assistant Secretary worried that Sir Frederick's departure would cause the whole project to get irretrievably bogged down in interdepartmental disputes. He told Leith-Ross that he "attached the utmost importance" to his remaining in Washington until they had thrashed out a proposal. Leith-Ross disliked the idea of having to face the Allied governments in exile empty-handed. If he returned with no agreement or progress to show for his time in Washington, they would most certainly recommence with independent purchases. At the end of July, the temporary suspension of purchases expired, and he believed it would be most difficult to prevent disintegration within the wartime alliance. He had hoped that an agreement could be reached among the four great powers before he returned, which could in turn be shared with the Allies along with future plans to call a conference of the United Nations to discuss the proposal.¹¹¹¹

¹¹¹⁰ "Memo of Conversation, Leith-Ross in Ottawa," by Jay Pierrepont Moffat, July 30, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹¹¹¹ Telegram Relief No. 27, DV to FO, July 31, 1942; see also Leith-Ross to Hopkins, August 4, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

Officials at the Treasury, Foreign Office, and Board of Trade acknowledged these concerns, but insisted that Leith-Ross return home. Their reasons were many. They did not know if Britain possessed sufficient leeway to press for further decentralization. The most recent language drafted to meet the concerns of the Board of Economic Warfare remained unsatisfactory: only after the Article VII negotiations had progressed could Great Britain discuss wider postwar economic issues. Concerns also remained over whether broad political and strategic questions could be delegated to the organization. Was the proposed machinery little more than a “façade under which the Director-General” would operate in close collaboration with the American and British governments? How would the agency interact with allied supply machinery? How would the demands of Canada and the smaller powers be met? These and other issues required the presence of Leith-Ross in London. Without personal conversations, they could not provide proper instructions or express the views of the British government.¹¹¹²

With pressure on Leith-Ross to return immediately, an ingenious stratagem was employed to buy time, yet its architect remains a mystery. On August 10, 1942, Sir Frederick informed the Foreign Office that Acheson had called a meeting of the interdepartmental meeting for the following day to reach agreement on a draft to be presented to the President. After receiving Roosevelt’s approval, the State Department intended to share the draft with the British, Chinese and Soviet governments. Acheson, Leith-Ross wrote, had asked him to remain in Washington to “see the President with him about” the relief proposal. “If I go back for consultation” now, Sir Frederick explained, this “procedure might still be followed in my absence.” The questions raised by the

¹¹¹² Telegram Relief No. 19, FO to DC, August 8, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

British Government could be settled with amendments if necessary at the next stage.¹¹¹³ Acheson may have designed this ploy: Leith-Ross, as we will see, provided him a tool with which to forge a compromise among the disputing departments. But Leith-Ross might also have been responsible. He wanted concrete results to show the Allies. But we will probably never have an answer: Leith-Ross never saw the President of the United States.¹¹¹⁴

Whatever the case, the Treasury and Foreign Office took the bait. On August 12, 1942, he received permission from White Hall to remain in Washington until he had met with Roosevelt, but he was asked to make it clear that Britain would probably raise additional points on the draft. The instructions also urged Leith-Ross to convince Roosevelt not to circulate the draft agreement to the Chinese and Russians until Britain had had the time to study the document.¹¹¹⁵ As we will see, this request was never met. Likewise, the British Treasury considered Sir Frederick's meeting with "the high authority" a chance to advocate for British concerns. A subsequent set of instructions urged Leith-Ross to tell the President that "general questions of post-war economic reconstruction should be dealt with in the Article VII conversations," which, according to the telegram, should remain "outside the scope of the relief administration."¹¹¹⁶

¹¹¹³ Telegram Relief No. 33, DC to FO, August 10, 1942, CAB 117/9, PRO.

¹¹¹⁴ Telegram Relief No. 44, DC to FO, August 22, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹¹⁵ Telegram Relief No. 23A, FO to DC, August 12, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹¹⁶ Telegram Relief No. 23, FO to DC, August 12; see also Note by S.D.W. [Waley], August 11, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

Finding a Procedure to Permit Allied Purchases

News of Sir Frederick's discussions in Washington created a series of new difficulties for the British back home. Even with the one-month moratorium on Allied purchases, the problem had unexpectedly generated a number of complications that threatened Britain's weakening balance-of-payments position. The British had always reserved the right to requisition supplies at cost if they were needed for the war effort and could not be purchased on the market. Yet they failed to analyze the complexity and financial implications of any such procedure. When the Ministry of Supply determined that leather and hemp could not be found on the market, they initiated procedures to requisition stocks, which the Dutch and Norwegians had purchased in South America using dollars.¹¹¹⁷ However Britain's weak dollar position led the Treasury and the Bank of England to propose that the materials be taken over on a barter basis. Britain would pledge to replace the leather and hemp, but if unable to do so within a specified time period, they would pay for the leather and hemp using dollars.¹¹¹⁸

The procedure appeared simple, but presented technical and financial difficulties. If at a later date, Britain procured the replacement leather and hemp using Sterling to preserve their dollars, the Bank of England would have to undertake a complex reverse

¹¹¹⁷ Gorvin to Steyne, June 19, 1942, Enclosure No. 5 to Dispatch No. 4469, Matthews to Hull, July 7, 1942, 840.50/481, Box 4797, RG 59, NARA.

¹¹¹⁸ Lithiby [Bank of England] to W.L. Fraser [Treasury], July 2, 1942; W.L. Fraser to Dudley Ward [Post War Requirements Bureau, MEW], July 2, 1942; F.G. Lee to Bretherton [Ministry of Supply], July 7, 1942, "Imports of Sole Leather from the U.S.A. and South America"; F.G. Lee to Playfair and Dunnett, July 7, 1942, "Sole Leather from South America"; Powell [Bank of England] to F.G. Lee, July 8, "Purchases of Sole Leather from South America"; E.W. Playfair to Powell, July 8, 1942, all in T160/1404/4, PRO.

transaction to meet payment agreement arrangements with South American countries.

Not only were such procedures time-consuming, Britain would have to inform the countries to prevent problems when the materials were exported. Notification would awaken them to Britain's financial weaknesses and leave England vulnerable to price exploitation.¹¹¹⁹ In any case, it was probable that Britain would pay higher prices when it entered the market to procure replacement materials: the days of surpluses had come to an end.¹¹²⁰ In view of Britain's contribution to the war effort, it seemed unjust that the invaded countries would be able to relieve their populations at a cheaper price, and that their unilateral actions would exacerbate England's finances no matter how London acquired the supplies it needed.

The United States constituted another obstacle. If Britain knew that a postwar purchasing program would soon be established – preferably a supply pool to avert exchange difficulties altogether – it would simply requisition the supplies using dollars or a reverse transaction.¹¹²¹ But absent a program, Britain faced the danger that either of these undesirable alternatives would become a precedent for innumerable requisitions in the future.¹¹²² The news of Leith-Ross's discussions left them dismayed. As one British official wrote, they “were going less well than we hoped.”¹¹²³ Even had the Americans shown a greater desire to integrate Sir Frederick's suggestions into the relief proposal, bureaucratic infighting within the American government probably would have made it

¹¹¹⁹ For discussion of reverse transaction, see Powell [Bank of England] to Playfair [Treasury], “Argentina,” July 10, 1942; E.W.P. [Playfair] to Dunnett and Lee, July 13, 1942; F.G.L. [Treasury] to Bretherton [Ministry of Supply], July 17, 1942, all in T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹²⁰ G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Fraser, July 9, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹²¹ On the point of a relief pool, see *Ibid.*

¹¹²² See G.S.D. to Lee, July 16, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹²³ Rink to Hooker, July 16, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

impossible. But that was irrelevant: the United States had money and resources. As we will see, cooperation between the two countries on planning for relief and purchasing had become increasingly asymmetric, with the British rarely taking action without informing Washington, and the Americans almost always acting unilaterally.

The question of Belgium adds a new dimension to these difficulties. While the Dutch and Norwegians repeatedly acted independently, the Belgians tried to cooperate. In early June, they informed officials in London that they hoped to purchase 200,000 tons of wheat in Canada, and promised to execute the transaction through Anglo-American supply authorities.¹¹²⁴ The proposal was difficult to refuse. Wheat was not in short supply; the Dutch had purchased a similar quantity; and everyone knew it would be harmful to obstruct purchases by an Ally attempting to cooperate.¹¹²⁵ But if the Belgians chose to demand delivery amidst the rush to replenish supplies in Europe after the war, it might lead to shipping shortages. And if they announced the purchases to accrue propaganda benefits, as they intended to do, other Allies might demand similar treatment, thereby precipitating shortages and forcing Britain to requisition wheat.

The Ministry of Supply conceived a solution, but the slow progress of the relief negotiations in Washington left them hesitant to propose it. Instead of permitting an outright purchase of wheat, they suggested buying wheat futures, which would be converted to actual wheat or flour out of British stockpiles held in Canada at call. In this way, the British would maintain control over the wheat and could coordinate competing

¹¹²⁴ Telegram 3191, Winant to Hull, June 8, 1942, 840.50/437, Box 4797, RG 59, NARA; Memorandum of Conversation, Interdepartmental Group and Leith-Ross, Fourth Meeting, July 10, 1942, FO371/31504, PRO.

¹¹²⁵ On the problems of refusing Belgium's request, see Telegram 3191, June 8, 1942, 840.50/437, NARA.

shipping demands.¹¹²⁶ Technically this procedure posed no difficulties, but as a matter of policy, the British questioned the advisability of this procedure with no assurance of a joint purchasing program or American acquiescence.¹¹²⁷ When the Belgians began to apply pressure, Leith-Ross presented the case to Acheson, who turned urgency into fluff.¹¹²⁸ “There is plenty of wheat available,” he wrote, and it “would be wise to encourage a country that is prepared to work through the Joint Supply Board.”¹¹²⁹ The Americans called the shots and the British had little choice but to let them do it.

British officials immediately maneuvered to guard their flank. Sir Frederick told the Belgians that any announcement must make a clear distinction between wheat and other supplies.¹¹³⁰ In London, his colleagues figured that the purchase of wheat futures could not be too harmful. A wheat pool had been established in 1941, which negated complaints from impecunious Allies who were incapable of entering the wheat market. While the Dutch had already purchased considerable wheat, British officials thought the Norwegians might be appeased if they were allowed to buy wheat futures too. So long as the facility were not extended to other commodities, the British thought all of the Allies should be permitted to use it.¹¹³¹ On August 1, 1942, the Foreign Office sought the approval of the State Department, which agreed.¹¹³² While this decision went far to

¹¹²⁶ “Supplies of Wheat and Flour to Belgium as Soon as that Country is in a Position to Receive Same,” June 29, 1942, Imported Cereals Division, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹²⁷ On concerns regarding the U.S., see Rink to Hooker, July 16, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹²⁸ See Richard to Leith-Ross, July 18, 1942; Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 21, 1942, both in T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹²⁹ Acheson to Leith-Ross, July 18, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹³⁰ Leith-Ross to Raoul Richard, July 20, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹³¹ G.S.D. to Waley, July 31, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹³² Telegram Relief No. 18, FO to DC, August 1, 1942, T160/1405, PRO.

mollify the Norwegians, it hardly resolved Great Britain's problems.¹¹³³ On August 2, 1942, the one-month moratorium on all other purchases, which Acheson had imposed upon the Netherlands and Norway, expired.¹¹³⁴

Without notifying the British, the Americans began designing proposals for the coordination of postwar purchases. Only when Leith-Ross inquired regarding the wheat futures did he learn of this activity.¹¹³⁵ The British now became concerned that the United States would unilaterally dump their proposals on the Allies without even bothering to consult them.¹¹³⁶ When the British sent a telegraph to Washington attempting to prevent this possibility, they learned that this was precisely what the Americans intended to do.¹¹³⁷ Acheson had planned to place the proposals before the Norwegian Ambassador to the United States on August 10, 1942 and the other Allies shortly thereafter. Only reluctantly did he agree to postpone delivery for 48 hours. If officials in London had suggestions, Leith-Ross wrote, they needed to "send them immediately." By the time this message arrived in London along with an outline of the American proposal, the British were left with a mere 24 hours to express their views.¹¹³⁸

The purchasing regime ignored the British Empire. It would apply exclusively to the Western Hemisphere and be centralized in Washington. The Norwegians, and possibly other Allied Governments, would be asked to notify the State Department of any proposed purchases, listing the quantity, grades desired, delivery dates, price limits and

¹¹³³ On Norway's reaction to this proposal, see Telegram Relief No. 24, FO to DC, August 12, 1942; Waley to Dunnet and Lee, August 18, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹³⁴ On this expiration, see Ronald to Ward, August 6, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹³⁵ Telegram Relief No. 31, DC to FO, August 5, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹³⁶ G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Waley, August 7, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹³⁷ Telegram Relief No. 20, FO to DC, August 8, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹³⁸ Telegram Relief No. 32, DC to FO, August 10, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

the source of supply. American officials would then, in conjunction with the British Embassy, consult the Food or Raw Materials Board to determine whether the items could be procured and the procedure to be utilized.¹¹³⁹

Commodities would be placed in one of three categories, which would dictate whether and how they could be procured. First, it would be forbidden to purchase materials in short supply deemed vital for the war effort. Second, the purchase of items not necessarily scarce, but that the Americans or British were buying or planning to purchase, would have to be coordinated with and executed according to procedures set by Washington. And finally, commodities in ample supply could be purchased freely. But to participate, countries would have to provide a list of all items already purchased or under contract, including the grade, quantities, and deliver dates.¹¹⁴⁰

The British reaction to the proposal speaks for itself. Officials worried, firstly, that the United States would provide the Allies lists of commodities in ample supply, which they could purchase freely. With the supply situation of commodities likely to change rapidly, they thought it wise to withhold any such list. But more importantly, they did not want to sell stocks of commodities they held in long supply, which were considered a potential source of reserve currency. They also sought to protect themselves against having to make requisitions. Secondly, they thought the Combined Shipping Board should be given the opportunity to express its views on the purchases: the British knew the shipping authorities would be more likely to block purchases. And finally, they thought the interim procedure should be broadened to include purchases anywhere, not only those in the Western Hemisphere. This suggestion served to avoid the appearance

¹¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

that Britain was not permitting purchases; to force the Americans to cooperate more closely with London; and to secure control and influence over purchasing in the Western Hemisphere.¹¹⁴¹

These proposals annoyed the Americans. They had no plans to share lists of commodities with the Allies and rejected the idea of giving the Combined Shipping Board veto powers over purchases. The Norwegians, who provided considerable shipping, would never accept this procedure, they argued, and it seemed unreasonable to reject purchases on prospective shipping difficulties. While they agreed to include purchases outside the Western Hemisphere, they only grudgingly accepted the British formula requiring the Allies to notify British supply authorities of their purchases. Yet they refused to include this procedure in the note to be conveyed to the Allied Ambassadors, choosing to tell them “orally that it will probably be found convenient that purchases in the Western Hemisphere are notified to the State Department and purchases in the British Empire to London departments concerned.” The British begged the Americans to hold the note to allow for time to study the proposals.¹¹⁴²

But they refused. On August 14, 1942, Hull shared the note with the Norwegians,¹¹⁴³ a day before the British received it.¹¹⁴⁴ While British officials judged it “sensible and satisfactory,” the Americans had neither consulted nor shared the procedure with any of the Dominions, most importantly Canada. With Ottawa threatening to reduce

¹¹⁴¹ Telegram Relief No. 24, FO to DC, August 12, 1942; see also Waley to Dunnett and Lee, August 18, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁴² Telegram Relief No. 24, FO to DC, August 12, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁴³ The SOS to the Norwegian Ambassador (Morgenstierne), August 14, 1942, 857.24/55a, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General, The British Commonwealth, The Near East* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 125-127.

¹¹⁴⁴ Telegram Relief No. 39, DC to FO, August 15, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

aid to Britain if Canada were not allowed membership on the Combined Boards and the Executive Committee of the relief organization, this failure threatened to exacerbate tensions between the two countries. The Americans also refused to limit how much the Allies could purchase, which increased Britain's exposure to requisition procedures and left them unwilling to sell stockpiles held in the British Empire. For Allies holding Sterling reserves, this decision took "away in substance" what the American note promised. The Americans also failed to extend the purchasing facilities to other Allies until much later. The Belgians received the note at the end of September. The delays left the Allies feeling they were not being treated equitably and Britain in the crosshairs of their scorn.¹¹⁴⁵

By early winter, the purchasing procedures were in place.¹¹⁴⁶ The Americans agreed that the note should be shared with the Dominions.¹¹⁴⁷ But apparently Acheson and Hull obstructed British efforts to win further concessions on other aspects of the American procedure. Sumner Welles intervened on London's behalf: to prevent future shipping problems, he secured an agreement permitting the allies to purchase no more than a six-month supply. He also pledged to keep the British Embassy informed of all purchase requests made with the State Department. No application would be forwarded to

¹¹⁴⁵ Waley to Dunnett and Lee, August 18, 1942; on Canada, see Telegram Relief No. 29, FO to DC, September 1, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁴⁶ The Norwegians agreed to the procedure relatively quickly: The Norwegian Ambassador (Morgenstierne) to the SOS, September 9, 1942, 857.24/66, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 137-138. The Belgians agreed to the procedure much later, but the purchasing note was not delivered to them until September 25, 1942. See The Belgian Ambassador (Van der Straten-Ponthoz) to the SOS, December 2, 1942, 855.24/53, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 151-152.

¹¹⁴⁷ Telegram Relief No. 52, DC to FO, September 4, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

the Combined Boards, he explained, until Britain had been properly informed.¹¹⁴⁸ In this way, the British would be able to relay whatever information they obtained to Ottawa when Canadian resources came in question. The British also prepared a parallel note on purchases, which they transmitted to all of the Allies at once.¹¹⁴⁹ Yet they failed to avoid the embarrassment of refusing to sell stocks in the British Empire while still suggesting they were open for business.

Ironically, the Dutch submitted the first request to utilize the new facilities.¹¹⁵⁰ While the subject of Anglo-American concern, they escaped the wrath levied against the Norwegians and continued their purchases. Apparently they ordered little in the Great Britain. When they came under the scrutiny of the Anglo-American supply authorities, they scratched their heads and procrastinated. The Dutch now wanted to try out the new procedure before accepting it, and they refrained from responding to the American memo until it became clear that the London agreed to the procedure as well. Within two days of receiving the British note on purchases, the Dutch formally agreed to cooperate – two months after the Americans delivered their memorandum and well after they had completed most of their purchasing.¹¹⁵¹ In time, all of the Allies would step into line. The problem of independent procurement vanished.

¹¹⁴⁸ Telegram No. 4799, The Acting SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), October 2, 1942, 840.50/709, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 140-141.

¹¹⁴⁹ The Chairman of the Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements (Leith-Ross) to the Assistant SOS (Acheson), September 4, 1942, 840.50/769, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 136 [see footnote].

¹¹⁵⁰ Telegram Relief No. 54, DC to FO, September 12, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁵¹ The Netherlands Ambassador (Loudon) to the SOS, October 23, 1942, 840.50/758, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 142.

Relief and its Relationship to Reconstruction

So long as Sir Frederick endeavored to limit the proposed agency's prerogatives to relief, the British Treasury agreed that he could remain in Washington until an agreement had been reached among the American departments.¹¹⁵² But two weeks earlier, he told Acheson that London might accept a "half-way" house between the Board of Economic Warfare's position and that of the American Treasury, which shared the views of the British Treasury, but for different reasons.¹¹⁵³ While they agreed that aid from the relief agency should come in the form of gifts, the American Treasury was not prepared to commit to pay for reconstruction prematurely. Instead, they hoped to use gifts and loans as carrots to win approval for America's postwar economic plans. Like the British Treasury, they did not want long-term reconstructions to become interminably bogged down in an international organization, and they knew that their functional expertise increased the likelihood that they would dominate the negotiations. Relief and reconstruction should therefore remain separate.¹¹⁵⁴

¹¹⁵² For Treasury view, see Telegram Relief No. 23A, FO to DC, August 12, 1942; Telegram Relief No. 23, FO to DC, August 12, 1942; G.S.D. to Waley, August 7, 1942; Note by S.D.W. [Waley], August 11, 1942, all in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁵³ "Sir Frederick Leith-Ross telephoned..." July 20, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹¹⁵⁴ Much of the information here is understood, but discussion of the two Treasuries' views can be found in the following documents: see contributions of Harry Dexter White in "Memo of Conversation," Interdepartmental Group and Leith-Ross, Fifth Meeting, July 15, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO; E Minutes 21, August 7, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA; "Post-War Relief," by Waley, August 4, 1942; Note by S.D.W. [Waley], August 11, 1942, latter two in T160/1404/5, PRO.

To bring the Treasury's view in line with that of the Board of Economic Warfare, Acheson prepared an alternative to the proposal provided by BEW on July 18, 1942.¹¹⁵⁵ His revision of Article I watered down their proposal, which gave the relief organization powers to "implement the objectives of the United Nations as expressed in the Atlantic Charter and United Nations declarations."¹¹⁵⁶ This language would have given the organization sweeping powers touching on almost every aspect of the postwar order from security to economic affairs. Acheson rejected this version. While retaining powers included in the original draft, namely, to "acquire, hold and convey property" and "to enter into contracts and undertake obligations," his new proposal gave the agency the right to "designate or create agencies and to review the activities of agencies so created." It then enumerated the specific functions in a second paragraph, consisting of three parts: one devoted to activities in recipient countries, one to the procurement of supplies, and one to future planning for the United Nations.¹¹⁵⁷

The first section granted the agency the power to "plan, coordinate, administer or arrange for the administration" of relief supplies, but it also stipulated what the organization could provide and the circumstances under which it could get involved in

¹¹⁵⁵ We are only aware of Acheson's revision proposed on July 24, 1942 via correspondence with Leith-Ross. The first copy of this revision cannot be found in either Acheson or Leith-Ross' files, but their discussions, taken with drafts utilized in late July, early August, and the final draft of August 13, 1942 permit one to ascertain quite precisely what he proposed. We first learn of Acheson's proposal in Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 28, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹¹⁵⁶ Copy of the original BEW proposal can be seen in Telegram Relief No. 21, DC to FO, July 18, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹⁵⁷ For the original BEW text, see Telegram No. 3703, Relief No. 12, DC to FO, July 14, 1942, PRO, FO 371/31501, PRO. For the earliest version of the new text in the documentary record, see Article I in "Relief and Rehabilitation Administration," Draft No. 2, July 29, 1942, T188/255 PRO.

reconstruction. The text permitted the agency the power to distribute “food, clothing, and other basic necessities,” and to provide for “housing facilities, and medical and other essential services.”¹¹⁵⁸ The construction of homes and the provision of essential services implied a degree of reconstruction. But to the disappointment of Leith-Ross, it made no provision for industrial reconstruction, though it implicitly permitted the agency to begin rebuilding industries that might provide relief supplies.¹¹⁵⁹ As Acheson explained, the agency could reconstruct firms in Poland’s lumber industry if it provided material for housing, but it could not support companies seeking to export.¹¹⁶⁰ Here Sir Frederick failed to obtain for the agency any additional powers over industrial reconstruction, but managed to get fuel and transportation included in the list of supplies and services the agency could provide.¹¹⁶¹

To Sir Frederick’s dismay, the second section provided the organization very little control over procurement. Apart from its right to acquire materials, it would be allowed to “formulate and recommend measures for... the coordination of purchasing, the chartering of ships and other procurement activities in the period following the cessation

¹¹⁵⁸ See Article I, Paragraph 2(a) in “Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” Draft No. 2, July 29, 1942, T188/255, PRO.

¹¹⁵⁹ For evidence of Leith-Ross’ dissatisfaction, see Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 28, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA; Telegram Relief No. 28, DC to FO, July 31, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹⁶⁰ E Minutes 21, August 7, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

¹¹⁶¹ Evidence of Leith-Ross proposal to include fuel and transportation can be found in: Telegram Relief No. 28, DC to FO, July 31, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO. This language was accepted: see Article I, Paragraph 2(a) in “Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” Draft No. 2, July 29, 1942, T188/255, PRO. Oddly, the version of telegraphed to London on July 31, 1942 does not include fuel and transportation, which suggests that Leith-Ross may have been lying to his superiors in the aforementioned Telegram Relief No. 28. Perhaps he hoped to give the impression that the Americans had accepted at least one of his proposals. But given the repeated instances in which the Americans rejected his suggestions, this may be untrue. Without a copy of Acheson’s language of July 24, 1942, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions.

of hostilities.”¹¹⁶² But these arrangements disregarded the issue of independent purchases during the war, and failed to stipulate machinery to coordinate the purchase and allocation of supplies after the war. The agency would have to seek authority from its members to play a role here.¹¹⁶³ For British supply authorities, who wanted to know the organization’s relationship with Anglo-American supply machinery, and whether these arrangements would persist after the war, this issue had been front and center.¹¹⁶⁴ Leith-Ross and others thought more international machinery would be required, but the Americans had no intention of surrendering control over their resources. As such, Sir Frederick believed the agency would not be able “to take effective action.”¹¹⁶⁵

Sir Frederick also came up short with respect to the controversial third section, which Acheson prepared to appease the Board of Economic Warfare while not offending the Treasury. It gave the agency the power “to formulate and recommend for individual or joint action... measures with respect to related matters” arising out of the experience of “planning and performing the work of relief and rehabilitation.” While the nebulous phrase “related matters” was used instead of “long-term reconstruction” to avoid

¹¹⁶² See Article I, Paragraph 2(b) in “Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” Draft No. 2, July 29, 1942, T188/255 PRO.

¹¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁴ This matter will be discussed latter, but on this point, see Maud [MOF] to Dyson [Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief Department], July 23, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO; Rink [MOF] to Ward [MEW], August 17, 1942; Nicholson [Ministry of Transport] to Ward, August 18, 1942; “Cable to British Food Mission,” August 19, 1942, all in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁶⁵ Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 28, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA. It should be noted that one American, the Ambassador to Great Britain, John Winant, also expressed a similar concern, but from a different angle. He was concerned that the draft provided no procedure for the DG to use existing Combined Boards to obtain the supplies and resources he would need to execute his responsibilities. See Telegram No. 4712, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, August 23, 1942, 840.50/605, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 133-135.

provoking Congress, the section also stipulated that any proposals would have to be approved “by unanimous vote of the Policy Committee.”¹¹⁶⁶ In this way, Washington could block undesirable proposals. Even with the veto procedures, Leith-Ross thought the proposal went too far, as did his colleagues in London.¹¹⁶⁷ It would be embarrassing to obstruct the desires of other great powers, particularly the United States, they thought.¹¹⁶⁸ Sir Frederick tried to secure changes, but here again he failed.¹¹⁶⁹

Yet he still believed Britain should accept these provisions. While everyone recognized that Article VII negotiations had to begin before the wider aspects of reconstruction could be taken up, public opinion in the United States remained more disposed to provide relief than to understand complex problems such as remedying exchange difficulties. The purpose of the final section of the Article I, Leith-Ross explained, was to provide interim measures should action not be taken elsewhere. And if actions were taken, he maintained that measures would be required to coordinate them with relief efforts.¹¹⁷⁰ Keynes, in fact, had been discussing the sell of relief supplies in

¹¹⁶⁶ See Article I, Paragraph 2(c) in “Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” Draft No. 2, July 29, 1942, T188/255, PRO. Acheson discusses the meaning of this text in E Minutes 21, August 7, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

¹¹⁶⁷ On Leith-Ross concerns, see Leith-Ross to Acheson, July 28, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA; Telegram Relief No. 28, DC to FO, July 31, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹¹⁶⁸ S.D.W. [Waley] to Henderson and Keynes, August 4, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁶⁹ Acheson apparently accepted changes to Article I, Paragraph 2(c), but the evidence suggests that the Board of Economic Warfare rejected these proposals. On August 5, 1942, Leith-Ross informed Harold Caustin that Acheson had approved the changes and sent them to Perkins and Riefler for their approval. The final draft clearly indicates that no changes occurred between the draft of July 29, 1942 and the August 13, 1942 draft. See “Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” Draft No. 2, July 29, 1942, T188/255, PRO; “Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Draft No. 2, August 13, 1942,” 840.50/995, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 121-124.

¹¹⁷⁰ Telegram Relief No. 35, DC to FO, August 13, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

liberated territories to mop up excess liquidity.¹¹⁷¹ Presumably efforts of this nature would have to be synchronized with plans for long-term reconstruction. But if Britain opposed using the relief agency for such purposes, the draft provided an opportunity to veto such proposals.¹¹⁷²

Leith-Ross highlighted the dangers of placing relief and reconstruction in separate watertight compartments. After the last war, the failure to consider relief and industrial production as a single problem led to the depreciation of exchanges, which in turn, precipitated revolutionary conditions in Europe. It would be foolish, he argued, to encourage the Americans to consider these two facets of the postwar world separately.¹¹⁷³ It would play into the hands of elements in Washington prepared to provide relief at no cost to starving people, but who wanted cash or at least repayment for anything else.¹¹⁷⁴ The Board of Economic Warfare, Sir Frederick explained, stood opposed to this view. Despite their injudicious methods, individuals like Milo Perkins and Winfield Riefler would be Britain's greatest allies when it comes to Article VII. It would be wise to encourage them, Sir Frederick argued, by agreeing to the formula provided in Article I. Britain should capitalize on American goodwill and leave open its extension to reconstruction.¹¹⁷⁵

¹¹⁷¹ See Keynes to Playfair and Waley, July 15, 1942, T 247/90, PRO; see also handwritten note at bottom of "Minute" by Jebb, July 22, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹¹⁷² Telegram Relief No. 35, DC to FO, August 13, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹¹⁷⁴ In addition to Telegram Relief No. 35, for discussion of this matter, see E Minutes 21, August 7, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

¹¹⁷⁵ Telegram Relief No. 35, DC to FO, August 13, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

Setbacks on Decentralization and the Emergence of a new British Strategy

If Leith-Ross considered the New Dealers potential allies in the Article VII negotiations, they did not help him in his efforts to decentralize the relief agency's operations. At the very moment when Leith-Ross thought the issue had been settled among the Americans, Riefler and Appleby launched a further attack on the regional committees. Riefler so disliked them that he preferred their deletion altogether. Appleby worried that the drafting of Article III of the agreement suggested a degree of freedom for the regional committees not granted to the technical committees.¹¹⁷⁶ While the agreement stipulated how members of the technical committees would be chosen – the Policy Committee would nominate them for approval by the Council – it said nothing of this sort with respect to the regional committees. Of course Leith-Ross preferred this distinction: the members of the Inter-Allied Committee, which would become the European regional committee, had been chosen.¹¹⁷⁷ This drafting implied independence and legitimacy.

Hostile to this idea, the Americans proposed a new Article III. Instead of providing two paragraphs, one each for the technical and regional committees, it grouped them together under the rubric “standing committees” of the Council. It described no procedure for choosing their members, except that they would come from the Council, unless an individual with competence in a given functional area were needed. Leith-Ross, who thought appointments should reside with governments, protested. But Acheson thwarted him. The draft, he explained at the final meeting of the Interdepartmental

¹¹⁷⁶ “Minute” by Leith-Ross for Caustin, August 5, 1942, T188/255, PRO.

¹¹⁷⁷ See Article III, paragraphs 4 and 5 of “Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” Draft No. 2, July 29, 1942, T188/255, PRO.

Committee on August 11, 1942, provided that the committees would be made up of “members of the Council, or their alternates, representing the member governments directly concerned.” Although the new draft still stated that the Inter-Allied Committee would become the regional committee for Europe, it not only made it clear that its powers would be advisory; it established its subservience to the Council.¹¹⁷⁸

These changes would be unacceptable to the Allied Governments, Leith-Ross argued, but he realized the futility of his efforts.¹¹⁷⁹ He came to believe the Allies would protest, and that decentralization would “more likely to be achieved through the pressure of events and the need for prompt action than by discussions now.” He advised his government to wage no protest at the moment. Why waste ammunition when others will surely wage the battle on Britain’s behalf? If necessary, the United Kingdom could always submit amendments later.¹¹⁸⁰ Indeed his colleagues in London were arriving at similar conclusions, though several of them remained unconvinced that the proposal was anything other than a “façade to screen the Director General.”¹¹⁸¹ Leith-Ross tried to allay fears by arguing that the arrangement drew upon American constitutional practice. “It has not been easy to get agreement on the maintenance of the Inter-Allied Committee

¹¹⁷⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation,” Interdepartmental Committee and Leith-Ross, Sixth Meeting, August 11, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO; for the new language, see Article III, paragraph 4, of “Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Draft No. 2, August 13, 1942,” 840.50/995, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 121-124.

¹¹⁷⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” Sixth Meeting, August 11, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹¹⁸⁰ Telegram Relief No. 35, DC to FO, August 13, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; on Leith-Ross’s views, see also S.D.W. [Waley] to Horace Wilson, “Post-War Relief and Economic Reconstruction,” August 17, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁸¹ S.D.W. [Waley] to Dunnett and Keynes, “Relief Organization,” August 12, 1942. The quote is from Telegram Relief No. 35, DC to FO, August 13, 1942, but the concern was put to Leith-Ross in Telegram Relief No. 19, FO to DC, August 8, 1942, all in T160/1404/5, PRO.

in London,” he asserted.¹¹⁸² It would be wise to show restraint. But the shrewdest officials, notably John Maynard Keynes, remained unconvinced.¹¹⁸³

The wait-and-see approach may have seemed practical, but it revealed a degree of wishful thinking. From the start, the Russians had emphasized the importance of drawing a fine line between the policy-making functions of the organization and the operational side, and the Americans never passed up an opportunity to inform them that the Soviet proposals influenced their ideas on this matter. The Russians also hated the Inter-Allied Committee and remained determined to sabotage it. Maisky informed Keynes of this in early July.¹¹⁸⁴ As a result, it seemed unlikely that the Soviet Union would support any scheme that increased the executive powers of the regional committees. Unless the Chinese embraced the British view – an unlikely event in view of China’s dependence on the United States for wartime material – London had little chance of achieving its objective. Even if the Allies protested, changes remained doubtful if the Americans, Chinese and Russians all opposed decentralization. Leith-Ross, who was well aware of the Soviet position, remained unconvinced.¹¹⁸⁵

¹¹⁸² “Extract from letter dated 6th August from Sir Frederick Leith-Ross,” August 6, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁸³ Keynes was so dismayed by the American structure that he put forward his own proposal to modify the arrangements. See “U.S. Proposals for the Establishment of a United Nations Relief Organization,” by Keynes, August 10, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO. On August 24, 1942, Dunnett complained that the regional committees had been made weaker than before, but then on September 1, 1942, he said that it was “significant that the European Regional Committee is conceived as Leith-Ross’s Inter-Allied Committee.” However, the latter statement was written to calm Keynes down. See G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Waley, August 24, 1942; G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Keynes, September 1, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁸⁴ Keynes to Ronald, July 8, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹¹⁸⁵ The FO informed Leith-Ross of this position on July 13, 1942. Telegram No. 4286, Relief No. 8, July 13, 1942, FO to DC, T160/1404/4, PRO.

The Russian Views Begins to Emerge

The Russian view of the early draft agreements remains difficult to ascertain without access to Soviet documents, but their thinking can be deduced with some precision by assessing their behavior and conversations with American and British officials. Until August 1942, the Russians had had few discussions with the Americans about postwar relief. Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, admitted he was unfamiliar with the topic. Ivan Maisky, their Ambassador to Great Britain, played the central role for Russia. He doggedly implemented his Government's refusal to have any relationship with the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements, and managed the diplomacy surrounding the January 1942 Soviet proposal for an international relief organization. If this document constituted an obstructionist ploy, then it makes little sense to assign it much significance when determining Moscow's attitude toward the American plan. The first hints of Russia's position emerged in July during interviews Maisky conducted with Anthony Eden and John Maynard Keynes.

The session with Keynes revealed more than the meeting with Eden. Maisky informed the Foreign Secretary that he supported the four-power Policy Committee. He also voiced opposition to establishing the organization in Washington.¹¹⁸⁶ But with Keynes, he argued that it would be "a mistake to unite planning and policy with the operating body."¹¹⁸⁷ This procedure had not been followed with the Soviet State Planning Committee, or Gosplan, as he put it, and it had been a "great mistake." The task of

¹¹⁸⁶ Eden to Kerr, July 7, 1942, U 86/12/73, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹¹⁸⁷ Telegram No. 4286, Relief No. 8, July 13, 1942, FO to DC, T160/1404/4, PRO.

allocating supplies between different applicants and that of organizing purchase, transport, and distribution would require different skills and contacts. The former, as Keynes described the Ambassador's view, involved "high politics." "It does not much matter who is the engine-driver for the supplies, if their destination has been settled elsewhere." Maisky consequently displayed an open mind towards the question of who would distribute relief in a given country. It might be the occupying army, the incoming government, or the relief agency, depending on circumstances and opportunity.¹¹⁸⁸

When describing the Ambassador's position, Keynes left the interpretation of it open to the reader. "You will see the inwardness of it without my having to say any more." If the Soviet Government embraced the position of Maisky, he insinuated, then its greatest concern was readily apparent. Moscow would want resources directed to areas of primary interests to the Soviet Union, and on the receiving end it would insist upon no interference from the individuals responsible for the allocation of supplies. The problem, as Keynes analyzed it, was that this view ran counter to the position of the Director General, which "seems to presuppose something else."¹¹⁸⁹ His colleague at the Treasury, Richard Hopkins, identified the same problem. "There is obviously a question of high politics lurking in this matter. One of the questions at any rate is whether Russia... will fall for this. I should have expected that Russia would wish to be administrator of relief in Eastern European countries."¹¹⁹⁰ But Leith-Ross believed it would be impossible to divorce allocation and delivery completely. Supplying countries, particularly the United

¹¹⁸⁸ Keynes to Ronald, July 8, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁰ R.V.N.H. [Hopkins], "Telegram Relief 11 and 12," July 16, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

States, would not provide their resources without a voice in regard to their distribution.¹¹⁹¹

When Maisky received a copy of the relief plan on July 23, 1942, his opinion hardened.¹¹⁹² Yet much of his critique revolved around facts not explicitly stated in the draft proposal. As he told Eden on August 12, 1942, he was “far from convinced that the headquarters of the proposed organization should be in Washington, still less that the Director-General should necessarily be an American.” No article of the agreement made any mention of such arrangements. But taken with what was stated, the plan frightened Maisky. The Director-General would be an individual of “enormous importance,” he forewarned, and he would have the “right to appoint his own staff.” “This,” he cautioned, “might mean that the majority of the staff might well be American, too.” If the Director-General then had responsibility for both the planning and execution of relief schemes, the United States could dominate the organization. Eden, who admitted his unfamiliarity with the relief proposal, asked Gladwyn Jebb to address Maisky’s concerns.¹¹⁹³

Jebb’s reply did little to comfort the Russian. When he alluded to Washington’s preeminence in resources, a fact that made it difficult to resist “an American claim to preside over the machinery for relief distribution,” Maisky countered that it would be “equally logical to maintain that those which had the greatest sacrifices in the Allied cause should be those which had the greatest say in relief policy and administration.” Yet his anxiety betrayed his awareness of brute realities: past sacrifice in no way guarantees future influence. Jebb claimed that the proposed organization did not but should have

¹¹⁹¹ Telegram No. 3701, Relief No. 13, DC to FO, July 14, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹¹⁹² Ronald to Maisky, July 23, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

¹¹⁹³ Eden to Kerr, August 12, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

regional directors and councils with “full and recognized powers both of policy and execution.” Maisky welcomed this proposal as a step in the right direction, but said it failed to address his main concern. “It might well be that the Americans would hold that because they commanded the resources they should therefore in the last resort dictate policy.” “That argument,” he asserted, “should be vigorously resisted.”¹¹⁹⁴

Eden tried to convince Maisky of the important role the United States would have to play. He expressed his fear that the American people might fail to shoulder their responsibilities as they had done after the last war. Anything that convinced them not to “run out of the peace” was good. Maisky seemed to accept the idea that the Americans would necessarily have a major say in what funds were apportioned and how they would be allocated between the various areas of relief. But cynicism and ideology consumed him. It would be foolish, he asserted, not to assume that the Roosevelt Administration would be replaced by “some ill-disposed Republican regime.” “The idea that Wall Street would get control of the Relief Organization filled him with dismay.” If the agency were constituted along American lines, “it would provide a very potent weapon for American imperialists, who might attempt to put a pistol to the head of the various smaller nations and say that unless they agreed to the American policies they would get no relief.”¹¹⁹⁵

There is no indication that Maisky expressed the views of his Government, but there is plenty of reason to believe he shared his opinions with Moscow, which became the Russian policy. On August 20, 1942, Litvinov requested a meeting with Acheson. As the Assistant Secretary was preparing to depart for vacation, Adolf Berle fielded a “string

¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid. Maisky’s views are also outlined briefly in S.D.W. to Wilson, Post-War Relief and Economic Reconstruction, August 17, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹¹⁹⁵ Eden to Kerr, August 12, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

of questions” from the Russian Government. Moscow viewed the relief proposal with brute realism. As such, Litvinov made not one single inquiry about the Council or the Policy Committee. He wanted to know, first and foremost, where the organization would be situated, and the location from which the Director General would operate. Who would appoint this individual, he asked, and from what nation would he come? The Americans had never informed the Russians of their plan to seat the agency in Washington, nor had they made it clear that an American would serve as Director General. Maisky must have learned these facts from Keynes. While Berle confirmed these plans for Litvinov, he imputed them to British desires.¹¹⁹⁶ Acheson, however, curiously attributed the idea of an American Director General to both Great Britain *and* the Soviet Union.¹¹⁹⁷

The Russians were looking for areas where they could drive a wedge between London and Washington. Litvinov wanted to know whether the relief proposal incorporated British suggestions. Berle and Acheson wisely evaded the question, but made it clear that the draft of August 13, 1942 was “American.” With this non-specific reply, Litvinov struggled to identify disputes that could be exploited to Russia’s advantage. At this juncture, there appeared to be no divisions over the composition of the Policy Committee, and Litvinov, as we have seen, didn’t even raise the question. With one exception, the Soviet Union’s belief that the policy and operational aspects of the relief problem should be distinct from one another squared well with the American view. The regional committees, Berle confirmed, would only be advisory. The Director General would preside over the Policy Committee, but would not vote in its decisions. It was

¹¹⁹⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Berle),” August 20, 1942, 840.50/617, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 128-130.

¹¹⁹⁷ “Memorandum by Assistant SOS Acheson to Assistant SOS Berle,” August 21, 1942, 840.50/617, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 130-132.

nonetheless conceivable that members of the Director General's staff might come from the Council, though Acheson admitted that no thought had even been given to this idea.¹¹⁹⁸

The Russians wanted to maximize their influence, minimize threats to their interests, and obtain as many resources as possible. Circumventing and surveying the Director General were means to these ends. After learning that the Director General would not be permitted a vote on the Policy Council, which would have given him more power to influence where and how resources would be dispensed, Litvinov inquired whether there would be Deputy Director Generals? As we will see, his Government hoped to place Russians at the highest levels of the organization. The Ambassador also asked how the members of the various committees would be chosen. Here, too, his Government wanted to ensconce in key places individuals friendly to the Soviet Union. Most revealing, Litvinov wanted to know who would determine the sums that might be required of local governments. But he left the United States out of the equation. Would it be the regional committees or the local governments, he asked? Berle replied that it was difficult "to see how any government would give any committee a blank check on its treasury." "Presumptively, negotiations with the local government were indicated." Acheson agreed.¹¹⁹⁹

¹¹⁹⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Berle)," August 20, 1942, 840.50/617; "Memorandum by Assistant SOS Acheson to Assistant SOS Berle," August 21, 1942, 840.50/617, both in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 128-132.

¹¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Preparing for the Next Stage

After months of maneuvering, Acheson laid out procedures for the endgame. The draft agreement, he told Leith-Ross, would be put before the departments involved in the discussions for final approval. Once their acquiescence had been obtained, he would send the document to Roosevelt, seeking his agreement to formally share it with the British, Chinese and Russians. Your presence at that meeting, he told Sir Frederick, would “probably be desirable.” However, *formal* discussions among the four great powers would not place: if disagreements arose, they would have to be resolved *informally* to avoid publicity. Once this process had played out, the United States would communicate the draft to the United Nations, with the intention of calling a conference sometime after the November 1942 elections. In the meantime, various other aspects of planning would continue, but he told Leith-Ross that discussions on coordinating these activities with London should be avoided for the moment to prevent additional roadblocks to achieving a consensus in the American government.¹²⁰⁰

Events unfolded much as Acheson planned, but not without delays. On August 11, 1942, the interdepartmental committee met for the last time. The group made several legalistic changes to the draft, the most important of which permitted the Free French to sign the agreement. Harry Dexter White also convinced the committee to add provisions requiring the Director General to make periodic reports “with a view to securing merited and valuable publicity.” But he made it clear that the Treasury could not sign off on the draft until the Secretary, Henry Morgenthau, had reviewed it. Leith-Ross maintained that

¹²⁰⁰ Minute by Leith-Ross for Caustin, August 5, 1942, T188/255, PRO.

his “personal approval of the draft” in no way precluded his government “from raising questions of detail.” The status of the regional committees worried him immensely. The “European Allied governments would not like the present form.” His “mental reservations” aside, he would not “press his objections.” At this juncture, the New Dealers constituted the greatest threat. The Vice President wanted the draft considered at the next meeting of the Board of Economic Warfare. Acheson demurred. I “hope it will not be necessary to delay presentation of the draft to the President to that extent.”¹²⁰¹

Two days later, Milo Perkins informed Acheson that the Board of Economic Warfare would consider the draft on August 18, 1942. The Assistant Secretary was invited, but the message was unambiguous: they would consider the draft with or without him.¹²⁰² Thus at 10 AM on that day, Acheson defended the relief agreement before a meeting of the Board in Henry Wallace’s office on Capital Hill. Miraculously, the New Dealers presented no opposition. But because the jury included departments excluded from the interdepartmental committee, Acheson faced opposition. The Under Secretary of War, Robert Patterson, objected to Article IV of the draft on grounds that the “relationship of responsibility of the armed forces and the Director General following reoccupation” lacked clarity. Those present jumped on the bandwagon and Wallace asked

¹²⁰¹ “Memorandum of Conversations,” Interdepartmental Group and Leith-Ross, Final Meeting, August 11, 1942, FO 371,31504, PRO.

¹²⁰² Perkins to Acheson, August 14, 1942, File #1 – Board of Economic Warfare Minutes of Meetings of EDB & BEW, reports, etc. filed at meetings (Part II), Box 2, REW, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Acheson to change the draft to meet their concerns.¹²⁰³ The new version of Article IV stipulated that “while hostilities or other military necessities exist in any area,” the “relief administration and its director general shall not undertake activities therein without the consent of the Military Commander in that area.”¹²⁰⁴

This change was inevitable. Three days prior to Acheson’s meeting with the BEW, Leith-Ross had received a telegram from the Foreign Office stating that British military authorities had problems with Article IV as well. They were planning to undertake emergency relief operations and the relationship between the relief organization and the occupying militaries required clarification. Leith-Ross was therefore instructed to clear up the matter “at once.”¹²⁰⁵ The American War Department’s intervention evoked applause in London, especially among officials at the Treasury, who assumed that relief distributed by the British military would qualify for lend-lease. For this reason, numerous officials in London hoped that the occupying militaries would maintain responsibility for relief as long as possible.¹²⁰⁶ According to Acheson, the American War Department agreed with this idea, but he thought it somewhat unrealistic. The soldiers on the ground carrying out this work, he insinuated, would want to come

¹²⁰³ “Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Economic Warfare Held August 18, 1942,” File #1 – Board of Economic Warfare Minutes of Meetings of EDB & BEW, reports, etc. filed at meetings (Part II), Box 2, REW, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹²⁰⁴ Telegram Relief No. 43, DC to FO, August 22, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁰⁵ Telegram Relief No. 25, FO to DC, August 15, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁰⁶ On lend-lease, see GS.D. [Dunnet] to Wood, August 24, 1942; S.D.W. [Waley] to Playfair, August 25, 1942; Playfair to Bewley, August 26, 1942, all in T160/1404/5, PRO.

home. He also evinced concern that the American military, unlike their British counterparts, had done nothing to begin preparing for emergency relief operations.¹²⁰⁷

In August, another relationship of critical importance remained unresolved. For weeks, officials in the British Ministries of Food, Supply and War Transport had been criticizing the draft agreement for its failure to address the problems of procurement and supply allocation. According to one complaint, U.S. authorities were not “giving enough weight to the need for making full use of existing agencies.”¹²⁰⁸ British authorities worried that the relief organization might undermine the Combined Boards, which had been established to centralize procurement and coordinate resource allocations with Allied war strategy. Article IV of the draft agreement empowered the Director General to create an emergency organization to purchase and assemble supplies. “It would be more than unfortunate,” one official wrote, “if the Director-General did in fact create” a rival “organization, particularly while hostilities were still continuing in some parts of the world.” If this occurred, the agency might become a competitor in a field where authorities had been working to eliminate competition and prevent uncoordinated purchasing.¹²⁰⁹

These officials wanted the organization’s relationship with the existing supply agencies defined precisely. In their view, the agency should be a client of the Combined Boards just as the Ministries of Food, Supply and War Transport, which were required to

¹²⁰⁷ On American and British military preparatory activities, see Telegram Relief No. 40, DC to FO, August 18, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; Note of Conversation, Leith-Ross and Acheson, August 20, 1942, T188/255, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 30, FO to DC, September 4, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁰⁸ Hurcomb [Ministry of War Transport] to Salter [British Merchant Shipping Mission, Washington], July 20, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹²⁰⁹ Rink to Ward, August 17, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

submit their requirements and proposed purchases for approval by the Boards. Otherwise the agency would compete for the same supplies and shipping resources without any coordination. In constructing an emergency procurement organization, the Director General would duplicate existing machinery and make demands on scarce personnel. If the matter were not “settled at the present stage,” British officials worried that the Americans might use the relief agreement to unilaterally assume responsibility for the procurement and allocation of supplies.¹²¹⁰ Officials may also have feared these arrangements would invite other Allies into the decision-making process. Either outcome would dilute Britain’s influence. These concerns, in fact, influenced the decision to recall Leith-Ross for consultations before possible four-power talks.¹²¹¹

Sir Frederick’s reaction to these worries must not have been reassuring. While the Americans agreed that the relief agency would have to be “linked up” with the Combined Boards, Acheson thought it ill advised to hold up the draft to resolve the problem.¹²¹² Leith-Ross concurred, but in missives to various British officials he rejected the idea that current supply arrangements could persist after the war. If the Combined Boards remained a bilateral affair, the Allies would regard them as instruments of “Anglo-American imperialism rather than of international cooperation.” Membership on the Boards would have to be widened. The “United Kingdom and perhaps also the United States” would “have to submit their own supplies and shipping programs to the control of this International Organization.” If Sir Frederick’s belief that such arrangements would

¹²¹⁰ Ibid.; E.M. Nicholson [Ministry of War Transport] to Dudley Ward [MEW], August 18, 1942; “Copy of Cable to British Food Mission 19-8-42”; “Copy of Cable to British Food Mission 20-8-42,” all in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²¹¹ Telegram Relief No. 19, FO to DC, August 8, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²¹² Telegram Relief No. 35, DC to FO, August 13, 1942; Telegram Relief No. 38, DC to FO, August 14, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

be accepted illustrates a certain disconnect with reality, his contention that “it should not be difficult for us to get our way” exhibits an equal degree of wishful thinking. His colleagues had refused to submit any programs to the Inter-Allied Committee, and the Americans had obstructed most if not all of his ideas for the relief organization.¹²¹³

By the third week of August, Acheson had secured agreement to the draft from all of the departments involved. The Treasury and the Department of Agriculture consented to its terms. Oscar Cox of the Lend-Lease Administration convinced his boss, Edward Stettinius, to accept the draft, but he thought Roosevelt should not announce it until it had the authority to execute it: doubtless he hoped the Lend-Lease Act might provide a means to this end.¹²¹⁴ Most importantly, the New Dealers had accepted the agreement. If the Board of Economic Warfare erected barriers from the beginning, the meeting of August 18, 1942 in the Vice President’s office proved a boon. Not only did it permit Acheson an opportunity to secure support from the Army and Navy, he could now legitimately argue to the President that all of the relevant departments in his Administration were on board, including the Departments of Justice and Commerce as well as the Bureau of the Budget and the War Production Board.¹²¹⁵ In view of the rancorous warfare that so often beset Roosevelt’s Administration, this work constitutes a significant achievement.

¹²¹³ Leith-Ross to Brand, “Joint Boards in Relation to Post-War Arrangements,” August 21, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²¹⁴ Cox to Stettinius, August 15, 1942, File #2 - Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA; Cox to Solicitor General, August 17, 1942, File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL. The Acheson Papers do not have a specific letter of approval from Treasury and Agriculture, but this can be assumed by subsequent developments and documents.

¹²¹⁵ “Memo for the President,” August 20, 1942, File #2 - Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Acheson was pleased. “With the drafting of the memoranda on the subject of the United Nations Relief Authority completed,” he explained to Appleby, “I am planning to turn to the question of making interim arrangements now for doing whatever is necessary on the administrative side to carry out our plans for action in this field.”¹²¹⁶ He had laid the groundwork. On August 7, 1942, he presented the draft to the economics subcommittee. The group accepted the plan and laid out a framework to study requirements and available supplies. As suggested by one of Acheson’s assistants, H. Julian Waldeigh, five committees were established to focus on food, agricultural rehabilitation, clothing, health, and essential services and industries. Relevant agencies and departments of the government were assigned to the each group. The committee postponed the creation of groups to study the controversial topics of personnel and finance.¹²¹⁷ The established structure nonetheless provided Leith-Ross points with which to formalize coordination with the Inter-Allied Committee, which he arranged during his final days in Washington.¹²¹⁸

He also sought cooperation in creating a coffee pool for postwar relief. As he wrote Herbert Feis in early July, a number of South American countries were “sterilizing substantial quantities of ‘sacrifice’ coffee for which there [was] no market.” These supplies, along with those in the United States, could be pooled using arrangements

¹²¹⁶ Acheson to Appleby, August 15, 1942, File #2 - Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹²¹⁷ E Minute 21, August 7, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹²¹⁸ On coordination between Washington and London, see Leith-Ross to Acheson, August 17, 1942; Memo of Conversation, Caustin, Veatch, Wadleigh, August 29, 1942, both in File #2 - Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

similar to the wheat agreement of 1941.¹²¹⁹ Any effort along these lines, Leith-Ross told Acheson and other officials, would assure the Allies that actions were being taken, provide opportunities for propaganda, and ensure markets for coffee-producing countries after the war. Acheson agreed that his colleagues should discuss the matter with the Leith-Ross. In turn, they decided to enter into discussions with Brazil, the only South American country with significant coffee surpluses. Brazil declared war on the Axis Powers at the end of August. Washington was eager to reward their fellow combatant.¹²²⁰ But this initiative could hardly be viewed as anything more than a token effort to color Sir Frederick's discussions with success. For starving populations, coffee provides no calories.

While these discussions unfolded, Adolf Berle's subcommittee continued its preparations for Eastern Europe. For good reason, much has been made of American efforts to use the Western Hemisphere as an exemplar for the postwar world, but at this juncture, the planners hoped that Eastern Europe might serve as a model as well, particularly the region's relationship with the United Nations organizations. Berle's subcommittee hoped the relief organization would restore nutrition standards to prewar levels, and that subsequent UN reconstruction efforts would augment them by at least ten percent. Everyone agreed that this objective would require an increase in agricultural production, and that this objective would allow for exports to provide the exchange currency needed to import consumer goods from Western Europe and the United States.

¹²¹⁹ Leith-Ross to Herbert Feis, July 9, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹²²⁰ Note on Conversation, Leith-Ross and Acheson, August 20, 1942, T188-255, PRO; Memorandum of Conversation, Leith-Ross, Caustin, Daniels and Carr, August 21, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

The Department of Agriculture was therefore asked to study and propose development projects for the region. The capital needed to fund such endeavors would come from a United Nations Bank, perhaps along the lines of the Treasury proposals of Harry Dexter White.¹²²¹

While ambition propelled the United States, the gravity of Sir Frederick's sessions in Ottawa forced British officials into a slow retreat on the composition of the Policy Committee. "If the U.S. would be ready to agree to a Canadian Member, it seems a pity that we should raise objections," wrote one Treasury official.¹²²² The possibility that the billion-dollar gift might not be renewed worried everyone. Reporting on a meeting with Clifford Clark, Sir Frederick Phillips of the Treasury claimed that the attitude of the Canadian government towards the renewal of the billion-dollar gift was colored "by strong resentment... at [the] exclusion of Canada from [the] Combined Boards and... the Relief Council."¹²²³ The Dominions Office suggested that Leith-Ross disassociate Britain from the American agreement in a conversation with the Canadian delegation to Washington.¹²²⁴ The Foreign Office agreed and Sir Frederick informed Pearson that the American draft in no way prejudiced London's views on the Policy Committee.¹²²⁵

For many officials, especially in the British Treasury, obtaining representation for the exiled governments was unimportant. "I doubt very much whether it is worth getting ourselves mixed up by granting representation to the various rump Governments of the

¹²²¹ E Minute 22, August 14, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, NARA.

¹²²² "Post-War Relief," by Waley, August 4, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²²³ Inward Telegram No. 1727, Canada (HC) to DO, August 28, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²²⁴ Telegram No. 5000, FO to DC, August 18, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²²⁵ Telegram Relief No. 41, DC to FO, August 21, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

invaded countries now,” one Treasury official wrote. “When the time comes we may find we have a quite different lot to deal with.” In the short run, resources and finance remained far more important. In the long run, something else could possibly be arranged. “The essentials of Post War Relief seem to me to be to get a good contribution out of the United States, to keep the scheme short – say one or two years, and to have ready a practical organization for obtaining and forwarding food to Europe. The precise degree of representation of European interests on the Government body is an ornamental consideration.” Keynes wholeheartedly agreed with this assessment.¹²²⁶

But this opinion was neither the case with Canada nor with any of the other dominions. From the Treasury’s point of view, the matter turned on resources and finance: Ottawa, in particular, had to be managed carefully. The Dominions Secretary, Clement Attlee, saw the issue in a much broader context. He worried about any policy that might lead to the disintegration of the British Commonwealth. Britain’s position on the four-power committee, he argued in a letter to Eden, would “have to be considered not in relation to Canada only, but to Australia... and to New Zealand and the Union [of South Africa].” For this reason, he thought it would be premature to commit Britain “to a policy which in effect would lend our full weight to the exclusion of the Dominions from the Committee.”¹²²⁷ Weeks earlier, the British had received a letter from the Australian High Commissioner to London, Stanley Bruce, in which he evinced increased interest in

¹²²⁶ F. Phillips to John Maynard Keynes, August 31, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²²⁷ Clement Attlee to Anthony Eden, June 30, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

the issue on the part of his government. Though Australia had made no claim to membership on the four-power committee at this juncture, the situation would change.¹²²⁸

What shall we tell the Allies?

Leith-Ross worried about the Allied governments in exile. They had been excluded from the Washington discussions, and the draft agreement that emerged looked as though it would offend them. It denied the Europeans membership on the Policy Committee and permitted few outlets for them to influence the organization. Sir Frederick therefore believed they might attempt to derail the agreement. A harsh reaction, he feared, could also hurt wartime and postwar cooperation. The possibility of disintegration also threatened the Inter-Allied Committee. But quite possibly, Leith-Ross reasoned, Allied objections to America's postwar relief plans might lead the Americans to change the draft to accord with Britain's desires. For this reason, Leith-Ross hoped to share the draft agreement with the Allies sooner rather than later. But the Americans refused and Sir Frederick needed to know what he could tell the Allies. He wanted maximum freedom.

On August 20, 1942, Leith-Ross put the ball in Acheson's hands. What could he tell the Allies, he asked the Assistant Secretary? "They would expect me to make some report," and they would probably have a "good idea of what was in the wind." Tell them that you have covered the whole ground with the American administration, Acheson replied, but explain that the administration did not think the time was opportune to set up

¹²²⁸ Stanley Bruce to Anthony Eden, June 8, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO.

a relief organization. Leith-Ross protested: this would not be “at all appropriate.” It would confirm “their view that nothing was being done and would strengthen forces in favor of independent action.” Instead, they should be informed that the Americans were “very much interested in the preparation of plans for an international relief organization, that they were working out a tentative scheme which would be put before the Allied Governments as soon as possible for their consideration with a view to a Conference being held later in the year.” Acheson disagreed. Hull did not want to commit the United States to a conference until it became clear that the war had turned in the Allies favor.¹²²⁹

Two days later, Leith-Ross pleaded with the Secretary of State. “The people in the European countries now in German subjugation would be disheartened in carrying on the struggle unless they could get assurances that Great Britain, the United States and other countries would be prepared to furnish relief.”¹²³⁰ But Hull refused to bend. The risks of agitating opponents of the Administration remained too high. They would argue that the Roosevelt Administration sought to “squander American resources on postwar relief” instead of exerting “all their energies to the winning of the war first.” Hull did not want a repeat of 1918. Woodrow Wilson had made promises that public opinion would not support. Leith-Ross recounted his arguments and argued. “If the first step was considered so difficult to get across to public opinion, what would be the position when we came to the practical question of commitments?” The Secretary replied that it did not matter. The Allies had two choices. They could accept America’s stance and cooperate during the

¹²²⁹ “Note on Conversation with Mr. Acheson,” August 20, 1942, by Leith-Ross, T188-255, PRO.

¹²³⁰ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the SOS,” August 22, 1942, 840.50/5762, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 132-133.

war, or they could choose “Nazi domination.” They could embrace America’s postwar plans, or “accept anarchy.”¹²³¹ In short, they had no choice but to go along.

With the Americans in control and Hull refusing to go on record in support of a relief conference, what could Sir Frederick do? He argued that leaks were already taking place. Acheson replied that this “could not be helped.”¹²³² Leith-Ross warned that the organization might not be ready in time. Hull acknowledge this possibility, but considered it wiser to run this risk than to endanger the entire endeavor through premature announcements.¹²³³ The underlying message, Sir Frederick wrote home to London, was “that relief policy should be decided by the Secretary of State and by no one else.” Hull, in fact, dictated what Leith-Ross could tell the Allies: he should report that he had undertook informal discussions in Washington; the U.S. Administration was interested in postwar relief; they were assembling the relevant factors and formulating plans to be communicated to the Allies at the appropriate time; but the timing of action would depend on the war situation and there should be no publicity at the present time.¹²³⁴

Sir Frederick watched in dismay as he saw the fault lines of the Roosevelt Administration surface before his very eyes. Acheson presented Hull the latest draft with the amendment from the War Department. It now had the approval of all the relevant individuals and bureaucracies, he explained, including the New Dealers and the Vice

¹²³¹ “Note of Conversation with Mr. Cordell Hull,” August 22, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²³² “Note on Conversation with Mr. Acheson,” August 20, 1942, by Leith-Ross, T188/255, PRO.

¹²³³ “Note of Conversation with Mr. Cordell Hull,” August 22, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²³⁴ Telegram Relief No. 42, DC to FO, August 22, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

President. As such, it was ready for the President's consideration, but Henry Wallace wanted to attend the meeting with Roosevelt. The Secretary disliked the Vice President and could not conceal his irritation.¹²³⁵ For Leith-Ross, this evoked worry. "Support for the plan from the New Dealers accentuates [Hull's] apprehensions," he wrote the Foreign Office. The Secretary did not propose a date for his meeting with the President and he "did not propose to take me along... as originally intended." He didn't even appear to support the present draft.¹²³⁶ Acheson tried to reassure Leith-Ross. Hull's behavior, he explained, should be attributed to caution rather than opposition to the agreement.¹²³⁷

Acheson was not lying, but his advice to Leith-Ross kept him away from the White House. He told him to go on a vacation. After all, he had planned one for himself. Do not cancel your trip to Denver, he counseled the British Treasury Official. The Secretary needs time to think about things and it is best not to pressure him.¹²³⁸ But as soon as Sir Frederick boarded his plane, Hull requested an appointment with Roosevelt. Set for August 28, 1942, the meeting ironically would not take place until Sir Frederick was back in Washington.¹²³⁹ But with Acheson now out of town, Leith-Ross was unaware of what was taking place. On September 2, 1942, Hull and Wallace met the President. Roosevelt accepted the draft agreement, and agreed that it should be formally communicated to China, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. Under the influence of Hull

¹²³⁵ "Note of Conversation with Mr. Cordell Hull," August 22, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²³⁶ Telegram Relief No. 44, DC to FO, August 22, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²³⁷ "Note of Conversation with Mr. Cordell Hull," August 22, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²³⁸ Ibid.

¹²³⁹ On the planning for the meeting, see Handwritten Note concerning meeting of FDR, VP and Hull, September 1, 1942, File UNRRA 1942, Box 1, Official File, FDR Papers, FDRL.

and Wallace, who were in agreement for once, the President insisted that the plan should not be announced at the present time. It would simply serve as the basis for future discussions. He also authorized a statement for Leith-Ross to deliver to the Allies.¹²⁴⁰

Leith-Ross protested the authorized text.¹²⁴¹ Before his departure for Denver, he had translated Hull's proposals into a positive statement.¹²⁴² But the State Department sent an alternative proposal with Hull to the White House, which, according to Leith-Ross, read as though the United States had gone back on the proposals of May 11. "Little progress had been made," he complained to Ray Atherton, head of the European Division at the State Department and one of Hull's closest advisors. These issues were "very vital in Europe... and it would be very disheartening to the people of Europe... if some definite announced plan for relief could not be reported."¹²⁴³ He then penned a letter to Acheson. "The last thing that His Majesty's Government wished to do was to cause any embarrassment to the Administration; and if this statement represented the furthest that the Administration felt able to go vis-à-vis the Allied Governments, I should have to

¹²⁴⁰ To my knowledge, we have no verbatim account of the meeting, but see Henry Wallace diary, July 9, 1942, in *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946*, ed. John Morton Blum (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973), 95-96; Memorandum of Conversation, Ray Atherton and Leith-Ross, September 3, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7 PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA. Despite the absence of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross at the meeting, the British did convey their view that the Article VII negotiations should remain separate from relief. This occurred in a meeting between Cordell Hull, Richard Law (British Parliamentary Under-SEEA) and Lord Halifax (British Ambassador to the United States). See "Memorandum of Conversation," August 24, 1942, File #2 - Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹²⁴¹ Telegram Relief No. 49, DC to FO, September 3, 1942. For the approved statement, see Telegram Relief No. 50, DC to FO, September 3, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁴² "Suggested Lines of Statement to Allied Committee in London," August 22, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7, PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹²⁴³ Memorandum of Conversation, Ray Atherton and Leith-Ross, September 3, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

make the best of it. But it seem to me that some of the phrases would be a cold douche to the Allied Governments.”¹²⁴⁴

One State Department official shared Sir Frederick’s view. When Harry Hawkins read the text, he expressed doubts. “This telegram strikes me as leaning so far on the cautious side as almost to throw cold water on the whole idea,” he wrote. “Such vague phrases as the one to the effect that many of the factors relevant to the post-war situation cannot be foreseen,” and “that formal negotiations might result in unnecessary controversy over detail, is the kind of language which diplomats often use gently to inter a proposal.” To restrict the Administration’s activity to “the immediate war effort,” he argued, gives the impression that the American government is either unwilling or incapable of foreseeing and preparing for future problems, which is “contrary to fact.” Language of this sort, he added, would put up road blocks to taking up any “post-war question as long as the war is on.” As such, it “tends to confirm and strengthen the occasional superficial criticism which it is intended to meet” – that the United States was doing nothing.¹²⁴⁵

Why did the State Department propose the statement as opposed to the more positive but rather innocuous language of Leith-Ross, and why did the most powerful men in the American government, including Franklin Roosevelt, accept it? The answer remains difficult to ascertain, but the record leaves possibilities. The Americans, to be sure, had legitimate reasons for wanting to avoid publicity and delay formal action on postwar relief. Woodrow Wilson’s failures after the First World War weighed heavily in

¹²⁴⁴ Leith-Ross to Acheson, September 3, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7, PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹²⁴⁵ Hawkins to Rostow, September 19, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7, PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

their calculations. Hull had made it clear that he did not want matters to get out in front of public opinion. With Congressional elections looming and the war effort going badly, this approach seemed wise. Yet the statement might have achieved the same objectives without sending counterproductive impressions to the Allies. It might have left Leith-Ross in a better position vis-à-vis the exiled governments. It could have suggested more definitely that concrete actions had been taking place and would continue to occur.

Perhaps the Americans wanted to send a clear message to Leith-Ross. In late July, the British held firm against Acheson's reaction to their decision to retract the rationing statement.¹²⁴⁶ Leith-Ross refrained from sharing London's stiff reply with the Americans. But with Hull apparently wavering, he reminded the Americans on September 1, 1942 that Britain's decision to maintain rationing would depend on the relief agreement.¹²⁴⁷ Spiteful though it may seem, the Americans, particularly Roosevelt, who had welcomed the statement and agreed to support it before the press, may have wanted to suggest that they could be equally obstinate and that they had no intention of caving into pressures from the British. In short, they would make the decisions on timing. Sir Frederick certainly left his meeting with Cordell Hull under this impression. Yet if the Americans hoped to send such a message, it seems bizarre that they would utilize language that reflected so poorly on them and that might cause disintegration, particularly after they had spent so much time working to discourage independent Allied purchases.

¹²⁴⁶ "Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet," July 21, 1942, W.M. (42), CAB 65/27/9, PRO; Telegram No. 1660, Relief No. 16, FO to HC Ottawa, July 28, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

¹²⁴⁷ Leith-Ross to Acheson, September 1, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7, PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Maybe the Americans simply hoped to undermine the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements. With officials in London urging Leith-Ross to move ahead in setting up the Committee, he requested Acheson's permission to establish subcommittees for nutrition, medical services and inland transport. Virtually no work had been done to consider how supplies would reach target populations, while nutrition experts and public health officials worried that Britain would not have assembled the requisite supplies to combat malnutrition and head off pandemic once the liberation of Europe began.¹²⁴⁸ But if the Americans intended to prevent these efforts, as they had successfully done in June, their approach backfired.¹²⁴⁹ Once Atherton informed Leith-Ross of the approved statement, Sir Frederick moved ahead aggressively.¹²⁵⁰ He made it clear that his efforts to develop the Inter-Allied Committee were a direct result of "the probable delay in setting up any United Nations Organization."¹²⁵¹ Acheson had no choice but to allow Leith-Ross to proceed, but in subsequent meetings with Sir Frederick's aid, Harold Caustin, the Americans ensured that they would be regularly informed of everything that was taking place in London.¹²⁵²

American behavior encouraged Leith-Ross to reach out to the Soviet Union as well. Throughout his stay in Washington, he had only once met with the Soviet

¹²⁴⁸ "Note on Conversation with Mr. Acheson," August 20, 1942, by Leith-Ross, T188/255, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 27, FO to DC, August 29, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 28, FO to DC, September 1, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁴⁹ The British tried to further develop the Inter-Allied Committee in early June, but the Americans prevented them. Telegram 2610, The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), June 5, 1942, 840.50/388-6/8, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 110-111.

¹²⁵⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation," Sir Frederick Leith-Ross and Ray Atherton, September 3, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER and EP May 7, PART 5, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹²⁵¹ Leith-Ross to Acheson, September 3, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹²⁵² Telegram Relief No. 51, DC to FO, September 3, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; Memo of Conversation, Caustin, Veatch, Wadleigh, August 29, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

Ambassador yet on September 1, 1942, after it had become apparent that the Americans had no intention of addressing his concerns, he reached out to Maxim Litvinov.¹²⁵³ Despite his obvious antipathy for the Russians, he duly noted the Ambassador's offer. "'After all,' Mr. Litvinov explained with a lecherous smile and a pawky wave of his hand, 'we are now Allies and we must act together. It may be that my Government would not wish to raise objections to the American draft but would be willing to support your Government if they wished to suggest some modifications.'" Leith-Ross described his concerns: the relationship between relief and reconstruction, the constitution of the Policy Committee, and the powers of the regional committees.¹²⁵⁴

The Americans may have hoped to undercut possible leaks through their statement, and they definitely wanted to keep Leith-Ross, who was prone to be independent, on a short leash. With the effort riding on Congressional support, worry over the Inter-Allied Committee or the Soviet Union was secondary. The Americans knew well that no country would have much choice but to cooperate with Washington after the war. Hull made this clear to Leith-Ross on September 2, 1942. Even Litvinov had come to accept the central tenants of the American plan – those that Maisky so despised – that it would be centered in Washington and run by an American. However lecherous he may have appeared to Sir Frederick, he was not seeking British support for Soviet modifications; he was offering Soviet support in the event that Britain desired changes.¹²⁵⁵ In view of the resources that would be needed to liberate and rebuild Europe,

¹²⁵³ The first meeting took place on July 17, 1942: Telegram Relief No. 16, DC to FO, July 17, 1942, CAB 117/89, PRO.

¹²⁵⁴ "Note of Conversation with Mr. Litvinov," September 1, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 47, FO to DC, September 1, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁵⁵ "Note of Conversation with Mr. Litvinov," September 1, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

no country on the continent – including the Soviet Union – was yet prepared to anger the United States.

Sir Frederick made one last effort to amend the statement. On September 4, 1942, just before his departure, he wrote Acheson with proposals to change the authorized statement. While he sought discretion to warm the water, he inserted adulterated versions of the very commitments the Americans hoped to publicly avoid. Instead of saying nothing of a future conference, he insinuated that one would take place: the United States “does not consider that the time has yet arrived for initiating formal intergovernmental negotiations for the settlement of a detailed plan.” Instead of leaving the Allies with the impression that nothing was being done, his language indicated that while negotiations were taking place, it would provoke “misunderstanding and controversy” if they were announced. Additionally he expressed disagreement with the idea that the United States would face “little difficulty in achieving unanimous agreement... for action based on... previous studies of a plan.” Rather, he hoped to conclude the statement with reassurances that the situation would change in a few months to “permit positive action.”¹²⁵⁶

Thanks to Harry Hawkins, the statement underwent revisions before it was delivered to the Allies. The alterations, however, did not reflect many of Sir Frederick’s suggestions. They were the product of Hawkins’ criticisms and desire to project the best possible image of the United States. The final draft deleted the vague phrases, adverse language, and misleading statements suggesting the Roosevelt Administration could not manage the war effort and postwar planning simultaneously. It established quite clearly that actions were being taken while carefully avoiding any firm commitments. Most

¹²⁵⁶ Leith-Ross to Acheson, September 4, 1942, T188/255, PRO.

importantly, it gave the impression of a confident and mature nation riding in the leadership position. Ironically the result left Leith-Ross with less leverage vis-à-vis the Allies than he might have had were the first draft of the statement used.

CHAPTER NINE

THE STRATEGIC ORIENTATION OF THE FOUR POWERS

Roosevelt hoped that four great powers – China, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union – would cooperate in the postwar period to prevent aggression and solve the problems of global politics. In diplomatic discussions, he called these nations the “Four Policemen.” In public, they were touted as the “Big Four.” Yet this term was misleading. A combination of overextension, strategic miscalculation, and financial malaise had seriously damaged the British Empire;¹²⁵⁷ China was divided, overrun by an enemy, and weak militarily and economically. There were only two great powers in this group: the United States and the Soviet Union. Roosevelt, however, planned to exploit the weaknesses of China and Great Britain to corner the Soviet Union. In this way, each of these countries would learn to cooperate with the United States.

China and Britain received special treatment during the war. In part, wartime circumstances and America’s postwar aims made this behavior necessary. For reasons already made apparent, the State Department took Britain into its confidence earlier than the other powers. But throughout Sir Frederick’s discussions in Washington, Acheson and Hull also kept the Chinese informed whenever they shared information with the Soviets. These nations would have the chance to study and comment on the American relief proposal before any other nation. Here we examine their reactions to the draft agreement, placing special attention on their strategic orientation going into the four

¹²⁵⁷ For an striking assessment of Britain’s financial problems, see “The Financial Problems of Post-War Britain,” October 26, 1943, File Post-War Plans 1939-44, Box 65, State Department Subject Files, 1938-1945, Berle Papers, FDRL.

power discussions. Where necessary, we also consider the historical context. We conclude with an assessment of American strategy for these negotiations.

Leith-Ross presents the Draft Agreement to the British Government

On September 18, 1942, the War Cabinet's Official Committee for Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief considered whether the "draft was a workable basis for action and whether it could be recommended" to the British Government. According to Leith-Ross, officials in Washington had intentionally left the agreement vague, preferring to develop machinery as events unfolded, and he thought it unwise to engage in time-consuming and potentially harmful attempts to define every aspect of the agreement. The regional committees constituted a case in point. Under the influence of their constitution, the Americans remained determined to keep the executive and policy-making functions divided. As a result, they made the Director General an all-powerful position, and refused to give the regional committees anything beyond mere advisory powers. But Britain's preferences, he explained, would be met: the pressure of events would force the Americans to devolve executive functions to the regional committees.¹²⁵⁸

Other members of the group feared the draft's imprecision. Keynes expressed reservations over the relationship between the Policy Committee and the Council. What happens, he asked, if the Policy Committee cannot agree on whether ex-enemy countries should receive aid? Would this matter then go before the Council, as the draft implies?

¹²⁵⁸ "Minutes of the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief," September 18, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO.

Leith-Ross replied that the Americans believed there must be a Council “to preserve the United Nations approach to the problem.” The burden of relief would fall largely on the United States, but they did not want this fact “apparent in the draft.” Cordell Hull insisted that every country must play its part. Sir Frederick also asserted the importance of avoiding the impression among many of the Allies that the “Axis dictatorship” was going to be substituted with a “dictatorship of the Great Powers.” If the Great Powers were agreed, he added, they would “always be able to dominate the Council.” And if the Soviets made agreement impossible by insisting on unanimous voting in the Policy Committee or the Council, the Director General could act unilaterally. These possibilities “strengthened the case for giving as much power as possible to the Director General.” In essence, the scheme was pretense and the imprecision helpful.¹²⁵⁹

While Keynes agreed with Sir Frederick’s assessments to a degree, these arrangements worried him, especially on matters of high politics, such as the treatment of enemy countries, whether relief recipients would pay or not, and the order of priority in which countries would receive relief. “It seems to me unwise to take such issues, even if only in point of form away from the Great Powers and give it to a monkey-house of 28 nations with no provision for voting or methods of procedure,” he wrote days later.¹²⁶⁰ Keynes disagreed with the American view that they could run the show via the Director General. It would be impossible for this individual to maintain control over local issues

¹²⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁶⁰ Keynes to Eady, September 21, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

all over the world even if he tried.¹²⁶¹ Keynes also worried about efforts to pool relief supplies, which he contemptuously labeled “international communism.”¹²⁶²

Yet he was prepared to go along. “The real question,” he wrote, “is whether one regards the plan as embodying a workable proposal, which we can expect to put into actual operation hereafter, or whether it is merely a way of getting the Americans committed to the first step with the intention of hammering out something rather different in the course of time and experience.” If the latter approach dominated British thinking, then “the object should be, not to make it more precise, but, if anything, less precise.”¹²⁶³ Although he preferred an arrangement whereby contentious political issues went before a Supreme Council of the Great Powers, he accepted Sir Frederick’s argument that it would be destructive, subject to certain reservations, not to accept the broad lines of the draft as a working basis. He still thought Britain should reduce the status of the Council, and attempt to clarify the role of and strengthen the regional committees.¹²⁶⁴

Leith-Ross wanted to appease the European allies without angering Washington. “In all probability the Council can hardly be more than a consultative body,” he wrote, “but it is probably wiser to let this develop from the force of circumstances than to provoke criticism from the smaller powers by limiting its nominal authority.” So long as the great powers are united, they would direct “all broad lines of policy” in any case. But if not, he maintained that Britain could always influence the Director General through

¹²⁶¹ Ibid.; “Minutes of the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief,” September 18, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO.

¹²⁶² For “international communism” quote, see Keynes to Dunnett and Eady, “Sir Frederick Leith-Ross’s New Memorandum on Relief Administration,” November 18, 1942, T160/1404/6, PRO.

¹²⁶³ Keynes to Eady, September 21, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁶⁴ “Minutes of the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief,” September 18, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO.

personnel it secured on his staff, or through bilateral relations with Washington. To mollify the allies, he thought Britain should make a further attempt to strengthen the committees, but without applying too much pressure. The Americans were “somewhat suspicious of our promoting” the Inter-Allied Committee, he wrote. If it appeared such proposals might create tensions, the inevitable devolution of powers to the regional committees would still provide Britain sources of influence.¹²⁶⁵

Sir Frederick believed other outstanding concerns would be resolved. American and British military officials agreed that Allied forces would manage relief while hostilities continued and for a short period afterwards, but would then hand over responsibility to the relief organization. Though military authorities in each country disagreed over how long this period would last, he thought the issue would not present major problems. He was largely correct. Furthermore, if the Combined Boards possessed suitable machinery, Leith-Ross believed the relief organization would utilize it, but he urged caution: the “Joint Boards were merely a façade under which the U.S. decided what could be provided” to Britain. Representatives from the Ministry of War Transport disputed this generalization and thought the Combined Shipping Board thought it should remain in place. The Committee thus decided that Leith-Ross should discuss the issue with the Ministries of Food, Supply and War Transport.¹²⁶⁶

¹²⁶⁵ “Draft Memorandum for Ministers on Proposals for a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” CPR (42) 16, September 23, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁶⁶ “Minutes of the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief,” September 18, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO.

Should Canada be Permitted a Seat on the Policy Committee?

Before the War Cabinet discussed relief on November 3, 1942, two major conflicts erupted: one concerned substance; the other revolved around procedure. The Official Committee had instructed Leith-Ross to prepare a report for the ministers discussing any misgivings he had with the draft, and a procedure to follow after the State Department officially shared the draft with London. Leith-Ross conveyed his concerns over the marginal status of the regional committees; everyone agreed with his assessments. But his recommendation that the Policy Committee be widened to include Canada aroused fierce debate. While most of the concerned ministries agreed with Leith-Ross, the Foreign Office remained staunchly opposed. Similar dynamics surrounded the debate over procedure. The Foreign Office believed the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of May 1942 required Britain to consult Moscow before sharing its views with Washington, but everyone else disagreed. In conflicts, Churchill provided the decisive voice.

Vis-à-vis Ottawa, Britain had two objectives: to obtain as much financial and material assistance as possible, and, to keep Canada integrated in the British Commonwealth and out of the American sphere of influence.¹²⁶⁷ Ottawa's aims did not come into blatant conflict with Britain's, but they were by no means perfectly harmonious. By providing assistance to London, Ottawa achieved its aim of economic growth. This objective, however, depended on continued support among the Canadian population for the war effort, which in turn, meant that Canada had to assert its

¹²⁶⁷ These aims are stated quite pointedly in Telegram 1803, Canadian HC to DO, September 9, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; see also G.S.D. [Dunnett], "Canada's Representation on Combined Boards," September 14, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

independence from Britain. If the Canadian public determined that its Government had little influence in the overall direction of the war, then it might become critical of the war itself. Officials in Ottawa therefore believed Canada should have a place in Allied Councils commensurate with its contribution to the war effort. As a result, the Canadians used their leverage with Britain to place pressure on the Americans while making simultaneous appeals in Washington.

Yet this tactic in no way guaranteed success. Many British officials were either blind to the changing power dynamics in the transatlantic triangle, or preferred to look out for their narrow interests, which meant that they often refused to bow to Canada's wishes.¹²⁶⁸ For those who recognized these shifts, their efforts to help Ottawa were undermined by the tremendous leverage the United States maintained over Canada. As Britain's financial and military situation deteriorated, Canada had turned to Washington to meet many of its defense requirements. Canada also needed American cooperation to preserve its trade relations with Great Britain, especially after the passage of Lend-Lease Act, which gave Britain all the incentives in the world to procure its food and manufacturing goods in the United States as opposed to in Canada. Altogether, this meant that the United States had the ultimate voice in whatever arrangements that might emerge. Canada and Great Britain were dependent on the United States economically and militarily. Often the United States simply engaged Ottawa bilaterally, knocking Britain out the equation altogether.

As we have seen, the Canadians protested their exclusion from the Munitions Assignment Board (MAB), the Combined Food Board (CFB), and the Combined

¹²⁶⁸ R.H. Brand is the perfect example of a British official looking out for his own narrow interests.

Production and Resources Board (CPRB) in the spring and summer of 1942. But when the Americans agreed to permit Canada partial representation on the MAB, the Canadians would accept nothing short of full membership. The Americans worried that if they satisfied Canada's desires entirely, other countries would make similar demands. They also believed Canada overstated its contribution to the production of munitions, much of which was paid for by the United States.¹²⁶⁹ As a result, the process of allocating Canadian munitions remained in the hands of an informal Anglo-Canadian committee in Ottawa, though the Americans would ultimately join this body as a full member. In form, however, Britain represented Canada on the MAB.¹²⁷⁰

The debate over the Combined Food Board unfolded along similar lines, but in this case, Britain blocked Canada's aspirations, not the United States. Many officials in London disagreed with this decision, but the British supply agencies, particularly the Ministry of Food, refused to acquiesce.¹²⁷¹ If London granted a seat to Ottawa on the CFB, they argued, then the other Dominions would make similar demands; their inclusion would make the Board's work more difficult. In hopes of appeasing the Canadians, they proposed the creation of a North American Food Committee that would parallel the London Food Committee, which included all of the Dominions. In this way,

¹²⁶⁹ On the American views, see Teletype WA-1499, Minister in United States to SOSEA, June 26, 1942, DEA/3265-B-40, Document 186 in CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 1942-1943 (Hull, Quebec: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1980), 181-182.

¹²⁷⁰ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, *The Mackenzie King Era, 1921-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 330. See also C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer for Canada, 1970), 167-184; "Minutes of Meeting Held in the PM's Office on September 16th to Discuss the Relationship of Canada to Certain of the Combined Boards in Washington," September 16, 1942, DEA/3265-D-40, Document 212, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 226-231.

¹²⁷¹ Issue of the MOF has already been discussed earlier, but it is again mentioned in G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Eady, September 17, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

Canada could protect its interests in London and Washington. These arrangements differed with those of the Munitions Board in only one aspect: the link between Ottawa and Washington on food issues would be immediately formalized. But the effect of both arrangements remained the same: like the Hyde Park and Ogdensburg Declarations of 1941, the United States established deeper ties with Canada at the expense of Britain.

Neither of these formulae allayed the fears of the Canadians, but they accepted them in exchange for full membership on the Combined Production and Resources Board, which the United States and Great Britain reluctantly permitted. On September 16, 1942, British and Canadian authorities finalized these arrangements in Ottawa.¹²⁷² British officials with little knowledge of the discussions or Canada's internal politics welcomed this development. The Treasury, which had hoped to remove "the causes of Canadian irritation," thought it would "make the point about Canada's representation on the Relief Policy Council less explosive."¹²⁷³ With talks of a financial agreement on the horizon, it remained important to keep the "political atmosphere in Canada... sweet."¹²⁷⁴ The Foreign Office interpreted the matter somewhat differently. "Canada is at the moment reasonably satisfied by her newly gained membership of the Combined

¹²⁷² The proposal for these arrangements was decided in London, "Record of Meeting Held in DO," September 14, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; for another account of that meeting, see also G.S.D. [Dunnett] to Eady, September 15, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; for the meeting with the PMs, see "Minutes of Meeting... in PM's Office," September 16, 1942, DEA/3265-D-40, Document 212; for the Canadian War Committee decision, see "Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee," September 16, 1942, PCO, Document 213, both in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 226-232.

¹²⁷³ Eady to Proctor, September 19, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁷⁴ Eady to Proctor, September 21, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

Production and Resources Board.” We should “let sleeping dogs lie” and push for the four-power Policy Committee, one official argued.¹²⁷⁵

But these assessments were mistaken. For most Canadian officials, the rejection of the offer for partial membership on the Munitions Board was a mistake, but stiff opposition from C.D. Howe, Minister of Munitions and Supply, posed an insurmountable hurdle. Howe did not want civilian control over military procurement transferred to military hands, which would have occurred under the MAB agreement.¹²⁷⁶ The Food Board constituted another mishap. The British had purposely understated the Board’s mandate to suggest it was of little interest to Canada, but the written terms of reference indicated otherwise.¹²⁷⁷ Similarly, membership on the Combined Production and Resources Board fell short of meeting Canada’s expectations. While the other Boards had power over allocations, the CPRB concerned planning. Canada, moreover, had the right to appoint someone to the Board, but not an “Executive Secretary” to match those already appointed by the United States and Great Britain.¹²⁷⁸ With Canadian prestige on the line, these arrangements meant little, and for British officials aware of the situation, they did

¹²⁷⁵ Quote is from “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, October 2, 1942; see also “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, October 4, 1942, both in FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁷⁶ Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 330; see “Assistant Under-SOSEA (Wrong) to Minister-Counsellor, Legation in United States (Pearson), September 22, 1942, DEA/3265-A-40, Document 214; see also “Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee,” October 7, 1942, PCO, Document 216 in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 232-234, 238.

¹²⁷⁷ This point was brought up during the meeting with King. “Minutes of Meeting... in PM’s Office,” September 16, 1942, DEA/3265-D-40, Document 212; for the Canadian War Committee decision, see “Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee,” September 16, 1942, PRO, Document 213, both in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 226-232.

¹²⁷⁸ “Minutes of Meeting... in PM’s Office,” September 16, 1942, DEA/3265-D-40, Document 212; for a statement of general resentment, see Minister-Counsellor, Legation in United States (Pearson) to Assistant Under-SOSEA (Wrong), September 28, 1942, DEA/3265-D-40, Document 215, both in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 226-231, 234-235.

not portend well for the impending debate over the relief organization's Policy Committee.¹²⁷⁹

If the Great Powers admitted Canada, the remaining Dominions would make similar demands; the Europeans would insist that they receive a seat; and the United States would support Brazilian membership to counter the possibility of Anglo-Canadian cooperation. If the committee became too large, disagreement and inefficiency would undermine its effectiveness as with the League of Nations.¹²⁸⁰ The Foreign Office remained the most vigorous proponent of this view.¹²⁸¹ On the other side of the equation, the Dominions Office, supported to varying degrees by the Treasury and Board of Trade, believed Canada had a formidable claim to membership on the Committee. In contrast to China and the Soviet Union, Canada could make a major contribution to postwar relief. China, in fact, would be "the principal beggar."¹²⁸² Apart from the United States and possibly Great Britain, this fact distinguished it from all other members of the United Nations.¹²⁸³ But equally if not more important, Canada might significantly reduce or even terminate its wartime financial assistance to Britain.¹²⁸⁴

¹²⁷⁹ On the issue of prestige, see G.S.D. to Eady, September 17, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁸⁰ These arguments are laid out in many documents, but most eloquently in "Draft Memorandum for Ministers on Proposals for a [UNRRA]," September 23, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁸¹ On FO position, see G.S.D. to Eady, September 17, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁸² "Draft Minute to Richard Law and Anthony Eden," October 9, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁸³ The Canadians conveyed these thoughts to the British on repeated occasions. See "Note of Short Conversation with Dr. Clark (fishing)," August 16, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁸⁴ Ironically the FO did the best job of articulating the case for Canada: see, for example, the "Draft Minute to Richard Law and Anthony Eden," October 9, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO; see also "Minute to Foreign Secretary," October 13, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

On October 7, 1942, the matter went before the Official Committee. The British High Commissioner to Canada, Malcolm MacDonald, presented the case for Ottawa. The Canadian Government, he informed the group, did not contest the idea that the organization “should be ‘streamlined’ as far as possible, and that the policy making body should be confined to a small number of powers,” but it believed that “if the four great powers tried to run the post-war world, they would not be successful.” This approach “would arouse the hostility of the other powers,” resulting in a “lack of cooperation.” In Canada, the French Canadians disliked the British and hated the Soviets. The political and intellectual class also feared four-power domination. Politics would dictate whether Canada contributed to the effort, MacDonald suggested, not economics. The recent compromise regarding the Joint Boards had not appeased Ottawa. But most importantly the British attitude towards the Policy Committee was prejudicing Canada’s willingness to continue providing financial support to Britain.¹²⁸⁵

MacDonald thought Britain should revert to the State Department’s original proposal for a Policy Committee consisting of seven powers, but he believed the Leith-Ross report insufficient. “If the Canadians saw the terms of the recommendations they would be bitterly disappointed.” The objective, he explained, was to have a positive influence on Britain’s financial negotiations with Canada. He considered it imprudent to support Canada’s aspirations only if the other powers agreed to widen the committee’s membership, which is what Leith-Ross proposed. The Canadians, he reminded the group, knew American reversion to the four-power setup had been in deference to Britain. If the

¹²⁸⁵ “Minutes of the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief,” October 7, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO; Malcolm’s views also appear much earlier: see Telegram 1727, Canadian HC to DO, August 29, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; see also Liesching to Dunnett, September 16, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

objective was to restore the goodwill and secure a financial support from Ottawa, it made no sense to create a situation in which the United States could argue that the British had only been willing to support Canadian representation due to American pressure. Instead, MacDonald thought the Official Committee should recommend an enlargement of the Policy Committee in positive terms.¹²⁸⁶

Rather than attack MacDonald's ideas on their merit, Nigel Ronald of the Foreign Office tried to delay decision using a technicality. If Canada's claim was based on "her views on the general framework of the post-war political settlement, then no progress was possible in the [Official] Committee." These issues fell outside the mandate of the Committee. Sir Frederick and Lord Keynes rebutted the career diplomat. Leith-Ross asserted the Committee's "duty" to make a recommendation on the size of the Policy Committee; Keynes maintained that Canada's argument in no way prejudiced other postwar bodies. He also endorsed MacDonald's view that the language of Sir Frederick's report to the Ministers should be strengthened. When Ronald replied that this decision might arouse the hostility of other contributing nations, Leith-Ross drew distinctions between the potential size of Canada's contribution and that of other countries. In this way, the matter was momentarily settled and MacDonald received instructions to provide substitute language for the memorandum. Defeated in this setting, Ronald reserved the views of the Foreign Office.¹²⁸⁷

¹²⁸⁶ "Minutes of the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief," October 7, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO; another account of the meeting can be found in the "Minute" by Jebb, October 7, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁸⁷ "Minutes of the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief," October 7, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO.

Over the next few days, Gladwyn Jebb sharpened the Foreign Office's position. He suggested the favored alternative to a four-power setup, a Policy Committee consisting of seven nations including Canada, Brazil, and a European state, presented insurmountable problems. With the Soviet Union likely to insist on unanimous voting, the committee would become ineffective. Divisions would emerge over the European country most deserving of the seventh seat. France, the obvious choice, remained divided. Donor countries excluded would insist on further extensions, possibly leading to a nine- or ten-power body. These demands would raise impossible questions as to what constitutes a "major donor." An enlarged committee would also prejudice the four-power concept for future organizations. Matters of high policy, Jebb argued, should reside with the four powers. With Welles, Hull and Roosevelt favoring the four-power concept, it seemed unlikely that they would accept anything else. It also remained unclear whether the Soviet Union would accept an enlarged committee.¹²⁸⁸

Should Great Britain consult with the Soviet Union?

In part, the latter question provoked a second major conflict. From the outset, there had been confusion over what procedure the British should employ moving forward, and whether the State Department would formally convey the agreement to China, Great Britain and the Soviet Union.¹²⁸⁹ If so, it was assumed, that the four powers would respond in writing. If they agreed to the broad lines of the draft, it would be shared

¹²⁸⁸ See "Minute" by Jebb, October 7, 1942; "Draft Minute to Richard Law and Anthony Eden," October 9, 1942; "Minute" by Jebb, October 21, 1942, all in FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁸⁹ Telegram 4729, DC to FO, September 19, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

with all the United Nations in anticipation of a conference. But the Americans, who wanted to avoid publicity at all cost, had made it quite clear that there would be no meeting of the four powers.¹²⁹⁰ No one, however, knew what would be done if disagreements erupted. For this reason, the British decided to limit their criticisms to avoid delays, or the possibility that the draft might be “thrown back into the melting pot.”¹²⁹¹ Once the War Cabinet had considered the plan, they would seek the approval of the Dominions, and “inform” the Soviets before conveying those views to the State Department.¹²⁹²

The dispute concerned whether Britain should “inform” or “consult” the Russians. According to the Foreign Office, the British Government had an “obligation” to parley with Moscow: the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of May 1942 stipulated that the two countries would collaborate closely “for the organization of security and economic prosperity in Europe.”¹²⁹³ With the Russians indicating a preference for a four-power Policy Committee, the Foreign Office clearly hoped the Soviet position would harden during any exchange. In turn, Soviet intransigence would force Britain to support the four-power plan. If Sir Frederick and his supporters hoped to avoid controversy, and if they wanted to get something started for relief now, leaving the details “to be hammered out

¹²⁹⁰ “Minutes of Official Committee for Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief,” September 18, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO.

¹²⁹¹ Quote is from “Draft Memorandum for Ministers on Proposals for a [UNRRA],” September 23, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO; but see also “Minutes of the Official Committee for Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief,” September 18, 1942 BT 88/93, PRO; W. Eady to Proctor, September 19, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹²⁹² See “Minutes of Official Committee for Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief,” September 18, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO; “Draft Memorandum for Ministers on Proposals for a [UNRRA],” September 23, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁹³ “Draft Minute to Richard Law and Anthony Eden,” October 9, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

afterwards,” then it hardly made sense to take a position that would open a rift with the Soviet Union, which might take weeks, possibly months to close.¹²⁹⁴

The Foreign Office believed Britain’s relations with Moscow might deteriorate. They blamed Leith-Ross. “The plain fact of the matter,” Jebb wrote on October 7, 1942, “is that Sir Frederick Leith-Ross does not like the Russians...”¹²⁹⁵ Leith-Ross had invited Maisky to send a representative to a meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee in late September, but hardly gave him a week’s notice. He neither shared relevant documents with him, nor consulted with him on anything for months, despite Russia’s role in proposing the international relief organization in the first place. If these failures were not enough to anger Maisky, Sir Frederick’s brief to him did: “The tenor of your letter is to the effect that discussions have already taken place... and conclusions arrived at” without even consulting the powers that set up the Inter-Allied Committee.¹²⁹⁶ Upon reviewing the correspondence, the Foreign Office became angry, called the exchange “unsatisfactory,” and insisted Sir Frederick apologize, and meet with the Russian Ambassador.¹²⁹⁷

Sir Frederick’s certainly disliked the Russians, but he also feared the Americans. The State Department had begun aggressive preparations for postwar relief. These actions, while decreasing dependence on the Inter-Allied Committee, would, in Leith-

¹²⁹⁴ On these views, see “Minute” by Jebb, October 2, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO; for the direct quote, see “Minutes of the Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief,” September 18, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO.

¹²⁹⁵ “Minute” by Jebb, October 7, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁹⁶ Leith-Ross to Maisky, September 25, 1942; Maisky to Leith-Ross, September 28, 1942, both in FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁹⁷ “Minute” by Jebb, September 29, 1942; “Minute” by Sargent, September 30, 1942; “Minute” by Jebb, September 30, 1942; for letter of apology, see Leith-Ross to Maisky, September 30, 1942, all in FO 371/31504, PRO.

Ross's view, increase America's ability to act unilaterally. It was therefore necessary to develop a system of technical committees in London as rapidly as possible. This fact, he told Maisky on September 30, 1942, explained the short-notice of his letter and suggestion that Russia chair the medical subcommittee. Maisky accepted the explanation, but tore into the American draft agreement. Leith-Ross implored him to be realistic. Relief could not be undertaken without the United States. If Britain or Russia raised too many objections, Washington might revert to unilateralism, providing Britain and Russia fewer opportunities to influence the distribution of postwar relief. Maisky agreed, but refused to back away from the principle that "blood was more important than wheat..."¹²⁹⁸

Despite Maisky's ire, officials still opposed the idea that Britain had a legal obligation to consult Moscow before sharing its views with Washington. The most vociferous opponent was Keynes. When Ronald read a minute on the matter prepared by the Foreign Office, Keynes suggested they hire a new legal advisor. A distinction, he argued, must be made between preliminary and final views.¹²⁹⁹ In talks with the American Ambassador, John Winant, he learned the President of the United States had not even endorsed the plan. With the November elections just around the corner, Roosevelt had no intention of supporting the plan just yet, even in diplomatic channels. He merely authorized the State Department to communicate it to the other powers for

¹²⁹⁸ "Note of Conversation with Monsieur Maisky" by Leith-Ross, September 30, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹²⁹⁹ "Minutes of the Official Committee for Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief," October 7, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO; "Draft Minute to Richard Law and Anthony Eden," October 9, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

comments.¹³⁰⁰ Thus Keynes believed it unwise to establish a precedent that might anger the Americans. He preferred that Britain remain flexible, or refrain from making its views known until the Soviets and Allies had expressed theirs.¹³⁰¹

On November 3, 1942, these issues came before the War Cabinet. By this point, the specter of losing financial aid from Canada had forged a consensus on the Policy Committee. British officials believed they needed to support the seven-power setup to restore goodwill in Ottawa. If the Soviets blocked this formula – a likely scenario according to the Foreign Office – then Britain could blame Moscow, while arguing that it had done everything possible to support Canada.¹³⁰² Here the preferences of the Foreign Office would be satisfied, and the financial concerns of the Treasury and Dominions Office would also be met. The strategy was nothing short of tacit approval of a four-power setup. But to hedge against the unlikely possibility of a seven-power committee, the Foreign Office insisted its membership never be allowed to exceed seven, and that

¹³⁰⁰ Keynes to Eady and Hopkins, September 24, 1942; Keynes to Eady, September 24, 1942, both in T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹³⁰¹ Keynes to Eady, September 24, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO; “Minute” by Jebb to Ronald, October 16, 1942, FO 371/33039, PRO.

¹³⁰² These views can be ascertained from multiple documents. The FO opinion that the seven-power setup would not be accepted can be deduced from “Minute” by Jebb, October 7, 1942; “Draft Minute to Richard Law and Anthony Eden,” October 9, 1942, both in FO 371/31504, PRO. The general perception that Britain needed to restore its goodwill in Ottawa for financial purposes can be found in many documents, but see “Draft Memorandum for Ministers on Proposals for a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” CPR (42) 16; “Note by Foreign Office on the Draft Report Circulated as C.P.R. (42) 19,” October 6, 1942, both in BT 188/93, PRO; “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, October 2, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

general postwar political arrangements always remain in the hands of the Big Four.¹³⁰³ With Lord Cherwell in support of this plan, Churchill readily acquiesced.¹³⁰⁴

As noted elsewhere, Cherwell, or the Prof, as his colleagues called him, *was* the Prime Minister's most trusted advisor. "Churchill," as Lord Ismay wrote in his memoirs, "used to say that the Prof's brain was a beautiful piece of mechanism, and the Prof did not dissent from that judgment... In his appointment as Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister no field of activity was closed to him." Relief and the postwar world were not exceptions to this rule. Cherwell would have had it no other way. As Ismay writes, "he was as obstinate as a mule, and unwilling to admit that there was any problem under the sun which he was not qualified to solve. He would write a memorandum on high strategy one day, and a thesis on egg production the next." His influence on Churchill was tremendous, and "contribution to Hitler's downfall... considerable."¹³⁰⁵

But here the approach he and Churchill embraced failed to address the inevitable political fallout if the seven-power formula were rejected. Tensions were already high. At the meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee on October 1, 1942, the allies struggled to conceal their outrage over being excluded from the talks in Washington, and expressed disgust over the apparent lack of progress. The Dutch representative called the statement

¹³⁰³ See "Minute" by Jebb, October 21, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO; "Memorandum by the SOS for Dominion Affairs, the SOS for Foreign Affairs and the President of the BOT," October 22, 1942, WP (42) 478, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

¹³⁰⁴ Cherwell to Churchill, October 29, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO; Churchill's support of this view are clearest in W.M. (42) 47th Meeting, November 3, 1942, in Sir Norman Brook Notebook: War Cabinet Minutes, WM (42) 156th meeting – WM (43) 99th meeting, CAB 195/1, PRO. The general conclusions can be reviewed in "Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet, November 3, 1942," WM (42) 149, CAB 65/28/19, PRO.

¹³⁰⁵ General Lord Ismay, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay* (New York: Viking Press, 1960), 173.

delivered by Leith-Ross on behalf of the American Government “worse than useless.”¹³⁰⁶ With such sentiments bound to grow, the War Cabinet concluded that it should stress the importance of regional committees in their reply to the Americans.¹³⁰⁷ These committees would improve the organization’s effectiveness and meet Allied demands for influence. Leith-Ross also endeavored to make the Inter-Allied Committee indispensable to relief operations, and the War Cabinet insisted that existing agencies of the United Nations be maintained.¹³⁰⁸

The matter of consultations with the Soviet Union was not easily resolved. For weeks, the Foreign Office had disputed the language used in Sir Frederick’s recommendations, but the concerned officials ultimately agreed to use the word “consultation” while also making a direct reference to the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance.¹³⁰⁹ This, however, did not sit well with the cantankerous Lord Cherwell. As he saw it, this requirement implied that Britain “must exchange views with Stalin before we are allowed to talk with Roosevelt.” If this became a precedent, it would “impair relations with Washington.” “Any semblance of aligning ourselves with the Soviets against the U.S. would be bound to cause irritation and ill-feeling and no legal pedantry should be

¹³⁰⁶ “Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Relief, Minutes of Third Meeting,” October 1, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO.

¹³⁰⁷ “Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet, November 3, 1942,” CAB 65/28/19, PRO.

¹³⁰⁸ The first point is apparent in his efforts to setup an elaborate committee structure, which was also discussed at the Inter-Allied meeting on October 1, 1942. See “Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Relief, Minutes of Third Meeting,” October 1, 1942, BT 88/93, PRO; see also “Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Relief, Minutes of Fourth Meeting,” October 20, 1942, 1942, BT188/93, PRO. The second point was explicitly meant to apply to the Combined Boards, but it implicitly referred to the Inter-Allied Committee as well.

¹³⁰⁹ On dispute over language, see “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, October 2, 1942; “Minute” by Jebb to Ronald, October 7, 1942; “Minute” by Jebb, October 9, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

allowed to force us into such a position.”¹³¹⁰ Churchill concurred and insisted that all reference to the Treaty be deleted from the recommendations.¹³¹¹ He agreed nonetheless to share their views with Moscow with the stipulation that they should only be permitted a fortnight to reply.¹³¹²

The Soviet Union received the short end of the stick. Britain intended to place blame for the four-power Policy Committee on Moscow, despite England’s complicity in these designs. The explicit preference of Roosevelt, Welles and Hull, the four-power concept, or the idea that that postwar world should be run by the “Four Policemen,” had originated in Washington.¹³¹³ When wayward officials such as Dean Acheson realized the outrage this formula would evoke, they began promoting a seven-power formula for postwar relief. Britain – citing the need for speed and efficiency – convinced Acheson and other officials to return to the four-power design. While Britain’s machinations remained secret, it is inconceivable that London’s insistence that Russia provide comments within two weeks would not raise eyebrows in Moscow. On the heels of Sir Frederick’s peremptory letter to Maisky, to say nothing of the six months it took Britain

¹³¹⁰ Cherwell to Churchill, October 29, 1942, PREM 4/28/11, PRO. Aware of the influence Cherwell had on the PM, an attempt was made to block this correspondence. See T.L.R. [Rowan] to Martin, Date Unknown, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

¹³¹¹ W.M. (42) 47th Meeting, November 3, 1942, in Sir Norman Brook Notebook: War Cabinet Minutes, WM (42) 156th meeting – WM (43) 99th meeting, CAB 195/1, PRO.

¹³¹² Leith-Ross prepared this report. Though the date is before the War Cabinet’s meeting, alterations to the document are penciled in the margins and correspond with the minutes and conclusions of the November 3, 1942 meeting of the War Cabinet: “Memorandum by the SOSDA, the SOSFA and the President of the BOT,” October 22, 1942, W.P. (42) 478, War Cabinet, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

¹³¹³ The idea of the four-power setup for the postwar effort is discussed extensively in the literature on Roosevelt’s foreign policy. See, in particular, Warren Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), chapter five; Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 342, 389-90, 434, 482.

to reply to the January 1942 Soviet relief proposal, this restriction could only reinforce Moscow's deepest suspicions.

The Impediment to Action in Washington is Removed

On November 3, 1942, the Congressional elections took place in the United States. The Democrats lost 45 seats in the House of Representatives, but managed to hold on to the majority by a mere one percent. While the Republicans picked up nine seats in the Senate, the Democrats, with a sixty-seat majority, still maintained decisive control of the upper house.¹³¹⁴ The results were now on the table; the State Department assumed the initiative.¹³¹⁵ The prospects "for satisfactory action were at the moment better than they had been at any time in Washington," Dean Acheson informed the British Embassy. "The internal disputes appear to have composed themselves and there is a serious desire to get on with the job." While encouraging them not to disagree, he requested Britain's reactions to the draft agreement as soon as possible.¹³¹⁶ His office made similar requests

¹³¹⁴ See Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia, s.v. "United States House of Representatives Elections, 1942," and "United States Senate Elections, 1942," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_House_of_Representatives_elections,_1942 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Senate_elections,_1942 (accessed September 20, 2012).

¹³¹⁵ The critical decision to move forward aggressively was taken in a meeting of Cordell Hull and Henry Wallace on November 4, 1942. See "United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Program," No Date, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA. At roughly the same time, the Americans began applying pressure on the British. See Telegram Relief No. 57, DC to FO, November 10, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹³¹⁶ Quote is in Telegram Relief No. 58, DC to FO, November 13, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

with both the Chinese and Soviet Embassies.¹³¹⁷ If the British worried that the time limit they intended to impose on the Soviet Union might offend Moscow, they need not worry now.¹³¹⁸ The Americans wanted a response at once!¹³¹⁹

For Britain, these exhortations created new problems. Before they could share their views with Moscow, they had to consult the Dominions and India. Here they anticipated no difficulties. But the Australian High Commissioner to Great Britain, Stanley Bruce, had misled the British Government into believing Canberra would accept an enlarged Policy Committee that included Canada but not Australia.¹³²⁰ Similar perceptions existed with regard to New Zealand. But when it became apparent that neither country would reach a decision rapidly, the Dominions Office decided to ignore them.¹³²¹ The War Cabinet had decided that their interests would be served through membership on a regional committee for the Far East, which they had proposed in their prepared response to the draft.¹³²² Thus on November 17, 1942, Eden shared Britain's views with Maisky despite problems with Australia.¹³²³ Not until December 15, 1942 did

¹³¹⁷ See Note to Acheson, Author unknown but probably Veatch, November 3, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹³¹⁸ On British worry, see “Minute” by Wilson, November 9, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO; Ronald to Leith-Ross, November 13, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹³¹⁹ The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), November 13, 1942, 840.50/830a, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General; the British Commonwealth; the Far East* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 144; Telegram Relief No. 57, DC to FO, November 10, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹³²⁰ G.S.D. to Eady, September 17, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹³²¹ Ronald to Leith-Ross, November 13, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹³²² “Conclusions of Meeting of War Cabinet, November 3, 1942,” CAB 65/28/19, PRO; but see also “Memorandum by the SOSDA, the SOSFA and the President of the BOT,” October 22, 1942, WP (42) 478, PREM 4/28/11, PRO.

¹³²³ For background to this decision, see Telegram No. 2535, DO to HC (Canada), November 17, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

Britain receive a reluctant letter of acceptance from Bruce.¹³²⁴ The Soviet reply came the following day.¹³²⁵ By this time, the British had shared their views with the Americans, albeit informally.¹³²⁶

The indirect implications of this decision are revealing. An impatient Acheson went to work securing support for a seven-power Policy Committee, and it appeared that the Americans would bow to Britain's preferences on the issue.¹³²⁷ The American planners, as we have seen, could have cared less whether the committee consisted of four or seven members. But equally revealing, Acheson requested Britain's permission to broach the seven-power setup with Litvinov.¹³²⁸ This proposal understandably worried the British, who had felt it "impolitic to refuse" a request from Maisky to allow Moscow more time to review Britain's response to the draft before London communicated it to Washington. Naturally the British asked that Acheson refrain. But if he should still speak with Litvinov, they insisted that he blame the seven-power setup on Canada! They did not want the Russians to think London and Washington were collaborating at Moscow's expense.¹³²⁹ Apparently the Americans agreed: Acheson did not speak with Litvinov.

While this affair sheds light on the double-dealing essential in all international diplomacy, it also reveals the degree to which the British were prepared to risk their rapport with Moscow to maintain exceptional relations with Washington. The Americans, who preferred unilateralism, rarely returned the favor. Nothing underlines this fact more

¹³²⁴ In this letter, the Australians made their reservations clear and they insisted on the creation of a Regional Committee for the Far East: see Bruce to Eden, December 15, 1942, T188/256, PRO; but also Attlee to Bruce, December 22, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹³²⁵ Maisky to Eden, December 16, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹³²⁶ Telegram 5948, DC to FO, December 7, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹³²⁷ Telegram Relief No. 67, DC to FO, December 14, 1942, T188/256 PRO.

¹³²⁸ Telegram No. 5948, DC to FO, December 7, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹³²⁹ Telegram Relief No. 46, FO to DC, December 10, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

than the bombshell Roosevelt dropped on November 23, 1942. Out of nowhere, the White House announced that Governor Herbert Lehman of New York State would resign his office in December to take up the position of relief administrator.¹³³⁰ While the British welcomed this appointment as evidence that Washington would play its part in postwar relief, they did not understand its implications until later. At a meeting of the Pacific War Council on December 9, 1942, Roosevelt “irrelevantly referred to the recent appointment of Governor Lehman as Director of Relief and Rehabilitation for the United Nations.” It was odd, the British Ambassador thought, that he should not have consulted London.¹³³¹

Roosevelt also failed to consult Hull or Acheson. Lehman would be responsible for setting up the State Department’s Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO). If the relief negotiations were successful, this bureau would become the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Lehman would then become the organization’s first Director General. Acheson was furious. He had long promoted Paul Appleby, who he believed would be an excellent “servant” of the State Department.¹³³² Acheson was also in the midst of the process of bringing the relief organization into being. It helped little that such a decision would be made without at least informing the diplomats so they could prepare and consult with the other powers. Equally important, he would have to work with whoever served in the position. At

¹³³⁰ Telegram No. 5730, DC to FO, November 23, 1942, FO 371/31505, PRO.

¹³³¹ Telegram Relief No. 64, DC to FO, December 11, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹³³² McDougall to Bruce, October 16, 1942, Document 61, in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy: 1937-1949*, Vol. 6, *July 1942 – December 1943* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1983), 132-134. The quote comes from Telegram Relief No. 11, DC to FO, January 15, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO. It is revealing that Acheson led the British to believe that the DG of UNRRA would be a “servant” of the State Department.

minimum, he thought the President should have informed the State Department before making the announcement.¹³³³ It only worsened morale and left Appleby with an unclear mandate. He returned to Department of Agriculture in January 1943.¹³³⁴

But with Roosevelt, politics determined everything. Shortly after the November 3, 1942 elections, Herbert Hoover began publicly promoting himself as the best man to run European relief after the war. As a result, Roosevelt took renewed interest in the topic and began expressing irritation that so little had been done to prepare for the day of liberation. Yet he was in large part responsible for the lack of progress. Unrelated to these developments, the Democrats had lost the New York Governorship to Thomas Dewey in November. Convinced that the damage could be undone if the party captured the New York Senate seat in 1944, Roosevelt tapped Lieutenant Governor, Charles Poletti, as his prospective nominee. But Poletti refused unless he could run as a former Governor, which meant that Lehman would have to resign just before the end of his term. Roosevelt decided that Lehman should be Director General of the relief organization.¹³³⁵ He had prestige, experience running large organizations, and a long record of providing relief to Jewish refugees. Lehman was a very rich Jewish New Yorker, married to a Guggenheim. But above all, he was an old friend of Roosevelt's.¹³³⁶

¹³³³ Acheson was typically excellent at concealing his views from the historical record, but they shine through in the following document: Noel Hall to Leith-Ross, November 23, 1942, FO 371/31505, PRO. Years later, Lehman speculated that his appointment angered Acheson. See Herbert Lehman, *Reminiscences of Herbert Henry Lehman, Columbia University Oral History, 1961* (New York: Columbia University, 1972), 373.

¹³³⁴ Telegram Relief No. 11, DC to FO, January 15, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO.

¹³³⁵ This story is conveyed in Noel Hall to Leith-Ross, November 23, 1942, FO 371/31505, PRO.

¹³³⁶ On Lehman's qualifications and background, see Allan Nevins, *Herbert Lehman and His Era* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963).

By late 1942, the puzzle was coming together. Whatever irritation the appointment caused, it was a welcome development to have the President motivated. It threatened Acheson's territory, but he accepted it, and the British quickly invited Lehman to London, apparently believing they could co-opt him. Hull delayed the visit.¹³³⁷ Competition between Great Britain and the United States would persist, but the fear of failure forced them to cooperate. Acheson believed there could be no "greater disaster" for the "United Nations than to have our forces, the British forces, or any other armies of the United Nations forces occupy an area and then find themselves unable to feed that area." A famine that led to the deaths of "hundreds of thousands, or millions of people," he told colleagues, would be "one of the greatest blows to our conduct of the war, to say nothing of the prestige of the United States throughout the world."¹³³⁸ Britain shared these views. Thus Leith-Ross expressed deep satisfaction when Britain formally conveyed its reaction to the draft agreement to Washington on Christmas Eve, 1942.¹³³⁹

Sino-American Relations During the War and Prospects for the Future

For Chiang Kai-shek, the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was a godsend.¹³⁴⁰ It guaranteed that at least one great power would make war on Tokyo. But it also promised increased aid. Washington had no desire to see China fall out of the war.

¹³³⁷ Telegram Relief No. 47, FO to DC, December 17, 1942, T188/256, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 72, DC to FO, December 27, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹³³⁸ "Statements of Acheson and Stettinius before the Food Requirements Committee," November 11, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹³³⁹ Leith-Ross to Dalton, December 28, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹³⁴⁰ On this particular point, see Schaller, *The United States and China*, 71.

Roughly two-fifths of all available Japanese forces remained tied down in the country. Of 50 Army divisions, 34 were in China if Manchuria is included.¹³⁴¹ To assist the Chinese, the United States had already provided the Nationalists \$170 million in loans and credits well before it entered the conflict. On February 9, 1942, it served up an additional credit of \$500 million.¹³⁴² Much of this aid was hoarded and misused.¹³⁴³

The Lend-Lease Act of March 1941 made further assistance possible, but the delivery of supplies presented extraordinary challenges. Isolated from Chinese seaports, which had been captured by the Japanese, territories occupied by the Nationalists were only accessible via the tortuous Burma Road. Yet on April 29, 1942, the Japanese stopped passage along this route, and by the end of May, they had taken all of Burma. Tragically, most of the lend-lease aid for China delivered to this date had been invested into improving this route.¹³⁴⁴ Now the United States could only fly supplies over the Himalayas, which imposed severe limitations on what could be brought to Chungking.

The reaction of the Americans and Chinese to these developments would color Chiang's attitude towards the relief proposals. A rancorous dispute broke out over what to do about China's supply problem. General Joseph Stillwell, the ranking American

¹³⁴¹ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 470.

¹³⁴² Detailed aid figures are found in Marilla Bliss Guptil, *The United States and Foreign Relief: UNRRA in China, 1942-1947*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, August 1995), 70-71. For a discussion of the \$500 million credit, see Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 177. For a general but excellent overview of aid sent to China, see Eastman, et al., *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*, 144-148.

¹³⁴³ On the misuse of this aid, see Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938-1945*, 96-99; see also Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 182.

¹³⁴⁴ At the end of March 11, 1943, the United States had provided China with a mere \$158,000,000 in lend-lease assistance. Most of this had been lost to the Japanese when they seized Burma. See *Eighth Quarterly Report to Congress on Lend-Lease Operations: For the Period Ended March 11, 1943*, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 12-15.

military official in the China-Burma-India theatre, hoped to use Chinese troops to reopen the Burma Road, but he also wanted to reform the Chinese army. This course would permit sufficient supplies into the country and pave the way for a renewed ground offensive against the Japanese. By contrast, Colonel Claire Chennault hoped to use airpower to attack the Japanese. With supplies flown over the Himalayas, he believed air power alone could strike a blow to Japan.

Despite the obvious problem with Chennault's strategy – air bases with inadequate ground defenses would be vulnerable to Japanese attack – Chiang preferred the latter option. He feared the potential loss of Chinese troops in a Burma campaign, which, he correctly assumed, would be needed to fight the communists at a later date. Stillwell's proposals to reform the military, moreover, would have undermined his leadership.¹³⁴⁵ Patronage paid to various warlords who commanded many of the Chinese army's divisions kept Chiang in control. Naturally, the Generalissimo pulled out all stops to undermine Stillwell and his allies.¹³⁴⁶

For Chiang Kai-shek, the stakes were high. Stillwell not only threatened Chiang's leadership, he also jeopardized the Nationalist party's access to supplies. The American General informed Washington of rampant corruption, incompetence, and extravagance among the Nationalist leadership. He suggested the United States should be wary of

¹³⁴⁵ On this point, see Eastman, et al., *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*, 147.

¹³⁴⁶ This dispute is discussed most thoroughly in Barbara Tuchman, *Stillwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), but is also discussed in most other accounts. In addition to sources already mentioned in this section, see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 356-58, 487-88; Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 170-201, 305-332. For an excellent overview of Chiang's problems with his military, see Eastman, et al., *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*, 134-143.

providing unconditional aid to Chiang, as it had done with a \$500 million loan.¹³⁴⁷ He and other officials, including British diplomats, even suggested the United States increase its cooperation with the Communists.¹³⁴⁸ Outraged, Chiang used Chennault and other contacts in Washington to undermine Stillwell, discredit his assessments, and label him the problem. He also sent his wife to the United States to garner public support for his leadership. These efforts, it should be remembered, were taking place at the very moment Acheson requested China's reaction to the relief proposal, and they continued throughout the four-power discussions. Chiang had no interest in kicking up dust over the proposed relief organization. He could not, as one scholar writes, appear "totally negative and disruptive."¹³⁴⁹ He wanted that characterization pinned on Stillwell.

Similarly, Roosevelt had no interest in angering Chiang. If China pulled out of the war, a card Chiang discreetly revealed from time to time, or if his regime collapsed, a scenario many American officials feared, it would not only undermine America's wartime strategy in Asia, it would undercut Roosevelt's postwar plans as well.¹³⁵⁰ In his view, the Versailles settlement had failed to concentrate power in the hands of a few select nations capable of providing global stability. To rectify this shortcoming, he believed the postwar international structure required more than a United Nations organization; a condominium of the Great Powers, or the Four Policemen, as he referred

¹³⁴⁷ For Stillwell's views, see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 386-87.

¹³⁴⁸ On cooperation with the communists, see Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 183, 434; Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938-1945*, 168, 201-204; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 478-49. Though these suggestions arose most forcefully in 1943-44, they were being quietly discussed in 1942.

¹³⁴⁹ Schaller, *The United States and China*, 81.

¹³⁵⁰ On Chiang's threats to pull out of the war, see Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1937-1945*, 184-185. On American worries that China would collapse, see Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 175-76; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 388-389.

to it, was needed to lead that organization, preserve the peace, and maintain global stability. Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union should constitute the first three legs of this structure, but China, he thought, should assume the fourth.¹³⁵¹ While he acknowledged China's weaknesses, and agreed that this country would have to go through a period of reform and transition, he stood convinced that China's geography and population would make this nation a Great Power regardless of its problems.¹³⁵²

The United States should not obstruct this process, he thought; rather, it should win China's friendship by facilitating its rise. Roosevelt believed this approach would serve American interests. In disputes with the other Great Powers, China would side with the United States. It would provide a counterweight to Soviet power; offer a means of containing Japan; and work to stabilize the entire region.¹³⁵³ Like the United States, China stood adamantly opposed to the colonial empires in Asia. As such, Roosevelt believed China should play a role in a trusteeship scheme for former colonies in Asia where a transition to self-government appeared necessary: Burma, Indochina, Korea, Malaya, and possibly Siam.¹³⁵⁴ With China and other countries involved in these trusteeships, Roosevelt could convince the American people to participate, which would

¹³⁵¹ Roosevelt's postwar plans are discussed in many places. But see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 342, 389-391; Kimball, *The Juggler*, 83-106; Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 175, 308. One scholar explains that America's idea of China as a stabilizing force in East Asia dates back to 1899. See Warren Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 142.

¹³⁵² On Roosevelt's attitude towards China, see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 390-391; Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 307-08, 420.

¹³⁵³ On these points, see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 390-391, but also John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10-11.

¹³⁵⁴ The issue of trusteeships is discussed more thoroughly in William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: the United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). But it is also touched upon in most of the works listed in this section.

in turn give him cover for the maintenance of American naval and air bases in the region. If China could reform and resolve its own problems with revolutionary nationalism, it might also serve as a model for other countries in the region.¹³⁵⁵ The United States could work with China, and thereby shape the country in ways beneficial to American interests. Access to the great Chinese market had always been a dream of the American capitalists.¹³⁵⁶

While Chiang could not and did not know the full extent of Roosevelt's plans, he certainly agreed with the general approach. The Chinese had never concealed their opposition to the presence of colonial empires in Asia. The Atlantic Charter, particularly the promise of self-government and economic opportunity, had struck a chord. When it appeared that a parallel Pacific Charter would not be announced, they quickly asserted the Atlantic Charter's global reach.¹³⁵⁷ Diplomatic reports coming out of Chungking indicated China's hope of increasing its regional influence, especially in areas hosting large Chinese populations, such as Malaya and Siam, but also territories at one time under the suzerainty of Imperial China, such as Korea and Indochina.¹³⁵⁸ Though debate

¹³⁵⁵ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 391, 429.

¹³⁵⁶ On this point, see Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 176. This point, however, is brought out at great length in the revisionist literature on U.S. diplomacy sparked by William Appleman Williams.

¹³⁵⁷ The Chinese attitude towards the Atlantic Charter can be gleaned from the following documents: "The Acting SOS to the Ambassador in China (Gauss)," March 25, 1942, 740.0011 Pacific War/2220a: Telegram; "The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS," March 28, 1942, 895.01/98; "The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS, December 19, 1942, 893.9111/48, all in DOS, *FRUS, 1942, China* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1956), 730-731, 746. But see also Gauss to SOS, Subject Indochina, with Enclosure, August 18, 1942, 840.50/666, Box 4798, RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁵⁸ "The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS," June 17, 1942, 893.000/14855: Telegram; "Memorandum of Conversation, by Counselor of Embassy in China (Vincent)," July 29, 1942, 840.50/640; "The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS," August 3, 1942, 840.50/531: Telegram; "The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS,"

raged over the country's future, factions existed who supported American aims: a commitment to reform and internal reconstruction, as well as a free, open and decentralized economic system.¹³⁵⁹ Whatever Chiang might have thought of these debates, he certainly embraced the invitation to join the Great Powers in managing world affairs. The relief organization was the first effort to apply the four-power principle to the postwar era, and the Generalissimo wasn't about to rock the boat.

The Determinant Factors in the Chinese Position Towards Postwar Relief

Chiang Kai-shek also needed aid. The prospect of an organization that might deliver food and supplies to China must have been a welcome development. As one scholar tells us, Chiang's troops were starving. Nothing did more to impair their ability to fight.¹³⁶⁰ A seat on the Policy Committee would afford Chiang the opportunity to steer aid to China, an outstanding prospect so long as it was kept out of the hands of the communists. If inadequate supplies, poorly trained troops, and incompetent leadership made it difficult for him to launch an offensive against the Japanese, a fact that angered the Americans and British, the communist menace made him all the more reluctant to risk

September 25, 1942, 893.50/277; Gauss to Hull, December 19, 1942, 893.9111/48, all in *FRUS, 1942, China*, 732-737, 739-740, 746. See also Gauss to Hull, with Enclosure, August 18, 1942, 840.50/666, Box 4798; "Study of Post-War Problems in China," Division of Special Research, September 11, 1942, 840.50/640, Box 4798; "Reference Chungking's dispatch..." by Division of Far Eastern Affairs, October 26, 1942, 840.50/666, Box 4799, all RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁵⁹ On China's postwar economic system, see "Memorandum of Conversation," by Vincent, July 29, 1942, 840.50/640; Gauss to Hull, September 25, 1942, 893.50/277; "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counselor of Embassy in China (Vincent)," November 12, 1942, 840.50/912, all in *FRUS, 1942, China*, 733-735, 739-743.

¹³⁶⁰ Eastman, et al., *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*, 141-42.

his troops in battle. For all of the heroic accolades bestowed upon Chiang and his military in the American press during the Second World War, the truth is that the Chinese army would not engage the Japanese, and Roosevelt, who wanted to appease the Kuomintang leader, refused to make aid contingent on China's willingness to fight.¹³⁶¹ Chiang therefore tied up his best troops blockading territories the communists controlled, until he had the requisite strength to attack them. Aid from any organization could only bolster his efforts. With few exceptions, China had little reason to dispute the relief proposals.

The regional committees that so aroused the passions of Leith-Ross played no role in China's assessments. The draft agreement granted these entities little power, and with no comparable Inter-Allied Committee in Asia to fret about, China had no reason to worry of such matters. But in London, the dramatic setbacks Britain experienced in the Far East, first with the loss of Malaya in January 1942, then Singapore in February, and finally Burma in April, they were eager to restore their prestige in the region. It was important to demonstrate that Britain could not only retake its lost territories, but that it could also care for the local populations. With this aim in mind, the Colonial Office emphasized the importance of a Regional Committee for the Far East, and even proposed the creation of an Inter-Allied Committee for the region, which might include France and the Netherlands.¹³⁶² Until this point, the main concern in creating a committee for the Far

¹³⁶¹ On the positive portrayal of China in the American press during the war, see Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 172-74, 181; on Chiang's refusal to fight see p. 185; but see also Eastman, et al., *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927-1949*, 134-140. On Roosevelt's refusal to make aid contingent on the Chiang's willingness to engage the Japanese, see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 388.

¹³⁶² See especially Clauson to Leith-Ross, October 5, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO. Immediately after this letter was dispatched, the British began making preparations for

East had been to appease the Australians and New Zealanders, who took offense at their exclusion from the Policy Committee. But in late 1942 it became a means to restore European prestige in the region, particularly that of the British Empire. Though China had no way of knowing this, it serves to highlight their reluctance during the negotiations.

Yet it might still seem bizarre that China would raise no complaint over the preeminent place the United States reserved for itself in the relief organization. Chiang, for example, had always been reluctant to place his troops under American command.¹³⁶³ Why would he give an American Director General of Relief the freedom to operate with such wide powers in China? Of course the Chinese would raise a minor objection to this arrangement, but they also made it clear that they would not insist on changes.

Further considerations make this behavior somewhat understandable. Membership on the Policy Committee explains it in part. But China had also been remarkably successful at “sucking folks in and deceiving them,” as Harry Hopkins put it.¹³⁶⁴ They had not only bamboozled influential individuals throughout the American government, they succeeded in assembling an army of journalists, philanthropists, and businessmen prepared to support their causes.¹³⁶⁵ Why would China provoke controversy over American power in the relief organization when it possessed the ability to exploit it for

the relief of their territories in Asia. See “Memorandum by the Burma Office,” October 28, 1942, CPR (42) FE3, War Cabinet Official Committee, Far Eastern Sub-Committee; “Memorandum by the DO,” November 10, 1942, CPR (42) FE1, War Cabinet Official Committee, Far Eastern Sub-Committee; “Memorandum by the Colonial Office,” November 10, 1942, CPR (42) FE2, War Cabinet Official Committee, Far Eastern Sub-Committee; Minutes of Cabinet Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief Committee, October 7, 1942, in FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹³⁶³ Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938-1945*, 103-106.

¹³⁶⁴ Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 182.

¹³⁶⁵ The role of journalists, philanthropists and businessmen in supporting China is described in *Ibid.*, 172-76. But see also Tim Park, *In Support of ‘New China’: Origins of the China Lobby, 1937-1941*, Ph.D. Dissertation, West Virginia University, 2003.

Chinese benefit? Why would Chiang challenge the Roosevelt Administration when the United States remained the sole power capable of offering significant assistance to the Chinese Nationalists in their inevitable struggle with the communists?

The alternatives presented problems. It made little sense to collaborate with Great Britain against the United States when London's central objective in Asia remained the preservation of the British Empire, a goal that came into conflict with China's aims. Churchill, moreover, had little respect for China and refuted the idea that it was or could be a Great Power. The Chungking Government, he told Anthony Eden in October 1942, was a "faggot vote on the side of the United States."¹³⁶⁶ As for the Soviet Union, Chiang had little leverage in Moscow, and his devious schemes to drag the Soviets into the war with Japan must have irritated Stalin, whose armies remained bogged down on the Eastern front. That the Chinese fared so poorly against the Japanese, and refused to go on the offensive, surely served to heighten Stalin's contempt. For his part, Chiang always feared the possibility that Moscow might provide aid to the Chinese communists, and the United States remained the best counterpoise to this contingency.¹³⁶⁷ The wisest course was to stir up no unnecessary trouble and stick with the Americans.

Similarly, the Americans did not want to strain their relations with China. Just as they informed the Soviets of Leith-Ross's visit to Washington, they also called in the Chinese Ambassador, Hu Shi, on July 1, 1942 to explain their intentions. Hu's meetings with Hull and Acheson are notable for two reasons. First, the Ambassador was terribly uninformed. He knew nothing of the Inter-Allied Committee in London, had not given the question of postwar relief any thought, and apparently had no guidance from his

¹³⁶⁶ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 389.

¹³⁶⁷ See Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1937-1945*, 182-196.

Government on how to handle the issue. Second, he revealed not the slightest hesitation in expressing what he knew his Government's primary concern would be. Whereas the British and Soviets fretted over the organization's structure, Hu wanted to know what information the Americans needed so his Government could receive relief. Apparently unconcerned with the scheme itself, he asked Acheson whether he should obtain "material on the extent of the Chinese needs for relief." The Assistant Secretary shrewdly deflected the question.¹³⁶⁸

But the reaction must have raised concerns. No sooner had Acheson shared the July 14, 1942 draft proposal with the Chinese than the State Department asked the American Ambassador in Chungking, Clarence Gauss, to find out everything he could about trends on postwar thinking in China.¹³⁶⁹ He learned that roughly forty Chinese officials were debating postwar issues in an organization established by the Kuomintang before the American entry into the war. Its leader, Wang Chung-hui, remained a powerful figure in the Nationalist party. A former Foreign Minister, he served as the Secretary General of the Supreme National Defense Council chaired by Chiang Kai-shek. Though real power in the Nationalist Government resided with the Military Affairs Commission, also chaired by Chiang, the Defense Council directed the Government. In meetings with Ambassador Gauss, Wang elucidated the reach of the postwar planning organization's work, which covered three primary topics: postwar international organization; relations

¹³⁶⁸ See "Memorandum of Conversation," Hu Shih and Hamilton, June 30, 1942; "Memorandum of Conversation," Hu Shih and Hull, July 1, 1942; "Memorandum of Conversation," Litvinov, Shih, and Acheson, July 1, 1942, all in File #2 – Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 3, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁶⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation," Hu Shih and Acheson, July 14, 1942, 840.50/571, Box 4798; Telegram 656, Secretary to State to Gauss, July 21, 1942, 840.50/504A, Box 4797, both in RG 59, NARA.

with Japan and other countries in the Far East, and economic adjustments, which was subdivided into external economic relations and internal reconstruction.¹³⁷⁰

From newspapers and meetings with elites and government officials in an outside of this organization, Embassy officials learned the Chinese had ambitious plans, and hoped for American assistance. According to various officials, China's primary concern would be internal reconstruction. China would request financial aid, raw materials, industrial equipment, technical know-how, and help expanding the country's transportation system and rebuilding its agricultural heartland. They desired the extension of lend-lease assistance into the postwar period, and believed access to the American market would provide a means of servicing their debt and retiring the principle of whatever loans and credits they received. But what they wanted most, and this they remained reluctant to say bluntly, was aid with no strings attached.¹³⁷¹

American officials also learned that certain Chinese officials hoped to "play power politics after the war."¹³⁷² These individuals wanted assistance building up the country's national defense industries with increased steel production, armaments manufacturers, and the extension of the country's rail, highway and air communications

¹³⁷⁰ The best description of the Nationalist Governmental structure is found in Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 459-60. For the Chinese postwar planning structure, see Gauss to Hull, August 3, 1942, 840.50/531: Telegram, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 735-37; Summary of dispatch from Gauss for Welles, October 8, 1942, 840.50/653; Gauss to SOS, August 4, 1942, 840.50/653, both in Box 4798, RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁷¹ "Memorandum of Conversation," by Vincent, July 29, 1942, 840.50/640; Gauss to Hull, August 3, 1942, 840.50/531: Telegram; "Memorandum of Conversation," by Vincent, November 12, 1942, 840.50/912, all in *FRUS, 1942, China*, 733-737, 740. "Study of Post-War Problems in China," September 11, 1942, 840.50/640, Box 4798, RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁷² Memorandum of Conversation, by Vincent, July 29, 1942, 840.50/640, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 733-35.

systems for military purposes.¹³⁷³ These officials placed special emphasis on the independence of former colonial territories and expressed their desire to assert influence in border regions and territories with large Chinese populations. They hoped to recover all territories lost to the Japanese since 1894, but the evidence also suggests that they wanted the Americans to help them regain leverage over Indochina to gain access to and control over the South China Seas.¹³⁷⁴ In the north, they similarly wanted the United States to help them secure an agreement with the Soviet Union to resolve border disputes and keep Moscow away from the Chinese communists.¹³⁷⁵ For officials with this agenda, internal reconstruction, while complementing their geopolitical aims, remained a secondary concern.

Yet most Nationalist officials, including Chiang Kai-shek, evinced a high degree of caution in how they presented their ideas. They played to American preferences. It was agreed, for example, that China should embrace Cordell Hull's ideas on trade: low tariffs, abandonment of nationalistic trade policies, and impartial access to raw and essential

¹³⁷³ "Memorandum of Conversation," by Vincent, November 12, 1942, 840.50/912, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 740.

¹³⁷⁴ Gauss to Hull, March 28, 1942, 895.01/98; "The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS," May 28, 1942, 893.00/14858; Gauss to Hull, June 17, 1942, 893.000/14855; "The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS," June 22, 1942, 740.0011 Pacific War; "Memorandum of Conversation," by Vincent, July 29, 1942, 840.50/640; Gauss to Hull, August 3, 1942, 840.50/531; Telegram; "The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS," September 14, 1942, 893.50/277; Gauss to Hull, December 19, 1943, 893.9111/48, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 730-737, 739, 746. See also Gauss to Hull, with Enclosure, August 18, 1942, 840.50/666; "Study of Post-War Problems in China," September 11, 1942, 840.50/640, both in Box 4798; "Reference Chungking's dispatch..." by Division of Far Eastern Affairs, October 26, 1942, 840.50/666, Box 4799; Telegram No. 856, Gauss to SOS, January 13, 1942, 840.50/1260, Box 4803, RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁷⁵ "Reference Chungking's Dispatch No. 739, November 19, 1942..." August 11, 1943, by Division of Far Eastern Affairs, 840.50/912, Box 4800, RG 59, NARA; "Memorandum of Conversation," by Vincent, November 12, 1942, 840.50/912, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 740.

materials.¹³⁷⁶ Statements made by officials expressing a preference for centralized control of the economy were balanced with assertions on the need for economic freedom and private enterprise.¹³⁷⁷ On geopolitical matters, the Nationalists were equally judicious. They repeatedly denied the notion that China aspired “to the dominant position sought by Japan.” Chiang certainly feared this impression. In a speech to the People’s Political Council, a body of 200 representatives from diverse Chinese parties set up purportedly to help Chiang design wartime policy, the Generalissimo asserted that, “although China is the oldest and largest nation in Asia ‘it is not for us to talk boastfully of her right to a position of ‘leadership’ and China shall rather regard it as her responsibility to treat peoples of Asia as equals’, toward whom China has responsibility but not rights.”¹³⁷⁸

Despite such statements, the British remained hostile to the idea of China as a Great Power. It constituted an error of judgment, one British official stationed in Chungking suggested, to continue along the path of “paying unwarranted tribute to the economic and political capabilities of the Chinese.” These attributes do not exist. He nonetheless agreed that the economic rehabilitation of China would be of tremendous benefit to not only the Chinese but also the entire world if the task were accomplished. But he worried that the Chinese regime “was becoming increasingly autocratic.” Any aid provided, he argued, should be used as leverage to exact reforms. It should only be granted with strict conditions, and should not be limited to areas controlled by the Nationalists. Most importantly, he stressed the importance of Anglo-American

¹³⁷⁶ Gauss to Hull, August 3, 1942, 840.50/531: Telegram, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 735-37.

¹³⁷⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Vincent, November 12, 1942, 840.50/912, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 740.

¹³⁷⁸ Gauss to Hull, December 19, 1942, 893.9111/48, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 746.

cooperation in China. The Chinese had a long history of playing the Great Powers off one another.¹³⁷⁹

Chinese Nationalist views on postwar international organization accorded with those of the Americans. They believed the organization should pursue disarmament and include an impartial body for arbitrating disputes, but that it should be backed up by an international police force. They reveled at the idea that China should be one of the four policemen. Yet they expressed disdain for unanimous voting, which, they believed, weakened the League of Nations, and left it unable to do anything meaningful when the Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931, and then the whole of China in 1937. Also like the Americans, the Chinese believed these enforcement functions should reside in a body separate from those managing political, economic and social affairs. Postwar relief, it can be inferred, constituted one such example. Like Sumner Welles, the Nationalists also agreed that while there should be no delay in setting up the organization, a “cooling off” period should precede the conclusion of definitive peace treaties. Ironically the Nationalists knew things would “heat up” in China when the war came to an end.¹³⁸⁰

It remains unclear who reviewed the draft agreement in Chungking, but it probably went before China’s planning organization.¹³⁸¹ Perhaps this group made

¹³⁷⁹ “Memorandum by Second Secretary of Embassy in Chungking (Clubb) of Conversation with Mr. W.V. Blewett of the British Embassy in China,” December 8, 1942, 840.50/1014, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 744-46.

¹³⁸⁰ Gauss to Hull, August 3, 1942, 840.50/531: Telegram; “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Vincent, November 12, 1942, 840.50/912, *FRUS, 1942, China*, 735-737, 740; “Reference Chungking’s underlying dispatch No. 624 of September 15, 1942...” by Division of Far Eastern Affairs, November 25, 1942, 840.50/734, Box 4799, RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁸¹ Acheson shared the draft agreement with the Chinese Ambassador on August 14, 1942; see Memorandum of Conversation, Shih and Acheson, August 14, 1942, 840.50/597, Box 4797, RG 59, NARA.

recommendations to Chiang Kai-shek and the Supreme National Defense Council, which authorized the Foreign Minister, T.V. Soong, to speak with Ambassador Gauss about the issue. As the Chinese responded more rapidly than the British and Russians, it remains doubtful that they consulted any other power on the matter at this point.¹³⁸² When Acheson began pressuring the Chinese to provide their reactions in early November, Soong informed Gauss that debate over the issue of unanimous voting had created delays. Yet he was unaware of the particulars. It soon became apparent, however, that the Chinese feared the organization might become hamstrung in the same manner as the League of Nations.¹³⁸³ Apart from this information, the Americans knew nothing of what the Chinese really thought at this juncture.

On November 24, 1942, T.V. Soong conveyed China's views to the United States. The Kuomintang accepted all ten articles of the agreement with two suggestions. First, they preferred that the Director General's plan of field operations be subject to the approval of the country concerned. If differences of opinion emerged, then the Policy Committee should resolve the dispute. This proposal was designed to protect their sovereignty. Second, they suggested that amendments to the agreement be permitted with a simple majority vote.¹³⁸⁴ This proposal, the Americans learned, was an attempt to prevent the weaknesses of the League of Nations. With these suggestions on the table,

¹³⁸² However, they would ultimately reach out to the French.

¹³⁸³ Telegram 1080, SOS to Gauss, November 13, 1942, 840.50/527A, Box 4797; Memorandum of Conversation, Gauss and Soong, November 18, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, both RG 59, NARA.

¹³⁸⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, Soong and Gauss, November 24, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Soong made it known that his Government was “not prepared to insist on them.”¹³⁸⁵

The Chinese had no reason to stir up trouble, nor any reason to think they would receive little or no aid. Without informing the State Department, the Board of Economic Warfare had recently sent experts to Chungking to discuss China’s postwar reconstruction.¹³⁸⁶ The New Dealers, like the Nationalists, had big plans for the country.

Relief and the Soviet Conundrum

The Soviet Union *was* a brutal regime. While it overtly slaughtered millions of its own people, and then sentenced millions more to harsh labor in what Solzhenitsyn called the Gulag Archipelago, its policies inadvertently if not explicitly led to the deaths of millions more, not only at home, but abroad as well.¹³⁸⁷ Much of this carnage was purportedly done to achieve internal and external security, but it was also part of an ideological campaign to bring about communism, or the final stage of history, in which class and state cease to exist. It also provided Joseph Stalin a pretext to remove threats to his authority and centralize power in his hands.¹³⁸⁸ Whatever one might think of the

¹³⁸⁵ Telegram No. 1386, Gauss to SOS, November 24, 1942, 840.50/854, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 148-49.

¹³⁸⁶ The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the SOS, September 24, 1942, 898.50a/156, *FRUS*, 1942, *China*, 739.

¹³⁸⁷ On the numbers, see Alan Kors, “Can There Be An After Socialism,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 20, no. 1 (2003): 1-17; Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1985).

¹³⁸⁸ On these points, see Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-73* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winsont, 1968); Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

relative worth or causal importance of these aims, the means employed to achieve them *were* often ruthless. Famine constituted one such tool, which makes Moscow's relief policy deserving of investigation.¹³⁸⁹

Equally important, the Soviet commitment to postwar relief does not appear to accord with Marxist-Leninist ideology, the socio-political underpinnings of the Soviet Union. To sharpen the problem, let us note that American policymakers considered relief necessary to prevent revolutionary instability, but often justified it in public with references to the country's Christian tradition.¹³⁹⁰ They believed that by preventing revolution they were doing God's work. This reasoning and justification contradict Marxist-Leninist ideology, which is premised not on eschatology,¹³⁹¹ but on a

¹³⁸⁹ The most notorious case is that of the Ukraine in 1933. For a set of articles that analyze this event, see Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, eds., *Famine in Ukraine, 1932-1933* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies University of Alberta Press, 1986). See also Miron Dolot, *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987); Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Lubomyr Y. Luciuk and Lisa Grekul, eds., *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine* (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 2008). The scholarly literature has indicted the United States for its failure to criticize Stalin for his role in causing this disaster and subsequent refusal to aid the victims. See Marco Carynnk, "Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, the United States and the Ukrainian Famine of 1933," in the Serbyn volume; see also M. Wayne Morris, *Stalin's Famine and Roosevelt's Recognition of Russia*, (New York: University Press of America, 1994). Regrettably these assessments assign little importance to the dramatic economic events that shook American politics and international relations in 1933.

¹³⁹⁰ Previous chapters have repeatedly documented the fear of revolution in American thinking, but the relationship between Christian doctrine and American behavior is not discussed in any great detail. Though the planners never explicitly referred to Christianity in their meetings, they did so both directly and indirectly in their public statements. See chapter on public relations.

¹³⁹¹ On the atheism of Marxist-Leninism, see "Socialism and Religion," in Vladimir Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 83-87; see also Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1 (New York: Penguin, 1976), 165, 173, 175, 493-94. For an outstanding study of the relations between church and state in Soviet Russia, see Tatiana

materialistic and teleological view of history that is both predictive and determinant.

As such, it foretells and promotes working-class revolutions that overthrow bourgeois establishments in favor of so-called “dictatorships of the proletariat.” In turn, this ideology both predicts and encourages the imposition of “socialism” on countries by these new regimes, with the goal of reaching “communism.”¹³⁹² If Stalin held these beliefs and espoused such aims, why would his regime support an agenda designed to prevent revolution?

Moreover, why would Stalin agree to collaborate with London and Washington to construct a relief agency? He had refused to participate in all of the Allied War Councils, preferring envoy diplomacy to manage the alliance. Maxim Litvinov had repeatedly argued for the institutionalization of inter-allied cooperation, but his superiors in Moscow ignored him.¹³⁹³ One historian explains: “Having themselves helped Germany against the Western Powers earlier in the war, the Russians now often assumed that the British and later the Americans were deliberately following a somewhat similar policy.”¹³⁹⁴ Soviet officials also remained wedded to the idea that Great Britain and the United States occupied the vanguard of capitalistic-imperialism, and were enemies of the proletariat.

A. Chumachenko, *Church and State in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev Years* (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

¹³⁹² “Marxism,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, Academic ed., s.v. “Marxism,” <http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2377/EBchecked/topic/367344/Marxism> (accessed September 20, 2012).

¹³⁹³ Geoffrey Roberts, “Litvinov’s Lost Peace, 1941-1946” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 25, 28-30; Aleksei Filitov, “The Soviet Union and the Grand Alliance: The Internal Dimension of Foreign Policy,” in *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1991: A Retrospective*, ed. Gabriel Gorodetsky (London: Frank Cass and Co, 1994), 98.

¹³⁹⁴ Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 291, 288, 306. See also Ulam, *Expansion*, 319, 329, 334. Ulam says that Russian historians have often complained that they were never invited to participate, but this interpretation does not accord with the record.

Nothing aroused Ivan Maisky's fears more than the thought that Wall Street might somehow take control of the relief organization.¹³⁹⁵ Stalin's worries were elsewhere, but his spirit the same: "Churchill is the kind who, if you don't watch him, will slip a kopeck out of your pocket... Roosevelt... dips in his hand only for bigger coins."¹³⁹⁶

The Great Russian Famine of 1921

Marxist-Leninism might have never emerged on the international stage were it not for the First World War, which precipitated the 1917 Russian Revolutions that brought the Bolsheviks of Vladimir Lenin to power. These events and the resulting Civil War also set the stage for a catastrophic famine. The policies of the old Tsarist regime, massive dislocations of people, and the requisition of food by the Bolsheviks led to significant reductions in the acreage of land cultivated annually. Then, a severe drought destroyed the harvest of 1920. By March 1921, Lenin's Bolsheviks had secured control of most of the country, but the food situation looked grim.¹³⁹⁷ "If there is a harvest," he predicted, "the government will be saved." But if not, he believed it would perish.¹³⁹⁸ By the early summer of 1921, a second drought made Lenin's direst predictions increasingly probable. With few alternatives, the Bolsheviks sought outside help.

¹³⁹⁵ Eden to Kerr, August 12, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹³⁹⁶ William Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy: From Entente to Détente to Cold War* (New York: Norton, 1982), 40. This quote is also found in Vojtech Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 48.

¹³⁹⁷ On the causes of the famine, see Bertrand M. Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 26-27.

¹³⁹⁸ Benjamin M. Weissman, "Herbert Hoover's 'Treaty' With Soviet Russia: August 20, 1921," *Slavic Review* 28, no. 2 (June 1969): 276.

During the first week of July 1921, two appeals went out from Moscow.

Lenin, who had hitherto attacked the Russian Orthodox Church, permitted Saint Tikhon, the Patriarch of Moscow, to request assistance. In letters to the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, Tikhon urged the world to aid Russia. Less shocking perhaps, but more dramatic, he also let the great Russian author, Maxim Gorky, issue an entreaty. While Tikhon appealed to the Christian beneficence, Gorky urged the world to save Russian civilization: “Gloomy days have come to the country of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Mendeleev, Pavlov, Mussorgsky [and] Glinka,” he wrote. “I ask all honest European and American people for prompt aid to the Russian people. Give bread and medicine.”¹³⁹⁹

Thus in one stroke, Lenin turned Bolshevism upside down. A regime that strove to supplant the old order with communism would turn to Russia’s deepest traditions to save itself. In so doing, Lenin established a principle: when Bolshevism is strong, Marxism is on the march; but when it is weak, it beckons the old order. Stalin learned well. During the purges of 1937-38, he had 100,000 priests, monks and nuns shot,¹⁴⁰⁰ but with the June 22, 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, he reopened the churches and made an appeal to “Russian” patriotism.¹⁴⁰¹ Herein one fact is clear: strategically the Bolsheviks were always willing to take contradictory steps when their survival was on the line.

This they did even if it was embarrassing. Lenin realized the workers of the world were in no position to assist Russia; he would have to turn to the capitalistic countries he

¹³⁹⁹ Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 27.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Alexander N. Yakovlev, Anthony Austin and Paul Hollander, *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 165.

¹⁴⁰¹ For a complete story of Stalin’s reorientation of church-state relations during the Second World War, see Chumachenko, *Church and State in Soviet Russia*, 3-86.

detested. Far more frightening, the individual most capable of assisting Russia was Herbert Hoover. While Hoover obtained global fame for his relief efforts during and after the First World War, he achieved notoriety in Russia when his private relief organization, the American Relief Administration (ARA), provided food to the White Armies battling the Bolsheviks in 1919. Hoover hated Bolshevism as much as Lenin abhorred capitalism. He considered the fight against this movement a great humanitarian cause. Its brutality and ideological commitment to world revolution appalled him. He thought it godless and synonymous with anarchy. It not only benefited from chaos and disorder, it openly promoted such conditions to achieve power. But its central cause, Hoover often argued, was hunger, which led him to believe it could be defeated with food.¹⁴⁰²

On July 23, 1921, Hoover replied to Gorky's appeal. Without the release of all U.S. citizens held in Soviet prisons, the American people would not be willing to aid Russia. The authorities in Moscow, he insisted, should appeal directly to the ARA. But to receive assistance, its American personnel must have complete "liberty to come and go and move about Russia." Governmental interference would not be permitted. Moscow would have to provide "free transportation, storage and handling of imported supplies with priority over other traffic." Required buildings, equipment, and fuel must also be supplied free of charge. Hoover stipulated that all children and sick individuals receiving ARA assistance be provided the same rations "as are given to the rest of the population." Finally, he insisted the government refrain from interfering with the liberty of ARA members. In return, he pledged to help all children and invalids without regard to race, creed or social status food. He promised that ARA representatives would engage in no

¹⁴⁰² Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 27, 32, 34-35.

political activities. These conditions, he concluded, were the same as those in place in the 23 other countries where the ARA was operating.¹⁴⁰³

The latter pledge seems misleading in view of Hoover's attitude towards Bolshevism. To be sure, he had every intention of using food as a weapon in the Soviet Union. But he did not plan to deploy it in the crude manner suspected by the Soviet authorities and his enemies at home. As one scholar explains, "His plan was to accomplish political ends in Russia not *under the guise of* famine relief... but rather *by means of it*." If the people of Russia could recover their physical strength, the prerequisite for which was food, then they would rise up and overthrow their Bolshevik repressors. The important step, Hoover reasoned, was to get them sustenance. Moreover, if the Russian people witnessed the energy and efficiency of the ARA, it would discredit the inefficient Soviet regime. In this way, the mere presence of the ARA might work as a catalyst to provoke an uprising.¹⁴⁰⁴

Hoover provided Lenin an opportunity. In 1921, Soviet Russia remained a pariah. Few countries had recognized the Bolsheviks. But with Hoover then serving as U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Lenin believed he could portray negotiations with the American Relief Administration (ARA) as quasi recognition of Soviet Russia by the United States, though the ARA by this point was *no longer* an arm of the U.S. Government. It was also important to reach an agreement with Hoover that would bring relief aid into the country, and save the regime. But with Hoover actively promoting the idea that relief aid would destroy Bolshevism, Lenin had to take care not to expose his government to subversive

¹⁴⁰³ The complete Hoover reply can be found in Harold Henry Fisher, *The Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919-1923: The Operations of the American Relief Administration* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), pp. 52-53.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 42-43.

activities and sabotage. He would therefore seek limits on what Hoover's men could do, and where they could operate. He would also try to control and survey their operations.¹⁴⁰⁵

Shortly after Lenin released the American prisoners, the negotiations began in the Latvian capital of Riga. Walter Lyman Brown, Chief of the ARA mission to Poland, represented Hoover. Maxim Litvinov, then serving as the Soviet Ambassador at large, negotiated for Lenin. At their opening meeting on August 10, 1921, conflict erupted over Hoover's conditions. Litvinov wanted ARA operations limited to the Volga region, and no more than 100 American personnel in Russia at a time. Arguing that they constituted a counterrevolutionary threat and unnecessary duplication of existing Russian machinery, he voiced adamant opposition to the use of independent food committees, which Hoover had insisted upon. Brown objected on all three counts. Hoover had no intention of interfering in political activities, he told Litvinov. He simply wanted to promote self-help. Replying in his customary lisp, Litvinov argued that nonpartisan food aid remained impossible in Russia. As he famously put it, "Food iz a veppon." He knew this from experience: the Bolsheviks had a habit of withholding food from their enemies.¹⁴⁰⁶

While the scholarship on the Soviet famine of 1921 has often praised Hoover for his efforts, there are grounds for criticism.¹⁴⁰⁷ Throughout April, May, and June of 1921, one of his ARA lieutenants, Tom Gregory, let the press know how he and Hoover withheld assistance to Hungary in the summer of 1919, thereby precipitating the collapse

¹⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 39-40.

¹⁴⁰⁶ See Ibid., 41.

¹⁴⁰⁷ The Hoover Institution at Stanford University published the two most important works on the American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia during the famine of 1921. This fact does not undermine the quality of these two texts, but may constitute one reason for insufficient criticism on this point.

of Bela Kun's communist regime in Budapest. This example alone suggests that if Hoover hoped to rid the world of Bolshevism, it might have been wiser to follow the Hungarian model. And by failing to silence Gregory, he needlessly overexposed himself. His statements aroused suspicions in Moscow, and encouraged Lenin to play tough. "Delicate measures are needed," he told the Politburo. "Hoover and Brown are insolent liars.... We must establish superstrict conditions: for the slightest interference in internal matters – expulsion and arrest." Thus the onus to display magnanimity fell to Hoover, not Lenin.¹⁴⁰⁸

Litvinov exploited this imbalance with aplomb. In an attempt to prepare the way for a collapse of the negotiations, he told the press that suspicion and a lack of confidence existed on both sides of the negotiating table. He implied that Hoover needed to show goodwill. With Brown, he maintained a hard line, well aware that failure would provoke a storm of controversy: it was in Hoover's interest to make a deal. He simultaneously turned to other relief organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, to suggest that the ARA was not the only organization capable of meeting Russia's needs. Thereupon Hoover's position softened, and Litvinov backed away from his fiercest demands. The local committees would be allowed if Soviet officials could serve on them. Additional compromises were reached on extraterritoriality, the selection of personnel, where the organization could operate, and who would bear the costs. The final

¹⁴⁰⁸ Patenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand*, 42.

agreement left Hoover in a strong position, but Lenin secured a more favorable deal than any other country receiving ARA assistance.¹⁴⁰⁹

The Relevance of the Relief Negotiations of 1921 for those of 1943

How do these events help us understand the relief negotiations of 1943? For one, they reveal the dexterity of Maxim Litvinov, who maneuvered Hoover into a corner and seized every chance to bolster the legitimacy of the Bolshevik regime. They make it clear that the Soviet authorities were willing to compromise when their own rule was at stake, but that their suspicions could not be erased. They would try to limit American control over the relief operations, obtain positions for their agents within the organization, and then use the security apparatus to keep the agency under surveillance. Similar factors would play a role in 1943. The war's outcome remained uncertain during the four-power discussions in Washington. Not until after the Battle of Kursk in August 1943 did a Soviet victory appear certain. Stalin also knew he would need aid after the war. Thus wartime solidarity and the need for postwar assistance drove him to cooperate on the relief organization.

But these comparisons present problems. In 1921, reaching an agreement that would permit an existing agency to operate in the Soviet Union remained the primary concern. The affair involved one country, and the discussions took place between a government and a non-state actor, over the conditions by which that agency would enter

¹⁴⁰⁹ Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia: 1921-1923* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), 46-73; Weissman, "Herbert Hoover's 'Treaty' With Soviet Russia," 284-85.

into the sovereign territory of a state. But in 1943, the question concerned the arrangements to set up an agency that would undertake postwar relief, but that was assumed to be a model for future international organization with implications for the entire postwar world order. The discussions took place between states, and included no non-state actors. Participation in the four-power negotiations implied not only legitimacy, but also great power status. The territorial prerogative of the proposed organization, moreover, was not restricted to one state. It potentially included countries on every continent, either as recipients or donors.

Would the Great Powers seek to build a postwar international system based on spheres of influence, or would they each adhere rigidly to their ideological preferences and thereby precipitate a global conflict? With China's future uncertain and Britain in decline, the attitude of the Soviet Union and the United States remains most important here. In both countries the tension between ideological aims and the desire for a stable postwar system created dilemmas.

While the Roosevelt Administration preferred and prepared for a liberal-capitalistic order based on democratic principles, free and open markets, and laws and institutions that would resolve disputes and restrain aggressive behavior, it also recognized the potential obstacles to these plans posed by Soviet power. As the Red Army converged on Germany, they acknowledged the importance of Moscow's acquiescence to American designs, especially in areas under Soviet occupation.

Roosevelt accepted the idea that Eastern Europe might fall into a Soviet sphere of influence. Yet neither he nor his administration ever renounced its global aspirations.¹⁴¹⁰

American thought developed along two distinct but not necessarily incompatible continuums. The United States would seek cooperation with the Soviet Union to win the war and create a stable peace. It would invite Moscow to participate in its postwar arrangements, offering aid and a position of leadership in the prospective international organization. Within this framework, however, the United States would also build in checks against potential Soviet aggression and obstruction. The idea of the four policemen constitutes a case in point. As much as this proposal was a forum for cooperation, an implicit recognition of spheres of influence, and a way to keep the peace, it was also a means to balance against Soviet power and advance American objectives. When disagreements left Washington at odds with Moscow, the support of China and Britain would make it more difficult for the Soviets to oppose American aims, and leave them isolated should they do so.¹⁴¹¹

The relief agency and future international organization would provide another tool to keep Moscow in check. By providing relief and other forms of assistance to countries behind Red Army lines, it would win allies for the United States and provide a public relations tool for Washington against Soviet subversion and propaganda.

On balance, the strategic disposition of the United States in early 1943 was far more offensive than defensive. In the event of cooperation with the Soviet Union, the concept was almost purely offensive, though it would rely on consent and the hope that

¹⁴¹⁰ On this point, see especially Geir Lundestad, *The American Non-Policy Towards Eastern Europe, 1943-1947* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978), 88-92.

¹⁴¹¹ On the four policemen, see the observations of Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 10-11.

Moscow's postwar requirements and evaluation of her interests would lead her to accept U.S. proposals. Yet the Americans knew the Soviet Union would probably achieve its prewar levels of production within three years of the war's end.¹⁴¹² This fact, in turn, increased the specter of non-cooperation, if not immediately after the war possibly within several years. The strategic concept in this case was much more defensive. But it still called for offensive action. If the Soviets became immediately hostile, the United States might still be able to use the relief agency to influence the regimes that came to power in Eastern Europe. If the Soviets became hostile later, the Americans could then use alliances in Eastern Europe and the UN organization in public relations campaigns against Moscow.

Soviet Postwar Strategy

For many years, Soviet strategy for the postwar era has been clouded in mystery. While it has long been known that the Soviet Union sought to secure its borders as they stood just before the launch of Operation Barbarossa,¹⁴¹³ and it has been confirmed that Roosevelt, at least by late 1943, remained prepared to accept this formula,¹⁴¹⁴ the policies Stalin pursued for territories beyond these borders has been a topic of constant debate, especially in the scholarship on the origins of the Cold War.

¹⁴¹² Eduard Mark, "American Policy Toward Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1946: An Alternative Interpretation," *Journal of American History* 68, no. 2 (Sept. 1981): 322.

¹⁴¹³ This point is repeated in the scholarship, but see in particular Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War*, 44-45.

¹⁴¹⁴ Kimball, *The Juggler*, 182.

The controversy has centered on whether the Soviet Union's decision to impose communist dictatorships over the countries of Eastern Europe was the result of its geopolitical and ideological ambitions, or whether it was a direct response to American behavior, particularly in the domain of economics. Despite heated argument, scholars on both sides of the debate have generally agreed that Stalin preferred regimes on its borders that would maintain friendly relations with Moscow.¹⁴¹⁵ It can therefore be assumed that Moscow would take measures to prevent the constitution of hostile governments in Eastern Europe, but also in areas along its southern and far eastern borders.

Following the battles at Stalingrad and Kursk in 1943, the Soviet postwar planning process accelerated, coincidentally at the very moment when the relief negotiations were underway. By 1944, the Soviet Ambassadors responsible for these negotiations, Ivan Maisky and Maxim Litvinov, had returned to Moscow. Maisky assumed leadership of the Foreign Ministry's new commission on reparations. Litvinov chaired a commission on peace treaties and the postwar order. Andrei Gromyko, who Stalin appointed second in command in Washington, assumed the Ambassadorship upon Litvinov's departure. He would manage the relief portfolio for Moscow henceforward.¹⁴¹⁶ Thanks to the Russian historian Vladimir Pechatnov, who has made several planning documents prepared by these men available, we can make reasonable guesses as to what the Soviets were thinking during the relief negotiations.¹⁴¹⁷

¹⁴¹⁵ On this point, see Mark, "American Policy Toward Eastern Europe," 313-315.

¹⁴¹⁶ Vladimir O. Pechatnov and C. Earl Edmondson, "The Russian Perspective," in *Debating the Origins of the Cold War: American and Russian Perspectives* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), pp. 90-92.

¹⁴¹⁷ Vladimir O. Pechatnov, "The Big Three After World War II: New Documents on Soviet Thinking about Post War Relations with the United States and Great Britain," Working Paper No. 13, *Cold War International History Project*, May 1995. In this paper,

These documents are not without problems. They were analytical pieces that included recommendations for Stalin and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vyacheslav Molotov, not official policy statements. Written after the relief negotiations took place, they may exhibit ideas formulated under different circumstances. One letter Gromyko penned to Molotov, for example, was written just after Great Britain and the United States launched the cross-channel invasion. This context, Pechatnov explains, may have led Gromyko to write more optimistically than he would have done earlier or later in the war. But several of the memoranda prepared by Maisky and Litvinov warrant attention. With Molotov eager to control foreign policy, he denied these men access to diplomatic exchanges, a fact that required them to rely on previous experience, newspaper reports, and word-of-mouth. While this fact heightens their importance for the relief negotiations of 1943, they may not reflect the opinions of Molotov and Stalin.¹⁴¹⁸

However, the work of Eduard Mark allows us to partly resolve these problems. With published and unpublished documents from Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and other countries, he examines the Kremlin's direction of Europe's communist parties, which shifted critically in 1943. He concludes that while the Soviet Union did not abandon its revolutionary ideology, Stalin altered its application to preserve Moscow's working relationship with London and Washington during and after

Pechatnov examines and quotes extensively from five documents. Henceforward, I will cite the documents as a primary source, though I do not have complete copies. They include: "Memorandum," Maisky to Molotov, January 10, 1944; "Report on the Question of Soviet-American Relations," Gromyko to Molotov, July 14, 1944; Litvinov, "On the Relationship with the USA," January 10, 1945; Litvinov, "On the Prospects and the Basis of Soviet-British Cooperation," November 15, 1944; Litvinov, "On the Question of Blocs and Spheres of Influence," January 11, 1945.

¹⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

the war. His strategy, as we will see, displayed offensive and defensive characteristics.¹⁴¹⁹ But most importantly, it accords with many of the ideas Maisky, Litvinov and Gromyko articulated later. It also corresponds with circumstantial evidence available to scholars for decades.

For Moscow, the maintenance of strong relations with London and Washington remained of paramount importance.¹⁴²⁰ In early 1943, Russia had every reason to work with its Anglo-American partners to defeat Germany and Japan. The Soviet Union might have defeated Germany without an Allied invasion of Western Europe, but authorities in Moscow knew that an Anglo-American assault in the West would reduce demands on the Red Army and decrease the human and material costs to Russia. For similar reasons, Moscow hoped Great Britain and the United States would defeat and demilitarize Japan, preferably without Soviet assistance.¹⁴²¹ After the war, the Soviet Union would require assistance from the West as it faced the task of reconstruction at home and in areas it planned to incorporate into its sphere of influence. Moscow certainly planned to rely on its own resources and reparations from Germany and Berlin's wartime allies, but it also considered Anglo-American aid the "third main pillar of reconstruction" assistance.¹⁴²²

In terms of postwar security, strong relations with London and Washington remained essential. In May of 1941, Stalin had expressed approval of Roosevelt's four

¹⁴¹⁹ Eduard Mark, "Revolution by Degrees: Stalin's National Front Strategy for Europe, 1941-1947," Working Paper No. 31, *Cold War International History Project*, February 2001.

¹⁴²⁰ Gromyko, Litvinov and Maisky all stressed this point: "Memorandum," Maisky to Molotov, January 10, 1944; "Report on... Soviet-American Relations," July 14, 1944; Litvinov, "On the Relationship with the USA," January 10, 1945, in Pechatnov, 'The Big Three After World War II.'

¹⁴²¹ Maisky to Molotov, January 10, 1944, in Pechatnov, 'The Big Three After World War II.'

¹⁴²² Ibid.

policemen. “One cannot doubt that without the creation of an association of the armed forces of England, the USA [and] the USSR able to forestall aggression,” he wrote Molotov, “it will not be possible to preserve peace in the future.”¹⁴²³ He assumed Great Britain and the United States would not permit the existence of fascist regimes, and could help prevent their emergence.¹⁴²⁴ Chinese participation in Roosevelt’s scheme remained a sore point for the Russians, who believed Washington sought to turn the country into an American protectorate.¹⁴²⁵ Yet even here, they had no interest in provoking conflict. It remained far wiser to play along, monitor the situation, and wait for an opportunity to assert Soviet influence in China.¹⁴²⁶ Too many other concerns weighed on their minds: the construction of friendly regimes in Europe,¹⁴²⁷ limiting Turkish influence in the Balkans and at the straits,¹⁴²⁸ increased influence in Iran and the Middle East, and the assumption of control over the Kuriles and Sakhalin in the Far East.¹⁴²⁹

Angering the British and the Americans would only create roadblocks. If the Soviet Union aimed to be the only great land power in Europe, an arrangement Litvinov and Maisky preferred, then they would have to win the trust of London and Washington. Moscow might play the two countries off one another to achieve its aims, but this would

¹⁴²³ Eduard Mark, “Revolution by Degrees,” 12.

¹⁴²⁴ “Report on... Soviet-American Relations,” July 14, 1944 in Pechatnov, ‘The Big Three After World War II.’

¹⁴²⁵ For an interesting example explaining how Stalin dealt with American plans towards China, see Kimball, *The Juggler*, 97.

¹⁴²⁶ On the Chinese, see Maisky to Molotov, January 10, 1944; Litvinov, “On the Relationship with the USA,” January 10, 1945, in Pechatnov, ‘The Big Three After World War II.’

¹⁴²⁷ Mark, “Revolution by Degrees.”

¹⁴²⁸ Maisky to Molotov, January 10, 1944 in Pechatnov, ‘The Big Three After World War II.’

¹⁴²⁹ Maisky to Molotov, January 10, 1944; “Report on... Soviet-American Relations,” July 14, 1944 in Pechatnov, ‘The Big Three After World War II.’

have to be done carefully. Otherwise the United States might rearm Germany and Japan, and erect blocs in Europe and Asia hostile to the Soviet Union. Authorities in Moscow did not believe the United States had territorial or military ambitions in any of the areas along their borders, though they feared American financial, economic and technological prowess, and the potential threats these assets might pose if conservative forces assumed power in Washington.¹⁴³⁰ Russian officials also displayed a degree of sensitivity to public opinion in the United States, which they knew placed constraints on whatever policy the Americans embraced.¹⁴³¹ Simply put, the evidence makes it clear that the Soviet Union did not want to provoke the wrath of the United States.

Stalin therefore reordered his priorities vis-à-vis the communist parties of Europe. He had already adjusted his strategy to meet the challenges posed by fascism. Following the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, the Comintern – the international communist organization founded in 1919 – returned to the Popular Front strategy first articulated in 1935, when the communist parties of the world chose to join with any and every political party opposed to fascism. This approach made sense until the Soviet Union became allies with the United States. The Comintern's pre-1935 history of aggressively pursuing communist revolutions stigmatized the organization in Washington, and Stalin considered its existence harmful for the war effort. By May 1943, he had dissolved the body.

Yet its activities intensified! Instead of using revolution to impose communist regimes on Europe, Stalin now hoped to establish in liberated territories national fronts

¹⁴³⁰ Maisky to Molotov, January 10, 1944; Litvinov, "On the Prospects... of Soviet-British Cooperation," November 15, 1944 in Pechatnov, 'The Big Three After World War II.'

¹⁴³¹ Litvinov, "On the Relationship with the USA," January 10, 1945, in Pechatnov, 'The Big Three After World War II'; Mark, "Revolution by Degrees."

consisting of multiple parties that included the communists. Within this framework, the communists would endeavor to render local opposition ineffective, create support for their programs, and minimize Western objections to the slow creation of communist regimes controlled from Moscow all over Europe. In this way, the Russians hoped to facilitate incremental communist revolutions while simultaneously sustaining cooperation with the West.¹⁴³²

The lingering debate over the origins of the Cold War drives one to ask whether this strategy constitutes a reaction to America's postwar plans. This interpretation is conceivable, but inconclusive. The extent to which State Department planners illegally shared information with Russian agents remains unclear, but the evidence suggests that certain officials were guilty of this charge.¹⁴³³ But the dominating position Washington reserved for itself in the relief plan could only arouse suspicions. Stalin's instructions to the Comintern coincided with Acheson's decision to share the draft agreement with Litvinov.¹⁴³⁴ The proposal, however, was not necessarily a cause for an offensive Soviet strategy, even if that might have been one of its results. Rather, the draft was a reason for considerable caution, demands for revisions, and extensive negotiations to achieve more favorable terms. That is precisely what occurred.

¹⁴³² Mark, "Revolution by Degrees."

¹⁴³³ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

¹⁴³⁴ Stalin's instructions revising the mission of the Comintern began to trickle out in the summer of 1942; Litvinov received first American draft for the relief organization on July 14, 1942. See Mark, "Revolution by Degrees," 15; see "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Acheson)," July 14, 1942, 840.50/572, in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 117-18.

It is nonetheless instructive to compare the Soviet and American strategies, which were inexact foils of one another. While Washington hoped to operate behind Red Army lines to construct liberal-capitalistic regimes, Moscow hoped to use communist parties to slowly create communist system in Europe. The United States, however, made no secret of its plans, and had every intention of seeking Moscow's cooperation in exacting them. Yet the Americans also planned to use international organization and relief aid as tools to achieve their aims even if the Soviets opposed them. With assistance and propaganda appeals to the people of Eastern Europe, Washington hoped to secure allies that would counterbalance Moscow if it became hostile to its objectives. Similarly, the Soviet Union planned to use communist parties to win broad support among Europe's populations, but had no plans to convince Washington of the merits of its preferences.

For the Soviet Union, cooperation on relief was not so much a means to obtain a stable postwar international system, but rather a necessary precondition to advance and protect its interests. The appearance in the West that Moscow might have or would abandon its extremist ideology after the war was pretense. Revolution stood at the center of the Soviet strategy. Stalin simply decided to pursue "quiet revolutions," or "revolution by degrees," as Mark describes it, to conceal his objectives and wreak the immediate and medium-term benefits of collaboration with the United States.¹⁴³⁵ The decision to engage London and Washington on relief, an endeavor designed to bring about stability, and that was at its core humanitarian, did not mark a break from the past. It was pure *Realpolitik*.

As such, the Soviet Union entered the relief organization with obvious aims: to reduce American influence in the relief organization while maximizing that of the Soviet

¹⁴³⁵ Mark, "Revolution by Degrees."

Union; to secure assistance for itself, preserve its geopolitical position, and guard against any ulterior motives the Americans might have had. To achieve these objectives, Moscow remained prepared to divide the British and Americans against one another, and to exploit opportunities the Chinese might create. It is through this prism that Moscow's approach to the postwar relief organization must be assessed. Though this approach is entirely compatible with what one would expect of Great Power politics, it ultimately served ideological purposes: the construction of communist regimes all over Europe.

The Russian Reaction to the Draft Agreement

The Russian reaction to the American draft agreement emerged piecemeal. While Maisky and Litvinov considered aspects of the draft between August and December 1942, it remains unclear who studied it in Moscow. Most likely, this responsibility fell to the Narkomindel, or People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, which sent follow-up questions to Maisky and Litvinov. Molotov clearly played a role.¹⁴³⁶ Presumably Stalin made the final decision. With the ousting of Litvinov as Foreign Minister in 1939, the Soviet Dictator took hold of the reigns of foreign policy. But Molotov, it seems, remained his primary conduit with the bureaucracy and the Ambassadors.¹⁴³⁷

¹⁴³⁶ "Chargé in the Soviet Union (Henderson) to SOS," November 20, 1942, 840.50/844, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 146.

¹⁴³⁷ For an excellent analysis of Molotov's role and how Stalin took control of the instruments of Soviet foreign policy, see Albert Resis, "The Fall of Litvinov: Harbinger of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact," *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 1, (Jan., 2000): 33-36, 46.

On December 16, 1942, the Soviets delivered a formal reply to the British expressing their opinion of the draft.¹⁴³⁸ Two weeks later, Litvinov shared a slightly different memorandum with Dean Acheson.¹⁴³⁹ Using these documents and the discussions the Russian Ambassadors had with their interlocutors, we can construct a reasonably clear idea of Moscow's thinking. Analytically, they assessed the draft on two levels: operations and policy-making. Broadly, they considered it "altogether too American."¹⁴⁴⁰

As with the Hoover Mission of 1921, Moscow placed great emphasis on the source of the relief organization's authority and the conditions under which it would be allowed to undertake operations in a given territory. They worried that the agency would enter into a territory uninvited, or that it might make aid contingent on it being able to control the distribution exclusively. While Maisky led the Americans and British to believe the Russians feared another Hoover Mission, it soon became apparent that their concerns extended well beyond Soviet territory.¹⁴⁴¹ "Clearly no such attitude would ever be taken up towards a great power," Eden wrote, "but [the] Soviet Government did not desire that it could be adopted to a small power either." They believed the draft created a "political instrument" susceptible to American domination due to Washington's resources.¹⁴⁴² Thus Moscow argued that the agency should operate with "the consent of

¹⁴³⁸ "Soviet Memorandum," December 16, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴³⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Acheson)," December 30, 1942, 840.50/1121, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 160-162; "Memorandum by the Soviet Union," December 29, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁴⁴⁰ "Note of Conversation with Monsieur Maisky by Leith-Ross," September 20, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹⁴⁴¹ "Note of Conversation with Maisky," November 19, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁴² Telegram Relief No. 1, FO to DC, January 1, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

the government of the state receiving relief,” and should “admit of ways” by which that government could “take upon itself the whole responsibility for fulfilling these measures on its territory.”¹⁴⁴³

The issue was never Russian territory. Neither London nor Washington believed any authority other than the Soviet Government would undertake relief there.¹⁴⁴⁴ The question concerned all of the other areas where the agency would operate. As Acheson explained, the drafters had given the organization wide authority for those areas where there was no clear government,¹⁴⁴⁵ or, as Eden put it, where anarchic conditions existed and relief was needed rapidly.¹⁴⁴⁶ But the Soviets worried that former enemy countries might have the power to negotiate with the relief organization and deliver supplies.¹⁴⁴⁷ In these areas, the Americans conceded that the “‘appropriate authority’ might be the commanders of the reoccupying forces.”¹⁴⁴⁸ For the Russians, this meant that the Red Army would undertake relief in areas it occupied, unless Moscow had sway, presumably through communist parties, over a recognized government.

With regard to policy-making, Great Britain presented Russia its greatest obstacle. Fearful that Moscow might make it more difficult to enlarge the Policy Committee,

¹⁴⁴³ “Memorandum by the Soviet Union,” December 29, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁴⁴⁴ On the American view, see “The SOS to the Chargé in the Soviet Union (Henderson),” December 5, 1942, 840.50/844: Telegram; “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Acheson, December 30, 1942, 840.50/1121, both in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 154-155, 160-162. On the British view, see Telegram Relief No. 1, FO to DC, January 1, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁴⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Acheson, December 30, 1942, 840.50/1121, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 160-162.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Telegram Relief No. 1, FO to DC, January 1, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁴⁷ “Foreign Secretary’s talk with Mr. Maisky...”, Date Uncertain, T188/256, PRO; “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Acheson, December 30, 1942, 840.50/1121, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 160-162; Telegram Relief No. 1, FO to DC, January 1, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Hull to Henderson, December 5, 1942, 840.50/844, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 154-155.

Leith-Ross told Maisky that this body would never address any point of “high policy,” but would remain focused on technical questions affecting the administration of relief. Jebb quickly corrected this view in an internal memorandum. “The extent to which Germany or Italy should be supplied with foodstuffs in relation to Allied countries is one which is all too likely to give rise to furious debate on a high level.” A “question of pure politics,” this matter would go before the Policy Committee.¹⁴⁴⁹

Jebb believed complete paralysis would result if the committee were enlarged. What if the Norwegians insisted that the Finns receive aid, he wrote, while other countries demanded assistance for Belgium or Poland? These suggestions alone would “evoke the utmost suspicion” in Moscow. The Russians, he declared, might well urge that the sufferings of their population who had at least resisted the Germans vigorously should be preferred to the sufferings of [people such as] the Danes who did not resist.”¹⁴⁵⁰

Though unaware of his views, Moscow took the same line as Jebb. The Policy Committee should be limited to four powers.¹⁴⁵¹ While they argued that jealousies and dispute would arise when trying to select the additional members,¹⁴⁵² they certainly knew that an enlarged committee would decrease the weight of their vote. They also appear to have assumed that those countries with the greatest claim for membership on the committee, specifically Brazil and Canada, would side with London and Washington in disputes over high policy.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Find the views of Leith-Ross and Jebb in “Minute” by Jebb, October 7, 1942, FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵¹ “Soviet Memorandum,” December 16, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁵² Telegram Relief No. 51, FO to DC, December 22, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

On the issue of voting, the Russians argued that all decisions of the Policy Committee should be taken unanimously.¹⁴⁵³ In this way, they could veto any proposals with which they disagreed and guard against the possibility that the Americans might agree to expand the size of the committee. The proposal also served to pressure the British into accepting a four-power committee. In conversations with the British, Maisky suggested that if the Allies insisted on expanding the Policy Committee, they would hold firm on their demand for unanimity.¹⁴⁵⁴

This tactic placed the balance of power in the hands of the Jebb and Ronald, who still preferred the four-power formula despite the Cabinet's decision of November 3, 1942.¹⁴⁵⁵ It put Leith-Ross on the defensive. Writing Ronald on December 18, 1942, Sir Frederick agreed that "the choice of the additional members" would "likely create difficulties," but he did "not think an increase from four to seven would complicate the Committee's work." He worried of the Soviet demand for unanimous voting.¹⁴⁵⁶ Several days later, Maisky provided him a way out. If the Policy Committee were limited to four, he suggested Moscow might drop the demand.¹⁴⁵⁷

The Soviet position on voting worried Acheson as well. Like the British, he believed unanimity would permit insignificant issues to become unnecessarily bogged down in diplomatic channels.¹⁴⁵⁸ Instead, he preferred this procedure for a few select

¹⁴⁵³ "Minute" by J.E. Coulson, October 2, 1942; "Minute" by Jebb, October 7, 1942, both in FO 371/31504; "Soviet Memorandum," December 16, 1942, T188/256, all in PRO.

¹⁴⁵⁴ Telegram Relief No. 51, FO to DC, December 22, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁵⁵ On the views of Jebb and Ronald, see "Minute" by Jebb, October 2, 1942; "Minute" by Jebb, October 7, 1942; "Draft Minute to Richard Law and Anthony Eden," October 9, 1942, all in FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Leith-Ross to Ronald, December 18, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Telegram Relief No. 51, FO to DC, December 22, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

matters. The final draft, in fact, called for unanimous voting on all amendments to the agreement and resolutions to expand the scope of the organization's operations.¹⁴⁵⁹ But for the moment, he told Litvinov something quite different. "As a practical matter," he thought unanimity "was probably essential," yet he "doubted the wisdom of requiring it in the draft."¹⁴⁶⁰ In this way, he sought to ameliorate Moscow's fears and open the way for an agreement.

Britain, it seemed, would have to pay the cost of a concession on voting from Moscow. As we will soon see, American officials remained far more flexible on the size and composition of the Policy Committee than Britain, even if Roosevelt hung tenaciously to the four-power concept. But for Britain, a decision to support the smaller committee could have serious financial repercussions. London would have to accept Russia's view that Canada's claims for membership on the Policy Committee would have to be met through alternative means.¹⁴⁶¹ The situation worried Eden. Writing the British Ambassador in Washington, Lord Halifax on January 1, 1943, he explained that he had "hoped for a less negative attitude [from Moscow], more especially in respect of unanimity rule and numbers on Policy Committee."¹⁴⁶²

If unanimous voting were abandoned, the Soviets would need another tool to stall the organization should circumstances require it. It is hardly surprising that they would

¹⁴⁵⁹ See Article 1, Section 2, Paragraph C and Article 7 in "Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Draft No. 2, August 13, 1942," 840.50/995, in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 121-124.

¹⁴⁶⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation," by Acheson, December 30, 1942, 840.50/1121, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 160-162.

¹⁴⁶¹ For Maisky's views on Canada, see Telegram Relief No. 51, FO to DC, December 22, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁶² Telegram Relief No. 1, FO to DC, January 1, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

focus on the Director General.¹⁴⁶³ They preferred that he should have as little influence on policy as possible. Because the draft provided that the Director General would serve as the Chairman of the Policy Committee, they first insisted that he have no voting rights.¹⁴⁶⁴ The Americans had never intended that he would, and made no mention of the issue in their formal correspondence with Moscow.¹⁴⁶⁵ Apparently Acheson had put the matter to rest in Washington before the end of 1942.

More significant, the Russians insisted that the Policy Committee have the power to periodically affirm or reject the Director General's leadership. If any member of the committee disapproved of the Director's performance, it should have the right to call a vote of confidence. If he failed to receive unanimous affirmation by the four powers, then he should be replaced.¹⁴⁶⁶ In this way, Moscow could periodically obstruct the organization by calling his leadership into question. This proposal, of course, raised serious doubts in Washington. While the British believed a term limit might appease the Soviets,¹⁴⁶⁷ Acheson rejected this idea altogether. It would make "continuity of planning and policy difficult," he told Litvinov.¹⁴⁶⁸

¹⁴⁶³ Few other matters were mentioned more consistently than the DG: Keynes to Eady and Hopkins, September 24, 1942, T160/1404/5; "Note of Conversation with... Maisky" September 30, 1942, FO 371/31504; "Note of Conversation with Maisky," by Leith-Ross, November 20, 1942, T188/256, all PRO; Hull to Henderson, December 5, 1942, 840.50/844, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 154-155.

¹⁴⁶⁴ "Note of Conversation with Maisky," by Leith-Ross, November 20, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁶⁵ For American view, see Hull to Henderson, December 5, 1942, 840.50/844, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 154-155; see also "Memorandum by the Soviet Union," December 29, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁴⁶⁶ "Memorandum by the Soviet Union," December 29, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA; Telegram Relief No. 51, FO to DC, December 22, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Telegram Relief No. 51, FO to DC, December 22, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁶⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation," by Acheson, December 30, 1942, 840.50/1121, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 160-162.

Maisky had another idea. He argued that China, Britain, and the Soviet Union should each be allowed to appoint a Deputy who would serve on the Director General's staff and share his duties. "This arrangement," he claimed, "would be necessary to avoid political suspicions." But Leith-Ross believed the proposal "likely to raise more difficulty than any of his other points."¹⁴⁶⁹ The Americans did not "wish the staff of the Administration to be exclusively American," he told Maisky, but had also insisted that the Director General have the exclusive power to hire and fire. They would "raise strong objection to the other Governments appointing Deputy Directors as political commissars,"¹⁴⁷⁰ or "political watch-dogs," as he described the idea to Acheson,¹⁴⁷¹ "without regard to their qualifications or their acceptability to the Director General."¹⁴⁷² Moscow refrained from making the suggestion in their official reply to the American proposal, but reserved its right to put forward additional proposals in the future.¹⁴⁷³

Like the British, the Soviets believed the powers of the regional committees should be increased, but did not explain in their reply to the Americans how this should be done.¹⁴⁷⁴ Maisky, however, told the British that the committees might play a role in determining the allocation of supplies. If a dispute arose in a given country, they might also work to resolve it locally with little or no intervention from the top. Leith-Ross welcomed these ideas, but pointed out that American officials "attached great importance

¹⁴⁶⁹ "Note of Conversation with Maisky," by Leith-Ross, November 20, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷¹ Leith-Ross to Acheson, December 4, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁴⁷² "Note of Conversation with Maisky," by Leith-Ross, November 20, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁷³ "Memorandum by the Soviet Union," December 29, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

to the proper coordination of the whole machinery and wanted to be sure that the regional committees would not claim for themselves independent powers.” Any proposals from the regional committee would have to go to the Policy Committee, he explained. For obvious reasons, Maisky believed this formula could work.¹⁴⁷⁵

Two remaining issues worried Moscow. With noticeable embarrassment, Maisky had informed Leith-Ross that his country “would probably wish to stipulate that they could not participate in any organization for the relief of territories occupied by a country with which they were not at war.”¹⁴⁷⁶ Doubtless this reservation concerned the Far East. In early 1943, the Soviet leadership remained sufficiently fearful of war with Japan that it wouldn’t even contemplate discussions of their providing relief to areas the Japanese occupied, especially China. With Moscow urging the Americans and British to open a second front in Europe, this stipulation made Maisky fretful. Apparently he worried that London and Washington might link the second front to a Soviet pledge to assist China with postwar relief. As this possibility threatened to provoke Japan into attacking the Soviet Union, it impinged upon Russia’s supreme national interests. Consequently, Moscow duly conveyed this stipulation to the State Department.¹⁴⁷⁷

The second issue concerned the return of prisoners and exiles. Here the Soviets worried that the relief organization would repatriate Russian citizens without Moscow’s consent. As Maisky explained to Leith-Ross, “there were a great many White Russians who were exiled from the Soviet territories and the Soviet Government could not agree that these exiled should be repatriated without Russian consent.” Sir Frederick dismissed

¹⁴⁷⁵ “Note of Conversation with Maisky,” by Leith-Ross, November 20, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷⁷ “Memorandum by the Soviet Union,” December 29, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

this possibility as inconceivable. The White Russians would not be repatriated without Moscow's consent.¹⁴⁷⁸ Though the Soviet Government made no mention of this concern to the Americans,¹⁴⁷⁹ it highlights their suspicions. Hoover had gladly assisted the White Armies fighting the Bolsheviks after the last war. Why wouldn't the Americans send White Russians back into the country after this war to incite insurrections?

American Strategy for the Four-Power Talks

The Roosevelt Administration never planned to call a formal meeting of the Big Four. State Department officials simply hoped Britain, China and the Soviet Union would accept their relief proposal with few or no alterations. Then, they planned to circulate it to all of the United Nations, and associated powers. Here again they hoped the world would simply accept the agreement. But this proved to be wishful thinking. The weakest of Roosevelt's four great powers, the Chinese, did as they were told. They put forward two suggestions, but made it clear that they would not press the matter. With London and Moscow, however, it was not so easy. Not only did these countries desire changes to the agreement, they disagreed with one another key points. This created a problem. How could the four powers resolve their differences? To minimize British influence, the

¹⁴⁷⁸ "Note of Conversation with Maisky," by Leith-Ross, November 20, 1942, T188/256, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 41, FO to DC, November 24, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁷⁹ "Memorandum by the Soviet Union," December 29, 1942, Acheson Papers, NARA.

Americans had initially hoped to resolve differences with the Chinese and Russians after Sir Frederick's departure.¹⁴⁸⁰ But the circumstances made this approach less ideal.

It became apparent that some informal meeting of the four powers would have to take place. Yet the recall of Leith-Ross meant these negotiations could not occur immediately. It was also apparent that Moscow would need time to assess the agreement.¹⁴⁸¹ Thus in late 1942, no one knew the date of the meeting, and it wasn't even clear where the talks would take place. Maisky, who wanted to play a role in postwar relief,¹⁴⁸² wanted them held in London. Leith-Ross disliked the idea: "the United States would be the financier and supplier of relief." An arrangement made in Washington, he told Maisky, was "much more likely to go down with Congress."¹⁴⁸³ He also knew Britain would have to oppose the Russians on the four-power plan and unanimity, and preferred the Americans "undertake the onus of getting over these difficulties with Russia." Although the suggestion was put to Lord Halifax, he was told not to push it if he believed it might cause offense.¹⁴⁸⁴ Nothing ever came of it. On January 8, 1943, the Americans issued an invitation for the three Ambassadors to meet three days later in Washington.¹⁴⁸⁵

They had devised their strategy. On January 5, 1943, Acheson convened a group of eight State Department officials to determine the American position for the talks. With

¹⁴⁸⁰ It is only through inference that this can be seen, but see "The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant)," June 9, 1942, 840.50/388-6/8, FRUS, Vol. 1, 110-111; Minute, by Leith-Ross for Caustin, August 5, 1942, T188/255, PRO.

¹⁴⁸¹ Telegram Relief No. 27, DC to FO, July 31, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹⁴⁸² Keynes to Eady and Hopkins, September 24, 1942, T160/1404/5, PRO.

¹⁴⁸³ Telegram Relief No. 51, FO to DC, December 22, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Leith-Ross to Ronald, December 23, 1942, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁴⁸⁵ "The SOS to the British Ambassador (Halifax)," January 5, 1943, 840.50/946, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), 851.

the exception of Herbert Lehman – the only participant with close relations to the President – and Laurence Duggan – who was a close associate of Sumner Welles – most of these officials owed their prominence in the Department to Cordell Hull. The Secretary had recruited Leo Pasvolksy and Harry Hawkins. James Clement Dunn, then the Department’s Advisor on Political Relations, had ingratiated himself with Hull and won repeated appointments.¹⁴⁸⁶ His Assistant, Alger Hiss, had also penetrated the Secretary’s circle, primarily through strong relations with Pasvolksy.¹⁴⁸⁷ Ray Atherton, whom Hull appointed Chief of the European Division following the Nazi invasion of Western Europe, became one of the Secretary’s most trusted advisors.¹⁴⁸⁸ Similarly, Hull had recalled George Acheson from China following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Acheson advised Hull and served as Assistant Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs until his redeployment to Chungking in late 1943.¹⁴⁸⁹

The presence of these men at the January 5, 1943 meeting symbolized the revival of Hull and the ascendancy of Acheson at the State Department. At no point during the Roosevelt years did Acheson possess more power than in early 1943. He maintained the full confidence of Hull, and had exploited the Secretary’s hatred of Welles to reduce Berle’s influence. Lehman might have preserved their significance, but appears to have been ill equipped for the infighting that distinguished Roosevelt’s Administration.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Irwin Gellman, *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 142.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: A Story of Superpowers, Secret Agents, Wartime Allies and Enemies, and Their Quest for a Peaceful World* (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2003), 104.

¹⁴⁸⁸ See Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia, s.v. “Ray Atherton,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Atherton (accessed September 20, 2012)

¹⁴⁸⁹ See UC Berkeley biographical sketch of George Acheson provided as a cover to his personal papers held at the Bancroft Library: <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/>

Roosevelt was mostly unaware of Acheson's approach to the negotiations. Nominally Hull remained in charge, but for much of this period he was away from the Department due to illness.¹⁴⁹⁰ Acheson therefore sat at the helm of the wheel. With the assistance of Roy Veatch, who had been lured away from the Board of Economic Warfare, he dominated the entire process.

This fact is important. It not only signified Acheson's central role in the making of American foreign policy at this juncture in the Second World War; it meant that relief would remain at the center of the country's postwar strategy. Welles, as we will see, would later complain of the impression that relief dominated all aspects of policy, and that Acheson was using relief to assume complete control of the State Department.¹⁴⁹¹ It serves as a testament to the Assistant Secretary's skill that he was so successful in this regard, but of his immaturity that he thought such an approach was sustainable. Shortly after Welles' departure from Government, Roosevelt would reshuffle the chairs on the ship deck, thereby cornering Acheson once again.

The men assembled on January 5, 1943 first discussed the Policy Committee. With the British now proposing to increase its membership to seven, the Americans focused on the countries that would fill the additional seats. Britain had suggested Canada, Brazil, and one European country. If Canada provided supplies to the organization, it would have benefits in view of domestic pressure to spread the burdens of relief and reconstruction across the international community. But if Canada were given a seat on the Policy Committee, it would outrage Anglophobes in Congress, who would

¹⁴⁹⁰ Irwin F. Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 310-311.

¹⁴⁹¹ Sumner Welles to Dean Acheson, February 23, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, NARA.

charge that London had two votes. While everyone agreed this might create problems, no one considered it true. A potential supplier, they thought Ottawa would side with Washington in disputes with Britain. They also drew similar conclusions with regard to Brazil. In fact, the Americans believed the promise of membership on the committee might entice Brazil to sign the United Nations Declaration, which it had refused to do so despite having entered the war in August 1942.¹⁴⁹²

But the difficulty of choosing the seventh member led the group to reject the seven-power formula. Here they agreed with Litvinov. The process of selecting a European country would create “great jealousies.” Both Poland and the Netherlands would demand membership, and neither would be satisfied unless it was included. Instead of producing “wholehearted cooperation,” it would only create “international friction.” Litvinov also knew it would make it more difficult for Moscow to achieve its aims. This might have been a good thing, but the Americans deemed Russian cooperation too important. Yet they concluded that Acheson “should not take a rigid attitude from which” he “could not later withdraw” if the four-power setup became untenable, or if Moscow appeared willing to accept a six-power committee that included Brazil and Canada. Whatever the case, the Americans considered the seven-power setup the “least desirable position.” It would only lead to fighting in Europe, and this they wanted to prevent.¹⁴⁹³

The group next considered two Russian proposals to restrict the Director General’s freedom of action. First, the Soviets believed the organization should only be

¹⁴⁹² “Memorandum,” January 6, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁴⁹³ Ibid.

permitted to operate in territories where it had obtained the consent of the government in that area, and they argued that it should make it possible for the recipient government to undertake the whole responsibility for the administration of relief in its territory. The Americans knew these proposals would curb their influence and create problems in enemy countries and areas where “several governments might be claiming authority.” But if Acheson assured Litvinov that Moscow would be exclusively responsible for the distribution of relief within its territory, they thought he might drop the demand. Oddly, they do not seem to have considered that the Russians were more worried about other countries.¹⁴⁹⁴ They also ignored a similar Chinese suggestion that recipient countries have the chance to approve or disapprove of the Director General’s operational plans. More striking, they refused to draw distinctions between enemy states and members of the United Nations.¹⁴⁹⁵

The second proposal also worried the Americans. In addition to mandatory reporting requirements, the Russians believed the Director General should face periodic review by the Policy Committee, which would either confirm his powers, or recommend to the Council a new person for the position. The problem was not the recommendation itself, but the call for unanimous voting on the Policy Committee. Under this procedure, the Director General would need unanimous approval to remain in the job. If he were ousted, policy coherence might result. This proposal would also weaken the Director General, and thereby undermine American influence over the organization. Instead, they thought the Policy Committee should have the power to remove the Director General at any time by unanimous vote. If this proposal proved unacceptable to Moscow, the group

¹⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

thought Acheson should propose a two-year term limit. If Moscow still refused, he should propose that the committee have the power to remove the Director General only if action were taken within thirty days of the date on which he submitted his annual report.¹⁴⁹⁶

Whether Washington should accept unanimity on all decisions taken by the Policy Committee remained a difficult question. For the Russians, the procedure would allow them to single-handedly remove the Director General when desirable; for the Americans it would allow them to prevent the Director's dismissal without their consent. This fact required a balancing act. While Washington hoped to prevent obstructionist ploys by any of the Great Powers, it had to avoid impressions that it planned to operate unilaterally in the event of disagreements. But as a practical matter, they knew the organization could not function without "the Great Powers acting together." Thus the Americans considered unanimity essential "on all questions of importance." This view Acheson would share with Litvinov, but he and his colleagues thought the Russians should not insist on its inclusion in the agreement. Such a procedure would "delay action on a large number of matters about which the Great Powers would not have strongly held views, but as to which a particular representative might have preconceptions."¹⁴⁹⁷

The Americans turned next to the issue of regional committees. Like the British, the Soviets thought these committees should not only be given advisory functions but also extended powers. The lack of specific proposals from Moscow on how this could be achieved made the American determination necessarily abstract. With the same force of reasoning with which they had rebutted pleas from Leith-Ross, they concluded that the

¹⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

regional committees should remain “purely advisory” and should not become part of the executive branch of the Administration. In one aspect, however, the Americans revealed flexibility. If the Director General chose to assign the committees administrative functions, then they would acquiesce. In this way, they could control the matter. Otherwise they concluded that any actions designed to strengthen the committees would be a “great mistake.” It would “tend to paralyze action if the Director General’s executive powers were subjected to the control of regional committees.”¹⁴⁹⁸

The final point of consideration presented no problem for the Americans. The Soviet Union wished to “reserve the right during the war to abstain from participating in the solution of problems arising in connection with [the] relief of countries with which the Soviet Union [was] not at war.” The Americans knew that Moscow preferred to take no actions that might be interpreted as a deviation from their policy of strict neutrality vis-à-vis Japan. With Moscow still engaged in a death struggle with Nazi Germany, they also realized that they could not and should not force the Russians into positions that might jeopardize their military position in Europe. Any such behavior would damage relations with Moscow and hurt America’s wartime interests. These same arguments had led them to accept a similar reservation during talks over the United Nations Declaration. By this point, the Americans must also have feared exacerbating tensions over repeated delays in opening a second front in Europe, which Stalin had insisted upon for months.¹⁴⁹⁹

¹⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER TEN

THE FOUR-POWER DISCUSSIONS

In early January 1943, the relief discussion entered their most torturous phase. Over the next five months, representatives of China, Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union would meet in Washington on six occasions to revise and finalize the draft agreement so that it could be submitted to the United Nations for consideration. The Americans and Russians would have preferred that the four powers determine the contours of the relief organization without interference from other members of the United Nations, but Great Britain considered it essential that Canada's concerns receive immediate attention. Because the Canadians threatened to withhold further wartime assistance to Britain if they were not given a place in the relief organization commensurate with their potential contribution, London embraced a policy that forced Washington to consider Canada's complaints. As a result, Great Britain and the United States engaged Ottawa in a series of informal bilateral exchanges that took place between the various meetings of the four. These exchanges added considerable complexity to this stage of the negotiations.

Throughout this process, two issues dominated the discussions. First, disputes emerged at the outset over the size and composition of the Policy Committee. Those who disliked the four-power formula worried that it would excite rage and possibly non-cooperation from states capable of contributing to postwar relief. This debate precipitated a time-consuming duel between Great Britain and the United States, the resolution of which involved painstaking discussions with Canada. Second, the four powers disagreed

over the organization's right to operate in a given territory. Would it be permitted to administer programs in an area without the consent of the recognized authority in that territory, and would it have any obligations towards that authority? While this issue raised theoretical questions on sovereignty, it was really a contest between the Americans and Soviets over who would dominate postwar Europe. For the most part, remaining disputes over voting procedures, the Regional Committees, a proposed Supplies Committee, and the introduction of Deputy Director Generals emanated from these broader concerns.

The Four Wise Men, Their Accomplices, and the Canadian

Of the principals who partook in the four-power negotiations, Dean Acheson was the least experienced in world affairs. Prior to joining the State Department, he had worked a total of one year at the Treasury. But the experience he had outside of Government made its mark on the negotiations. Acheson was, as Jean Monnet, the Frenchman and father of the European Union, later observed, "of that uniquely American profession."¹⁵⁰⁰ He was a lawyer. He served in private practice for most of his early career, but shortly after graduating from the Harvard Law School, he clerked for Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis.¹⁵⁰¹

Acheson was not only happy to use his legal skills; he was talented at it. To avoid the two-third majority vote required of treaties in the Senate, he and experts in the State

¹⁵⁰⁰ Jean Monnet, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1978), p. 154.

¹⁵⁰¹ On Acheson, see James Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998); Robert L. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Department concluded that the results of the relief negotiations could be classified as an executive agreement. A matter we will examine in the final chapter, they drew on a past precedent, but had to be careful lest they anger the relief organization's main funding source: the Congress.¹⁵⁰² Like other American laws, the agreement would thus have to give impressions quite different from what was intended or secretly arranged. Acheson was well equipped for this task. He helped devise the legal and financial principles that led to the passage of the Destroyers for Bases Deal of 1940 as well as the Lend-Lease Act of 1941. Roosevelt was so impressed with his skill and support that he brought him back into Government as Assistant Secretary of State.¹⁵⁰³

Acheson was not the only lawyer among the wise men. The Chinese Ambassador to the United States, Wei Tao-ming obtained a doctorate in law from the University of Paris in 1926. A short and handsome man, he returned to China to pursue a legal career, but joined the Kuomintang and at the astonishing age of 29 became President of the Judicial Yuan, the equivalent of a Minister of Justice. From here he served as Mayor of Nanking, Secretary General of the Executive Yuan, and as a member of the Supreme

¹⁵⁰² Chronological Minutes, ER-7, June 12, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Natter Papers; EVR to Acheson, December 28, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2; Veatch to Acheson, May 14, 1943, File File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, both in Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers; Veatch to Acheson, April 21, 1943, 840.50/2100-3/5, Box 4810; Veatch to Acheson, July 10, 1943, 840.50/2230, Box 4811; “Memorandum of Conversation,” September 23, 1943, 840.50/2676, Box 4815, all RG 59, NARA. See also Ernest K. Lindley, “A Mechanism for United Nations,” July 16, 1943, *WP*, 13; Memo by Oscar Cox for Harry Hopkins, July 10, 1943, both in File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

¹⁵⁰³ Chace, *Acheson*, 79-81, 87-89. See also Abe H. Feller to Dean Acheson, April 15, 1941, Folder 133, Roll 7, Series 1, Acheson Personal Papers, Yale University.

Council for National Defense during the early war years. Before deployment to Washington, he also served as Ambassador to France.¹⁵⁰⁴

Western sources leave us with little further information about this man, but two relevant facts should be noted. Wei maintained important relationships with French officials, which in turn meant that the Chinese Embassy would share the entire record of the four-power negotiations with the Frenchman, Jean Monnet. Second, his legal training was in the Western civil law tradition, which influenced his country's legal system. Chinese law also drew upon moral norms of Confucianism and principles of Chinese Legalism. Altogether, this meant that the system had fewer laws, but that they were clear and less susceptible to judicial change.¹⁵⁰⁵ By contrast with Acheson, who strove for just enough confusion to keep everyone happy, Wei remained far more comfortable with agreements that were unambiguous.

The British Ambassador, Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, or Lord Halifax, was an Oxford educated aristocrat possessing that sense of entitlement peculiar to his class. As he told Winston Churchill, he “expected to be treated like a gentleman.”¹⁵⁰⁶ Of course he looked and acted like one. Tall and slender, he had an atrophied left arm, but it never kept him from his hunting, shooting, and horseback riding excursions.¹⁵⁰⁷ By the time he arrived in Washington in 1941, he had served in an impressive array of posts, most

¹⁵⁰⁴ “Ambassador Hu Shih Recalled by China: Wei Tao Ming, Formerly at Vichy, Will be His Successor,” September 2, 1942, *NYT*, 3; “Dr. Wei Tao-Ming Will Address Law Institute Wednesday,” May 2, 1943, *WP*, L6.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia, s.v. “Chinese Law,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_law (accessed September 20, 2012).

¹⁵⁰⁶ Andrew Roberts, *The Holy Fox: A Biography of Lord Halifax* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), 13.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online, s.v. “Wood, Edward Frederick Lindley” (by D.J. Dutton), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/> (accessed September 20, 2012).

notably as Viceroy of India and Foreign Secretary under both Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill. Though scorned by contemporaries for his support of appeasement, recent scholarship, especially work by conservative historians, has vindicated him for his abrupt abandonment of this policy.¹⁵⁰⁸

Halifax was prone to conciliation, a fact that led him, in Acheson's words, "to avoid obstinacy by circuitous restatement of the same position so that it kept reappearing as a new one."¹⁵⁰⁹ He endeavored to establish new principles and ideas without saying anything new at all. By contrast with many of his peers, trickery and deception were not his forte: his devout religiosity made him too honest for diplomacy, and prone to accommodation. Yet compromise played no role when he was out with his hunting dogs. He showed no mercy for game in the sites of his gun. Churchill christened him the "Holy Fox."¹⁵¹⁰

The Soviet Ambassador, Maxim Maximovich Litvinov, was the oldest and most experienced of them all. An old Bolshevik revolutionary, he learned to propagandize, escape prisons, rob banks, and smuggle arms early in life. In exile, he mastered the ways of the West, an ability that helped him as a man in power. He proved a shrewd negotiator and diplomatist, talents that explain in part why he was at the center of Soviet foreign policy for three decades, most importantly as Ambassador at large under Lenin and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs under Stalin. Scholars in the West have spilt gallons of ink trying to argue that had he not been dismissed late in his career, the Cold

¹⁵⁰⁸ Roberts, 'The Holy Fox'. But for an earlier example, see Maurice Cowling, *The Impact of Hitler, British Politics and British Policy, 1933-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

¹⁵⁰⁹ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969), 68.

¹⁵¹⁰ Roberts, 'The Holy Fox,' 13.

War might or might not have been averted. But the picture of Roosevelt he proudly displayed on his desk serves more as testament to his savvy than any easy-minded approach to the West. He was just as tough, cynical, stubborn and suspicious as his cohorts, which is why Stalin, who considered his ability and knowledge indispensable, kept him around for so long. Litvinov, in fact, was one of a very few Jewish Bolsheviks from the pre-1917 era to survive the Stalinist purges.¹⁵¹¹

If Maxim Maximovich was misleadingly courteous and talkative, his short and plump figure made him seem warm and even affectionate. He was known to “waddle in and out” of Washington’s wartime social functions with his British wife attached to his arm.¹⁵¹² Acheson humorously described him as “roly-poly.”¹⁵¹³

Several assistants of the wise men played important roles. The Director of Relief in the State Department’s Division of Special Research, Roy Veatch, aided Acheson.

¹⁵¹¹ The literature on Litvinov is extensive. For a book-length biography translated from Russian into English, see Zinoviy Sheinis, *Maxim Litvinov* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1988). For an outstanding portrayal during the 1930s, see Sabine Dullin, *Des Hommes D’Influence: Les ambassadeurs de Staline en Europe 1930-1939* (Paris: Payot and Rivages, 2001). See also Sabine Dullin, “Litvinov and the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs: the Fate of an Administration under Stalin, 1930-39” in *Russia in the Age of Wars 1914-1945*, ed. Silvio Pons and Andrea Romano (Milan: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 2000), 121-146; David Dunn, “Maksim Litvinov: Commissar of Contradiction,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 2 (April 1988): 221-243; Hugh Phillips, “Mission to America: Maksim M. Litvinov in the United States, 1941-43,” *Diplomatic History* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 261-275; Vojtech Mastny, “The Cassandra in the Foreign Commissariat: Maxim Litvinov and the Cold War,” *Foreign Affairs* 54, no. 2 (January 1976): 366-76; Albert Resis, “The Fall of Litvinov: Harbinger of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact,” in *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 1 (January 2000): 33-56; Geoffrey Roberts, “The Fall of Litvinov: A Revisionist View,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, no. 4 (October 1992): 639-657; Geoffrey Roberts, “Litvinov’s Lost Peace, 1941-1946,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 23-54; Rudolf Schlesinger, “Litvinov’s Ghost,” *Soviet Studies* 7, no. 4 (April 1956): 373-383.

¹⁵¹² Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 5, 1943, File (4) Diaries and Personal Papers (N8), MG26 N8, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁵¹³ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 68.

Halifax relied mostly on Noel Hall, the Minister in charge of economic warfare activities, but occasionally on Guy Thorold, the First Secretary of the Embassy. For China, the newly appointed Minister, Liu Chieh, backstopped for Ambassador Wei. It is not clear who, if anyone, helped Litvinov. Stalin appears to have placed Andrei Gromyko “second in command” at the Soviet Embassy to keep an eye on his boss, not to help him. Thus while Veatch, Hall and Liu attended all of the four-power meetings, Gromyko was present at only one of them, but as a substitute in Litvinov’s absence. The Soviet Ambassador could never permit the emergence of two versions of the story lest he risk his own life and career.¹⁵¹⁴

Of the assistants, Veatch and Hall played dominant roles. Roughly the same age, they were professors trained as economists. Both men worked in economic warfare. One would think that these two men would have gotten along well, but rivalry and mutual dislike of the other man’s country colored their interactions. On the one side, there was Sir Noel the “glorious name-dropper” who, according to the *New York Times*, knew the American people and their problems.¹⁵¹⁵ On the other side, there was Dr. Roy the optimistic do-gooder from Oregon whose pedigree and multiple Christian affiliations made him precise but righteous.¹⁵¹⁶

¹⁵¹⁴ Gromyko would eventually become Ambassador to the United States. See “Gromyko Gets Capital Post In Unexpected Shake-Up,” August 22, 1943, *NYT*, 1.

¹⁵¹⁵ “Halifax Gets Aides For Economic Warfare: British Name Professor Noel Hall to Embassy Role With Rank of Minister,” March 19, 1941, *NYT*, 4.

¹⁵¹⁶ YMCA of the USA, *Year Book of the Young Men’s Christian Association of North America For the Year May 1, 1920 to April 30, 1921* (New York: Association Press, 1921), 406; United States Department of State, *Register of the Department of State, October 1, 1938*, Publication 1247 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), 5, 30, 183; “The Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations,” Released to the press January 16, in *Bulletin*, January 16, 1943, Vol. 8, No. 186, Publication 1855 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 64-65;

If these four men and their aids drove the four-power negotiations, one additional individual played a critical role as well. Born in Toronto, Canada, Lester Bowles Pearson is one of the giants of his country's history. He served notably in the First World War, but was injured in a plane crash and discharged from the service. He had a BA from the University of Toronto, and had taken an Oxford MA. During the early part of the Second World War, as we have noted, he served in London as a member of the Canadian delegation, but was transferred to Washington in 1942, where, as Minister Counselor, he was second in command at the Canadian Embassy. His immediate superior, however, played no role in the relief discussions. This provided Pearson a tremendous opportunity.

In at least one way, Pearson, or "Mike," as his friends referred to him, stood apart from his interlocutors in Washington. He was a politician long before he ever became one. Not only did he want to be your friend, he wanted to be noticed. Lester Pearson, like Lord Halifax, was also very religious: he worshiped at the altar of a stagnant pool. But where he distinguished himself was in how often and how long he stood there. In short, Pearson thought highly of himself, and went to great ends to satisfy his ambitions. Along with his indisputable intelligence, these qualities translated into a career that paralleled and possibly exceeded that of all of the other principals. The relief negotiations provided him a critical steppingstone.¹⁵¹⁷

"Haskell Is Named Field Relief Head," January 17, 1943, *NYT*, 17; Junior Class of Princeton University, *Bric-a-Brac: Princeton University Yearbook* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932), 56. Research conducted at AFSC made it clear that both Veatch and his wife were involved with the AFSC.

¹⁵¹⁷ For the definitive work on Pearson, see John English, *Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson*, Vol. 1, 1897-1948 (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1989); John English, *Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson*, Vol. 2, 1949-1972 (Toronto:

The First Meeting of the Four Powers: January 11, 1943

The first meeting of the four powers began poorly. Acheson informed the group that Hull considered it unwise to allow for a seven-power Policy Committee unless a “solution could be found for the difficulties that otherwise might result.” Litvinov feigned ignorance: he did not know why his Government remained attached to the four-power principle, but surmised that Moscow believed it would be difficult for the Europeans to select one country to fill the seventh seat. It would be much “easier for four members to reach agreement” than seven, he argued. Adding members to the Policy Committee would also “set a pattern which might be embarrassing on other occasions when quite different matters might require decisions or action by the four Powers.” Halifax refused to bend. He was “firmly bound” by the instructions of his Government, which considered the “cordial cooperation” of the supplying countries, especially Canada, essential. While impressed with Litvinov’s argument, he would have to inform London of any suggestions they might have. The Chinese Ambassador replied similarly, but everyone knew he would follow Washington’s lead.¹⁵¹⁸

Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, 1992). For a brief collection of essays, see Norman Hillmer, ed., *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999). Pearson also thought so much of his career that he would write not a one-volume memoir, but a three-volume memoir. See Lester Pearson, *Mike: The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson*, Vol. 1-3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972, 1973, 1975).

¹⁵¹⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation in the Office of the Assistant SOS (Acheson),” January 11, 1943, 840.50/1266, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963): 853-857.

The burden of finding a solution initially fell to the Americans. Not only did they agree with Litvinov's claim that selecting the seventh power might prove difficult, they were unable to convince Brazil to sign the UN Declaration of January 1942. The Americans dangled the prospect of membership on the Policy Committee before Brazil's eyes in an effort to entice them to join the alliance, but they refused despite having declared war on Germany and Italy in August 1942.¹⁵¹⁹ Acheson therefore suggested formulas to make the four-power setup work. He made the comical proposal that Canada and the United Kingdom share a seat on the Policy Committee.¹⁵²⁰ Then, he suggested the creation of a standing committee on supplies, which would include Canada and the other major supplying countries. Halifax recorded these options, but argued that they did not go far enough to remove London's fear that the European Allies would protest the Policy Committee. To meet this concern, Acheson thought the Inter-Allied Committee "might be strengthened" to enlist their "interest and cooperation."¹⁵²¹

Acheson now refocused the group's attention on the organization's authority to operate in a given territory. The Soviets preferred that the Director General first obtain "the consent of the government of the state receiving relief." The Chinese wanted the Director General's field operations to be subject to the approval of the recipient state. But Acheson argued, "It would be difficult to cover these points in the draft." "Such a

¹⁵¹⁹ Telegram Relief No. 8, DC to FO, January 8, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 10, DC to FO, January 11, 1943, both in T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵²⁰ This proposal is comical for two reasons: first, the Americans thought that the British and Canadians would disagree on supply issues; second, they believed critics would view British and Canadian membership as two votes for Britain. On the first issue, see "Memorandum," by Dean Acheson, January 6, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA; on the second issue, see Telegram Relief No. 9, DC to FO, January 8, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵²¹ "Memorandum of Conversation," January 11, 1943, 840.50/1266, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 853-857; Relief Telegram No. 10, DC to FO, January 11, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

provision might cause embarrassment in dealings with the former enemy governments and in determining the proper governments with which to deal in unsettled territories.” He reassured those present that the Soviet and Chinese Governments would be the United Nations authority in their respective countries. The Chinese raised no objections. Halifax did not “feel strongly on the matter.”¹⁵²² He was silently pleased that the Americans were now making an implicit distinction between enemy countries and members of the United Nations, a marked improvement over the previous week.¹⁵²³ But Litvinov, while accepting Acheson’s views on enemy countries, believed the anticipated difficulties unlikely. “The United Nations would be forced to recognize some government in each territory without delay.” But with no further instructions, he would have to refer the matter to Moscow.¹⁵²⁴

The group discussed the Director General. Like Litvinov, Acheson agreed that this individual should file periodic reports with the Council, but he reserved for the Policy Committee the right to redact any information best left confidential until the war’s end. He similarly concurred with the Soviet view that procedures should be established to remove the Director General. He suggested this might be done by a unanimous vote of the Policy Committee. Litvinov listened, but replied quizzically: “It would be very harsh to remove the Director General.” Would it not be “easier and less embarrassing for the Policy Committee merely to fail to reelect him?” To avoid the embarrassment of a direct dismissal, he responded, the Director General “would be given an opportunity to resign.”

¹⁵²² “Memorandum of Conversation,” January 11, 1943, 840.50/1266, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 853-857.

¹⁵²³ On this point, see Relief Telegram No. 8, DC to FO, January 8, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵²⁴ “Memorandum of Conversation,” January 11, 1943, 840.50/1266, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 853-857.

Halifax voiced agreement. “The Director General should be given the fullest possible executive power subject to the control of the Policy Committee and the Council.” But he added, “If it were necessary to find an alternative, the most desirable alternative... would be to set the Director General’s term of office at a definite period... certainly not less than two or three years.” Litvinov had heard enough. He would report to Moscow.¹⁵²⁵

Acheson then reported that his Government preferred unanimous voting only at points in the draft where everyone agreed that it was desirable. On other points, he considered a simple majority adequate. Otherwise the relief organization might encounter innumerable delays arising “from the opposition of an individual member on minor matters on which he might hold some personal opinion.” Litvinov reacted in disbelief. “He could not imagine a situation in which an individual would obstruct action as a personal matter.” But the Chinese Ambassador expressed agreement with Acheson’s proposal and Litvinov offered to report it to Moscow.¹⁵²⁶ For reasons we cannot yet know, the Soviet Union accepted this proposal along with the American suggestion that the Director General could be removed with the unanimous vote of the Policy Committee. But Litvinov and Maisky repeatedly threatened unanimous voting on all decisions if Great Britain and the United States refused to accede to their wishes on other matters, most importantly, their preference for a four-power Policy Committee.¹⁵²⁷

This insistence only heightened the importance of the Regional Committees. To make the four-power Policy Committee palatable to all of the organization’s members, it

¹⁵²⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵²⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵²⁷ Telegram Relief No. 17, FO to DC, February 3, 1943; “Discussion on Relief” by Gladwyn Jebb, March 26, 1943, both in T188/256, PRO; “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” February 27, 1943, (130) AME 45/1/25, Monnet Papers, Institute Jean Monnet, University of Lausanne.

would have to provide them with outlets of influence. The British recognized this fact, but Acheson's argumentation of the previous week left them apprehensive, not because they disagreed with it, but because it contradicted the Soviet habit of attaching political commissars to military commanders in the field. The Assistant Secretary of State, in short, adduced the examples of the American Congress, which attached a committee to General George Washington during the American Revolution, and William of Orange, who enlisted Dutch Commissaries to keep an eye on the Duke of Marlborough during the English Revolution, both, in Acheson's view, with "deplorable effects." He believed that "any Regional Committee would be a committee of the council and not of the executive." Their purpose, he told Noel Hall, would be to "lay down policy and to make representations to the Policy Committee if their directions were not properly carried out."¹⁵²⁸

On January 11, 1943, Acheson abandoned the provocative argumentation and laid out the principle that guided the American attitude towards the committees. They should be "concerned [purely] with policy and not with executive or administrative functions." Aware that this position created an opening for Great Britain, Halifax quickly concurred.¹⁵²⁹ Leith-Ross, in fact, considered the American point of view promising by comparison with the obstinate attitude he had faced during his frustrating discussions in Washington. The Americans now appeared willing to support increased policy-making powers for the Regional Committees.¹⁵³⁰ Noel Hall agreed, and told the group that these

¹⁵²⁸ Telegram Relief No. 8, DC to FO, January 8, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵²⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation," January 11, 1943, 840.50/1266, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 853-857.

¹⁵³⁰ Leith-Ross to Noel F. Hall, January 11, 1943, T188/256, PRO; but see especially Telegram Relief No. 11, FO to DC, January 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

committees would be in a better position to develop policy than the Council given their proximity to and knowledge of the actual problems in the areas needing assistance. The group therefore decided that Acheson should redraft the paragraph in the agreement on the Regional Committees. He should also draft language for the committee on supplies, which he had suggested earlier in the meeting. The record of this meeting leaves no evidence of Litvinov's views on the matter.¹⁵³¹

Henceforward the talks unfolded as expected. Acheson accepted the Soviet right to abstain from participation in the solution of relief-related problems in countries at war with a state with which it was not at war. The Chinese raised no complaint. Though they had long hoped the Soviet Union would go to war with Japan, they could not afford to offend the United States. Similarly, Ambassador Wei raised no protest when the group rejected Chungking's proposal that amendments to the agreement might be made with a simple majority vote in the Council and the Policy Committee. Acheson argued that such modifications "would open the way to changes of great importance without the full support of the great majority of the member Powers." Litvinov and Halifax concurred. In sum, the four wise men agreed that Acheson should prepare a resume of their discussion with relevant modifications to the draft. The size and composition of the Policy Committee remained the only sticking point. The position of the Director General, the Policy Committee's voting procedures, the creation of a Supplies Committee, and the relative powers of the Regional Committees depended on the course of this debate.¹⁵³²

¹⁵³¹ "Memorandum of Conversation," January 11, 1943, 840.50/1266, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 853-857.

¹⁵³² *Ibid.*

The Policy Committee Debate Begins: The Four-Power Option

While the Americans endeavored to make the four-power setup acceptable to the rest of the world without endangering their control over the organization, the British tried to convince the State Department that the seven-power arrangements were not only essential but also possible. The British knew that if the Soviets failed to alter their position, it was better to have shaped a flawed organization in ways that would appease Canada and quell the fulminations of the governments in exile than to allow discontent to wreck the entire project. They also knew that by looking out for Canada and Europe, they could increase their prestige and possibly augment the influence of the Inter-Allied Committee. For their part, the Americans always thought the seven-power setup could work well for them. It was best to maximize the benefits of such an arrangement by molding the organization for the contingency that Moscow might accept seven members. But if not, the Americans would need to win over the governments in exile, several of which had considerable resources. They would also have to convince Canada. Ottawa had much to offer, and was in a position to create trouble for the wartime alliance.

The degree to which Acheson took their claims seriously remains a moot point. The British and Canadian Government reacted with disbelief at his suggestion that they share a seat on the Policy Committee. Lester Pearson, then the Minister Counselor at the Canadian Embassy, dismissed the proposal as “impossible” and evidence of a “surprising lack of knowledge.”¹⁵³³ But the proposal was not senseless. Apparently the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Leighton McCarthy, had no problem declaring his

¹⁵³³ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, January 23, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

allegiance to the Empire. “A British subject I was born and a British subject I will die,” he wrote in January 1943.¹⁵³⁴ But many English Canadians, Pearson for example, and especially the French Canadians, despised this attitude. The British High Commissioner to Canada, Malcolm MacDonald thought the proposal could even “lead to the break-up of the British Commonwealth.” It prejudiced the possibility that a Dominion could have a voice of its own in an international body and suggested members of the Commonwealth enjoyed something less than full nationhood.¹⁵³⁵ If this ever was Acheson’s intent, he certainly backed away from the idea when criticism of it began to emerge.

Its problems were immense. Mackenzie King’s Government considered the proposal “entirely unacceptable” for nationalistic reasons.¹⁵³⁶ The British thought it failed to meet Ottawa’s claim as a major supplier.¹⁵³⁷ According to one telegram, the suggestion was tantamount to giving a vote to the British Empire, an approach that would undermine Ottawa’s ability to obtain public support for the relief organization among the Canadian public. Old school imperialists in the other Dominions would request a share in the vote, a demand that might lead to disputes with Australian, New Zealand and South African nationalists. In turn, this could lead the Dominions to consider whether they should remain members of the Commonwealth at all. From the American point of view, it might

¹⁵³⁴ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, January 6, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁵³⁵ Telegram No. 179 Secret, Canada (HC) to DO, January 23, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵³⁶ The matter was discussed at a meeting of the Canadian War Committee. See Cabinet War Committee, Meeting No. 216, January 21, 1943, C-4875, Vol. 5678, RG 2, LAC. Quote is taken from the “Memorandum” delivered by the Canadians to the British HC in Ottawa on January 22, 1943: full text included in Telegram 105, SOSEA to HC in Great Britain, January 22, 1943, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 668, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 1942-1943 (Hull, Quebec: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1980), 775-776.

¹⁵³⁷ On this point, see “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, January 13, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO.

precipitate similar demands from Latin American countries eager to have influence on the Policy Committee. Not only would this fracture South America, it would weaken the American position.¹⁵³⁸ It might also offend policymakers in Moscow, who would suspect the Canadians, as they already feared with regard to the Chinese, would “perpetually side with the United States.”¹⁵³⁹ It was an awful proposal. By the beginning of February, it had been dismissed by everyone, including Acheson.¹⁵⁴⁰

The fate of Acheson’s second proposal, the Supplies Committee, appeared less certain. Immediately after the four-power meeting of January 11, 1943, Noel Hall at the British Embassy provided the first suggestion as to how it might be integrated into the text, which indicated approval from London.¹⁵⁴¹ Indeed the Foreign Office recognized its benefits. In addition to appeasing Canada, it might mollify the European countries with supplies to offer, such as Belgium, Norway and the Netherlands. As such, it would provide a check against unilateral action.¹⁵⁴² But as the various ministries considered the proposal further, a number of policymakers began to worry that it would duplicate existing supply machinery, particularly the Combined Boards.¹⁵⁴³ By early February, one official at the Foreign Office even called it the “most dangerous suggestion.”¹⁵⁴⁴ Leith-Ross also voiced concerns. It would “separate donor from recipient countries.” If every

¹⁵³⁸ Telegram Relief No. 10, FO to DC, January 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵³⁹ “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, January 13, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Telegram No. 307, Canada (HC) to DO, February 6, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁴¹ Noel Hall to Dean Acheson, January 11, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁵⁴² “Minute by J.E. Coulson,” January 13, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO.

¹⁵⁴³ “Minute by J.E. Coulson,” January 26, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO.

¹⁵⁴⁴ “Minute by J.E. Coulson,” February 1, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO.

country with supplies were included, it would become too wieldy. He also thought it might even trump the Policy Committee in its importance.¹⁵⁴⁵

Whether the draft agreement included the proposal would depend on two factors: the reaction of the Soviet Union and the size of the Policy Committee stipulated in the draft circulated to the United Nations. If the Soviet Union refused to accept a Supplies Committee, or ultimately agreed to the seven-power Policy Committee, it made little sense to integrate it into the draft with the problems it could cause.¹⁵⁴⁶ Ironically, neither the United States nor Great Britain paid much attention to the Canadian point of view at this point, even though the provision was designed to address their concerns. When the Canadians learned of the proposal, they informed the British of their opposition and told the Americans that nothing short of membership on the Policy Committee would satisfy their claims.¹⁵⁴⁷ However Moscow remained opposed to this setup and agreed to the creation of a Supplies Committee so long as its policies were “carried out under the control and with the approval of the Policy Committee.”¹⁵⁴⁸ The Soviet attitude placed the Canadians in a difficult position. If Ottawa backed down, Canada would look weak; if it refused to bend, it would wreck the entire endeavor or miss the benefits of participation.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Telegram Relief No. 10, FO to DC, January 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁴⁶ On this issue of Soviet acceptance of seven-power Policy Committee, see Veatch to Acheson, January 23, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁵⁴⁷ “Memorandum from Under-SOSEA to PM,” January 18, 1943, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 667, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 773-774. “Memorandum of Conversation by the Assistant SOS (Acheson),” January 26, 1943, 840.50/1231, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 864.

¹⁵⁴⁸ “The Soviet Embassy to the Department of State, Memorandum,” February 16, 1943, 840.50/1307, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 868-869.

Acheson's final proposal won accolades from everyone. To make the four-power formula more acceptable, he wanted to strengthen the Regional Committees. But on January 20, 1943, dispute erupted over the specifics. The drafting, according to the British, failed to grant the committees sufficient authority to "give directions in regard to [the] administration of relief in their [respective] area[s]." ¹⁵⁴⁹ London consequently proposed Regional Deputies, who would liaison for the committees with the Council and Policy Committee on programs and policy proposals, but who would also "give effect, so far as practicable, to any recommendations made by" the regions. ¹⁵⁵⁰ Confusion ensued. The British equivocated on whether the Deputies would be agents of the Regional Committees or the Director General. To give the committees control over operations and access to the Council and Policy Committee, their proposal circumvented the Director General. ¹⁵⁵¹ The Americans demurred, forcing the British to put the Director General back into the equation. ¹⁵⁵² Thus the deputies became agents of the Director General and received the menial task of providing a secretariat at meetings of the Regional Committees. ¹⁵⁵³

¹⁵⁴⁹ Telegram Relief No. 12, FO to DC, January 20, 1943, T188/256, PRO; for the American proposal for Regional Committees, see "Memorandum Presenting Drafts of Modifications of the Draft Plan as Discussed in the Meeting of January 11, 1943," 840.50/1266, January 16, 1943, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 858-860.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Telegram Relief No. 12, FO to DC, January 20, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁵¹ Much of this can be inferred by simply reading the British proposal, but for the American complaint, see Telegram Relief No. 19, DC to FO, January 31, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO.

¹⁵⁵² For the British proposal reintegrating the DG in the text, see G.F. Thorold to Veatch, February 2, 1943, 840.50/1321; for the immediate American reaction, see Veatch to Acheson, February 3, 1943, 840.50/1321, both in Box 4803, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁵⁵³ Veatch to Acheson, February 16, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

The Regional Committees would recommend policy and monitor operations, but their power to communicate with the Council and Policy Committee would be circumscribed. On policy, their recommendations would be made through the Director General. If he disapproved, he could decline to report them to the Policy Committee, or the Council if it were in session. Regarding operations, the committees would only have access to the Policy Committee if dispute emerged with the Director General over the implementation of policy. In this case, the Policy Committee would arbitrate. This arrangement actually strengthened the Policy Committee vis-à-vis the Director General, but did little to empower the regions. As for the Deputies, their role would be reduced to preparing reports at the request of the Director General, and aiding the Regional Committees administratively. Otherwise they would have little power. Their access to information and policy recommended by the regions would be at the discretion of the Director General. In essence, while the British hoped to make meaningful changes to satisfy the Europeans, the Americans preferred pretence to trick them into believing they had more power.¹⁵⁵⁴

While the size of the Policy Committee proved the source of conflict in early 1943, the committee's function and relationship to other entities in the organization had created problems in 1942. The Americans worried that calling it the "Executive Committee" might suggest its subservience to the Council or some other United Nations authority. Moreover, executive authority would reside with the Director General and his staff, not the "Executive Committee." The Americans therefore accepted Leith-Ross' suggestion in the summer of 1942 that the body be renamed the "Policy Committee" to

¹⁵⁵⁴ All of this is in the footnoted documents of the previous paragraph.

more accurately reflect its duties. But now it had become apparent that this title made the Council and the Regional Committees appear less relevant. The matter so worried Acheson that he routinely deemphasized the Policy Committee's importance in meetings with the British and Canadians.¹⁵⁵⁵ He even pondered its elimination altogether.¹⁵⁵⁶ But Roy Veatch proposed a new name, "Central Committee," which would place it on the same plane as the Regional Committees and remove the "implication that the committee of four would set policies for the organization."¹⁵⁵⁷

It was an ironic proposal. The agreement makes it clear that the Central Committee would be a far more important than the Council or the Regional Committees. As such, the new title served to conceal the truth rather than to overtly mislead. At the same time, it was also inexplicitly honest. The Americans always wanted the Central Committee to be at the center of things, but they preferred that it do far less than any of the other powers believed. The draft, of course, left no impression of this sort. The Central Committee would make policy at times when the Council was not in session. But the real master would be the Director General. The Central Committee's purpose would be to rubberstamp his policies. If it refused, the Director General would stage compliance while carrying out America's preferences on the ground. For this reason, it was important to minimize lines of communication between the Regional Committees and the Central Committee. The Americans did not want the Director General cut out of the policy-making process, and they did not want the Regional Committees informing the Central Committee that he was acting unilaterally or refusing to comply with their policies.

¹⁵⁵⁵ Telegram Relief No. 17, DC to FO, January 31, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, January 26, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Veatch to Acheson, February 16, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

The Policy Committee Debate Continues: The Seven-Power Option

While Great Britain and the United States worked to resolve problems with the four-power setup, they simultaneously struggled to make the seven-power alternative acceptable. But no one knew whether this approach would ever fly. Cordell Hull had dismissed it altogether. The Russians would accept nothing other than the four-power alternative, he argued. If thwarted, they would “simply resort to delaying tactics.” Sumner Welles disliked the seven-power because he thought the four-power principle should be well established so that it might also guide political and military arrangements after the war.¹⁵⁵⁸ The President certainly shared this view.¹⁵⁵⁹ However, the State Department envisioned a scenario in which European ire over the four-power setup forced the Soviet Union to yield to continental demands for representation on the Policy Committee. In this case, Roy Veatch believed the United States should “be able to bring forth the least objectionable plan for meeting such pressure.”¹⁵⁶⁰ The debate hinged on one issue: How could the three additional powers be chosen?

The Americans made the first proposal on January 21, 1943, but everyone considered it problematic. In conversations with the British, the State Department

¹⁵⁵⁸ Telegram Relief No. 15, DC to FO, January 21, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Roosevelt’s commitment to the four-power formula is well established in the scholarship. See, for example, Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 342, 389-390. But for clear documentary evidence, see “Minutes of Meeting at White House,” October 5, 1943, File Talks with FDR 1942-44, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. It seems to me that we must assume that the four-power Central Committee constituted a trial run for what Roosevelt envisioned in the postwar era.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Veatch to Acheson, January 23, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

suggested the creation of three caucuses of the Council, one each for Europe, Latin America, and the principle supplying countries. These groups would select the additional members of the Policy Committee by majority vote.¹⁵⁶¹ Ultimately the Americans and British concluded that this procedure might lead to unfortunate horse-trading among the Europeans and Latin Americans.¹⁵⁶² But from the British point of view, it in no way guaranteed a seat for Canada. With many of the Latin American countries potentially in the caucus of supplying countries, it was conceivable that Ottawa might not win the seat it coveted. As such, the British preferred that the three posts be delegated geographically: one for a British Dominion, a Latin American country, and a European nation, respectively.¹⁵⁶³ But this idea too, presented problems.

Roy Veatch and Noel Hall met on January 22, 1943 to forge an alternative plan. Instead of assigning the Council responsibility for selecting the three additional members, they thought the four Great Powers should make the decision annually by unanimous vote. In this way, they could avoid the problems associated with the other proposal, and make it unnecessary to establish a Supplies Committee.¹⁵⁶⁴ But these arrangements were not without flaws. The Americans and British considered it unwise to explicitly reserve a seat for Canada in the agreement, which might force the great powers to cite other members as well.¹⁵⁶⁵ If they chose one European country, it could create jealousies. As a result, there would have to be some advance agreement made with the Soviet Union that

¹⁵⁶¹ Telegram Relief No. 15, DC to FO, January 21, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁶² Veatch to Acheson, January 23, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁵⁶³ Telegram Relief No. 15, FO to DC, January 22, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Veatch to Acheson, January 23, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA. This compromise considered the previous American proposal, but also the ideas put forward by Leith-Ross in Telegram Relief No. 11, FO to DC, January 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁶⁵ Wrong to McCarthy, January 14, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

provided for Canadian and Brazilian membership, assuming that Rio de Janeiro signed the United Nations Declaration before the relief conference took place. For this reason, Veatch thought Acheson should reach out to Litvinov to ascertain his views.¹⁵⁶⁶ As we have no record of such discussion, the Americans must have considered this premature.

For one, it was unclear what the Canadians and Brazilians would do. At the moment of this proposal, Canada had communicated with the United States very little on the topic of relief. What purpose would it serve if Ottawa were easily convinced to retreat? It also made no sense if Brazil still refused to sign the UN Declaration. Rio de Janeiro, to be sure, had appealed to London in an effort to become involved in postwar relief. Policymakers in Brazil knew their country would profit handsomely from participation.¹⁵⁶⁷ But at this point they appeared unwilling to join the Policy Committee if the price for membership was signing the UN Declaration.¹⁵⁶⁸ It also seems they were afraid to partake in an endeavor where they would be expected to do as they were told. Noel Hall told Lester Pearson that Brazil did not want to play the role of “American protégé on the enlarged Committee.” This attitude, he explained, was “symptomatic of the general unrest... at United States tutelage.” Small states had become “impatient at being pushed around, especially in South America, where... the good neighbor,”

¹⁵⁶⁶ Veatch to Acheson, January 23, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁵⁶⁷ Telegram 583, Matthews to SOS, January 21, 1943, 840.50/1136; Telegram 677, Department of State to American Embassy London, January 29, 1943, 840.50/1135, Box 4802; W.N. Walmsley, Jr. to Duggan and Acheson, January 30, 1943, 840.50/1136, all Box 4802; Telegram 584, Matthews to SOS, January 21, 1943, 840.50/1202, Box 4803; Memorandum of Conversation Duggan and Veatch, January 29, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, all RG 59, NARA.

¹⁵⁶⁸ This can be inferred from several documents: Telegram Relief No. 11, FO to DC, January 15, 1943; Telegram No. 307, Canada (HC) to DO, February 6, 1943, both in T188/256, PRO.

according to Hall, “was ‘in shreds and tatters.’”¹⁵⁶⁹ Brazil signed the UN Declaration on February 8, 1943, but made little fuss over the Policy Committee.¹⁵⁷⁰

The British knew that it would be insufficient to merely devise a workable seven-power Policy Committee. Officials in the Soviet and American Governments, especially Sumner Welles,¹⁵⁷¹ worried that anything deviating from four-power control might set an undesirable precedent for other postwar organizations. Cognizant of this fact, the British drew distinctions between postwar economic arrangements, on the one hand, and those that would manage political and military affairs on the other hand. When political issues arose in the context of relief, they argued that these issues could be settled through diplomatic channels.¹⁵⁷² But to erase fears that this procedure might influence future postwar organizations, they simultaneously expressed the view that “the four powers should retain ultimate control over post-war military and political arrangements.”¹⁵⁷³

Economic affairs were a different matter. While Canada factored heavily in their analysis of the question, they also considered it inconceivable that the Europeans would accept four-power control over Europe’s economic life. With a population of 133 million people and prewar aggregate trade levels more than twelve times that of both China and Russia, they did not see how the European continental members of the United Nations could be excluded from the primary decision-making bodies of organizations with

¹⁵⁶⁹ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, January 25, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC; on this point, see also Telegram No. 307, Canada (HC) to DO, February 6, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁷⁰ “Declaration by the United Nations,” January 1, 1942, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade03.asp (accessed September 11, 2012).

¹⁵⁷¹ On Welles, see Telegram Relief No. 15, DC to FO, January 21, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁷² Telegram Relief No. 9, FO to DC, January 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁷³ Telegram Relief No. 16, DC to FO, January 21, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

economic functions.¹⁵⁷⁴ While Russia and China would be major recipients of economic aid, many of the European countries – specifically Belgium, France, Holland and Norway – might have resources of their own to contribute. If the leaders of any of any of these countries relegated control over their economic life to a four-power directorate that included China and the Soviet Union, the British believed their populations would repudiate them.¹⁵⁷⁵ The byproduct of such a reaction would be nothing short of full-scale social, political and economic instability, the very condition that the relief organization endeavored to prevent.

Canada and the Trans-Atlantic Triangle

As the British processed the opposition they faced in Moscow and Washington, they shared all relevant telegrams with the Canadians, who welcomed London's support, but repudiated four-power management of postwar political and military affairs. On January 21, 1943, the Canadian War Committee, concluded that the "United Nations could not be divided into one group of great powers exercising responsibility for political and military settlements, and another group excluded from responsibility regardless of

¹⁵⁷⁴ Telegram Relief No. 11, FO to DC, January 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO; "The British Ambassador (Halifax) to the Assistant SOS (Acheson)," January 24, 1943, 840.50/1169, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 862-864. The population and trade statistics come from the latter document. The population figures refer roughly to the European countries on the continent that had joined the United Nations. See Gregory Frumkin, *Population Changes in Europe Since 1939: A Study of Population Changes in Europe During and Since World War II as Shown by the Balance Sheets of Twenty-Four European Countries* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Inc., 1951).

¹⁵⁷⁵ Telegram Relief No. 11, FO to DC, January 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

their size and importance.”¹⁵⁷⁶ They conveyed this view to the British High Commissioner the following day. For the Canadians, the “functional principle” was as applicable to these domains as it was to economics.¹⁵⁷⁷ The British took notice.¹⁵⁷⁸ Whereas on January 15, 1943, they stated that it was “*certainly important* that the four powers should retain control over post-war military and political arrangements,” on January 24, 1943, they told the Americans it was “*almost inevitable* that the ultimate control of postwar military and political arrangements” would “tend to lie in the hands of the four great powers.”¹⁵⁷⁹

At Britain’s suggestion, the Canadians made their case at Washington directly. On January 26, 1943, Pearson dispensed the usual arguments with Acheson. But instead of stressing the political considerations forcing his country to demand membership on the Policy Committee, he stressed the size of a Canadian contribution, and suggested it would damage the Canadian economy if it failed to participate. True enough, but the implication was that economic concerns would force Canada to reach an agreement. By contrast, he might have argued, as Alex Skelton did with Leith-Ross the previous year, that the political class would just as well commit economic suicide than to accept an affront to Canadian prestige. To be sure, he covered all of the relevant ground, but his

¹⁵⁷⁶ Cabinet War Committee, Meeting No. 216, January 21, 1943, C-4875, Vol. 5678, RG 2, LAC.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Telegram No. 179 Secret, Canada (HC) to DO, January 23, 1943, T188/256, PRO; the Canadians gave the HC the following “Memorandum,” January 18, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁵⁷⁸ The internal discussion over how to back away from the stronger claim can be found in the following documents: Telegram Relief No. 15, DC to FO, January 21, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 15, FO to DC, January 22, 1943, both in T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁷⁹ I have used the italics to underscore the subtle shift in their position. Telegram Relief No. 9, FO to DC, January 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO; Halifax to Acheson, January 24, 1943, 840.50/1169, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 862-864.

approach laid too much emphasis on the wrong facts. Yet still more reproachable, he contravened the Canadian War Committee's recent decisions. "In the political and military field Canada would not expect a position equal to the four great powers."¹⁵⁸⁰ Acheson must have considered Pearson's approach weak.

The Canadian diplomat scrambled. Noel Hall informed him that Acheson was "inclined to take the line that Canadian difficulties regarding the Policy Committee were not possibly as great as the British thought and that... Acheson thought... a Committee of Suppliers might meet" Canada's problem. Pearson wrote Robertson that Acheson "could not have received that impression from his talk with me... In our discussions about a possible Suppliers Committee I had stated that this would in all probability not be considered acceptable." He then assigned blame for the hardened attitude to Hull and Welles, and criticized Robertson's insistence that he restate the Canadian position more firmly with Acheson. "A more effective procedure," he wrote, "might be for the Minister to send a formal note to the Secretary of State putting our position in clear terms." He even contemplated an abandonment of the Canadian position, which he admitted, would

¹⁵⁸⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation," by Acheson, January 26, 1943, 840.50/1231, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 864. Pearson's official account of the exchange is brief. See Telegram No. 307, Canada (HC) to DO, February 6, 1943, T188/256, PRO. But see Lester Pearson Bound Diary, January 26, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC. Pearson wrote Norman Robertson the following on February 1, 1943. "Hall thinks that Acheson, after my conference with him, had another talk with the SOS and Welles and that as a result his opposition to the extension of the Policy Committee to include Canada is as strong or even stronger than ever. I doubt therefore that our talk with Acheson along the lines of your telegram would be very fruitful." See Telegram No. 309, Canada (HC) to DO, February 6, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

“leave us worse off than if we had not brought the question up.” Alternatively, the Prime Minister might speak with Roosevelt.¹⁵⁸¹

If the Americans now considered Canada’s difficulties less than what everyone had previously thought, the logical next step was to pressure London. The process had already begun. On January 18, 1943, Acheson, stating a “renewed sense of urgency,” proposed a second meeting of the four powers by the end of the week, a fact that forced Noel Hall, in the Ambassador’s absence, to request instructions from London on a forty-eight-hour notice.¹⁵⁸² Due to Soviet delays, the meeting did not take place. But on January 24, 1943, the British delivered a strong criticism of the four-power setup in Washington.¹⁵⁸³ Yet Pearson’s performance had undercut them, and the Americans increased the stakes.

The State Department lobbed a veiled threat at London. As Halifax explained, the State Department was “embarrassed by the rapid extension” of Herbert Lehman’s activities. The situation made them “afraid that unless we proceed quickly to set up the United Nations relief agency he will have built up so large and strong a team on his own that the agency will not become properly international in its personnel and outlook.” In this way, they made the consequences of British truculence clear. If London did not reverse course, then the world would be faced with a unilateral American relief effort. Of course they preferred otherwise. “The four power Policy Committee might be unpalatable

¹⁵⁸¹ Telegram No. 309, Canada (HC) to DO, February 6, 1943, T188/256, PRO; this document is also in the Canadian documents, but is dated February 1, 1943.

¹⁵⁸² Telegram Relief No. 14, DC to FO, January 18, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁸³ For the British comment, see Halifax to Acheson, January 24, 1943, 840.50/1169, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 862-864.

to the European nations,” the State Department argued, “but... they would have to swallow it.”¹⁵⁸⁴ Clearly they felt the same with regard to Canada.

Ironically, the British refused to believe the fib. Roosevelt had appointed Lehman without consulting the State Department. The decision so outraged Acheson’s preference for Director General, Paul Appleby that he resigned to return to the Department of Agriculture in early January.¹⁵⁸⁵ The circumstances made the State Department’s claim plausible, but concealed the fact that most everyone in the American Government agreed that if the relief negotiations failed, then the United States would have to go it alone. Yet the British dismissed this fact, even though they had conjectured this possibility in conversations with Maisky. Now they considered the story nothing more than “weak” cover for the American refusal to “get involved in a dispute with Russia.”¹⁵⁸⁶ Evidentially they decided to do what the Americans refused to do.

In early February, the British asked Maisky to persuade Moscow to accept the seven-power Policy Committee. Both the Foreign Office and the British Embassy in Washington thought the Russian Ambassador in London might have more influence in Moscow than Litvinov.¹⁵⁸⁷ But Richard Law, who met with Maisky on February 2, 1943, quickly realized that Hull’s assessments were true. “If we pressed M. Maisky to intervene with his Government in support of the larger policy committee he would probably take the opportunity to raise all these other questions at the same time and the chances of

¹⁵⁸⁴ Telegram Relief No. 17, DC to FO, January 31, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁸⁵ Telegram Relief No. 4, FO to DC, January 6, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 11, DC to FO, January 15, 1943, both in FO 371/35266, PRO.

¹⁵⁸⁶ Telegram Relief No. 17, DC to FO, January 31, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁸⁷ For the Foreign Office view, see “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, February 1, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO; for the Embassy’s opinion, see Telegram Relief No. 18, DC to FO, January 31, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

getting any settlement of this issue would be very much lessened.” Law therefore told Maisky there was no need to raise the matter with Moscow; it was best to leave it up to Litvinov in Washington.¹⁵⁸⁸

Leith-Ross, however, could not desist. That evening he consulted with Maisky, who informed him that membership on the Policy Committee could not be considered in isolation of other points, such as the Director General’s position, the powers of the Regional Committees, and the relationship between the Relief Administration and the recipient countries. Maisky also told him that he had already telegraphed Moscow despite Law’s instructions. But the Russian Ambassador led Leith-Ross to believe that he had drawn a distinction between economic matters and political and military questions. This presentation pleased Sir Frederick.¹⁵⁸⁹

Meanwhile, the Canadians deliberated. Robertson worried that if Ottawa abandoned its position, Canada might find itself “sitting on the side-lines while other and still more important parts of the post-war settlement are being arranged.” Yet he questioned the wisdom of “a formal note to the Secretary of State.” Diplomatic protocol would require a response. “If they took an adverse position it would be very difficult to bring about a change.”¹⁵⁹⁰ But the War Committee accepted the risk.¹⁵⁹¹ On February 8, 1943, Robertson instructed Pearson to present Hull a memo that made Ottawa’s most

¹⁵⁸⁸ “Minute” by Richard Law, February 2, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO.

¹⁵⁸⁹ Leith-Ross to Ronald, February 3, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO.

¹⁵⁹⁰ “Memorandum from Under SOSEA to PM,” February 3, 1943, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 669, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 776-777.

¹⁵⁹¹ Cabinet War Committee, Meeting No. 218, February 4, 1943, C-4875, Vol. 5678, RG 2, LAC.

forceful demand for inclusion on the Policy Committee.¹⁵⁹² “Unless this change is made.... Canada, and no doubt other countries, will not be able to cooperate in the work of the administration...” But in trying to avoid the embarrassment of retreating if the Americans refused to bend, they inadvertently gave them reason to play hardball. The memo suggested Canada *would* withdraw if “other alterations with equivalent effects [were] adopted.” If not, Canada would still cooperate, but “not as fully as [it] would [otherwise] be prepared to do.”¹⁵⁹³

Canada’s prospects for membership on the Policy Committee deteriorated. In Hull’s absence, Sumner Welles received Pearson. Ottawa’s “position is a very strong, almost unanswerable, one,” he told the Canadian. Acheson “half jocularly remarked that the difficulty would be solved if [Ottawa] could prevail on the U.K. to let [Canada] take its place on a Four-Power Committee.” He warned of American unilateralism if Canada sabotaged the effort.¹⁵⁹⁴ While both Americans blamed the problem on Moscow, Acheson left Pearson with little hope that Canada could “make any impression on the Russians.”¹⁵⁹⁵ But Welles thought they should try. It failed. The Soviet Ambassador in Ottawa was hopelessly uninformed and without power.¹⁵⁹⁶ In a further attempt, King

¹⁵⁹² Teletype EX-459, SOSEA to Minister in United States, February 8, 1943, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 670, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 777-779.

¹⁵⁹³ “The Canadian Legation to Department of State, Memorandum,” February 9, 1943, 840.50/2155, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 866-867.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Telegram WA-627, Canadian Minister in USA to SOSEA, February 10, 1943, File W-22-1, 1943-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC. For additional accounts of this meeting, see Lester Pearson Bound Diary, February 10, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC; “Memorandum of Conversation by Under SOS (Welles),” February 10, 1943, 840.50/1442, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 868.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, February 10, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁵⁹⁶ “Memorandum from Under-SOSEA to PM,” February 11, 1943, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 671, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 779; Telegram EX-547, SOSEA to Canadian Minister in the United States, February 15, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

authorized his diplomats to propose that Sweden or Switzerland fill the seventh seat.

But it remained unlikely that the four powers would permit countries abetting the Nazis a seat on the Policy Committee. It would have infuriated the governments in exile.¹⁵⁹⁷

Pearson was despondent. “We are pretty well dug in now... and it is going to be difficult to retreat.”¹⁵⁹⁸

The British had begun altering their strategy to account for Canada’s foibles and Moscow’s recalcitrance. The Treasury, of course, advocated solidarity with Ottawa on principle. Keynes had always hated the American relief proposal. He and his colleagues thought the American position “unrealistic,” and suggested Halifax “resist and... make no concession.”¹⁵⁹⁹ The Foreign Office, by contrast, proposed complete capitulation.¹⁶⁰⁰ In a worse case scenario, they thought Britain might make the four-power “arrangement provisional for three months or so.” Leith-Ross advocated a middle-of-the-road approach. He believed Britain should encourage the Americans to distribute the draft and hope the Europeans would do what Ottawa was unwilling to do. “If there was strong objection [to the four-power Policy Committee], then the four powers should meet again to reconsider the position.” It might then be possible to win acceptance for an enlarged policy directorate.¹⁶⁰¹ Sir Frederick’s compromise position won the day.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Telegram EX-547, SOSEA to Canadian Minister in the United States, February 15, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC; “The Minister Counselor of the Canadian Legation (Pearson) to the Assistant SOS (Acheson), February 18, 1943, 840.50/1421, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 878; Telegram Relief No. 24, DC to FO, February 18, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 22, FO to DC, February 23, 1943, both in T188/256, PRO.

¹⁵⁹⁸ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, February 10, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁵⁹⁹ Leith-Ross to Hugh Dalton, February 2, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁰⁰ For a fuller description of the Foreign Office position, see “Minute by Jebb,” February 14, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO.

¹⁶⁰¹ Leith-Ross to Dalton, February 2, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

The Second Meeting of the Four Powers: February 17, 1943

On February 16, 1943, Litvinov informed the State Department of Moscow's reaction to the revisions and amendments Acheson submitted to the three powers the previous month. While the Russians accepted most of Acheson's proposals, they continued to "attach great importance" to their suggestions regarding the organization's authority to operate in a given territory. They also refused to alter their attitude towards the Policy Committee, which they felt should be limited to the four great powers, as suggested in the American draft.¹⁶⁰² The British disagreed, but were taking precautionary steps for the contingency that they might fail to convince the other powers to expand the committee to seven. Now they considered the Supplies Committee, Regional Committees, and Deputy Director Generals all-important.¹⁶⁰³ But disputes had emerged with the Americans over the place and role of these entities in the wider organization. The Americans, for their part, had an interesting proposal of their own to introduce. These issues constituted the agenda for the second meeting of the four powers on February 17, 1943.

The men first addressed the Soviet proposal that the agreement be amended so that the organization would have to obtain consent from the government of any state in

¹⁶⁰² For Acheson's proposals, see "Memorandum Presenting Drafts of Modifications of the Draft Plan as Discussed in the Meeting of January 11, 1943," 840.50/1266, January 16, 1943. See also "The Department of State to the Soviet Embassy, Memorandum," January 16, 1943, 840.50/1266; "The Department of State to the Chinese Embassy, Memorandum," January 16, 1943, 840.50/1859. For the Soviet response, see "The Soviet Embassy to the Department of State, Memorandum," February 16, 1943, 840.50/1307, all in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 858-861, 868-869. The Chinese did not convey a formal response the amendments.

¹⁶⁰³ Telegram Relief No. 17, FO to DC, February 3, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

need before administering relief programs. At the previous meeting, Acheson interpreted Moscow's concern in a way that allowed him to skirt much of the proposal's substance, particularly the idea that the relief organization should also "admit of ways by which the Government receiving relief" could undertake itself the whole responsibility for fulfilling these measures. He believed Moscow simply wanted to distribute relief itself in the Soviet Union. He therefore told Litvinov that those who drafted the agreement had always believed the Soviet Government would distribute relief in Soviet territory, not the international agency. The draft, he explained, referred to "appropriate authorities of the United Nations" rather than governments of territories receiving relief to "guard against embarrassment and difficulty" that would arise in collaborating with former enemy countries, or one of several factional or contending governments.

Having consulted Moscow, Litvinov told the group that he could not withdraw their original proposal. The Russians never intended that the amendment would apply to enemy territory; rather, they worried about "the position of recognized governments which would be members of the proposed Administration." Moscow's concerns extended "beyond its own territories." Litvinov drew a distinction between the demand that the organization obtain the consent of a recipient state to provide aid, and the ambiguous proposal that the agency should "admit of ways" by which a recipient country could, with supplies from the organization, administer relief on its own. The first stipulation, he argued, should apply in *all* cases where there was a recognized government, but the degree to which it could administer aid should be determined by the Policy Committee using "criteria for judging the soundness" of the proposals formulated by the Director General in collaboration with the country in question. As such, member states would

have the chance to make the case that they should be permitted “full responsibility,” but would also have a veto over any relief scheme the organization might suggest.¹⁶⁰⁴

While this explanation met most of Acheson’s concerns, he disliked the possibility that a member government might veto relief plans once it had already agreed to accept assistance. This right, he explained, would “give each government the power to insist upon undertaking the whole responsibility for relief measures within its territory since it would be able to veto any other arrangement as unsatisfactory to itself.” Though left unsaid, he clearly did not like the idea of American aid going to a country where the United States would not have significant control over its distribution and use. To avoid this possibility, he suggested that member governments should have “the mandatory power... to say whether it would wish to receive relief and rehabilitation assistance or not,” but beyond that it would only be able to “provide or ‘admit’ ways in which” it “should be able to determine in agreement with the Administration the forms and methods of administering relief within its territory.” Equally important, he stipulated that the member government would have to be in “actual control” of its territory.¹⁶⁰⁵

Halifax saw no reason to object to the Soviet suggestion. “As a practical matter,” the organization “would have adequate bargaining power in reaching an agreement... as it would be in a position to withhold relief assistance if it felt that the forms of distribution proposed by any government would not be satisfactory.” Acheson must have recognized this fact, but if this determination fell to the Policy Committee, which is what

¹⁶⁰⁴ “Memorandum of Discussion in the Office of the Assistant SOS (Acheson), February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590; see also “The Soviet Embassy to the Department of State, Memorandum,” February 16, 1943, 840.50/1307, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 868-877.

¹⁶⁰⁵ “Memorandum of Discussion,” February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 869-877.

Moscow preferred, then the other three powers could override Washington. The Americans would then have to withhold financial and material assistance from the agency to prevent ventures that might lead to undesirable outcomes. While Acheson wisely said nothing of such contingencies, Halifax argued that the agreement could be “so worded as to require consultation and collaboration with the government of the affected area” while also providing an “escape clause” to “cover territories in which no recognized civilian government existed or cases in which even recognized governments might not have effective control of the territory.” In essence, he believed it remained a matter of drafting. Litvinov readily concurred and Acheson reluctantly agreed to draft new provisions.¹⁶⁰⁶

This procedure left the Chinese in a difficult situation. Like the Russians, they had requested limits on the relief organization’s ability to operate freely. Yet unlike Moscow, which put forward far-reaching demands, Chungking had merely suggested the recipient government have the right to approve or disapprove of the Director General’s operational plans.¹⁶⁰⁷ However, the new formula threatened this right in cases where a recognized government had nominal sovereignty, but was not in effective control over its territory. For the Chinese Nationalists, this idea posed problems. After the Japanese surrendered, they would have problems occupying and controlling the liberated areas. They would have to contend with the Communists, who were gaining ground among the peasantry in

¹⁶⁰⁶ “Memorandum of Discussion,” February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 869-877.

¹⁶⁰⁷ “The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to SOS,” November 24, 1942, 840.50/854: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General; the British Commonwealth; the Far East* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 148-149; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Dr. T.V. Soong and Mr. Gauss, November 24, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2 , Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

occupied areas.¹⁶⁰⁸ It was not a promising situation. If the Nationalists were seen or classified as ineffective, it would undermine their legitimacy, and allow the agency to ignore disputes the Chinese Nationalists might have with the Director General's plans. Ambassador Wei believed "it might be dangerous to place with the Policy Committee the power to decide whether a given government was an 'effective' government." He thought the "important question would be whether the government was recognized or not."¹⁶⁰⁹

This complaint failed to move the other powers. Halifax and Litvinov "agreed that in cases where a recognized government was not in control of its territory, the Policy Committee would have to determine the authority with which the Administration should deal." Acheson's silence suggested approval.¹⁶¹⁰ Though the Americans considered the Nationalist Government the "appropriate authority of the United Nations in China," a point they made to the Chinese repeatedly,¹⁶¹¹ they also believed "it would be impractical to leave the distribution of relief solely to the Chinese Government," a fact they refrained from telling the Nationalists.¹⁶¹² With other countries in similar situations, they therefore discouraged proposals that would prevent the organization from collaborating with local authorities in territories that had been under enemy control, or undertaking relief alone in cases where there was no functioning government. Wei's attempt to prevent future challenges to his Government's sovereignty and legitimacy highlighted its weaknesses.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), 472-473, 480-483.

¹⁶⁰⁹ "Memorandum of Discussion," February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 869-877.

¹⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹¹ "Memorandum of Conversation," January 11, 1943, 840.50/1266; "The Department of State to the Chinese Embassy, Memorandum," January 16, 1943, 840.50/1859a, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 853-857, 861.

¹⁶¹² Ray Atherton to Acheson, January 14, 1943, 840.50/1146-1/2, Box 4802, RG 59, NARA.

Once Acheson agreed to draft language putting the Soviet amendment into effect, the group turned to the problem of the Policy Committee's size. Acheson wisely began where the men could reach agreement: the Supplies Committee, which had been suggested to make the four-power setup more acceptable. While the Soviets wanted to establish the Policy Committee's supremacy over the Supplies Committee, the British did not want the new committee usurping the Director General's power, particularly his right to procure supplies for the administration. Acheson therefore agreed to revise and amend the draft to meet these concerns. To ensure the Policy Committee's supremacy, he suggested the Supplies Committee "recommend to the Council and Policy Committee" rather than "report." Acheson addressed the British concern by deleting the word "procurement" from this section of the draft, and suggesting language making the Director General the central conduit between the Council or Policy Committee and all other committees of the organization. It seemed that the four wise men had settled these matters.¹⁶¹³

But the wider dispute remained. Halifax tried to convince the Chinese and Russians to accept an enlarged Policy Committee. As instructed, he argued that postwar relief was an economic issue, not a political or military matter. For this reason, he did not believe the seven-power formula would prejudice the composition of bodies set up at a later date to address problems in the political or military fields. Ambassadors Litvinov and Wei could not be moved. They remained adamant that the Committee should consist of only four members. Acheson, for his part, tried to play the role of "honest broker," but

¹⁶¹³ "Memorandum of Discussion," February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 869-877.

ultimately came down on the side of the four-power setup.¹⁶¹⁴ The Canadians, in his view, had overestimated the powers of the Policy Committee, which the Council and its various committees would keep in check. As he put it, the United States did not oppose the seven-power formula “as a matter of principle,” but simply believed it was time to move on. It had repeatedly acknowledged Canada’s importance for the plan and had done everything possible to meet Ottawa’s demands.¹⁶¹⁵

Halifax was persistent. He asked if it might be possible to leave the size of the Policy Committee open for decision at the first Council meeting, but Litvinov ridiculed this idea as likely to lead to a Policy Committee larger than seven. Acheson worried about “permanent harm to the program” if the four powers were not in agreement prior to the meeting.¹⁶¹⁶ Halifax then tried a second proposal. The British Government, he told the group, would not object if the draft were circulated as it stood, but would reserve its position. Litvinov appeared receptive to the idea, but Acheson dissented when Noel Hall informed the group that Britain might still vote for an enlarged committee if a majority of the United Nations opposed the four-power formula. Thereupon a third and final proposal was put forward. Hall suggested the Americans circulate the draft; Britain would still reserve its position, but another meeting of the four powers would take place before the conference to reconsider the question if wide opposition emerged. This procedure, Acheson professed, might satisfy the American government, but he still considered it a

¹⁶¹⁴ Telegram Relief No. 22, DC to FO, February 17, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶¹⁵ “Memorandum of Discussion,” February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 869-877.

¹⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*

“grave risk to take during the war.”¹⁶¹⁷ The debate now concerned procedure if Britain refused to bend.

The group next turned to the issue of Deputy Director Generals, positions the British purportedly proposed to strengthen the Regional Committees. But this idea aroused fierce skepticism, not because the Americans opposed the idea, but because the British proposal provided that the deputies would work as conduits between the Regional Committees and the Policy Committee, an arrangement that disregarded the Director General. Equally troublesome, the British proposal allowed the Policy Committee to choose the deputies without any input from the Director General, whom the Americans believed should have the right to hire and fire his staff. Thus they agreed to the creation of such positions, but insisted that the Director General make the appointments. They also introduced language that placed the Director General at the center of all interactions between the Regional Committees and Policy Committee or Council. Only with the approval of the Director General could these deputies play a role. Noel Hall tried to reassure Acheson that Britain had no intention of undermining the Director General, but to no avail.¹⁶¹⁸

The matter might have ended here, but it would reemerge with fury. Litvinov read these proposals and observed this exchange with horror. While the British always made the case that strengthening the Regional Committees served to convince the exiled governments to accept the proposed relief organization, they concealed their leadership aspirations. But more important, Leith-Ross had always wanted to play an important role

¹⁶¹⁷ Ibid. On the three proposals, see Telegram Relief No. 22, DC to FO, February 17, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 17, FO to DC, February 3, 1943, both in T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶¹⁸ “Memorandum of Discussion,” February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 869-877; Telegram Relief No. 23, DC to FO, February 18, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

in whatever scheme that emerged. With the position of Director General reserved for an American, Sir Frederick's best chance of securing a prominent role for himself depended on strengthened Regional Committees and Deputy positions. But with his fierce and well-known anti-communism – to say nothing of his stormy relations with Maisky – any semblance of a prominent role for Leith-Ross was bound to arouse suspicions in Moscow. If Litvinov evinced not the slightest misgiving on February 17, 1943, it was because he played poker so well.

Litvinov considered the final point of discussion – changing the name of the Policy Committee to the Central Committee – little more than needless trickery. Only if the Canadians would renounce their objections to the four-power setup, or if there were other clear benefits, did he see any reason to change the name. Another title could do nothing to remove the facts laid out in the agreement. While the Council would be nominally responsible for policy, the four-powers would call the shots when it was not in session. With only two meetings of the Council a year, the Policy Committee would make most of the big decisions most all of the time. In statutory terms, all other parts of the organization were only allowed to make policy recommendations, and with the newest revisions to the draft, their ability to do so depended in large part on the Director General. Litvinov saw no reason for the name change. As he humorously put it, “the leadership of the four powers [is] already widely accepted.”¹⁶¹⁹

The British disagreed, and now appealed to the democratic principle: they wanted the allies to decide. The Americans, of course, abhorred this idea, but with the Russians refusing to bend, they turned to a new guise. Roy Veatch had suggested the title “Central

¹⁶¹⁹ “Memorandum of Discussion,” February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 869-877.

Committee” as a means of taking the spotlight off the four powers,¹⁶²⁰ and Acheson was rehearsing his arguments to this end. He parsed up the organization’s functions to reduce the importance of what the Americans now called the “Central Committee.” The Director General and Supplies Committee would play a “leading role” in the provision of supplies. He would work with his deputies and the Regional Committees to determine requirements. The Central Committee would merely adjust and coordinate these two functions. As Veatch put it, the name “Central Committee” would be “more truly descriptive of the position and functions allotted to the Policy Committee.” It would be at the center of things but would hardly do anything at all.¹⁶²¹

The Americans were tiptoeing across a tightrope. Finding the right balance was no easy task. On the one hand, they hoped the Russians would be sufficiently agreeable such that true power could reside with the Central Committee, yet they wanted to reserve power for the Director General for the contingency that they were not cooperative. On the other hand, they recognized the importance of downplaying the importance of the Central Committee not only to win wide acceptance for the scheme, but to pacify the British and tame the aspirations of Canada. The name change, the committee system, and the Deputy Director Generals constituted efforts to achieve this objective.

¹⁶²⁰ Veatch to Veatch to Acheson, February 16, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁶²¹ “Memorandum of Discussion,” February 17, 1943, 840.50/1590, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 869-877.

Roosevelt Proposes the Food and Agriculture Conference

With the success of the relief program uncertain, Franklin Roosevelt was eager to find an alternative forum to achieve his immediate objectives. As he told the Pacific War Council on February 17, 1943, he wanted to “put the United Nations on the map before the public.” Since the signing of the UN Declaration more than a year prior, nothing had been done to make a show of allied unity and ingrain the idea of the United Nations into the global consciousness. If the desired relief conference was delayed, failed, or did not take place, an alternative would have to be devised.¹⁶²² The Roosevelt Administration, moreover, had come under fire in public for its apparent failure to prepare for the postwar period.¹⁶²³ To address these dangers, Roosevelt thought the United Nations might convene as soon as possible to discuss a limited and uncontroversial topic.

Food became his preferred subject. A cadre of international experts had been lobbying for the creation of a global institution to address agriculture, food, and nutrition issues since the war’s outbreak. They promoted the idea as a means to achieve Roosevelt’s “freedom from want.” The ploy worked and Roosevelt readily took on their topic.¹⁶²⁴ But his objective had little to do with the problems of food and agriculture. He

¹⁶²² Telegram No. 807, DC to FO, February 17, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO.

¹⁶²³ The best discussion of the public relations concerns can be found in Craig Alan Wilson, “Rehearsal for a United Nations: The Hot Springs Conference,” *Diplomatic History* 4, no. 3 (Spring 1980): 263-281.

¹⁶²⁴ Amy L.S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization Changed the World, 1945-1965* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2006), 75-76. For explicit example of these experts promoting this agenda, see Collado to Acheson, November 1, 1941, 840.50/266, Box 4795, RG 59, NARA. For an article on one of these experts, see John B. O’Brien, “F.L. McDougall and the Origins of the FAO,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 46, no. 2 (2000): 164-174.

wanted to stage a low risk spectacle that would make everyone feel good. According to one official, he also “wanted to see if the representatives of the various nations could work together.” It would be “an experiment in their sitting around a table... a sort of pattern for other conferences that would follow.”¹⁶²⁵

Skeptics only emboldened Roosevelt. Members of the Pacific War Council criticized his choice of topic: it would “demand far more technical and precise examination than a formal meeting of the United Nations could possibly give.” Halifax, who thought the idea “nebulous... thoroughly inchoate and unpractical,” told Roosevelt this conference would require lots of preparation: if it were to take place soon, time would only allow for speeches and general resolutions agreed to well in advance. Otherwise the event would impinge upon other discussions and agreements already reached. The President of the Philippines, Manuel L. Quezon, also of the Pacific War Council, thought speeches might be given, but that the important issues should be referred to a committee that would prepare a report in six months. But nothing deterred the President, who, according to Halifax, was “keen on doing something to give bones to the idea of the United Nations.” He wanted to “make all the smaller members feel that they were part of a live show.”¹⁶²⁶

The Americans proceeded to stage a spectacle, while endeavoring to restrict its scope and substantive impact. The primary purpose, according to one official, was to remove impressions that Washington had “dragged its feet” in initiating international discussions of “certain post-war problems.” To limit the conference proceedings, the Americans chose to focus on the “need for increasing food production in the short-run,

¹⁶²⁵ Wilson, “Rehearsal for a United Nations,” 266.

¹⁶²⁶ Telegram No. 807, DC to FO, February 17, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO.

rather than the long-run type of problem...”¹⁶²⁷ The conference would be restricted to speeches and discussions of uncontroversial technical matters. It would consider the “profitable disposal of agricultural surpluses,” and debate means “to increase the production of food supplies,”¹⁶²⁸ but would reach no substantive conclusions. “The food problem obviously enjoys a measure of public interest and approval which financial discussions, for example, would not elicit.” Commercial policy and tariff questions remained highly controversial. But food “would have the greatest publicity value in the eyes of the American people and would be the least likely to involve controversial issues.”¹⁶²⁹

In Hull’s absence, Welles assigned Acheson the task of preparing the conference. “It should be made clear – and completely clear,” he wrote, “that the President’s proposal is completely divorced from any relief and rehabilitation aspect... There is nothing that could more rapidly destroy the whole beneficial effects of what we have under consideration, in so far as public opinion in this country is concerned, than to permit the implication to be drawn that the proposal is connected with relief.” Then came the criticism. “I am beginning to think that there exists a morbid complex in the Department of State which is rapidly creating the impression that every aspect of our foreign policy is dominated by relief and that those charged with relief should consequently assume charge of all aspects of policy.”¹⁶³⁰ Here, Sumner Welles, hitherto one of the most powerful men

¹⁶²⁷ “Proposal for a Food Conference,” February 19, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁶²⁸ Sumner Welles to Dean Acheson, February 23, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁶²⁹ “Proposal for a Food Conference,” February 19, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁶³⁰ Welles to Acheson, February 23, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

in the Roosevelt Administration, highlights the paramount importance of relief in American foreign policy at this juncture in the war.

Yet he had every reason to keep the food conference divorced from the relief negotiations. On February 24, 1943, the Canadian War Committee unanimously agreed that failure to press Canada's case for membership on the Policy Committee further would "amount to a withdrawal of [Canada's] claim for effective representation." The Canadians even considered reaching out to other members of the United Nations in an effort to obtain support for a larger committee. But the idea was rejected on grounds that it "would give the appearance of trying to form a bloc opposed to the proposals of the four great powers." Thus with Prime Minister King arguing that capitulation would "sacrifice the essential support of the Canadian people from the whole undertaking," the group decided to reiterate its demands at Washington.¹⁶³¹ On February 26, 1943, Pearson informed Acheson that "unless Canada is afforded in some way a position in the direction of the work which is commensurate with the contribution in international relief which Canada will undoubtedly be expected to make," then Canada would not participate.¹⁶³²

This notice was cause for concern. While Roosevelt sought an alternative forum to meet the propaganda demands of the war, George Acheson at the State Department and Noel Hall of the British Embassy tried to salvage the relief proposal. They believed Canada might accept the four-power proposal if Ottawa were guaranteed the chair of the Supplies Committee. To make this idea more attractive, they also drafted an amendment

¹⁶³¹ "Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee," February 24, 1943, PCO, Document 673, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 780-781. See also Telegram No. EX-676, SOSEA to Canadian Minister in the USA, February 26, 1943, File W-22-1 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁶³² "The Minister Counselor of the Canadian Legation (Pearson) to the Assistant SOS (Acheson)," February 26, 1943, 840.50/1515, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 881.

permitting the chair to attend meetings of the Policy Committee when supply questions came under consideration. This amendment, Ottawa was told, would “be tantamount to membership.”¹⁶³³ Had the War Committee discussed the idea before the four powers met on February 27, 1943, it remains doubtful that they would have accepted the four-power setup. At this very moment, the Board of Economic Warfare unilaterally cancelled all in-transit licenses for Canadian goods in route to South America without providing Ottawa any warning. This action infuriated the Canadians, reignited their fury over previous decision to exclude them from wartime decision-making bodies, and reinforced their belief that the United States habitually ignored their concerns and interests.¹⁶³⁴

The Third Meeting of the Four Powers: February 27, 1943

It remains a curious fact that no record of the third meeting of the four powers exists in any of the relevant American archives.¹⁶³⁵ From the American vantage point, we only know of the meeting due to correspondence concerning disputes with London over

¹⁶³³ “Memorandum for the File,” NAR/SR, February 26, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁶³⁴ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, February 26, 1943 and February 27, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁶³⁵ No record of the meeting exists in the relevant decimal and lot files (NARA). It cannot be found in the papers of any leading participant, including Acheson (NARA, HSTL, Yale University), Berle (FDRL), Hull (LOC), and Welles (FDRL). No piece of evidence makes its absence more striking than its exclusion from the papers of Herbert Hoover, who, as a former President, should have had access to everything. Most all of the relevant documentation can be found in his papers, but the memorandum of conversation for this particular meeting is missing (HHL).

what transpired on February 27, 1943.¹⁶³⁶ But from the British documents, we also learn the State Department prepared a memorandum of conversation for this meeting. One telegram even includes a small portion of the memo, though it excludes the most sensitive portions of the document.¹⁶³⁷ But thanks to Liu Chieh, the Minister and Counselor of the Chinese Embassy who attended the meetings with Ambassador Wei, we have a copy. Chieh leaked everything to the Frenchman, Jean Monnet.¹⁶³⁸ In due course, we will have more to say of this individual and his country. For now, let us consider the context and contents of the gift Monnet left us.

Prior to the meeting of February 27, 1943, the Americans became increasingly disturbed by the Soviet demand that the relief organization obtain the consent of the governing authority in all non-enemy territories receiving aid. If the Americans acquiesced to this stipulation, Acheson thought the “distribution of relief might be used by an exile government as a means of regaining power and might be abused by an incompetent administration.”¹⁶³⁹ Thus on February 22, 1943, American officials agreed that the Russians should be talked out of their present stance lest it “raise difficult

¹⁶³⁶ See Roy Veatch to Liu Chieh, March 12, 1943; Roy Veatch to Noel Hall, March 12, 1943; Roy Veatch to Nenna Anderson, March 12, 1943, all in File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA. Each of these letters contain an amended copy of page five of the memorandum of conversation.

¹⁶³⁷ Telegram Relief No. 32, DC to FO, February 27, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 36, DC to FO, March 12, 1943; Telegram No. 1780 ARFAR, May 2, 1943; Telegram No. 1566 ARFAT, May 3, 1943, all in T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶³⁸ See the file entitled “AME 45 – Les antecedents de la conference d’Atlantic City” in the Monnet Papers. Many of the State Department documents in this file are covered with a note from Liu Chieh, which leads me to believe he gave the memo of conversation for the February 27, 1943 meeting to Monnet.

¹⁶³⁹ Acheson to Hull, February 20, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

political problems.”¹⁶⁴⁰ They worried about Congress and the possibility of spending billions of dollars without significant controls over how it was being used. For the likelihood that they failed to persuade Moscow, Acheson prepared new language that included an escape clause. A recipient government would only have veto and consultative powers in cases where it “exercises administrative control” over its territory.¹⁶⁴¹ This condition “must be insisted upon” if the Soviet “amendment is included,” Acheson wrote Hull.¹⁶⁴²

Regrettably for Acheson, Litvinov not only rejected the original draft, he opened the meeting of February 27, 1943 with an unanticipated criticism: the proposed drafting excluded the possibility that a member government might assume “full responsibility for the administration of relief in its territory.” Acheson had carefully drafted the amendment to suggest “dual responsibilities” for the administration and member government if the latter were to participate. But Litvinov would not accept language that might provide the Americans a backdoor into areas the Soviet Union occupied. After much debate, the group could find only one pathway out of the quagmire: to delete all reference to the responsibilities “of the Administration.” While Acheson preferred the suggestion that a member government might play a collaborative role, Litvinov wanted to prejudice the outcome. For this reason, he preferred the phrase “full or partial responsibility of the

¹⁶⁴⁰ Departmental Discussion, February 22, 1943, “Revision of Draft Agreement for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” 840.50/1830, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁶⁴¹ For proposed American language, see Telegram Relief No. 27, DC to FO, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁴² Acheson to Hull, February 20, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

member government.” Acheson disapproved on grounds that it would “be an invitation to each government to demand full responsibility as a matter of prestige.”¹⁶⁴³

At this point, negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on this matter stalled. Its settlement would require guidance from a higher level. Litvinov told Acheson that while the new draft constituted a “definite improvement over the old one,” he preferred an explicit reference “in the agreement to the possibility of a member government undertaking ‘full’ responsibility” for the distribution of relief. He would nonetheless report the latest proposal to Moscow. Acheson knew this procedure would cost precious time and urged Litvinov to wait until he had discussed the matter with Welles.¹⁶⁴⁴ Hull, at this time, was in Palm Beach, Florida recovering from illness.¹⁶⁴⁵ This matter was of supreme importance for American strategy. Even if the Undersecretary made the decision, it was best that the State Department operate with Roosevelt’s approval. Welles could make this happen. If he had a formula to escape the impasse, it might also make Litvinov’s appeal for guidance from Moscow unnecessary.

Acheson thought he had closed the debate, but the Chinese Ambassador reopened it. The Assistant Secretary, as we have seen, had agreed on February 17, 1943 to draft a so-called “escape clause” allowing the relief organization to ignore the agreement’s consultation and collaboration requirements in cases where no recognized civilian government existed, or where a recognized government did not have control over its territory. Wei had evinced obvious problems with this procedure, and now requested that

¹⁶⁴³ “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” February 27, 1943, (130) AME 45/1/25, Institute Jean Monnet.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Irwin F. Gellman, *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Sumner Welles* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995) 310-311.

Acheson explain “the limitation of the provision... to territory wherein a member government ‘exercises administrative authority.’”¹⁶⁴⁶ The Assistant Secretary, who anticipated this question, had rehearsed his response with the Secretary of State.¹⁶⁴⁷

He referred the Ambassador to one of the agreements most important requirements, namely that “the consent of the military command must be obtained for activities of the Administration in any area in which hostilities or other military necessities exist.” “The new addition now proposed,” he explained, simply required “the consent of the member government in its own territory after it had restored its own administrative authority following any military control that might have existed.”¹⁶⁴⁸ In short, Acheson implied that the addition was designed for statutory consistency. It would be illogical not to require the consent of the member government if the draft had already required such consent from the military commander. In this way, Acheson evaded the central issue: what happens when the recognized authority does not have control, either because it never obtained it or because it lost it?

Acheson, in fact, left loopholes in the text. First, the draft did not stipulate that the military authority in a given territory had to be some recognized civilian government. For this reason, Liu Chieh asked whether the provision “referred to the military control of the member government in areas of hostilities within its own territory.” Acheson deflected Liu’s Socratic thrust. “Certainly in Chinese and Soviet territory,” he replied, but “some other territories might, of course, be under the control of other United Nations’ military

¹⁶⁴⁶ “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” February 27, 1943, (130) AME 45/1/25, Institute Jean Monnet.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Acheson to Hull, February 20, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁶⁴⁸ “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” February 27, 1943, (130) AME 45/1/25, Institute Jean Monnet.

forces for a time.”¹⁶⁴⁹ Yet the Assistant Secretary conveniently failed to point out that there was no guarantee that the United States would agree that the recognized authority had control over its territory, even after the relinquishment of military control; and there was no promise that the United States would not conclude, sometime after the recognized government had presumably assumed control, that that authority had lost its control.

This exchange worried the Chinese. They did not revisit the critical distinction between a government with “nominal” authority and one that actually “exercises” it. But Wei requested “the privilege of reserving judgment... until further consideration could be given to it.”¹⁶⁵⁰ The Minister, however, shared the record of the meeting with Jean Monnet, which presents us with the question of why? The answer, it seems, has to do with the fact that China and France faced similar circumstances. Neither country wanted the United States dominating their internal affairs. But they remained vulnerable to this possibility. Enemy states occupied portions of both countries; competing factions vying for power threatened the outbreak of civil war once the invader had been evicted; and these divisions had the potential to divide members of the wartime alliance. The sum of these circumstances heightened the possibility that the United States would wield a heavy hand in both countries. Lieh must have concluded that it would serve Chinese interests to work with the French on matters pertaining to their relations with the United States.

Yet Monnet had no official affiliation with either of the French groups vying for power. Wary of Charles De Gaulle, he had refrained from joining the Free French in 1940. Instead, he went to work for the British Government, who sent him as a part of the British Supply Mission to the United States in August 1940. In this capacity, he helped

¹⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

the United States establish its wartime supply and resource machinery, and to coordinate it with England's, just as he had done for Britain and France during the First World War. Roosevelt admired and liked Monnet, who possessed an intimate knowledge of and love for the United States. He became an unofficial advisor to the President and "rabble rouser" in the American bureaucracies.¹⁶⁵¹ He personified the Marquis de Lafayette – a fact that lends credence to the possibility that Lih hoped Monnet work to restrain the Americans. Whatever the case, Monnet's connections in Washington – something neither De Gaulle nor Giraud possessed – meant that he would likely assume a position of inordinate influence in postwar France. Chieh might have realized this as well.

Next the group considered recommendations designed to make the four-power Policy Committee more palatable to Canada and the other United Nations. They quickly approved the proposal granting the Chair of the Supplies Committee the right to attend Policy Committee meetings when supplies were discussed, and they authorized the United States to inform Ottawa of "their intention to secure the chairmanship" for Canada. The three Ambassadors also accepted the American proposal to change the name of the Policy Committee to Central Committee. This "colorless name," Acheson argued, would help convince Canada and other countries to accept the draft. To avoid criticism and misapprehension, it was better to make the change now rather than at a conference of the United Nations. Litvinov reluctantly agreed, but held to the view that it "would not make any difference." For his part, Noel Hall preferred "Coordinating Committee" as it

¹⁶⁵¹ Jacques Cheminade, "FDR and Jean Monnet: The Battle vs. British Imperialism Methods Can Be Won," *Executive Intelligence Review* 27, no. 24 (June 16, 2000): 36-43.

accorded with the line of argumentation Acheson planned to take with the United Nations, but the Americans preferred ambiguity. The other powers concurred.¹⁶⁵²

The issue of Deputy Director Generals remained a sore point. The Americans had sabotaged Sir Frederick's proposals at the previous meeting. Halifax, who was eager to move on, informed London that the Americans planned to publish an explanatory note with the draft agreement. He thought it might describe a closer relationship between the deputies and the Regional Committees.¹⁶⁵³ But Leith-Ross disliked this idea and suggested new language that would have required the deputies to regularly advise the committees and consult them "on general questions of programmes and policy affecting the area."¹⁶⁵⁴ But the United States held tenaciously to the view that there should be a "clear distinction between policymaking and administration functions." The deputies might keep the Regional Committees "regularly advised on matters affecting the area," but the Americans would not consent to language making direct references to policy or programs.¹⁶⁵⁵ Unlike Leith-Ross, Halifax was not invested on this point. He accepted the American view. Sir Frederick was furious at an outcome he called "inadequate and disappointing."¹⁶⁵⁶

The four wise men next argued over the interminably difficult question of the Central Committee's size. But the usual exchange of arguments devolved into a question of process. Halifax made it clear that Canada's acceptance of the latest proposals in no

¹⁶⁵² "Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson's Office, Department of State," February 27, 1943, (130) AME 45/1/25, Institute Jean Monnet.

¹⁶⁵³ Telegram Relief No. 29, DC to FO, February 24, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁵⁴ Telegram Relief No. 24, FO to DC, February 25, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁵⁵ "Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson's Office, Department of State," February 27, 1943, (130) AME 45/1/25, Institute Jean Monnet.

¹⁶⁵⁶ Telegram Relief No. 29, FO to DC, March 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

way guaranteed that Great Britain would abandon its preference for a seven-power setup. This formula constituted “the best way of securing the support of all the United Nations,” he argued. He therefore advanced the proposal laid out by Hall on February 17, 1943, but with a different twist. The United States should first circulate the draft with the four-power Central Committee. Once the opinions of the United Nations had been obtained, the four great powers should reconvene to consider whether the reaction warranted a seven-power committee. At this meeting, Britain would be “willing to abide by the decision of the majority.” If this meant that the other powers still preferred the four-power setup while Britain desired the seven-power program, the “British Government would go along ‘with regret but good will.’” Acheson readily agreed to this procedure.¹⁶⁵⁷

Officials in London did not. By the middle of March dispute had erupted over what the agreement actually entailed. When Halifax reported the meeting of February 27, 1943, he wrote that Britain’s willingness to be bound by the majority was conditional on the other four powers doing the same.¹⁶⁵⁸ But when the Americans shared the official record of the meeting, it stated that the obligation only applied to Great Britain. The Foreign Office immediately demanded that the State Department rectify this omission in the official record.¹⁶⁵⁹ Halifax thereupon took the matter a step further. In a letter to Acheson of March 18, 1943, he not only asked that each of the four powers be obligated to go along with the majority, he also claimed that London “wished to be assured that the

¹⁶⁵⁷ “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” February 27, 1943, (130) AME 45/1/25, Institute Jean Monnet.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Telegram Relief No. 33, DC to FO, February 27, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Telegram Relief No. 30, FO to DC, March 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

mutual undertaking [cover] the whole draft agreement.”¹⁶⁶⁰ This stipulation, no doubt, was designed to encourage the Americans to accept the British position on the Deputy Director Generals. As we will soon see, this insistence could not have come at a worse time. The Russians were wholly unpredictable.

This the Americans and British learned at the close of the meeting on February 27, 1943. While everyone believed Moscow had abandoned its demand for unanimous voting on the Central Committee, Litvinov informed the group that he wished to explore the matter further. Veatch apologetically told him that the provision authorizing the removal of the Director General by unanimous vote “had been omitted inadvertently.” Litvinov then asked whether the nomination of the Director General should not be by unanimous vote of the Central Committee. Acheson agreed!¹⁶⁶¹ In effect, the Russians now possessed a veto over both the Director General’s nomination and dismissal. But from the American point of view, they had averted the original Russian proposal that the Director General’s powers be periodically affirmed, which would have given Moscow the right to reject the Director General at prescribed points during his tenure. In any case, Acheson agreed to submit a new draft to the four powers that included the latest revisions and additions to the draft agreement, which he did on March 12, 1943, a week before Moscow created aggravating complications for the negotiations that would lead to further revisions.¹⁶⁶²

¹⁶⁶⁰ Halifax to Acheson, March 18, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁶⁶¹ “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” February 27, 1943, (130) AME 45/1/25, Institute Jean Monnet.

¹⁶⁶² Telegram Relief No. 35, DC to FO, March 12, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

Canada and the Central Committee

While everyone awaited Moscow's reaction to the latest proposals, America's relations with Canada deteriorated. Initial signs indicated that the compromise agreed to on February 27, 1943 "went a long way towards meeting Canada's wishes." At least this is what Lester Pearson led the British to believe.¹⁶⁶³ But in Ottawa, most officials disliked the proposal. Indeed Pearson, who supported the compromise, may have inadvertently prejudiced their opinion. It "hardly seemed to give satisfactory recognition to the Canadian position," he wrote on February 27, 1943. But he suggested they accept the deal. The "British Embassy felt it would "be difficult for them to stand out against the compromise clause in respect of the Central Committee as now drafted."¹⁶⁶⁴ Norman Robertson disagreed. Although the compromise met the conditions laid down by the War Committee on February 24, 1943, it left the "four power front theoretically unbroken," provided Canada no precedent for future use, and failed to embody the functional principle. Robertson also described Canada's strategic position in terms that contravened Pearson's report. "If we refused to accept" the compromise, he wrote, Britain "is likely to continue to support our position."¹⁶⁶⁵

Ottawa's official reaction, however, was not a foregone conclusion. Robertson and Wrong agreed with Pearson: it would be foolish to back Canada into an extreme position from which it would be difficult to extricate itself without damaging the

¹⁶⁶³ Telegram Relief No. 33, DC to FO, February 27, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁶⁴ Telegram WA-931, Canadian Minister in the USA to SOSEA, February 27, 1943, File W-22-1 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG3, LAC.

¹⁶⁶⁵ "Memorandum for Cabinet War Committee," "International Relief Administration," March 2, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

country's prestige. If Canada levied threats but then failed to execute them, the Americans and Russians would henceforward assume that with enough pressure the Canadians would capitulate.¹⁶⁶⁶ For this reason, the War Committee considered the possibility of making a counterproposal whereby the Chairman of the Committee on Supplies would be made an "ex-officio full member of the Central Committee for all purposes."¹⁶⁶⁷ The four powers had already agreed to alter the language of the compromise such that the Chairman would attend meetings of the Central Committee as a "participant" as opposed to a mere observer.¹⁶⁶⁸ But on the very day when the War Committee considered the compromise, a fatal misstep on the part of the United States evoked outrage in Ottawa.

On March 3, 1943, Welles dropped a bombshell. In an effort to assume leadership over efforts to alleviate the plight of refugees, he publicized a note to the British Government and issued a statement proposing a conference of British and American officials to discuss the matter. But without informing or inviting the participation of the Canadian Government, he said that the conference would be held in Ottawa. The proposal unleashed a groundswell of anger in the Canadian capital.¹⁶⁶⁹ By this point in the war, the offenses had been too great: Canada, as we have seen, had been excluded from the wartime decision-making bodies and disregarded when the Combined Boards

¹⁶⁶⁶ Telegram No. 566, Canada (HC) to DO, March 7, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Telegram No. 517, Canada (HC) to DO, March 2, 1943, T188/256, PRO. See also "Memorandum for the File," NAR/SR, February 26, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Telegram WA-931, Canadian Minister in the USA to SOSEA, February 27, 1943, File W-22-1 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁶⁶⁹ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 3, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC. For the Welles note, see "The Acting SOS to the Chargé in the United Kingdom (Matthews)," March 6, 1943, 548.G1/64: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 144-146.

were established. Upon complaint, the Anglo-American authorities offered them an unsatisfactory compromise with regard to the Combined Food Board, which the Canadians only begrudgingly accepted. Then the Americans unilaterally stopped all in-transit exports from Canada to South America without either informing the Canadians or explaining why. Furthermore, they proceeded to make threatening demands for full information on sensitive civil aviation matters.¹⁶⁷⁰

But in Washington Canada's concerns were dismissed. A quick apology or retraction might have solved the problem, but Welles was "unrepentant." He could not understand how or why it might be "inappropriate to publish" a note so suddenly without even bothering to consult the Canadian Government. Instead, he blamed the entire affair on the British, who had taken "all the credit for helping refugees."¹⁶⁷¹ "The British Government was permitting the impression to be created that it was the great outstanding champion of the Jewish people and the sole defender of the rights of freedom of religion and individual liberty and that it was being held back in its desire to undertake practical steps to protect the Jews in Europe and elsewhere and to safe-guard individual rights and liberties by the unwillingness" of the United States "to take any action for the relief of these unfortunates beyond words and gestures."¹⁶⁷²

Few documents capture the mood in Ottawa more than the Deputy Minister of Finance, W.C. Clark's reaction to the compromise proposal. "Thank you boys, but count us out," he wrote Robertson. "We are still trying to run a democracy and there is some historical evidence to support the thesis that democracies cannot be taxed without

¹⁶⁷⁰ Telegram No. 1100, DC to FO, March 6, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁷¹ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 5, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁶⁷² Welles to Matthews, March 6, 1943, 548.G1/64: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 144-146.

representation.” Canada would not be able to win the support of its people for this organization or any program “run as a monopoly by the Four Great Powers.” “I would refuse to [even] consider a compromise,” he continued, “or have any of our representatives talk about the terms of a possible compromise.” The relief issue smelled just like the “Combined Food Board fiasco,” but it was “far more dangerous.” It would “set the pattern for postwar economic organization as well as for postwar political organization.” Any Canadian Government that accepted any such proposal “would soon be brought to realities by the public – and would deserve what they would get.”¹⁶⁷³ The War Committee agreed. Robertson instructed Pearson to convey this decision at Washington. He also provided Clark’s letter as a guide for Pearson talks.¹⁶⁷⁴

On March 4, 1943, Acheson received Pearson in his office. No mention was made of Welles’ statement the previous day, but it hovered in the background. The fact that Pearson had not retreated from his personal view that Ottawa should accept the compromise led him to stay away from the “strong and undiplomatic language” used in the instructions he received from Robertson.¹⁶⁷⁵ But he nonetheless told Acheson that his Government categorically rejected the compromise on grounds that it “would furnish a pattern for further economic organization.”¹⁶⁷⁶

The Assistant Secretary maneuvered from defense to offense. Neither the wheat negotiations nor those contemplated for the financial field relied on the four-power

¹⁶⁷³ W.C. Clark to Norman Robertson, March 3, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Cypher Secret EX-763, SOSEA to Canadian Minister in the USA, March 4, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 4, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁶⁷⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Acheson),” March 4, 1943, 840.50/1430, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 881-883.

principle, he responded. Relief was a narrow issue and would not be a precedent. He then argued that Canada had overestimated the powers of the Central Committee. Real authority for the relief organization, he told Pearson, would reside with the Director General, while the Supplies Committee would play an important role. Acheson also laid out the structural constraints. The Russians not only feared Polish membership on the Central Committee, they now worried that Britain would seek membership for the Netherlands. If Canada were also included, then the Soviet Union would face three Anglo-Saxon nations, Canada, Great Britain and the United States, and two of their protégés, Brazil and the Netherlands.¹⁶⁷⁷

The prospects for agreement did not look good. Again on March 5, 1943, the Canadian War Committee reconfirmed its decision.¹⁶⁷⁸ Yet there existed little or no possibility that they would be permitted full membership on the Central Committee. Halifax reconsidered the possibility of one vote for the Commonwealth – which would have avoided the charge from Russia that there would be three Anglo-Saxon powers – but in Ottawa and London this alternative remained a nonstarter. It would compromise the foreign policy independence of Canada.¹⁶⁷⁹ Pearson, for his part, thought the solution was not so much a function of finding a new formula, but rather access to the Prime Minister. With Robertson in control of the flow of information to King, Pearson told Acheson he or some American official “fully conversant with the proposed organization” should visit Ottawa. “The Prime Minister’s knowledge of this subject was slight and that it might well

¹⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Extract from Minutes of the War Committee,” March 5, 1943, PCO, Document 680 in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 787.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Telegram Relief No. 36, DC to FO, March 12, 1943, T188/256, PRO; Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 14, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC; Telegram No. 623, Canada (HC) to DO, March 16, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

be that, upon full presentation and discussion of the problem, he might modify his view.”¹⁶⁸⁰ But when Pearson put the idea to Robertson, the Undersecretary doubted whether a visit would affect the situation.¹⁶⁸¹

The Soviet Amendments and the Fourth Meeting of the Four Powers: March 24, 1943

During the third week of March, the negotiators encountered a new patch of turbulence. In Lester Pearson’s estimation, it looked as though “Russia was going to save [Canada] from the position of being the bad boys in this matter.”¹⁶⁸² The amendments Litvinov shared with Acheson on March 18, 1943 placed formidable obstacles in the way of reaching an agreement. With the United States now prepared to share the draft with the other United Nations irrespective of Canada’s point of view, they first had to resolve their differences with Moscow. Not surprising, the Soviets hung steadfast to their demand that member governments be permitted the opportunity to undertake full responsibility for the administration of relief. Additionally, Litvinov introduced three major changes to the draft. First, he insisted that each of the four powers have representation on the Supplies Committee. Second, he demanded that reference to the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements be deleted in the agreement, a provocative change that suggested the complete liquidation of the body. And finally, he proposed the nomination of two Deputy

¹⁶⁸⁰ “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Acheson, March 4, 1943, 840.50/1430, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 881-883.

¹⁶⁸¹ Teletype Cypher WA-1017, Canadian Minister to the USA to SOSEA, March 4, 1943; Robertson to Pearson, March 5, 1943, both in File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁶⁸² Lester Pearson Bound Diary, Week of March 22nd to 27th, Pearson Papers, LAC.

Director Generals for Europe, one for Great Britain and the other for the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁸³

Several possible causes for these amendments exist. Roy Veatch believed Moscow sought opportunities to “be in touch with every activity of the organization” in order “to protest or block action if at any point it feels that its own interests are threatened.” This seems indisputable. But it also appears that Moscow hoped to check British influence. In their view, the relief organization would be a political instrument inasmuch as it would be an administrative entity.¹⁶⁸⁴ According to Acheson, the Russians suspected Britain of “angling to take over almost complete control of this suspected political machinery.”¹⁶⁸⁵ By insisting on the appointment of a Deputy Director General, whom the Russians feared would be Leith-Ross, and by seeking to transform the Inter-Allied Committee into the Regional Committee for Europe, the British had provoked Moscow. This assessment seems irrefutable. The Russians detested Leith-Ross and they hated the Inter-Allied Committee. As a result, they not only called for the liquidation of this committee; they also wanted a Russian Deputy Director General.

American archives record only one of Acheson’s bilateral meetings with Litvinov,¹⁶⁸⁶ but with the correspondence of Roy Veatch, we can infer the line he took.

¹⁶⁸³ Litvinov to Acheson, March 18, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Veatch to Acheson, March 19, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Teletype WA-1411, Pearson to Wrong, March 26, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Their final talk took place on March 23, 1943. It includes some reference to the previous meetings, but is largely confined to the conclusions. Thus it remains difficult to know precisely how Acheson made his case. See “Memorandum of Conversation,” Acheson, Litvinov, Veatch and Henderson, March 23, 1943, 840.50/1430-3/5, Box 4804, RG 59, NARA.

Acheson probably began by focusing on the British, the Inter-Allied Committee, and possibly Sir Frederick Leith-Ross. Washington had consistently opposed their “proposals or insisted on considerable modification to them so as to make it clear that the European program would not be dominated by any committee or office in London.” Veatch suggested the Assistant Secretary make this clear to Litvinov, but to also inform him that Washington preferred the liquidation of the Inter-Allied Committee as well, and that internal State Department preparations endeavored to strip the British of responsibility. Like the Soviet Union, the Americans feared English guile. They also considered the committee’s work insufficiently narrow to meet the problems of postwar relief and rehabilitation. It is similarly probable that Acheson promised not to support a Leith-Ross candidacy, or that of any “Britisher,” as Veatch wrote, for the position of Deputy Director General.¹⁶⁸⁷

In line with Veatch’s recommendations, Acheson likely tried to convince Litvinov to drop the amendments. Why risk the whole efforts with demands based on concerns that the United States sought to address without modifications to the draft agreement? But this line of reasoning failed.¹⁶⁸⁸ The Russians were as worried about the United States as they were with Great Britain. Promises and reassurances amounted to nothing for a suspicious nation that preferred concrete guarantees. Moreover, the confidence and prestige of the Soviet Union had been bolstered with the Red Army’s breathtaking

¹⁶⁸⁷ Veatch to Acheson, March 19, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA. “Britisher” is “mainly used on the Indian subcontinent, having originated there during the British Raj. It was once considered pejorative, but is now considered jocular.” See Wiktionary: the Free Dictionary, s.v. “Britisher,” <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Britisher> (accessed October 1, 2012).

¹⁶⁸⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation,” March 23, 1943, 840.50/1430-3/5, Box 4804, NARA.

victory at Stalingrad several weeks prior. Now there was room to play hardball.

Acheson had little choice but to pursue the next best option: secret agreements, revised drafting, and unanimous voting on the Central Committee for specific issues.

American policymakers believed it would be far better to make secret agreements than to alter the draft in ways that might provoke members of the United Nations or the Congress to obstruct their objectives. To avoid leaks, they also preferred oral agreements. Acheson first attempted this procedure when the Soviets insisted on new language that would have incited member states to request “full responsibility” for the administration of relief in their territories as a matter of prestige. Apparently Acheson’s outreach to Welles following the meeting of February 27, 1943 had failed. As a fallback, the Russians now wanted the phrase “complete or partial responsibility” inserted in the draft. Litvinov refused the offer of an oral agreement, but agreed to abandon the proposal so long as the minutes of the next four-power meeting made it clear that member states might have the opportunity to undertake, in agreement with the relief administration, full responsibility for relief and rehabilitation within its territory. In this way, Acheson’s fear was removed. The British and Chinese readily agreed to this procedure on March 24, 1943.¹⁶⁸⁹

The Americans similarly worried that any provision in the draft reserving seats on the Supplies Committee for China or the Soviet Union would elicit outrage. As Veatch explained, it would “emphasize in the minds of the smaller countries the danger of domination of the entire organization by the four great powers.” But he also saw benefits. It might create an imperative for both China and the Soviet Union to make contributions

¹⁶⁸⁹ “Memorandum of Discussion in the Office of the Assistant SOS (Acheson),” March 24, 1943, 840.50/1761a, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 884-86.

to the relief organization.¹⁶⁹⁰ This hope proved to be wishful thinking. The Soviet Union refused to even pay administrative costs, despite having agreed to do so.¹⁶⁹¹ Acheson nonetheless tried to keep this provision out of the draft, arguing that it was unnecessary to reserve a seat on the committee for the Soviet Union if the power to make these appointments rested with the Central Committee. But Litvinov rejected Acheson's argument and refused a gentleman's agreement. For this reason, the minutes of the four-power meeting on March 24, 1943 stipulated that the Supplies Committee would include representatives of the four powers. The British reserved their final approval until Canada's views could be ascertained.¹⁶⁹²

While American policymakers disliked the Inter-Allied Committee, they preferred a process whereby the body was contained and exploited, but ultimately consumed by the relief agency. Acheson persuaded Litvinov on this point, but the Ambassador could not restrain himself. On March 24, 1943, he claimed that Moscow "had no way of knowing what... the Leith-Ross Committee" was doing, "since it was not a member..." It could not accept any provision stating that the committee's work "should be carried on by the Committee for Europe."¹⁶⁹³ Sir Frederick fumed over these words. In a petty but accurate report to Halifax, he wrote that Moscow had accepted the St. James Palace Resolution creating the Inter-Allied Committee, but complained about its secretariat and then refused

¹⁶⁹⁰ Veatch to Acheson, March 19, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁶⁹¹ George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, Vol. 1. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 138.

¹⁶⁹² "Memorandum of Discussion," March 24, 1943, 840.50/1761a, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 884-86. The British first questioned this procedure on March 22, 1943. See Memorandum of Conversation at the British Embassy, March 22, 1943, 840.50/1430-2/5, Box 4804, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁶⁹³ "Memorandum of Discussion," March 24, 1943, 840.50/1761a, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 884-86.

to appoint a member.¹⁶⁹⁴ It was a pointless rejoinder. The Chinese and Soviets accepted Acheson's alternative proposal, which, ironically, had been suggested by Halifax!¹⁶⁹⁵ Instead of ignoring the Inter-Allied Committee, his proposal stated that the "Committee of the Council for Europe" would "replace the Inter-Allied Committee."¹⁶⁹⁶ Under the influence of Leith-Ross, London did not convey its agreement until March 31, 1943.¹⁶⁹⁷

Resolution to the thorny issue of Deputy Directors would not come so easily. It proved almost as sticky as the composition of the Central Committee. Veatch believed the Russians wished for a Deputy to "check [the] influence" of the other Deputy, who they suspected would be a "Britisher."¹⁶⁹⁸ But Acheson thought the proposal would turn administrative positions into "political appointees," making the "work of the Director General and his staff nigh impossible."¹⁶⁹⁹ Veatch feared "competing deputies," who would "break the European program up into one for Western Europe, dominated by the British, and one for Eastern Europe, dominated by the Russians." When Litvinov refused to drop the amendment, he proposed unanimous voting on the Central Committee for the Deputy positions, thereby granting the Russians a veto over any undesirable candidate.¹⁷⁰⁰ But he refused to bite, which forced Acheson to turn to the next best alternative.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Telegram Relief No. 36, FO to DC, March 31, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, March 22, 1943, 840.50/1430-2/5, NARA.

¹⁶⁹⁶ "Memorandum of Discussion," March 24, 1943, 840.50/1761a, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 884-86.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Telegram Relief No. 36, FO to DC, March 31, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁶⁹⁸ Veatch to Acheson, March 19, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁶⁹⁹ Telegram Relief No. 38, DC to FO, March 24, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Veatch to Acheson, March 19, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

If Britain could be convinced to withdraw its amendment creating deputies, Acheson believed Litvinov might retreat. He worried that the Russian deputies might compromise America's freedom of action. But with Halifax, he argued that the Soviet reaction to the British amendment contravened the original purpose of the proposal: to make the agency more efficient and the draft more palatable to the United Nations. He also told Halifax of Litvinov's belief that Britain hoped to "secure political control of relief in Europe after the war." The Russian "felt that he had nearly missed a trick and that [the] U.S.S.R. now took a very strong line" on the matter. Betraying his usual stoicism, Acheson requested London's advice. Halifax, in turn, reported that Acheson had "showed perhaps more clearly than at any preceding phase of the negotiations that he now fully understood and was convinced of the sincerity of our motives..." This telegram reached London too late to alter the British stance at the March 24, 1943 meeting of the four powers.¹⁷⁰¹

Acheson advanced another position. The United States would accept the appointment of British and Soviet deputies, but with conditions. First, the Director General must have "all responsibility for the appointment of Deputy Directors... without confirmation by the Central Committee." This provision guaranteed the Americans a veto over any individual put forward by London or Moscow disagreeable to them. Second, the Director General would have the power to appoint other deputies, including an American. This stipulation, on the one hand, gave the Director General the power to hire as he pleased, but on the other hand, gave the United States the chance to put forward a Deputy who might check the British and Soviet deputies. Third, the agreement would not be

¹⁷⁰¹ Telegram Relief No. 38, DC to FO, March 24, 1943, T188/256, PRO; Memorandum of Conversation, March 22, 1943, 840.50/1430-2/5, NARA.

stated in the draft, but would be recorded in the minutes of the meeting as a secret understanding between the four great powers. This suggestion sparked mixed reaction. Litvinov quickly accepted the proposal; the Chinese questioned it; and the British expressed immediate disapproval.¹⁷⁰²

The question would remain unresolved for weeks, but the debate of March 24, 1943 produced what we might call the “Litvinov principle.” While Ambassador Wei wanted to know how responsibilities would be allocated among the deputies, Halifax and Hall attacked the idea of reserving positions for a specific country. “It had not been the British Government’s intention to ask for the appointment of a Deputy Director for Europe of British nationality,” they asserted, “but rather to support the appointment of the best man for the job whatever his nationality might be.” Litvinov read these words for drivel and enunciated a principle that informs the attitude of UN employees to this day. “If there were deficiencies in one of the Deputies appointed for Europe, then that might be made up by the others appointed.” Halifax struggled to maintain his government’s disingenuous argument, and pursued another tact. Why, he asked, was the Soviet Union “concerned with the appointment of a Soviet Deputy for the entire European region?” Litvinov explained that his Government “had a real interest in the measures to be undertaken” all over Europe.¹⁷⁰³ Acheson’s proposal was in trouble.

Acheson now revealed his belief that Britain bore responsibility for the quagmire. “The Soviet Government’s suggestion had been made only after the Draft Agreement had been changed to provide definitely for one Deputy appointed with the consent of the

¹⁷⁰² “Memorandum of Discussion,” March 24, 1943, 840.50/1761a, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 884-86.

¹⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*

Central Committee.”¹⁷⁰⁴ Halifax must have been stunned. Previously Acheson had suggested the Russians were at fault, but that Britain might alter its position to resolve the issue. If necessary, Acheson had implied that the United States would force the Soviet Union into a corner, not Great Britain. The Assistant Secretary told Halifax that the State Department might circulate the draft agreement with the Soviet amendments but with no invitation for a conference. If the response was negative and Moscow refused to alter its view, the United States would “withdraw the draft and suggest an alternative procedure.” With Acheson now hammering London, Halifax requested a record of their conversation of the previous week. But Acheson refused. According to Veatch, his boss had “gone too far” and “failed to get support for his suggestion from colleagues.”¹⁷⁰⁵

It is not clear what happened. Acheson’s superiors may have reined him in. A breach with Moscow would have been disastrous for the war effort and undermined the chances of four-power leadership in the postwar era. We know that he was capable of being a Cold Warrior. But it might be the case that Halifax simply called Acheson’s bluff. The Assistant Secretary was intelligent enough to know that winning the war exceeded all other priorities, even if “the Russians *were* trading too heavily upon the forbearance of all of us,” as he told Noel Hall.¹⁷⁰⁶ Whatever the case, the negotiations had become a crucial learning experience for the future Secretary of State. “For the first time in my life,” he privately told Hall, “I can sympathize with a tennis ball, stricken by

¹⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰⁵ The Americans refused to give Halifax the following document: Memorandum of Conversation, March 22, 1943, 840.50/1430-2/5, NARA. For quotes, see Telegram Relief No. 43, DC to FO, March 29, 1943; but for clarity on the dates mentioned in this telegram, see Telegram Relief No. 45, DC to FO, March 30, 1943, both in T188/256, PRO.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Telegram No. 1343, DC to FO, March 20, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

powerful forehand drives from one racket to another.”¹⁷⁰⁷ Acheson was constrained.

Even the best bureaucrat could not escape the fact that authority for foreign relations in the American Government derives primarily from the President, but also the Congress. He might have preferred brinkmanship with Moscow, but exigencies mattered.

While Halifax formally interpreted Acheson’s reversal for the Foreign Office, Anthony Eden, who was in Washington for talks with Roosevelt and other top-level officials, privately explained it to Winston Churchill. In Halifax’s assessment, the United States now insisted that “the four powers must stand together on the main issues and that they can make no further concessions to smaller United Nations than those already provided for in the draft.” In essence, they were asking Great Britain “to join with them in *imposing* a scheme upon the rest” of the world, and they felt that this could only “be done provided the big four stand absolutely solid together.”¹⁷⁰⁸ With this end in mind, Eden informed Churchill that the American Government “felt it essential to secure the closest cooperation with the Soviet Government, and that they felt bound, for reasons of high policy, to satisfy Soviet demands, even at the cost of creating friction with other countries.”¹⁷⁰⁹ The message was clear: Washington was seeking London’s help.

Great Britain Deliberates and Reacts

On March 31, 1943, Leith-Ross convened a group of representatives from the various departments of the British Government to consider the latest relief telegrams. The

¹⁷⁰⁷ Telegram No. 74, DC to Ottawa, April 3, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁷⁰⁸ Telegram Relief No. 43, DC to FO, March 29, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁷⁰⁹ We have no record of Eden’s correspondence with Churchill, but the general idea is recorded in Leith-Ross to Hugh Dalton, April 1, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

Board of Trade and Foreign Office thought Britain should “join with the United States and Russia in forcing on the other United Nations an organization which gives the four Great Powers the control through the Central Committee.” It was imperative to bring the relief organization into being quickly, irrespective of the problems. Whatever misgivings the various ministries had, they believed the proposed setup could be made to work. It served no purpose to argue with the Americans indefinitely, when they would make the greatest contribution to postwar relief and rehabilitation. The Dominions Office disagreed. If the Soviet Union continued bullying the Dominions, it would threaten the unity of the British Empire. For this reason, Britain could not simply “throw over the Canadians.” Unable to resolve this dispute, the representatives decided to postpone further discussion. They would await the outcome of Anthony Eden’s visit to Ottawa before making final decisions.¹⁷¹⁰

In the meantime, they responded to the substantive proposals of the latest four-power meeting. As we have seen, they accepted the secret addendum to the minutes of the meeting admitting of the possibility that member countries might, in agreement with the relief administration, undertake relief on their own. They agreed with the secret procedure stipulating that the four powers should serve on the Supplies Committee, but chose to reserve their final approval until after the opinion of Canada had been obtained. And they reluctantly approved the new language Acheson suggested with respect to the Inter-Allied committee. But while they expressed approval on these matters, they voiced adamant opposition to Acheson’s proposal providing for an American, British and Soviet Deputy Director General. His suggestion implied that the deputies “should be political

¹⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

appointees.” This was unacceptable. “A Soviet Deputy Director would obviously be the servant of the Soviet Government and not of the Director General,” they asserted.¹⁷¹¹

Leith-Ross deplored the idea that Britain should retract its amendment on Deputy Director Generals. It had never been the intention of Britain to strengthen the deputies; rather, they had hoped to empower the Regional Committees. It is for this reason that their original proposal only required that the deputies “consult” the committees “on policies and programmes” and “give effect to their recommendations as far as practicable.” But the American revision of the paragraph’s describing the deputies’ responsibilities raised the specter of these individuals having “full powers.”¹⁷¹² On this point, Leith-Ross was correct, but he conveniently disregarded the fact that the American language granted the Director General the exclusive power to assign the deputies responsibilities.¹⁷¹³ Leith-Ross must have known this fact, but he had an agenda of his own. He therefore requested that the Americans accept his original proposal, which was more open-ended than he was ever willing to admit. As such, the closing sentence of his telegraph to Halifax comes across as disingenuous: “so far as we are concerned, we should not wish that any reference should be made to a British Deputy Director.”¹⁷¹⁴

At the end of March, two outstanding problems remained: the dispute with Canada over the Central Committee and the issue of national Deputy Director Generals. With the Americans now unwilling to risk the possibility of an open breach with any of their most important wartime Allies, it was imperative that solutions be found to these

¹⁷¹¹ Telegram Relief No. 36, FO to DC, March 31, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁷¹² Ibid.

¹⁷¹³ For the American drafting, see “Memorandum of Discussion,” March 24, 1943, 840.50/1761a, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 884-86.

¹⁷¹⁴ Telegram Relief No. 36, FO to DC, March 31, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

problems. Otherwise the United States had every intention of seeking other means of meeting the requirements of postwar relief. The United States had created the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO) with the intent of going it alone should the four-power talks or subsequent international negotiations end in failure. In large part, Roosevelt chose to hold a United Nations Food and Agriculture Conference as a hedge against failure: he needed a public relations victory. He wanted to give the impression of a broad wartime coalition preparing for peace. He wanted the world to feel good. If relief was to have any role to play in these efforts, the onus fell to Great Britain to make it happen. All eyes were on Anthony Eden.

Anthony Eden and the Resolution of the Canadian Problem

Eden arrived in Ottawa prepared for the worst, but sufficiently versed in the relief portfolio to meet the Canadian challenge. Both Pearson and MacDonald had warned him: he and his entourage should expect “a pretty rough ride” on this relief business.¹⁷¹⁵ The Dominions Secretary, Clement Attlee, urged caution on the Foreign Secretary. It was essential that Britain not lay itself “open to a crush” in its “relations with the Dominions.” The Canadians felt “very strongly on this matter” and the United Kingdom had already recognized their claims as “irresistible.”¹⁷¹⁶ Eden’s entourage also received a briefing from Acheson, who explained the compromise proposal, but laid special emphasis on the Canadian concern that the relief organization would create a precedent for the future.

¹⁷¹⁵ “Report of Anthony Eden to War Committee of Canadian Cabinet,” in Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 31, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷¹⁶ Telegram No. 794, Canada (HC) to DO, March 30, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

Most importantly, he believed the United States might be willing to prepare a memo for the Canadians stating that the “relief organization would not furnish the pattern for future organizations.” This, he added, now “appeared to be clearly the fact.”¹⁷¹⁷

But the latter statement was misleading. On March 27, 1943, Eden’s entourage met with Roosevelt, Hull, Welles, Winant, and Harry Hopkins at the White House. The record of this meeting is both vague and inconclusive, which makes it difficult to know Roosevelt’s views precisely. But the debate over China – whether it would “be one of the controlling powers after the war” – makes the President’s adherence to the four-power formula clear. The record, however, offers no details of his attitude towards the future United Nations organization, of which the relief agency constituted a model.¹⁷¹⁸ But if we take the plan Roosevelt presented to Stalin at Tehran in November 1943 as representing his views in March, the picture becomes clear. It called for an Executive Committee of only the four powers, but also a Council, which would include a number of lesser powers as well. Thus the State Department, which never really shared Roosevelt’s views on the four powers, could dance around the issue.¹⁷¹⁹

On March 31, 1943, the Eden met with the Canadian War Committee. To refute the claim that the relief organization would provide a precedent, he told the committee that Roosevelt now envisioned a post-war Council of eight to ten members, not unlike the old League of Nations Council. He admitted that this arrangement presented a problem for Commonwealth representation, but implied that the compromise proposal for the

¹⁷¹⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Acheson),” March 26, 1943, 840.50/1714, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 895-897.

¹⁷¹⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation,” Roosevelt, Hull, Welles, Winant, Hopkins, Eden, Halifax, Strang, March 27, 1943, 840.50/2088, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁷¹⁹ Robert C. Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: The Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Postwar Security* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 31.

relief organization created an excellent precedent for Canada, which would be chair of the Supplies Committee. It “recognized Canada’s special position in a very satisfactory way.” From here, he reported on his most recent visit to Moscow, where he met with Stalin. The Soviet Dictator, he explained, was an “uncompromising realist, with no conception of or appreciation of the delays that were made necessary by democratic or parliamentary procedure.” To illustrate his point, he explained that Stalin had “offered to make a treaty” with him “at once, establishing the postwar boundaries of Eastern Europe,” which “he thought could be done quite simply.” Canada’s domestic political concerns, he insinuated, had no chance of influencing Stalin. But it remained “essential to keep in as close and friendly touch as possible with Russia.”¹⁷²⁰

Eden’s presentation trumped the lackluster performance of the Canadian Prime Minister. The evidence suggests that neither King nor any of his ministers made the case for Canadian membership on the Central Committee. King warned of “unfortunate effects” if the four great powers chose to “constitute themselves as an executive committee of the proposed organization.” The Minister of Justice, Louis St. Laurent, wondered whether it would be possible to obtain the cooperation and support of the other United Nations if the four great powers controlled the organization alone. But when Eden met these concerns and put the compromise on the table, it went downhill.¹⁷²¹ Though the War Committee had formally discussed the compromise twice, a fact of which Eden was well aware, King told the Foreign Secretary that they “had had no chance yet really of discussing the compromise.” He expressed concerns that other countries might not react

¹⁷²⁰ “Report of Anthony Eden to War Committee of Canadian Cabinet,” in Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 31, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷²¹ Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee, March 31, 1943, PCO, Document 683 in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 790-791.

positively if Canada chaired the Committee on Supplies. But most striking, he “wondered whether [there was] a Canadian who was capable of handling the job!” When King asked those present if they had observations, only Pearson, who flew up for the meeting, spoke. Naturally he blew more wind into Eden’s sails.¹⁷²²

But Canadian acceptance of the compromise remained uncertain. Many of the Ministers were still unconvinced. Pearson hoped to warn Eden, but failed. He telephoned Acheson to suggest he visit Ottawa immediately “to clinch matters,” but Hull blocked the trip on grounds that the Canadians were planning “to put him on the spot.”¹⁷²³ Fortunately from Pearson’s point of view, Robertson met Eden on the evening of April 1, 1943.¹⁷²⁴ When confronted with the news that his talk with the War Committee had not settled the matter, he suggested an exchange of notes between Canada and the United States, in which the Americans, on behalf of the four powers, would confirm that the arrangements for the relief organization would not constitute a precedent. Robertson demurred. He even suggested that the Council select the members of the Central Committee and the Supplies Committee. But Eden flatly rejected this idea. He also warned Robertson. Dr. H.V. Evatt, the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs, had recently demanded the right to the same position as Canada in the relief organization. He thought it would be wise for Canada to quickly accept the compromise. If it was “left

¹⁷²² “Report of Anthony Eden to War Committee of Canadian Cabinet,” in Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 31, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷²³ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, April 5, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷²⁴ “Report of Anthony Eden to War Committee of Canadian Cabinet,” in Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 31, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

open until after Evatt arrived in Washington, there was no telling what the upshot might be.”¹⁷²⁵

The Australians worried everyone. For much of the war, they had complained incessantly with regard to their place in Allied War Councils. As a result, the Americans and British learned to consult them, even if they were usually unwilling to make substantive concessions.¹⁷²⁶ In large part, Evatt bore responsibility for the attention Australia received. He was rude and effective. No official in Washington liked him, but everyone respected him.¹⁷²⁷ The news that he had complained to Eden about Australia’s exclusion from the Central Committee led the State Department to act cautiously. On March 25, 1943, the Australian Minister in Washington, Owen Dixon, delivered a similar note from his boss to Cordell Hull.¹⁷²⁸ Two days later, he requested a meeting with Acheson. The Assistant Secretary did his best to calm his fears.¹⁷²⁹ But the sum of these exchanges left Hull sufficiently weary that he denied a second request from Pearson that Acheson visit Ottawa. If on Evatt’s arrival, Acheson were in Ottawa discussing the terms of Canada’s relationship with the relief organization, it would create problems with a man

¹⁷²⁵ “Memorandum for the PM,” April 2, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

¹⁷²⁶ On this point, see C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies*, Vol. 2, 1921-1948 *The Mackenzie King Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 339.

¹⁷²⁷ On this point, see Lester Pearson Bound Diary, April 17, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷²⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the SOS,” March 25, 1943, 840.50/1630, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 889. For a copy of the letter from Evatt to Hull, see contents of the following letter: Hume Wrong to Oliver Harvey, March 29, 1943, FO 371/35269, PRO.

¹⁷²⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Acheson),” March 27, 1943, 840.50/1735, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 897-898.

who knew how to stir up trouble. It was also doubtful that Acheson could arrive in Ottawa before the War Committee met again to discuss the compromise.¹⁷³⁰

Though Eden had the final word, news of two additional factors arrived in Ottawa before the War Committee met. First, the Canadians learned of the Soviet request that each of the four powers be permitted membership on the Supplies Committee. While this provision might have been interpreted as diluting the substance of the compromise, Pearson and MacDonald argued that this idea heightened the committee's importance.¹⁷³¹ Second, the Canadians learned that the problems with the Soviet Union had been resolved. On April 5, 1943, Litvinov conveyed to the Department of State a "definite acceptance of the draft convention as amended."¹⁷³² The implications of this development were important. If Canada refused to accept the compromise, then they would run the risk of being blamed for the failure to set up the first United Nations organization. Inasmuch as the Canadian Government worried that their population would protest a relief organization unfair to Canada, they also feared the consequences of appearing excessively obstinate and obstructive.¹⁷³³

It now appeared that Mackenzie King was inclined to accept the compromise. "If he is prepared to take a strong line," MacDonald telegraphed the Dominions Office, "I

¹⁷³⁰ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, April 5, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC; Cypher WA-1617, Canadian Minister in the USA to SOSEA, April 5, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

¹⁷³¹ "The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Organization" by Lester Pearson, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC; Telegram No. 815, DO to Canada (HC), April 1, 1943; Telegram No. 785 Secret, Canada (HC) to DO, April 2, 1943, both in T188/256, PRO; Cypher WA-1617, Canadian Minister in the USA to SOSEA, April 5, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

¹⁷³² Cypher WA-1617, Canadian Minister in the USA to SOSEA, April 5, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

¹⁷³³ Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee, April 7, 1943, PCO, Document 687 in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 797-798.

think that he will prevail.”¹⁷³⁴ This assessment proved accurate.¹⁷³⁵ On April 7, 1943, the Canadian War Committee reluctantly agreed to accept the compromise despite opposition from several ministers. The acceptance depended on two conditions: that the relief administration would not constitute a precedent for other United Nations organizations, and that their acceptance in no way altered the Canadian Government's opposition to four-power control of any other United Nations organizations that might be constructed.¹⁷³⁶ A variety of factors influenced this decision, but fear played the decisive factor. In his remarks to the War Committee, Prime Minister King noted: despite the fact that the compromise failed to “remove the basis of the Canadian objection, namely, control of an important UN agency by the four great powers... the Canadian Government would be subject to severe criticism both inside and outside Canada if it could be alleged that we were responsible for the failure of the whole United Nations relief plan.”¹⁷³⁷ After months of fierce opposition, Mackenzie King's Government had reversed course.

Canadian Wartime Diplomacy: An Episode in Missed Opportunity

How does one explain this remarkable turn of events? Analytically, two issues warrant our consideration: the Canadian Government's perception of the international political structure, and the capabilities and interplay of the personalities involved in the Canadian decision-making process. While an analysis of the first issue sheds light on the

¹⁷³⁴ Telegram No. 785 Secret, Canada (HC) to DO, April 2, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁷³⁵ Telegram No. 831, Canada (HC) to DO, April 7, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁷³⁶ Cypher EX-1248, SOSEA to Canadian Minister to USA, April 7, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

¹⁷³⁷ Extract from Minutes of Cabinet War Committee, April 7, 1943, PCO, Document 687 in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 797-798.

Canadian failure to convince the four powers to accept an enlarged Central Committee, an examination of the second issue explains why a compromise was proposed in the first place and how the Canadian Government came to accept it.

Each of the four powers displayed varying degrees of support for the four-power formula. While Great Britain initially supported the setup, London became Canada's greatest advocate due to the pressure Ottawa placed on London. The British worried that their relations with Ottawa would deteriorate, leading to a reduction of Canadian aid to Great Britain, if they stood steadfast by the four-power setup. They also feared the long-range implications for the British Commonwealth and Canada's place in it. The magnetic appeal of the United States threatened to lure Canada away from the mother country.

The United States, by contrast, considered the seven-power setup preferable at the outset, but reverted to the four-power formula. The American leadership, particularly Roosevelt, hoped that the four powers would police the postwar world, and that they would constitute the nucleus of whatever international organizations were constructed. As such, the relief organization *was* a precedent for the future, however much Acheson tried to refute this idea. Policymakers repeatedly made this claim in internal discussions from the outset. Most likely, the fear of a public relations backlash led Roosevelt to send a different message in March 1943. Yet he never abandoned the four-power concept. At the end of April, he told the Canadian Minister at Washington that "there would be no long-drawn-out Peace Conference [after the war], [and] that he 'and Winston and possibly Stalin' would settle everything themselves." Though he left the Chinese out of

the equation, he clearly thought they would step up to this role.¹⁷³⁸ Whatever the case, the United States appeared flexible on the matter.

The Soviet Union displayed not one iota of flexibility on this point. In January 1942, Moscow advanced a proposal that envisioned broad leadership on relief matters. But these views changed. The critical moment came during Molotov's visit to the United States in the spring of 1942, during which Roosevelt introduced the four-power concept. Stalin immediately approved the idea, and held fast to it for much of the war, though he had serious reservations about China's suitability. He worried that the Nationalists would be agents of the United States. In any case, the Soviet Union presented Canada with its greatest problem. Ostensibly China was also an obstacle, but it remains inconceivable that the Nationalists would not have altered their views had Washington pressured them. They were too dependent on American resources. Thus the Canadians were led to believe the Soviet Union constituted the biggest problem.

But they also believed the way around this problem was for Great Britain and the United States to convince the Russians otherwise. They therefore threatened to terminate Canadian assistance to Britain if London refused to support their policy. From here, they tried to persuade the United States. When the Americans placed the blame on the Soviet Union, the Canadians even advanced proposals designed to meet Moscow's concerns. But Moscow held fast and the Americans did not consider it in their interest to apply pressure. As a result, certain Canadian officials, especially Pearson, became convinced that it would be impossible to overcome this structural obstacle. This point of view left Canada with three options: it could refuse to participate in an organization led by the four

¹⁷³⁸ We have already discussed this matter, but it is also made apparent in the following: "Memorandum of Conversation," March 27, 1943, 840.50/2088, NARA.

powers, quietly abandon its position and join the organization, or seek and accept a face-saving compromise. Ottawa's immediate rejection of the second option reduced Canada's choices to non-participation or compromise.

This assessment of Canada's alternatives seems perfectly logical, but the Canadians failed to engage the Russians with the same seriousness of purpose with which they approached the Americans and British. They delayed in making overtures with the Soviet Minister in Ottawa and the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, and failed to follow up.¹⁷³⁹ They might have never approached these diplomats had Welles not suggested direct talks with them in his meeting with Pearson on February 10, 1943.¹⁷⁴⁰ To their credit, the Canadians requested on January 6, 1943 that their Minister in the Soviet Union approach the Russian Government to explain the Canadian position on the Policy Committee. But for unknown reasons, he failed to even acknowledge his instructions until March 29, 1943.¹⁷⁴¹ He finally spoke with the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Solomon Lozovsky, about the matter on April 16, 1943.¹⁷⁴² But the Canadian War Cabinet had accepted the compromise solution nearly two weeks prior.

¹⁷³⁹ Telegram EX-547, SOSEA to Canadian Minister in the United States, February 15, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

Telegram WA-750, Canadian Minister in the USA to SOSEA, February 18, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC; J.D.H. to Acheson, February 17, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Telegram WA-627, Canadian Minister in USA to SOSEA, February 10, 1943, File W-22-1, 1943-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC; Memorandum from Under-SOSEA to PM, February 11, 1943, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 671, in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 779.

¹⁷⁴¹ Cypher No. 9, Canadian Minister to USSR to SOSEA, March 29, 1943; Cypher No. 3, SOSEA to Canadian Minister to USSR, March 30, 1943, File W-22-1, 1941-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

¹⁷⁴² Cypher No. 31, Canadian Minister to USSR to SOSEA, April 17, 1943; Cypher No. 32, April 17, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

In these exchanges with the Russians, the Canadians had no apparent strategy.

The documentary record leaves no evidence indicating that they ever considered whether they had any leverage over Moscow and how they might use it to their benefit. Perhaps the Canadians provided Moscow no financial or material assistance, but even if this were the case, they certainly could have argued that their men and resources would be critical to opening the second front Stalin so desired. But instead of considering what was possible, the Canadians merely recounted their position to the Russians without ever explaining why it was in the Soviet Union's interest to support an enlarged Central Committee. This job was relegated to Great Britain and the United States, which only reinforced Moscow's view that if Canada was not an agent of London, then it was most certainly one of Washington. Of course the Canadian Minister in Kuibyshev, where the Soviet Government had taken refuge, refuted this idea in his talks with Lozovsky. But it was too little too late.¹⁷⁴³

It was not a foregone conclusion that Canada would accept a compromise, even after Ottawa realized its chances of obtaining a seat on the Central Committee were slim. Almost everyone preferred the hard-line, even Mackenzie King. Moreover, compromises necessarily require the willingness of both sides in a dispute to negotiate. The Americans and British always remained open to the idea – the benefits of Canadian participation were evident – but frustration and the belief in Washington that Canada might not be willing to play along led Acheson to consider circulating the draft agreement irrespective of the Canadians. In this situation, two factors mitigated against this option. First, the

¹⁷⁴³ Ibid.

Americans did not want to circulate the draft if Great Britain remained uncommitted.

Second, the Canadian delegation in Washington appeared willing to play ball.

If one individual proved decisive, it *was* Lester Pearson. From the beginning, he was the only Canadian who believed Ottawa should display more flexibility in its attitude towards the relief organization.¹⁷⁴⁴ He was also the first Canadian to think his country should accept the compromise.¹⁷⁴⁵ But he faced a problem. Stationed in Washington, he had little access to the Prime Minister, the only individual with sufficient political weight to bring about reversal in Canadian policy, and he had few chances to refute the hardliners, such as Clark. In the face of these obstacles, he chose to prejudice his reports in favor of his point of view. On several occasions he even conveyed false information to Ottawa. To give the impression that Canada was the sole obstacle to the creation of the first United Nations agency, he told Wrong that the troubles with Moscow had been resolved, when in fact they had not.¹⁷⁴⁶ But this approach failed. Robertson and Wrong controlled the flow of information to both the Prime Minister and the War Committee, and because they remained skeptical of Pearson's preferences to the very end, they

¹⁷⁴⁴ As early as February 10, 1943, Pearson was privately bemoaning the rigid position his government had embraced. "We are pretty well dug in now, however, and it is going to be difficult to retreat." See Lester Pearson Bound Diary, February 9, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷⁴⁵ He was so eager that his government should accept the compromise that he telephoned Ottawa upon learning of it to see if the War Committee would consider the proposal immediately so that its views could go before four powers the following day. See Lester Pearson Bound Diary, February 26, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷⁴⁶ See Teletype WA-1476, The Canadian Minister in the United States to the SOSEA, For Wrong from Pearson, March 29, 1943. Here Pearson states that the "Russian difficulty seems to be cleared up and so the only remaining obstacle... is the 'Canadian difficulty.'" Yet the difficult matter of a Soviet Deputy Director Generals had not been resolved. One might conclude that Pearson was unaware of this problem, but that was not the case. See Teletype WA-1411, Pearson to Wrong, March 26, 1943, both in File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC.

routinely presented a story skewed towards their views.¹⁷⁴⁷ Not until Eden's visit to Ottawa did Pearson have the chance to speak with King. Naturally he exploited this opportunity to convince him of the compromise proposal's merits. This may not have been decisive, but it helped.

Pearson's most important deeds took place in Washington. From the beginning of 1943 until Eden's visit to Ottawa, Pearson routinely ignored or deviated from his instructions, and he repeatedly disclosed compromising information to the Americans and the British. Without any authority, he suggested in January 1943 that Canada would be open to a compromise.¹⁷⁴⁸ By March 1943, he was pressing American and British officials to visit Ottawa. As he told Acheson, King's "knowledge of the subject was slight and... he might be persuaded upon full presentation of the facts."¹⁷⁴⁹ Before Eden's meetings in Ottawa, Pearson was, in his own words, "disloyal enough to my Government to give them some off-the-record advice as to the best way to approach Mackenzie King."¹⁷⁵⁰

¹⁷⁴⁷ For an example of this behavior, compare Pearson's February 1, 1943 telegram to Ottawa with Robertson's report of February 3, 1943 to Mackenzie King. Though Pearson writes that presenting a formal note to the Americans would be a "more effective procedure" in dealing with the matter, Robertson informed King that a "further approach" with the Americans is "unlikely to be productive," and that Pearson was "not very optimistic" that "this procedure" would produce the desired results. Then, Robertson urges King to get the Canadian Minister, Leighton McCarthy involved in the matter, clearly as a way of cutting Pearson out of the process. See Telegram WA-455, Canadian Minister in United States (McCarthy) to SOSEA (King), February 1, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC; "Memorandum from Under-SOSEA to PM," February 3, 1943, Document 669 in *DCER*, Vol. 9, 776-777.

¹⁷⁴⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation," by Acheson, January 26, 193, 840.50/1231, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 864.

¹⁷⁴⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation," by Acheson, March 4, 1943, 840.50/1430, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 881-883.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, Week of March 22nd – 27th, Pearson Papers, LAC.

This behavior had two immediate effects. First, it encouraged Acheson and the British to apply pressure on King's Government, but it also drove them to forge a compromise solution with the Soviet Union. Much of this took place at a moment when the Americans were prepared to circulate the draft irrespective of Ottawa's views. Second, it unnecessarily gave Eden a decided advantage when he met with King and the War Committee. Doubtless these factors played an important role in the outcome. Pearson's behavior, while lamentable, earned Canada an important role in the organization that exceeded that of all other middle and small powers. It was a remarkable achievement.¹⁷⁵¹

But his actions had negative repercussions as well. If he aimed to heighten Canada's standing, he achieved that goal, but needlessly erected a glass ceiling below his country's deserved stature. In 1943, Canada's position was stronger than its politicians recognized. The Soviet Union was still reeling under the Nazi assault; China remained a weak, divided and occupied; Britain's financial position was precarious at best. Only the United States trumped Canada in its position relative to the other Allies. The Canadian High Commissioner to London, Vincent Massey, saw this clearly. Outraged over what he considered a capitulation, he wrote Robertson, "One could hardly imagine a case offering us sounder grounds for making a claim for full membership on an international body." Even if "American and Russian objections were too strong to be overcome," he lamented, "I cannot help feeling that we would have been in a better position to secure our rightful

¹⁷⁵¹ I consider this the beginning of what two scholars have called "Pearsonian internationalism." See Don Munton and Tom Keating, "Internationalism and the Canadian Public," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 34, no. 3 (Sept., 2011): 517-549.

place in international bodies in the future if we had carried out our intention of quietly withdrawing altogether from the relief administration if our claim could not be met.”¹⁷⁵²

Massey was discerning in other aspects as well. Chairing the Supplies Committee would not increase Canada’s prestige and power. “The membership that will matter,” he wrote, “is that of the Policy Committee.” With the Council meeting only twice a year, the four powers would make the big decisions most of the time.¹⁷⁵³ The Supplies Committee was merely an advisory body. “It shall consider, formulate and recommend to the Central Committee and the Council policies designed to assure the provision of required supplies.”¹⁷⁵⁴ Massey also thought it foolish to rely on the American promise that the relief organization would not constitute a precedent. “One of the arguments advanced by the Russians against our full membership of the Policy Committee of the post-war relief administration was precisely that it might be a precedent for the future. They will presumably attach a similar significance to our non-membership and will use it as an argument on future occasions,” he wrote.¹⁷⁵⁵

In these assessments, Massey was correct. When the issue of the Central Committee’s composition was reopened in 1945 to grant France a seat, the Americans initially refused to consider Canadian membership. This fact is astonishing. An invaded country, France was far weaker than Canada in 1945. Its leader, moreover, maintained stormy relations with Washington. The Americans only agreed to entertain Canada’s claims after Ottawa protested: the looming Cold War also made Canadian membership

¹⁷⁵² Massey to Robertson, April 10, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁷⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵⁴ See Article III, Paragraph 4 of “Draft Agreement for the Establishment of United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” March 25, 1943, 840.50/1430e, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 890-895.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Massey to Robertson, April 10, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

attractive. But initially they argued that Canadian membership would lead other countries to demand equal treatment, which it did. The Russians also appealed to precedent.¹⁷⁵⁶ While the scholarship has not yet revealed why they acquiesced to Canadian membership, their application for UNRRA assistance for the Ukraine and areas of Belarus during the August 1945 Council meeting may provide an answer. They wanted aid.¹⁷⁵⁷ But I cannot see why the same logic did not apply in 1943, when the Soviet Union was in a far more desperate position.

The example of Argentina vindicates Massey further. Like Canada, the Argentine had food resources, but was not asked to participate in the organization. Buenos Aires abetted the Nazis and refused to declare war on Germany until March 1945. No country in the Western Hemisphere presented the United States with more problems during the war than Argentina.¹⁷⁵⁸ But when the specter of famine threatened in 1946, the Americans sent the new Director General of UNRRA, Fiorella LaGuardia, to Buenos Aires, who pleaded with the Argentines to sell wheat to the organization.¹⁷⁵⁹ They never

¹⁷⁵⁶ Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 59-60; Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, Vol. 1, 52.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, Vol. 2, 233-234.

¹⁷⁵⁸ R.A. Humphreys, *Latin America and the Second World War*, Vol. 1, 1939-1942, Vol. 2, 1942-1945 (London: Athlone Press, 1981-1982): see references throughout volume 1, but see also chapters 6-7 in volume 2. David Sheinin, "Argentina: The Closet Ally," *Latin America During World War II*, eds. Thomas M. Leonard and John F. Bratzel (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 183-204.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Bess Furman, "LaGuardia As Head of UNRRA To Seek Wheat From Peron," March 30, 1946, *NYT*, 1; "UNRRA Will Take What Food it Can, LaGuardia Says," March 30, 1946, *CDT*, 2; "UNRRA Mission Seeks Food in Argentina," April 3, 1946; *WP*, p. 2; John W. Ball, "Canada and Argentina Join U.S. in Upping Famine Aid," April 21, 1946, *WP*, p. M1; Press Conference UNRRA Headquarters Washington D.C., April 22, 1946, Folder 3; Verbatim Minutes of the Eighteenth Plenary Meeting, UNRRA, Fourth Session of the Council, May 9, 1946, Council IV, Folder 5, both in Box 26B1, LWA.

joined UNRRA, but made lots of money.¹⁷⁶⁰ If Canada's concerns were largely economic, they would have been satisfied without joining the organization.¹⁷⁶¹ But their political concerns might have been met as well. The Americans not only did business with the Argentines, they sought to seat the Argentines at the UN Conference in San Francisco despite opposition from Moscow. Here again the prospect of Cold War played an important role.¹⁷⁶²

To be fair, Pearson could not predict the future. He believed the Supplies Committee would *become* a powerful body, and that Canada would secure gains as its chairman. The degree to which these beliefs were true require further research, but like many others, he considered the agreement a guide. The relief organization would evolve and adapt to circumstances. For him, it seems the choice was between the path of cooperation and less influence in the medium term with the specter of increased influence down the road, and that of non-cooperation and no influence at all. He also worried that a refusal to cooperate would impair the war effort and possibly postwar international cooperation.¹⁷⁶³ Yet he knew, and this is where his opinion encounters trouble, that the relief organization was not only a public relations gimmick designed for the American people and Congress, but also an attempt at American multilateralism. When he expressed his disapproval at the way conferences were being organized and suggested an

¹⁷⁶⁰ Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, Vol. 1, 130.

¹⁷⁶¹ John W. Ball, "Canada and Argentina Join U.S. in Upping Famine Aid," April 21, 1946, *WP*, M1.

¹⁷⁶² Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks*, 253-254. For a more detailed account, see Ruth B. Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1958), 572, 631-33, 636-39.

¹⁷⁶³ Lester Pearson, "The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Organization," No Date; Teletype WA-1411, Pearson to Wrong, March 26, 1943, both in File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC; Lester Pearson Bound Diary, Week of March 22nd – 27th, Pearson Papers, LAC.

international committee to do this work, Acheson, Atherton and Dunn all nodded their heads in agreement. From this Pearson concluded: "The Americans are going to run these things themselves."¹⁷⁶⁴

Yet the young civil servant from Toronto who would one day become Prime Minister preferred at this moment in his career to play along in their geo-strategic show. In doing so, he only reinforced the impression of the Soviet Union, that if Canada was not an agent of the British Empire, then it was surely one of the United States. There are many good reasons why Canada should not have let Russian impressions influence its behavior, but had Ottawa chosen to quietly withdraw, as Massey preferred, it would have removed one of the primary obstacles to Canadian independence in international affairs: the idea that Canada was a token in someone else's game, a view that was also espoused by many figures in Washington. Massey also thought that it would have cracked the "Big Power complex" that had created so many difficulties for Canada. Equally important, it would have underscored the so-called "functional principle," which Massey thought Ottawa should promote "in and out of season." It is tribute to his patriotism that he would conclude his April 10, 1943 letter to Norman Robertson voicing these complaints with the following words: "It is time for toughness."¹⁷⁶⁵ Lester Pearson was too smart not to have drawn the same conclusions, but he refused to act upon it. Why?

In large part, the answer has much to do with his personality. By nature, Pearson preferred friendly and open exchange to conflict, which he went to great lengths to avoid. A need for self-approbation fueled this behavior and made it difficult for him to advance policies that would create friction. It drove him to suggest compromise without authority

¹⁷⁶⁴ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, April 5, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Massey to Robertson, April 10, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

from his superiors, and to be forthcoming to the extent of disloyalty, a behavior that was exacerbated by righteousness and self-assurance. These factors explain why he repeatedly rejected the stiff language he was instructed to use in his exchanges with Americans; why he habitually attacked King for being, as he wrote, at “his postprandial worst”;¹⁷⁶⁶ why he was the only individual, despite his junior status, to speak before the War Committee in Eden’s presence; and why he expressed frustration with Americans who remained far less willing to divulge information than he was. Acheson, for example, was “an intelligent fellow; [but] not easy to know.”¹⁷⁶⁷ “Atherton,” he complained, “does not give anything away, even over the brandy...”¹⁷⁶⁸ These traits shed light on his efforts to achieve a compromise. It gave Pearson a deep sense of satisfaction to have solved the problem. “I saw Noel Hall and Dean Acheson and told them the news,” he wrote in his diary. “They were delighted. I think that my arguments may have had some effect in Ottawa. In any event, I was a minority of one when I reached there last week.”¹⁷⁶⁹

But an attendant factor played an equally important role here. Pearson’s need for self-approbation led to an over-abundance of ambition. As a result, he became something more than a mere representative of his Government in Washington. He always promoted schemes that would benefit Pearson. It remains an indisputable fact that the international conferences that would soon take place, and the postwar organizations soon established, would provide Pearson a stage on which he could distinguish himself.¹⁷⁷⁰ “I hope we play our cards right now and put a good man on the Supplies Committee,” he wrote in his

¹⁷⁶⁶ See “Report of Anthony Eden to War Committee of Canadian Cabinet,” in Lester Pearson Bound Diary, March 31, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, April 5, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷⁶⁸ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, February 27, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷⁶⁹ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, April 8, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷⁷⁰ English, *Shadow of Heaven*, Vol. 1, 267-298; Pearson, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, 244-278.

diary after King's Government accepted the compromise agreement. "We have a chance to play a big part in this Organization."¹⁷⁷¹ Pearson, of course, played the part.¹⁷⁷² The Americans welcomed him due to his eagerness to help them solve problems. They even nominated him to be the first Secretary General of the United Nations. But the Soviet Union rejected him for obvious reasons.¹⁷⁷³ Pearson returned home, served as Secretary of State for External Affairs, and then became Prime Minister. It was a remarkable journey for "Mike," but the evidence presented here indicates that it may not have been the best path for Canada. He made his country appear weak and pliant in diplomatic circles, an unfortunate impression that was not erased until the ascent of Pierre Elliot Trudeau.

To be sure, Mackenzie King bears responsibility for this impression as well. While he was a fierce domestic political fighter whose tenacity as a politician has been rivaled by few Canadians in the twentieth century, he lacked imagination and strategic vision in foreign affairs. He was slow to see where the world was headed and unwilling

¹⁷⁷¹ Lester Pearson Bound Diary, April 8, 1943, Pearson Papers, LAC.

¹⁷⁷² Armstrong-Reid and Murray, *Armies of Peace*, 28.

¹⁷⁷³ "The Acting United States Representative on the Preparatory Commission (Stevenson) to the Acting SOS," December 24, 1945, 500.CC(PC)/12-2445: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, 1945 Vol. 1, *General; the United Nations* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1967), 1506-1508. See relevant documents throughout the section, "United States Policy Regarding Elections to Certain Organs, Commissions, and Committees of the United Nations," in DOS, *FRUS*, 1946, Vol. 1, *General*; (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1972), 117-250. But see especially "Minutes of the First Meeting of the United States Delegation, on Board the Queen Elizabeth," January 2, 1946, 10 Files: USGA/Ia/Del.Min./1(Chr), *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 121-122. It reads: "Mr. Hiss stated that the Department had made it known that the United States would be delighted if Mr. Pearson of Canada were elected as Secretary General, but it was expected that his candidacy would be hampered by the desire to have a non-American as Secretary General." For an article on the selection of the first Secretary General of the United Nations, see James Barros, "Pearson or Lie: The Politics of the Secretary-General's Selection, 1946," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (March, 1977): 65-92.

to imagine Canada's place in it.¹⁷⁷⁴ When Wrong suggested the "functional principle" as a guiding light, King embraced it, but lacked the nerve to take the steps necessary to get other countries to respect it. It was insufficient to play hardball with Great Britain, a nation in decline. The circumstances required that King get tough with Moscow and Washington as well, which he was unwilling to do. On repeated occasions during the war, he caved when the big boys came to town.¹⁷⁷⁵ For the relief organization, Eden did the job. It might be said that we have exaggerated King's power, but I can see no greater leverage than the million men deployed during the war. He just as well might have called them home. If for Canadian diplomacy the 1930s were the "low, dishonest decade," as James Eayrs famously put it, then the war years were a missed opportunity.¹⁷⁷⁶

Subsequent developments underscore the general inconclusiveness of Canada's action. Shortly after Pearson conveyed his Government's acceptance of the compromise proposal to the Americans on April 8, 1943, difficulties emerged over how best to record the assurances promised to Ottawa.¹⁷⁷⁷ Much of the debate concerned diplomatic protocol and the need for secrecy, issues easily resolved and of no importance here. But the disagreement also concerned the manner by which China and the Soviet Union would

¹⁷⁷⁴ These are my words, but they are not out of sync with the general impression made in Adam Chapnick, *The Middle Power Project: Canada and the Founding of the United Nations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005).

¹⁷⁷⁵ C.P. Stacey, in particular, faults King on this point. See Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, Vol. 2, 331.

¹⁷⁷⁶ James Eayrs, "'A Low Dishonest Decade': Aspects of Canadian External Policy, 1931-1939," in *Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1990), 488-505.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Cypher EX-1248, SOSEA to Canadian Minister to USA, April 7, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG 2, LAC; "The Minister Counselor of the Canadian Legation (Pearson) to the Assistant SOS (Acheson)," April 8, 1943, 840.50/1820, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 898-899.

adhere to the compromise.¹⁷⁷⁸ On the first point – guaranteeing the Chairmanship of the Supplies Committee for Canada – Acheson requested and recorded the adherence of the Chinese and Russians in the minutes of their next meeting. But on the second issue, that the Central Committee would not be regarded as a precedent, he refused to ask the Chinese and Russians to agree to a formal note in the minutes.¹⁷⁷⁹ Instead, he wrote a letter without Moscow or Chungking's approval to Pearson in which he merely noted Canada's view that the Central Committee should not be a precedent.¹⁷⁸⁰ Of course this procedure raised eyebrows in Ottawa, but the Canadians did nothing meaningful to rectify the situation, even after it was escalated all the way to the Prime Minister.¹⁷⁸¹

The Fifth Meeting of the Four Powers and the Problem of France

It is either a testament to Acheson's talent, or evidence of his weakness, that on April 12, 1943, when the four great powers met for the fifth time, that the Soviet Union

¹⁷⁷⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Acheson)," April 8, 1943, 840.50/1820; "The Minister of the Canadian Legation (Pearson) to the Assistant SOS (Acheson), April 13, 1943, 840.50/1825, both in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 899-901; Telegram Relief No. 48, DC to FO, T188/256, PRO; Teletype WA-1684, Canadian Minister in the USA to SOSEA, April 9, 1943; Teletype No. EX-1297, SOSEA to Canadian Minister in the USA, April 12, 1943, both in File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC.

¹⁷⁷⁹ WA-1764, Canadian Minister to the USA to SOSEA, April 14, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC; "Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson's Office, Department of State," April 12, 1943, (139) AME 45/1/33, Monnet Papers, Institute Jean Monnet, University of Lausanne.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Veatch to Acheson, May 25, 1943, 840.50/1825, Box 4804, RG 59, NARA; Acheson to Pearson, June 12, 1943, included in Teletype WA-2869, Minister in the United States to the SOSEA, DEA/2295-G-40, Document 700, *DCEA*, Vol. 9, 811-812.

¹⁷⁸¹ See previously noted documents, but also "Memorandum to the PM," June 15, 1943, File W-22-1, 1942-43, Vol. 44, RG2, LAC; Teletype EX-2458, SOSEA to Minister in the United States, June 28, 1943; Teletype WA-3197, Minister in the United States to SOSEA, July 1, 1943, both in DEA/2295-G-40, Documents 701-702, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 813.

created no problems. The Americans had received their acceptance of the revisions that emerged in their meeting on March 24, 1943. But neither the British nor the Chinese had commented. For this reason, the only significant agreement concerned Canada: the four powers would “use their best endeavors to secure the selection of a Canadian as Chairman of the Committee on Supplies.” But even this matter proved tentative. With none of the Ambassadors in attendance, their representatives felt obliged to confirm the agreement with their governments.¹⁷⁸² Diplomacy is a slow process.

It is unsurprising that the Americans preferred that only four powers participate at this stage. But in time the number of countries involved would have to increase if they wanted to achieve the dual objectives of showing wide support for the war effort and winning legitimacy for American leadership in the postwar period. Just before the UN Declaration was signed, Roosevelt had written Hull: “It seems to me a distinct advantage to have as long a list of small countries as possible in this Declaration.” He wanted the names of all of the Central American countries that had declared war on the Axis Powers included.¹⁷⁸³ He would also want other nations to join the Allied cause. But by the end of March 1943, only one state south of Panama – Brazil – had declared war on the Axis and signed the Declaration.¹⁷⁸⁴ Many of these countries had large Italian and German

¹⁷⁸² “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” April 12, 1943, (139) AME 45/1/33, Institute Jean Monnet.

¹⁷⁸³ “President Roosevelt to the SOS,” December 27, 1941, Hopkins Papers, DOS, *FRUS*, 1942, Vol. 1, *General; the British Commonwealth; the Far East* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), 13.

¹⁷⁸⁴ For a list of the countries and the date on which they signed the declaration, see “Declaration by the United Nations,” January 1, 1942, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade03.asp (accessed September 11, 2012). The most recent scholarship on Brazil’s relationship with the United States during the war is: Antonia Pedro Tota, *The Seduction of Brazil: The Americanization of Brazil During World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press,

populations to manage;¹⁷⁸⁵ they worried that the Axis powers might attack their coasts,¹⁷⁸⁶ and they disliked the heavy-handed approach of the Americans.¹⁷⁸⁷ By contrast with the nations of Central America, these countries were strong enough or geographically remote enough to remain out of the war.¹⁷⁸⁸ But the United States deployed both carrot and the stick to ensure cooperation.¹⁷⁸⁹ Legally, they only had an

2000); the matter is covered generally in E. Bradford Burns, *A History of Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 359; and Thomas E. Skidmore, *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 120-124. But for a nuanced overview, see Frank D. McCann, "Brazil, the United States, and World War II: A Commentary," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 1 (January 1979): 59-76. This article shows that Brazil evinced considerable resistance to the United States.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Colombian officials worried about nationals of the Axis powers who resided in Colombia: "The Ambassador in Colombia (Braden) to the SOS," December 19, 1941, 740.0011 European War 1939/17675: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS* 1941, Vol. 6, *The American Republics* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), 81-82; Argentina and Chile constitute the most famous examples, but Peru and Venezuela worried as well. See Leonard and Bratzel, eds. *Latin America During World War II*; Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign Against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁷⁸⁶ Argentina and Chile are the most important examples; see Graeme S. Mount, "Chile: An Effort at Neutrality," and Scheinin, "Argentina: The Closet Ally," *Latin America during World War II*, eds. Thomas M. Leonard and John F. Bratzel, 162-204. Ecuador worried that the Japanese would seize the Galapagos: "The Minister in Ecuador (Long) to the SOS," December 8, 1941, 740.0011 Pacific War/872: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 6, 89.

¹⁷⁸⁷ This point comes up throughout the literature. The British and Canadians were aware of it. For an overview, see Leonard and Bratzel, eds. *Latin America During World War II*.

¹⁷⁸⁸ For an overview of Central America and the Second World War, see Thomas M. Leonard, "Central America: On the Periphery," *Latin America during World War II*, 38-53.

¹⁷⁸⁹ This can be seen throughout the *FRUS* volumes devoted to U.S. relations with Latin America during WWII. See *FRUS*, Vol. 6, 118-206. Notice how lend-lease was used as a carrot, and how the United States used sticks to control the flow of goods into, out of, and throughout the Hemisphere to achieve its objectives. This behavior is evident in all of the volumes.

obligation to “consult” with one another if the territory of a country in the hemisphere was attacked by a non-American state.¹⁷⁹⁰

Roosevelt still preferred that these countries join the alliance, if not for wartime purposes then as participants in the postwar international organizations he envisioned. So long as these countries remained outside the United Nations, they created embarrassment for the United States, which had promoted the Good Neighbor Policy as a model for the world.¹⁷⁹¹ It also contradicted Roosevelt’s talk of wartime solidarity in the hemisphere. Argentina constituted a sore point of course, but when nine of ten South American countries refrained from declaring war or adhering to the UN Declaration, it appeared that Washington’s program for the Hemisphere earned less respect than the Americans suggested.¹⁷⁹² These countries needed to be lured into the fold. Roosevelt therefore insisted that they receive invitations to the Food and Agricultural Conference. He also requested that the State Department change the relief agreement so that countries “associated with the United Nations” could sign the document. This formula was also applied to the postwar financial arrangements.¹⁷⁹³

¹⁷⁹⁰ See “The SOS to Diplomatic Representatives in the American Republics,” December 9, 1941, 710 Consultation 3/16a: Circular Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 6, 118-119.

¹⁷⁹¹ Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 107-126.

¹⁷⁹² The distinction between a war declaration and adherence to the UN Declaration is important. Brazil declared war, but refused to sign the UN Declaration until months later. Before the North African landings, the Roosevelt Administration preferred that South American countries adhere to the declaration without declaring war. They worried of having to devote scarce resources to defending their coastline.

¹⁷⁹³ For its application in the food and agricultural talks, see “The Acting SOS to the Chargé in the United Kingdom (Matthews),” March 8, 1943, 550.AD1/b: Telegram; “The SOS to Certain Chiefs of Mission,” April 10, 1943, 550.AD1/145a; “The SOS to the American Delegates to the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture,” May 15, 1943, 550.AD1/650. For its application in the financial talks, see “SOS to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery),” April 21, 1943, 800.515/627a: Circular Telegram; “Mr.

Acheson put the proposal before the four powers on April 12, 1943. In total, he informed the group, this change would mean that all of the South American countries would be included as well as Egypt, Iceland, Iran and Liberia. As their governments had already agreed to this procedure for the Food and Agricultural Conference, the representatives of the Ambassadors thought it would work for the relief organization as well, but still wanted to check with their governments.¹⁷⁹⁴

If this alteration posed no problem, Roosevelt's attitude towards France created a major stumbling bloc. From the beginning, the Americans had been wary of the Free French Forces and the French National Committee – the military and political entities Charles De Gaulle established with British assistance to lead the country's resistance after the Nazi victory over France in June 1940. The Americans refused to recognize De Gaulle's group for two reasons: first, they considered the Free French closet minions of John Bull; second, they preferred to maintain relations with Vichy France, the collaborationist Government established under the leadership of Marshal Pétain following the collapse of the Third Republic. Apart from strategic concerns, Roosevelt disliked De Gaulle immensely. While these men had incompatible personalities, they exercised power in ways bound to create conflict. Whenever Roosevelt tried to control,

H.D. White, Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury (Morgenthau) to the Assistant SOS (Berle),” April 29, 1943, 800.515/657; “Text of the Draft Directive or State of General Principles,” Received by the Department from the Treasury on October 11, 1943, 800.515/865d, all *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 820-821, 831-833, 841-844, 1069-1070, 1073, 1084-1090.

¹⁷⁹⁴ “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson's Office, Department of State,” April 12, 1943, (139) AME 45/1/33, Institute Jean Monnet. We know of Roosevelt's responsibility for these proposals through Telegram Relief No. 50, DC to FO, April 12, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

restrain, or influence De Gaulle, the defiant Frenchman either ignored or rejected the preferences of the American President, who was unaccustomed to such behavior.¹⁷⁹⁵

As a result, American policy towards the Free French often had punitive aspects quite separate from its strategic purpose. The United States, for example, agreed to provide the Free French lend-lease aid shortly after De Gaulle established the French National Committee in September 1941. Even if the Americans disliked the Free French, they figured that they might gain influence and even lure the group away from Britain if they provided aid to counterbalance British assistance. But the fiasco over the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon proved this assumption incorrect. In December 1941, Great Britain and the United States became alarmed that the Vichy regime was using a radio station on St. Pierre to relay meteorological data to the Nazis. While the British wanted the Free French to take over the islands, the Americans preferred a Canadian expedition. But on December 24, 1941, against the expressed wishes of Roosevelt, De Gaulle launched an invasion. The President was furious. He cancelled plans to permit the Free French to sign the United Nations Declaration and even refused to recognize them as Allies.¹⁷⁹⁶ Roosevelt would welcome all nations willing to declare war on the Axis Powers into the wartime alliance. But the Free French were duly excluded.

¹⁷⁹⁵ G.E. Maguire, *Anglo-American Policy Towards the Free French* (London: MacMillan Press, 1995). Here I have focused on Roosevelt, but it is important to note that Cordell Hull hated De Gaulle as well. For a fantastic rant against him, see "Memorandum of Conversation," Hull, Halifax, and Eden, March 15, 1943, 840.50/1716, Confidential File, Box C129, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Maguire, *Anglo-American Policy Towards the Free French*, 27-29. For an example of Free French ire at American behavior, see "Memorandum by Mr. Samuel Reber of the Division of European Affairs," January 12, 1942, 740.0011 European War/of Conversation 1939/18828, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 33-34.

The deterioration of relations influenced American planning for postwar France. If De Gaulle could not be trusted, then who would administer the country after liberation? Reports suggesting a surge in communist activity inside of France created concern. Vichy elements, too, might vie for power. None of these options showed promise. The Political Subcommittee worried that De Gaulle would establish a dictatorship; that a communist regime would show allegiance to the Soviet Union; or that a Government dominated by Vichy elements would precipitate civil unrest. With no obvious heir to the French Third Republic, the Political Subcommittee concluded that a United Nations authority would have to run the country until elections could be held.¹⁷⁹⁷ Roosevelt agreed, but minced no words about what this meant. The United States would run the country incognito. When the time comes for liberation, he told Sumner Welles, the “trustee element so far as France is concerned should be bested in an American civilian authority.”¹⁷⁹⁸

Yet this proposal presented perplexing problems. Unless the Germans completely destroyed the country upon retreat, its administrative machinery would remain intact. The United States would have to plan meticulously and enact measures to prevent undesirable elements from taking control of this machinery. But with limited manpower, Washington would have to recruit Frenchmen to administer the country, at least at the local level. To

¹⁷⁹⁷ P Minutes 2, March 14, 1942; P Minutes 5, April 4, 1942, both in File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part III), Box 55; Minutes AC-3, April 4, 1942, Summary of Conclusions, File President Roosevelt’s Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy Minutes 1-4 (Feb. 1942-May 1942), Box 54, all in ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁷⁹⁸ P Minutes 38, December 19, 1942, File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 32-49 (Part II), Box 55; quote is also found in “Passages in the Minutes of Advisory Committee and Its Subcommittees Reflecting Consultation with the President,” No Date, File Talks with FDR, 1942-44, Box 54, all ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

ensure that these individuals showed full allegiance to the United Nations, they would have to be chosen carefully. In cases where undesirable individuals or groups threatened American plans, the Subcommittee concluded that “it might be necessary to use relief as a political weapon.”¹⁷⁹⁹ In this way, stability could be achieved. Yet the Political Subcommittee recognized the limits of their plans. If they went too far, it could backfire, thereby benefiting the groups they hoped to weaken. In any case, they ultimately agreed that France could have De Gaulle, but that the French people would have to make this choice. He could not be permitted an unfair advantage.¹⁸⁰⁰

The mutual distrust escalated nonetheless. The United States launched Operation Torch, the November 1942 invasion of French North Africa, without even informing De Gaulle. Strategic calculations made this decision essential. To avoid the loss of life, the Americans reached an agreement with the French military commanders in North Africa whereby they would sever ties with Vichy and halt all French opposition to the invasion in return for leadership of the French Administration in North Africa. The ploy worked brilliantly. But it outraged De Gaulle, who considered the chosen French leader, Admiral Francois Darlan, a traitor to France due to his associations with the Vichy Government. The North African machinations also fell flat with the American and British people, who disliked the idea of compromising the very principles for which the war was presumably being fought. Roosevelt had little choice but to reach out to De Gaulle. A tête-à-tête between the two leaders would have taken place in Washington at the end of 1942, but the unexpected assassination of Darlan led Roosevelt to postpone the meeting until the United States had found a replacement. They chose General Henri Giraud, who had

¹⁷⁹⁹ P Minutes 38, December 19, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

¹⁸⁰⁰ P Minutes 5, April 4, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

escaped a Nazi prison in April 1942 and joined with Darlan in November 1942. The problem of competing French authorities remained.¹⁸⁰¹

On December 19, 1942, the Political Subcommittee discussed France once again. But this time, a number of members began to question the intelligence of Roosevelt's policy. Again, it was the indefatigable Anne O'Hare McCormick who raised the salient questions. When Welles insisted that France could only become a member of the United Nations organization "within a year or a year and a half after the war," she asked him "if that meant that France would not be... in the same category as Yugoslavia." It was a tricky issue. With Giraud and De Gaulle now poised for confrontation over the control of postwar France, the Subcommittee worried that the country would slip into a civil war. Yet everyone knew that Yugoslavia remained equally if not more vulnerable to a civil war than France. But in the mind of Sumner Welles, France had no functioning government, which placed it in a league quite separate from Yugoslavia. McCormick, however, reminded the Undersecretary that these circumstances existed "only because the United States refused to "recognize the French Government-in-Exile." Yet most of the postwar planning assumed that the Roosevelt Administration had no intention of recognizing any French authority, which made the problems even more perplexing. But even worse, McCormick suggested, "We seem to be considering [France] as an enemy power." Clearly she believed this approach would backfire.¹⁸⁰²

The circumstances led Roosevelt to pursue unity between the two French factions, but De Gaulle proved wholly uncooperative. When Churchill proposed that he meet with

¹⁸⁰¹ The Darlan deal is discussed in many places, but see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 362-366; Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 431-439.

¹⁸⁰² P Minutes 38, December 19, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

Giraud at Casablanca in early 1943, he refused to leave London. As Robert Dallek writes, “He was reluctant to meet under Allied auspices, where he might come under pressure to compromise with Vichyites, and he was insulted that the invitation did not come from FDR.” Only after Roosevelt added his name to the invitation and Churchill threatened to withdraw his support of De Gaulle did he agree to go to Casablanca. When he arrived, he criticized the venue, reproached Giraud, complained to Churchill, and rejected a compromise that would have made him the political leader while maintaining Giraud as the military commander in North Africa. He also refused to acquiesce to a communiqué between him and Giraud drawn up by the Americans and British. It was only after much cajoling that the American President finally convinced him to have his picture taken with Giraud for the press. The whole affair left a bitter taste in Roosevelt’s mouth: he had hoped to resolve the French problem, but left Casablanca with a mere photograph.¹⁸⁰³

Lest one conclude that De Gaulle’s actions were obtuse and petty, it is critical to understand why he behaved as he did. It serves as an instructive foil to the behavior of the Canadians, who grudgingly accepted compromises devised by Great Britain and/or the United States repeatedly throughout the war, but it also contrasts with the strategy De Gaulle would later embrace. From the start, De Gaulle had always wanted the Americans to explicitly recognize the Free French as the sole legitimate French authority, even though he was sufficiently wise to understand why they would not: they wanted strategic flexibility. But instead of acting as though this objective had not yet been obtained, he always behaved as though it were so. Just like the Americans, who relied on spectacle to

¹⁸⁰³ See Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 362-366; quote is on p. 377.

achieve their aims, he made a show in hopes that it would somehow legitimize his leadership and the authority of the Free French. While this may have been foolhardy in early 1943, he knew well that it would appeal to the French people in the long run. It therefore served no purpose to deal with any competing French authority, especially one that had connections to Vichy, and it made no sense to accept a deal composed by foreign powers holding a conference in a locale that he considered sovereign French territory.¹⁸⁰⁴

Roosevelt struggled to manage De Gaulle. Initially he treated him like a powerful bureaucrat engaged in one of his Administration's many turf wars. Like Cordell Hull, who had tremendous power in the Senate and support among the American people, De Gaulle had the backing of Great Britain and a considerable following in France. Unable to dismiss him, Roosevelt assigned responsibility to one of his rivals. When this failed to resolve the matter, he sought a compromise solution. But neither charm nor persuasion could compel De Gaulle to play along. If Lester Pearson considered friendship a means to influence, De Gaulle thought only of power and spectacle. "France has no friends, only interests," he famously quipped.¹⁸⁰⁵ Roosevelt could no more dismantle this mantra than he could deny De Gaulle a place in it. As a result, he became angry. He mocked and insulted him in public and private.¹⁸⁰⁶ And just as he failed to invite Hull to most of the wartime conferences, he kept De Gaulle away from the United Nations. Yet he well knew that this behavior could create trouble. Privately he was beginning to wonder what to do

¹⁸⁰⁴ For an excellent portrayal of De Gaulle's attitude, see Maguire, *Anglo-American Policy Towards the Free French*. See also Charles De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles De Gaulle* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1998).

¹⁸⁰⁵ Michael E. Haskew, *De Gaulle: Lessons in Leadership from the Defiant General* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 186. But see also Jean Lacoutre, *De Gaulle: The Rebel, 1890-1944* (New York: Norton and Company, 1990).

¹⁸⁰⁶ For an excellent adumbration of Roosevelt's negotiation tactics as well as his petty behavior, see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 378-379.

if the Soviet Union became aggressive or refused to cooperate with China, Great Britain and the United States in the postwar era. He even began to think that it might be better to abandon his plans to disarm France after the war.¹⁸⁰⁷

For the moment, Roosevelt's vindictive attitude prevailed. On February 20, 1943, De Gaulle's Commissioner for the Economy, Finance, and the Colonies, Hervé Alphand, met with Acheson and other officials at the State Department to express his fear that the work of the Inter-Allied Committee would be terminated. If this occurred, he explained, it would be a tremendous blow to the French National Committee. He had heard of the American plans for an international relief organization and wanted to know what role the United States anticipated for France in this scheme. Acheson told Alphand that a plan was under consideration by the four powers, but that France presented them with perplexing problems. It would be difficult to include two delegations, one for the Free French and one for the North African Government. He therefore suggested that if the two groups could somehow "work out a deal," then the problem would be simplified, but he could make no promises. Alphand pleaded with Acheson to give them time.¹⁸⁰⁸ But the pressure marked the advent of a new strategy towards the Free French. If they refused to accept the compromise that Churchill and Roosevelt proposed at Casablanca, they would have to work out their problems with the French in North Africa on their own, precisely what De Gaulle, who always had sovereignty on his mind, preferred.

¹⁸⁰⁷ For Roosevelt's earlier and later views, see "Passages in the Minutes of Advisory Committee and Its Subcommittees Reflecting Consultation with the President," No Date, File Talks with FDR, 1942-44, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. In particular, see entry for May 20, 1942, when Roosevelt said that France should be disarmed, and the entry for February 26 1943, when he was reconsidering his position.

¹⁸⁰⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Acheson)," February 20, 1943, 840.50/1828, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 878-879.

We can accurately speak of a new strategy because the Americans employed a similar approach to the other postwar matters under consideration at that time. In March 1943, the State Department informed the competing French groups that they would be able to participate in the postwar financial discussions if they could agree on a joint representative.¹⁸⁰⁹ They made a similar proposal in April 1943 with regard to the impending Food and Agricultural Conference.¹⁸¹⁰ However these two areas of discussion differed from the relief negotiations in one critical aspect. At the relief conference, the attending Governments would be asked to sign an international agreement. No such plans existed for the financial discussions or the Food and Agricultural Conference. Though they might lead to an agreement, the Americans considered these meetings “preliminary and exploratory.”¹⁸¹¹ Thus in their eyes, mere participation constituted a lesser form of recognition than the ability to sign an international agreement.

The Americans also faced another problem. By April 1943, the State Department had received “something like a hundred requests from various organizations of exiled peoples... anxious to sign the United Nations Declaration.” If the French were permitted to sign the relief agreement, numerous other non-governmental authorities would demand

¹⁸⁰⁹ “The SOS to the Consul General at Algiers (Wiley),” March 17, 1943, 800.515/567a: Telegram; “The Consul General at Algiers (Wiley) to the SOS,” March 30, 1943, 800.515/568: Telegram; “The SOS to the Consul General at Algiers (Wiley),” April 13, 1943, 800.515/568: Telegram; “The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant),” April 14, 1943, 800.515/604a: Telegram, all in *FRUS*, Vol 1, 1059, 1063-1064, 1066-1067.

¹⁸¹⁰ “The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant),” April 14, 1943, 550.AD1/144a: Telegram; “The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant),” April 26, 1943, 550.AD1/281b: Telegram; “The SOS to the Consul General at Algiers (Wiley),” April 26, 1943, 550.AD1/319a, all in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 837-839.

¹⁸¹¹ Quote comes from: “The SOS to the British Ambassador (Halifax),” Washington, undated, 550.AD1/58: but for a description of the financial negotiations as “exploratory,” see “The SOS to the Chargé in China (Vincent),” April 24, 1943, 800.515/635b: Telegram, both in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 830-831, 1071.

the same right. In particular, the Americans worried about the Free Danes, a hodgepodge of Danish groups dispersed in various capitals, but especially in London and Washington.¹⁸¹² Here the Danish problem is both analytically useful and revealing.

Following the invasion of Denmark in April 1940,¹⁸¹³ the Roosevelt Administration maintained relations with the Danish Monarchy of Christian X, whose Government continued to operate under Nazi occupation. Yet at the same time, the Americans argued that the Danish Government was neither a “free agent” nor a “sovereign government” so long as the Germans occupied the country.¹⁸¹⁴ They also encouraged the Danish Minister in Washington, Henrik de Kauffmann, to act independently. He refused to recognize the German occupation, labeled Christian X a Nazi prisoner, and sought to build a coalition of like-minded Danes in the Western Hemisphere. Then, on April 9, 1941, without authority from Copenhagen, he signed a treaty with the United States authorizing it to defend the Danish possession of Greenland. The Americans occupied the territory the following day, citing the approval of a “Free Denmark.”¹⁸¹⁵ In turn, they thought Kauffmann should sign the UN Declaration, but legal

¹⁸¹² Veatch to Acheson, April 12, 1943; see Veatch to Acheson, April 17, 1943, both in File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁸¹³ On the Nazi invasion of Denmark, see Weinberg, *A World At Arms*, 509-510.

¹⁸¹⁴ P Minutes 5, April 4, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

¹⁸¹⁵ See section entitled “Agreement for Defense of Greenland Signed with Danish Minister: Refusal by United States to Recognize Actions of Danish Government Deemed to be Under German Duress,” in DOS, *FRUS 1941*, Vol. 2, *Europe* (Washington: United States Government Printing Service, 1959), 35-87.

ambiguities, problems with the Free French, and mild protests from the Norwegians, who believed the Danes belonged in a different category, led them to abort the plan.¹⁸¹⁶

American plans for Denmark would face further hurdles. After the war, they thought the Danish monarchy should remain, and that Kauffmann might form a government in Copenhagen.¹⁸¹⁷ Adolf Berle, who became friends with the Danish Minister, promoted this agenda relentlessly.¹⁸¹⁸ These aspirations informed the American decision to allow for Danish participation on the United Nations Information Committee,¹⁸¹⁹ and to invite Kauffmann “in a personal capacity” to attend the Food and Agriculture Conference.¹⁸²⁰ But the relief conference presented difficulties. The Americans would not have worried over Danish signature of the relief agreement were it not for the French; despite his ambiguous status, Kauffmann had already signed the treaty regarding Greenland. But there was another problem: the British. London had embraced the same policy as Washington towards the Danish Monarchy. But inasmuch as Washington promoted Kauffmann, the British advocated for the Danish Minister to Britain, Count Eduard Reventlow, and the Free Danish Council, headed by Christmas Moeller.

¹⁸¹⁶ Berle to Roosevelt, January 5, 1942, File Roosevelt, F.D. 1942, Box 67, Berle Papers, FDRL; “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS (Berle),” January 2, 1942, 740.0011 European War/1939/19567, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, Page 27.

¹⁸¹⁷ P Minutes 5, April 4, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA.

¹⁸¹⁸ See Entries for April 9, 1940; April 19, 1940; April 20, 1940; April 23, 1940; March 5, 1941; November 27, 1941 in in Beatrice Bishop Berle and Travis Beal Jacobs, eds., *Navigating the Rapids, 1918-1971: From the Papers of Adolf A. Berle* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973), 301-306, 361-362, 378-381. See Berle’s comments in P Minutes 5, April 4, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA; Berle to Roosevelt, January 5, 1942, Berle Papers, FDRL.

¹⁸¹⁹ Veatch to Acheson, April 12, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁸²⁰ Coulson to Ward, June 8, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO.

The United States could not allow two competing Danish groups to emerge, one backed by Washington, the other by London. The British had similar fears. But while the Americans abetted Kauffman's aspirations with little consideration for the repercussions in London, the British remained circumspect.¹⁸²¹ When the Danish Legation in Britain began requesting permission to participate in various technical committee meetings of the Inter-Allied Committee, they acquiesced, but following the precedent established in Washington, they would only allow Danes to partake in a "personal capacity" as experts, and they denied them access to the main Inter-Allied Committee.¹⁸²² The Americans still saw the dangers of division. Following the Danish uprising of 1943,¹⁸²³ competition between the London and Washington Danes came out into the open. The Americans wisely smashed Danish aspirations on both sides of the

¹⁸²¹ See, for example, "The British Embassy to the Department of State," April 8, 1943, 859.00/988, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 2, *Europe* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), 6-7.

¹⁸²² "Note of Discussion between Mr. Rottbell, Consul-General for Denmark and Commercial Counselor to the Danish Legation, Mr. Standering of the Danish Legation, and Mr. Gorvin," March 10, 1943; Leith-Ross to Ronald, March 17, 1943; J.E. Coulson (for Ronald) to Leith-Ross, March 23, 1943, all in FO 371/35268; Coulson to Ward, June 8, 1943, FO 371/35270; "Note of the Conversation of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross with Monsieur Christmas Moëller on June 29th 1943," Hall-Patch to J.E. Coulson, June 30, 1943; Leith-Ross to Coulson, July 9, 1943; "Memorandum of Conversation," Leith-Ross, Möller, Rottböll, July 9, 1943, all in FO 371/35272; E. Reventlow to Henrik Kauffman (Danish Minister in Washington), August 3, 1943, FO 371/35273; Aide Memoire, by Reventlow, October 5, 1943; C.F.A. Warner to Count Eduard Reventlow, October 28, 1943; Reventlow to Warner, November 2, 1943; "Danish participation in Relief organizations," No Date, all FO 371/35277, all PRO.

¹⁸²³ On the Danish uprising, see Jorgen Hastrup, *Secret Alliance: A Study of the Danish Resistance Movement, 1940-45*, Volumes 1-3 (Odense: Odense University Press, 1976-1977); Jerry Voorhis, "Germany and Denmark: 1940-45," *Scandinavian Studies* 44, no. 2 (1972): 171-185; Coulson to Leith-Ross, October 11, 1943, FO 371/35277, PRO.

Atlantic,¹⁸²⁴ but silently promoted Kauffmann.¹⁸²⁵ For this reason, the Danes never established a government-in-exile. These events would be in the future, but in April 1943 the Americans could see the threats.

Thus French politics in particular, but also the looming threat of division among the Danish groups in London and Washington, influenced American policy towards non-governmental authorities with respect to the relief agreement. Acheson therefore used the April 12, 1942 meeting to request that the phrase “or authorities” be expunged from the draft agreement.¹⁸²⁶ Though it had been inserted during the Leith-Ross visit,¹⁸²⁷ Acheson humorously attributed it to a “typographical error.” It appeared that none of the four powers would oppose this change.¹⁸²⁸

But the British considered the deletion unacceptable. This “sort of exclusion,” J.E. Coulson at the Foreign Office wrote, “will merely encourage them to be non-cooperative in every possible way.” The French were already making “heroic efforts” to assemble supplies from their Empire for the day of liberation. They were also trying to remain “out of wartime machinery for the allocation of supplies.” They preferred to manage their

¹⁸²⁴ See the documents included in section entitled “Denmark: Continued Recognition by the United States of the Danish Minister as Representative of Denmark While That Country Was Under German Occupation,” *FRUS, 1943*, Vol. 2, 7-21.

¹⁸²⁵ Berle to Acheson, October 11, 1943, 840.50/2791; Unknown Author to Berle, October 12, 1943, 840.50/2791; Unknown Author to Berle, October 16, 1943, 840.50/2791; Unknown Author to Berle, October 12, 1943, 840.50/2791, NARA, all in Box 4815, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁸²⁶ “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” April 12, 1943, (139) AME 45/1/33, Institute Jean Monnet.

¹⁸²⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation,” July 15, 1942; “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 11, 1942, both in FO 371/31504, PRO.

¹⁸²⁸ “Memorandum of Discussion in Mr. Acheson’s Office, Department of State,” April 12, 1943, (139) AME 45/1/33, Institute Jean Monnet. The claim that it was a typographical error was a lie. See Veatch to Acheson, April 17, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

affairs independently. “Unless we give them some opportunity to associate themselves with post-war mechanism,” Coulson wrote, “we shall only have ourselves to blame.”¹⁸²⁹ The Belgians, Dutch, Luxembourgers, Norwegians, and the Free French had jointly petitioned the British with a request to allow them to collaborate with military authorities to draw up relief plans the previous year.¹⁸³⁰ If the United States angered them further, the possibility also existed that De Gaulle would seek to lure these countries away from Washington. For this reason, the British had even suggested a seat for France on the Central Committee, which the American considered, but opposed.¹⁸³¹ Hugh Dalton nonetheless presented Acheson’s alteration to the War Cabinet. But before they could consider it, the departments reached a unanimous agreement. It was duly rejected.¹⁸³²

The End Game: The Final Meeting Resolves the Two Outstanding Issues

At the end of April 1943, Acheson still faced two hurdles. The Canadian problem had been replaced with the question of French participation, while the dispute over the national Deputy Director Generals remained unsolved. On April 15, 1943, the British reiterated their rejection of Acheson’s proposal reserving these positions for three of the four powers.¹⁸³³ Then on April 23, 1943, the Chinese informed the Americans that they

¹⁸²⁹ “Minute by J.E. Coulson,” April 14, 1943, FO 371/35269; “Minute by J.E. Coulson,” April 26, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO.

¹⁸³⁰ “Memorandum of Conversation by Leith-Ross,” November 26, 1942; “Memorandum handed to Sir Frederick Leith-Ross,” November 26, 1942, all in 371/31505, PRO.

¹⁸³¹ Telegram Relief No. 8, DC to FO, January 8, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO.

¹⁸³² “United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” Paper by President of the BOT, Hugh Dalton, April 20, 1942, FO 371/35270; Telegram Relief No. 38, FO to DC, April 15, 1943, FO 371/35269, PRO.

¹⁸³³ Telegram Relief No. 38, FO to DC, April 15, 1943, FO 371/35269, PRO.

too wanted a Deputy Director General.¹⁸³⁴ This demand strengthened Acheson's hand. The evolving dynamics of America's attitude towards France also boded well for the final round of talks. With Roosevelt increasingly doubtful of Moscow's postwar intentions, it was likely that the Americans would find a way out of the French quagmire.¹⁸³⁵ They had invited them to the Food and Agricultural Conference and the postwar financial discussions. For the relief conference, the question was whether they should be permitted to sign the agreement, not whether they could participate. The British simply misunderstood the American position. Let us tackle these issues in turn.

By April 24, 1943, the Americans agreed that Deputy Director General positions should be reserved for China, Britain and the Soviet Union. The issue was secrecy. If such arrangements could not be stated in the draft agreement, it was considered equally dangerous to include them in the minutes of the next four-power meeting. In a letter to Acheson, Roy Veatch implied that the State Department had conceded too much: if events turned awry, and Congress subpoenaed the records for an investigation, these arrangements would create political problems in the United States.¹⁸³⁶ Ray Atherton also expressed doubts. "This Government should not be placed in the position of having to

¹⁸³⁴ Chinese Ambassador to Acheson, April 23, 1943, 840.50/1852, Box 4808, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁸³⁵ Roosevelt's views on France began to change in early 1943. He began to worry of a weak France in the face of a Soviet Union that refused to cooperate with the China, Great Britain and the United States. See "Passages in the Minutes of Advisory Committee and Its Subcommittees Reflecting Consultation with the President," No Date, File Talks with FDR, 1942-44, Box 54, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. In particular, see entry for February 26 1943. This entry states: "Davis reported change in President's views on France. Before North Africa events President favored keeping France disarmed. Now he is weighing the question of what would happen if France and Germany were disarmed, but Russia remained armed and failed to cooperate with U.S., U.K., China in maintenance of peace."

¹⁸³⁶ Veatch to Acheson, April 24, 1943, 840.50/1784-2/7, Box 4807, RG 59, NARA.

yield to the desires of the British and Soviet Governments on this matter since most of the resources of the organization will be provided by the United States.”¹⁸³⁷

Yet Acheson refused to reopen the question with Litvinov. He had already agreed to record the understanding in the minutes of the next four-power meeting.¹⁸³⁸ For this reason, the Americans altered the text of the understanding. Instead of naming the countries, it referred to members of the Central Committee. But more significantly, it stated that the four powers would recommend this procedure to the Director General and use “their best efforts” to help him make the appointments.¹⁸³⁹ Prior to the final meeting of the four powers, the British reluctantly agreed to this proposal.¹⁸⁴⁰

But they disagreed with the American position on France. If the two French groups could agree to a common delegation, they would be admitted to the relief conference, but they would not be permitted to sign the agreement. In Acheson’s view, the two groups were legally akin to a non-governmental organization. Ray Atherton concurred, but unlike Acheson, who thought the French should be allowed to sign if they established a “joint authority,” he believed this could only be allowed if the two French groups established a “government recognized by the United States.”¹⁸⁴¹ If principle drove Atherton, tactics motivated Acheson, who believed the French, at least in appearance, should have some control over their destiny. His view prevailed. The British argued the French should also be admitted to the organization if they formed a “joint authority” *after*

¹⁸³⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation,” April 24, 1943, 840.50/1784-2/7, Box 4807, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁸³⁸ Telegram Relief No. 52, DC to FO, April 26, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁸³⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” April 26, 1943, 840.50/1784-2/7, Box 4807, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁸⁴⁰ Telegram Relief No. 42, FO to DC, April 30, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁸⁴¹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” April 22, 1943, 840.50/1784-1/7, Box 4807, RG 59, NARA.

the agreement was signed.¹⁸⁴² The Americans wanted this stipulation relegated to the minutes of the next four-power meeting, but they remained hostile towards the phrase “or authorities.”¹⁸⁴³

On May 4, 1943, the four Ambassadors convened for their final meeting. They rapidly reached agreement on the issue of Deputy Director Generals, though Litvinov made an attempt to impose unanimity on their selection by the Central Committee. The wise men reaffirmed that they would use their best endeavors to secure the Chairmanship of the Supplies Committee for Canada. They accepted the American proposal to invite countries associated with the United Nations to the relief conference and permit them to sign the agreement. France constituted the only sore point. Yet China, Great Britain and the Soviet Union cornered the United States. While Acheson thought the draft might be altered to allow for French signature after they had agreed on a “joint authority,” China, Britain and the Soviet Union believed they should be included from the outset. To meet Acheson’s concerns, they proposed that no authority be admitted for signature without unanimous agreement of the four powers.¹⁸⁴⁴ The American Government acquiesced a few days later.¹⁸⁴⁵ The tortuous four-power discussions had finally come to an end.

¹⁸⁴² Telegram Relief No. 41, FO to DC, April 30, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁸⁴³ Telegram Relief No. 38, FO to DC, April 15, 1943, T188/256, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 52, DC to FO, April 26, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO.

¹⁸⁴⁴ “Memorandum of Discussion in the Office of the Assistant SOS (Acheson),” May 4, 1943, 840.50/1899c, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 902-908; Telegram Relief No. 55, DC to FO, T188/256, PRO.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Telegram Relief No. 56, DC to FO, May 8, 1943, T188/256, PRO.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY

Public relations had always played a central role in Roosevelt's wartime and postwar strategies. At the conclusion of his January 6, 1941 State of the Union address, he laid out the four freedoms on which he believed a new world order should be founded: freedom of expression and religion, freedom from want and fear.¹⁸⁴⁶ Then, on August 14, 1941, he and Winston Churchill released the Atlantic Charter at the conclusion of their conference aboard the USS *Augusta* and the HMS *Prince of Wales* in Placentia Bay. This bilateral statement ensconced the four freedoms in a wider program that pledged the two powers to neither seek territorial aggrandizement, nor neglect the political and economic aspirations of people all over the world.¹⁸⁴⁷ Following the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor and America's entry into the war, Roosevelt summoned allied representatives to the White House, where, on January 1, 1942, they signed the United Nations Declaration. This document turned the unilateral and bilateral statements of the previous year into a full-fledged alliance, in which the signatories committed themselves to the defeat of the Axis Powers and to achieve the ideals and objectives articulated in the Atlantic Charter.¹⁸⁴⁸

¹⁸⁴⁶ "The Annual Message to Congress," January 6, 1941, in Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1940: *War and Aid to Democracies* (New York: MacMillan, 1941), 663-672.

¹⁸⁴⁷ "Atlantic Charter," August 14, 1941, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy (New Haven: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, 2008): <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp> (accessed September 11, 2012).

¹⁸⁴⁸ "Declaration by the United Nations," January 1, 1942, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy (New Haven: Lillian Goldman Law Library,

The idea of unity stood at the center of Roosevelt's strategy. Until his death in 1945, he hammered this theme at every possible turn, despite the fact that the war was being fought by a small number of countries, primarily Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. The purpose was to create the impression of a broad alliance that would win the war and establish a stable peace. This objective served multiple purposes. It suggested that the burdens of fighting the war and winning the peace would be spread out across the freedom-loving nations of the earth. Doubtless Roosevelt fashioned this impression for the American people, who worried that they might shoulder too much of the burden.¹⁸⁴⁹ It cloaked America's hegemonic aspirations in the banner of broad participation. This impression served to win support in the global community, especially among people in free or invaded countries fearing imperialism after the war, but also colonial territories yearning for independence.¹⁸⁵⁰

The substance of these public relations salvos served two aims. At the most basic level, they aided the war effort. By providing a bright vision for the future – one based on freedom, justice, equality, prosperity, and democracy – these statements emboldened the

Yale Law School, 2008): http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade03.asp (accessed September 11, 2012).

¹⁸⁴⁹ The examples of Roosevelt emphasizing the theme of unity are too numerous to enumerate here, but in one example, he explains the purpose of this theme: "The President Stresses the Need for Allied Unity in a Letter to the Economic Club of New York," March 12, 1942, in Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1942: *Humanity on the Defensive* (New York: MacMillan, 1942), 161-162.

¹⁸⁵⁰ On the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations generally, see Theodore A. Wilson, *The First Summit: Roosevelt and Churchill at Placenta Bay, 1941* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1991). See also Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005). On the issue of colonial territories and the Atlantic Charter, see William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 20-21, 223-224, 247, 254.

global masses, whether in occupied or unoccupied countries, to resist, rise up, or join the fight against the Axis Powers, which threatened these values. In effect, they gave the world, and the American people especially, a cause for which to fight. This fact points to the second purpose of these statements. They abetted American aspirations and provided a vague but powerful blueprint for the postwar period. While the lofty language and high ideals worked to obtain global support for American leadership after the war, many of the programmatic aspects of these statements – free and open markets, universal access to raw materials, freedom and independence for colonial peoples – constituted an implicit attack on the British Empire and other colonial powers. It was an effort to de-link these territories from their colonial masters and integrate them into an American system.¹⁸⁵¹

The vision Roosevelt touted in public was radical not only in terms of its substance, but also in its geographic reach. The Atlantic Charter, he imperiously claimed, “applied to all humanity.”¹⁸⁵² The creation of the United Nations, he argued in a speech to the International Student Assembly on September 3, 1942, was a “development of historic importance” that glossed over cultural distinctions. “It means that the old term ‘Western civilization,’ no longer applies. World events and the common needs of all humanity are joining the culture of Asia with the culture of Europe and the culture of the Americas to form, for the first time, a real world civilization.”¹⁸⁵³ To be sure, these

¹⁸⁵¹ On the points, see works listed in previous footnote.

¹⁸⁵² “The Eight Hundred and Fifty-fifth Press Conference (Excerpts),” October 27, 1942, in Rosenman, ed., *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1942, 435. Hull and Welles also made this statement. See Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 155. We have also seen this stressed in the postwar planning meetings in the State Department. See previous chapters.

¹⁸⁵³ “The Better World... Will Be Made Possible Only by Bold Vision, Intelligent Planning, and Hard Work – The President Addresses the International Student

claims worked to unify the globe against the Axis Powers, but they also served to exalt the United States into the position of world leader. Because Roosevelt and many of the officials in his Administration believed in the inherent goodness of America, they thought that what advanced U.S. interests would serve the global good as well.

Yet the postwar planners, as we have seen, struggled to turn the Atlantic Charter into an actionable program. They anticipated wide infractions of its principles, especially by the Soviet Union, but quite possibly by the United States as well. They also knew that the Four Freedoms could never be applied on a global scale. Freedom, for one, almost always comes into conflict with order and stability, which they well knew was a prerequisite for peace. They also doubted the possibility that countries would surrender their sovereignty and resources to international organizations, whether in the domain of security, justice, or human welfare. But despite these realities, the Roosevelt Administration continued to publicly advance the unrealistic aims and lofty ideals of the Charter. For Roosevelt, those who called the four freedoms and the Atlantic Charter unattainable nonsense would have been opposed to the Declaration of Independence, the Magna Charta, and the Ten Commandments of Moses.¹⁸⁵⁴ Yet tragically, as one scholar explains, these appeals only “heightened the already high expectations about the postwar world and thus perhaps contributed to some of the disillusionment that followed...”¹⁸⁵⁵

Assembly,” September 3, 1942, in Rosenman, ed., *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1942, 347.

¹⁸⁵⁴ “We Have Been Forced to Call Out... the Sheriff’s Posse... That Gangsterism May Be Eliminated in the Community of Nations,” August 25, 1943, Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1943: *The Tide Turns* (New York: MacMillan, 1943), 365.

¹⁸⁵⁵ Christopher D. O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles: Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 619.

The Three Central Public Relations Objectives

It is in this context that we consider the public relations strategy that emerged for postwar relief. Three distinct but interrelated problems converged in the months after the Congressional elections of November 3, 1942. First, domestic political factors limited the actions of the Roosevelt Administration. Herbert Hoover remained the dominant voice on food and relief matters in American politics. Following the November elections, he began touting his credentials as a possible leader of the country's food and relief efforts. Roosevelt again considered the idea, but quickly abandoned it when Hoover's comments in the press turned nasty.¹⁸⁵⁶ The former President argued, on the one hand, that the country's food policies evinced no "vision of the impending postwar famine";¹⁸⁵⁷ on the

¹⁸⁵⁶ Bernard Baruch reports that Roosevelt considered bringing Hoover into the Administration to supervise the food operations, but apparently changed his mind due to Hoover's press activities. See Richard Norton Smith, *An Uncommon Man: The Triumph of Herbert Hoover* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 318. Hoover reports that the Chinese suggested that he be "called in, but the Roosevelt Administration was adamant against it." See Herbert Hoover, *An American Epic*, Vol. 4, *The Guns Cease Killing and the Saving of Life from Famine Begins, 1939-1964* (Chicago: Henry Regenry Company, 1964), 84. For other efforts to bring Hoover into the Administration, see Gary Dean Best, *Herbert Hoover: The Postpresidential Years, 1933-1964*, Vol. One: 1933-1945 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), 226. Even members of the public tried to get Roosevelt to bring Hoover into the Administration. See, for example, W.M. McGill, Jr., "Mr. Hoover Speaks Out: Letters to the Editor," January 28, 1943, *WP*, 6.

¹⁸⁵⁷ Quote taken from Hoover, *An American Epic*, Vol. 4, 77. The most important attack came in the form of a nationwide broadcast on January 21, 1943. See "Hoover Places Agriculture in Class With Arms Industry: Says Labor, Equipment Shortages Hinder Production," January 22, 1943, *WSJ*, 3; "Hoover Sees A Lag in the Food Front," January 22, 1943, *NYT*, 16; "Hoover Calls for Greater Food Output," January 21, 1943, *LAT*, 1. Hoover also published a number of articles in the American Press beginning with a letter to *Farm Journal* the day before the November 1942 Congressional elections. The most widely read were distributed by the Associated Press. See Herbert Hoover, "Home Front Vital, Hoover Declares," January 12, 1943, *NYT*, 7; Herbert Hoover, "Strain in Germany Studied By Hoover," January 13, 1943, *NYT*, 10; Herbert Hoover, "Japanese Supplies Good, Hoover Says," January 14, 1943, *NYT*, 8; Herbert Hoover, "Home Front Task

other hand, he reignited his campaign to see wartime relief delivered into Belgium, Finland, Holland, Norway, and Poland. With Great Britain and the United States now providing relief assistance to Greece, he asserted, the old arguments no longer applied.¹⁸⁵⁸ The former President's stature also increased due to the publication of *The Problems of Lasting Peace*, a thoughtful contribution to the debate over the postwar world co-authored with Hugh Gibson and published in early 1942.¹⁸⁵⁹

Herbert Hoover had to be contained. But because the relief negotiations were proceeding too slowly, and appeared as though they might fail, the Administration could not call a relief conference just yet. They needed another mechanism to thwart the former President. As explained elsewhere, the Administration announced on November 20, 1942 that Herbert Lehman would resign as Governor of New York to set up the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO) in the State Department, which precluded the possibility that Hoover would assume control of the Government's postwar

Defined by Hoover," January 15, 1943, *NYT*, 2; Herbert Hoover, "U.S. War Council Urged By Hoover," January 16, 1943, *NYT*, 4. Within the administration, there was also criticism of the bureaucratic management of food policies. See Claud F. Clayton and John D. Black, "Wartime Food Administration-U.S.A.," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 225, *Nutrition and Food Supply: the War and After* (Jan., 1943): 96-105.

¹⁸⁵⁸ On his renewed efforts to encourage the Allies to permit aid through the blockade, see Herbert Hoover to Herbert Lehman, November 25, 1942, Drawer 1, Personal Correspondence of the DG of UNRRA 1942-1946, Lehman Papers, CU; Herbert Hoover, "Japanese Supplies Good, Hoover Says," January 14, 1943, *NYT*, 8; Herbert Hoover, "Hoover Renews Plea for Opening of Blockade to Stave Off Famine in Europe," January 14, 1943; *WP*, 11; "Hoover Asks Food For More Countries," February 21, 1943, *WP*, 8; "Hoover Would Feed Europe's Children Now," February 21, 1943, *LAT*, 1; "Use of Neutrals to Feed Europe Urged By Hoover," February 21, 1943, *CDT*, 21.

¹⁸⁵⁹ Demand for this book was so high that the publishers printed it on no less than ten occasions between May 1942 and January 1943. Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson, *The Problems of Lasting Peace* (New York: Doubleday Books, 1943).

relief efforts.¹⁸⁶⁰ Yet this maneuver did not rule the former President out as a possible food czar, a position he also held after the First World War. Thus Roosevelt appointed the Secretary of Agriculture, Claude R. Wickard Food Administrator on December 6, 1942, and gave him sweeping powers over the nation's food supplies and distribution.¹⁸⁶¹ In this way, he silenced talk of Hoover joining the Government in either capacity; and he implicitly deflected the charge of negligence by revealing that relief preparations were underway in the State Department. Simultaneously, he, Welles and Lehman publicly heightened the Administration's commitment to undertake postwar relief.¹⁸⁶²

¹⁸⁶⁰ W.H. Lawrence, "Lehman to Direct Relief of Peoples Freed from Axis," *NYT*, 1; W.H. Lawrence, "Lehman to Get Allied Food Post," November 22, 1942, *LAT*, 5; "Lehman Forecasts Years of Service in War-Torn Lands," November 22, 1942, *NYT*, 1; "Lehman's Task: Feeding a Half a Billion People!" November 22, 1942, *CDT*, 6; "Tough Assignment," November 23, 1942, *WP*, p. 12; "Lehman Accepts War Relief Job," November 29, 1942, *WP*, B5.

¹⁸⁶¹ John Fisher, "Roosevelt Names Wickard Food Czar," December 7, 1942, *CDT*, 1.

¹⁸⁶² On November 17, 1942, Sumner Welles told the New Herald Tribune Forum: "The United Nations' machinery for relief and rehabilitation must be prepared to operate without a moment's delay to alleviate the suffering and misery of millions of homeless and starving human beings, if civilization is to be saved from years of social and moral collapse." Then, quoting from Roosevelt, he added: "'No one will go hungry or without the other means of livelihood in any territory occupied by the United Nations, if it is humanely within our powers to make the necessary supplies to the peoples of these territories to hasten the defeat of the Axis.' Weapons will also be supplied to the peoples of these territories to hasten the defeat of the Axis.'" See "Blueprint for Peace: Address before the New York Herald Tribune Forum," November 17, 1942, in Sumner Welles, *World of the Four Freedoms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 98. Roosevelt used the December 11, 1942 report to Congress on lend-lease operations to state the following: "We also have another task, which will grow in magnitude as our striking power grows, and as new territories are liberated from the enemy's crushing grip. That task is to supply medicines, food, clothing, and other dire needs of those peoples who have been plundered, despoiled and starved. The Nazis and Japanese have butchered innocent men and women in a campaign of organized terror. They have stripped the lands they hold of food and other resources. They have used hunger as an instrument of the slavery they seek to impose. Our policy is the direct opposite. United Nations' forces will bring food for the starving and medicine for the sick. Every aid possible will be given to restore each of the liberated countries to soundness and strength, so that each may make its full contribution to United Nations victory, and to the peace which follows." See

The second problem concerned the United Nations. Officials had become concerned that nothing had been done to transform the idea of the United Nations into something more than a phrase used to describe the wartime alliance. While they desired a show of unity to bolster the war effort, they also wanted to pave the way for postwar cooperation among the United Nations. It was insufficient to have “United Nations Week” in January 1943. Thus they had “United Nations Month” in February 1943.¹⁸⁶³ But this was not enough either: something else needed to be done.

Food and agriculture, as we have seen, were the topics chosen for the first multilateral conference. Uncontroversial, these matters appealed to the American people, but also provided an opportunity, as one administration official explained, “to see if the representatives of the various nations could work together.”¹⁸⁶⁴ As a result, Roosevelt broached the idea on February 23, 1943.¹⁸⁶⁵ Three days later, Sumner Welles indirectly

Seventh Report to Congress on Lend-Lease Operations: For the Period Ended December 11, 1942 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942), 5-6. See also “Address by Herbert H. Lehman,” delivered at a testimonial dinner, New York, NY, January 9, 1943, in *Bulletin*, January 9, 1943, Vol. 8, No. 185, Publication 1863 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 31-32; “Address by Herbert H. Lehman,” delivered at a testimonial dinner for Labor Division of the Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training, New York, NY, January 31, 1943 in *Bulletin*, February 6, 1943, Vol. 8, No. 189, Publication 1875 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 129-132.

¹⁸⁶³ For reference to United Nations week, see “Statement by the SOS,” Released to Press on January 15, 1943, in *Bulletin*, January 16, 1943, Vol. 8, No. 186, Publication 1866 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, January 16, 1943), 37-38. For reference to United Nations month, see “Address by the Under SOS at the Opening Ceremonies for United Nations Month,” Released to the press February 12, in *Bulletin*, February 13, 1943, Vol. 8, No. 190, Publication 1877 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 147-149.

¹⁸⁶⁴ Craig Alan Wilson, “Rehearsal for a United Nations: The Hot Springs Conference,” *Diplomatic History* 4. no. 3 (July 1980): 265-268.

¹⁸⁶⁵ “Roosevelt Presidential Press Conference Number 882 (February 23, 1943),” in *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 21, 1943 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 183-87.

referred to this proposal in a speech delivered at the University of Toronto. The United States, he emphasized, was taking steps to discuss with other members of the UN ways to achieve the economic objectives of the Atlantic Charter.¹⁸⁶⁶ While wartime and postwar imperatives played the dominant role in this decision, this proposal also deflected criticisms raised by Hoover, who was insisting that the United States had not done enough to prepare for the war's end.

The Food and Agricultural Conference discussed important substantive issues, but it was also a dilatory tactic.¹⁸⁶⁷ With the relief negotiations bogged down on account of disputes with the Canadians and the Soviets, the Administration needed an alternative to distract in the interim. As Oscar Cox of the Lend-Lease Administration wrote Harry Hopkins in late 1942, a lot of preparatory and educational work still remained to be done.¹⁸⁶⁸ While opinion polls suggested an overwhelming majority of Americans believed the United States should provide food and supplies to destitute populations after the war, the Roosevelt Administration worried that the relief proposals would set off alarm bells in Congress, where representatives feared the costs of relief and reconstruction, and endeavored to protect their constitutional prerogatives.¹⁸⁶⁹ Here too Hoover had the ability to create obstructions. He and other Republicans believed

¹⁸⁶⁶ "The Victory of Peace: Address at the Convocation of the University of Toronto," February 26, 1943, in Welles, *World of the Four Freedoms*, 109-121.

¹⁸⁶⁷ For a sharp article on the substance of the conference, see Ernest Lindley, "The Food Conference Can Only Start On Problem of World-Wide Needs," *WP*, B7.

¹⁸⁶⁸ See Oscar Cox to Harry Hopkins, November 13, 1942, Oscar Cox to Harry Hopkins, November 14, 1942, but especially Oscar Cox to Harry Hopkins, December 8, 1942, all in File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

¹⁸⁶⁹ On public opinion, the Office of War Information determined that 78% of Americans agreed that the United States should help in the reconstruction of war-torn countries even "if it means that we have to continue rationing and other sacrifices after the war." Quoted in Oscar Cox to Herbert Lehman, January 26, 1943, File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

Roosevelt had run rough shod over the constitutional prerogatives of the Congress, especially its powers to approve international treaties.¹⁸⁷⁰ The mere idea of an international organization evoked memories of the debates over the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations. As a result, the Roosevelt Administration needed time to properly inform the American people, so that Congressional support would be forthcoming when the time came.

This fact underscores the final problem the Administration faced: it had to shape public opinion with arguments that would reduce opposition to their relief plans and thereby isolate opponents in the Congress. To achieve this objective, they followed the pattern set by Roosevelt and Welles with respect to the broader postwar international settlement. While Roosevelt spoke in vague and broad-sweeping terms, Welles tested specific ideas with trial balloons. In this way, the President could shield himself from possible backlash, but then enter the foray when the mood and circumstances suited him. In the case of relief, Herbert Lehman and his staff in the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO) did most of the public relations work usually reserved for Welles. While they crafted their arguments to appeal to the wider population, they focused on the audiences whose support they most needed, and who would play a considerable role in their efforts. With many of the nation's men drafted in the war effort,

¹⁸⁷⁰ See, for example, Herbert Hoover to Arthur Vandenberg, May 6, 1943. See Vandenberg's reply, in which he writes, "I entirely agree with you that it would be well worthwhile to put a microscope on all of the agreements which are being made by the executive departments in respect to international economic relationships." Arthur Vandenberg to Herbert Hoover, May 10, 1943, File Vandenberg, Arthur Correspondence and Print Matter 1940-1943, Box 243, PPIC, HHP, HHPL. Respect for Hoover in the Congress led to invitations for him to speak on the Hill. See "Hoover Holds Spotlight on Hill Today," February 8, 1943, *WP*, 1; "Senate to Get Hoover View," February 8, 1943, *LAT*, A; "Hoover Advises Easing Draft to Save Man Powers," February 9, 1943, *CDT*, 7; Robert De Vore, "Hoover Fears Peril in 1943 Army Goals," *WP*, 1.

they spoke to women, pacifists, social workers, religious groups, businessmen, and other entities with experience in humanitarian relief.

This strategy to meet the exigencies of domestic politics, pave the way for multilateral cooperation, and educate the American people on postwar relief did not emerge at once. Rather, it unfolded piecemeal. The opening salvo began with the appointments of Lehman and Wickard, but this decision only precipitated a barrage of criticism from Hoover, who was attacking the Administration for its failure to centralize control over food policy and relief in the hands of a single agency, and urging Roosevelt and Churchill to permit aid through the blockade. In a February 20, 1943 memorandum to Lehman, Thomas Reynolds, the newly appointed Director of Public Relation in the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO)¹⁸⁷¹ described the problem. First, he claimed that OFRRO had failed “to nail down” its “sphere of operation and relationships with other agencies.” This fact had entered the public discussion. Second, Reynolds lamented Hoover’s attempts “to snatch the leadership [of] the relief problem in any manner possible.” OFRRO, he argued, could not permit him to “break ground for a problem” that they were “capable of solving.” Third, the former President’s drive was “spreading rapidly outside the ranks of Hoover followers to... friends or those who normally should be our friends.” Democrats in the Senate and House had introduced resolutions for the extension of relief through the blockade, and three days prior, 43 Protestant leaders had demanded the Administration permit “immediate shipments of dried milk and vitamins for children, mothers and invalids through the blockade.”¹⁸⁷²

¹⁸⁷¹ “Reynolds is Named Lehman Aid,” January 5, 1943, *NYT*, 13.

¹⁸⁷² “Memorandum,” by Thomas Reynolds, February 20, 1943, Drawer 1, Personal Correspondence of the DG of UNRRA 1942-1946, Lehman Papers, CU.

These factors set off a wave of activity. Roosevelt, first, called the FAO Conference. Then the Administration began disputing Hoover's idea that the United States should send relief aid through the blockade with the argument that an intensification of the U-Boat campaign in the Atlantic made it impossible.¹⁸⁷³ Throughout March and into the summer, Administration officials were more forthcoming in their public statements on the President's future plans, a process Roosevelt initiated on February 23, 1943 with the news that Lehman and the State Department were "talking with other nations in regard to a conference on relief."¹⁸⁷⁴ A series of speeches by OFRRO officials to groups such as the American Friends Service Committee and National Association of Social Workers began in early March, culminating with major addresses by Herbert Lehman at Swarthmore College on May 31, 1943 and the Foreign Policy Association on June 17, 1943.¹⁸⁷⁵ Yet internally disputes over the relative powers of Lehman's operation vis-à-vis other agencies in the Government continued unabated.

¹⁸⁷³ See in particular, Harold Callender, "U-Boat Toll Bars Feeding of Europe," March 26, 1943, *NYT*, 5. This was not a false claim; the Allies experienced heavy losses during the month of March 1943.

¹⁸⁷⁴ "Roosevelt Presidential Press Conference Number 882 (February 23, 1943)", in *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 21, 183-87.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech to the National Conference on Social Work, March 12, 1943, 840.50/1676, Box 4805; Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech to the American Friends Service Committee, March 29, 1943, 840.50/3426, Box 4807; Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech to Graduating Class of Swarthmore College, May 31, 1943, 840.50/4053, Box 4810, all in RG 59, NARA; Press Release No. 252, June 16, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech to the Foreign Policy Association, June 17, 1943, FO 371/35272, PRO. Note also "Address by Assistant Secretary Berle," Released to the press January 10, in *Bulletin*, January 16, 1943, Vol. 8, No. 186, Publication 1866 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, January 16, 1943), 38-42.

The outcome of this dispute, which proved a major distraction both inside the Government and in the press, did not arrive until the end of the year.¹⁸⁷⁶

Educating the American people

“The American people are generous but they are far away from knowing the needs of mankind and the cause-and-effect relations in world affairs. We don’t like regimentation and rationing and are easily confused by ill-informed and post-seeking men into thinking that any foreign relief and rehabilitation is a senseless blunder.”¹⁸⁷⁷ In this way, Luther Gulick, Chief of the Division of Programs and Requirements in the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, explained the internal rationale for the Roosevelt Administration’s efforts to educate the American people on the need for

¹⁸⁷⁶ For a survey of the internal bickering over power, see Roosevelt to Hull, December 11, 1942; Reynolds to Lehman, February 20, 1943; Lehman to Roosevelt, March 13, 1943; Roosevelt to Hull, May 8, 1943; Lehman to Roosevelt, August 30, 1943; “Memorandum for the President,” September 4, 1943, all documents in Drawer 1, Personal Correspondence of the DG of UNRRA 1942-1946, Lehman Papers, CU. For a more detailed picture, see File 49-1 UNRRA, Hugh Jackson Papers OFRRO, OLLA, OFEC-State Department Relationships Dec. 1942-Sept. 1943, Box 1, Jackson Papers, CU. For coverage of this fiasco in the press, see Herbert Hoover, “U.S. War Council Urged by Hoover,” January 16, 1943, *NYT*, 4; “Single Food Chief Urged by Hoover,” June 9, 1943, *NYT*, 1; “New Unit Formed to Aid Liberated,” July 18, 1943, *NYT*, 1; “Urges Naming of Hoover to End Food Muddling,” July 3, 1943, *CDT*, 4; “WFA Denies Food to Lehman Agency,” August 15, 1943, *NYT*, 1; John MacCormac, “Hull to Take Reins Over All Agencies in Economic Field,” September 3, 1943, *NYT*, 1; Drew Pearson, “The Washington Merry-Go-Round,” September 16, 1943, *WP*, 21; “Lehman Losing Powers; Hint Clash With Hull,” September 17, 1943, *CDT*, 11; Edward T. Folliard, “Crowley Heads Newly-Formed Unit Centralizing Foreign Economic Functions,” September 26, 1943, *CDT*, M1; “Stettinius Named for Welles Post; Crowley Shifted; Lehman Also Advanced,” September 26, 1943, *NYT*, 1; “Welles Out; Place Taken by Stettinius,” September 26, 1943, *LAT*, 1; “Roosevelt Shakes Up Aids!: Welles Quits; Stettinius and Crowley Move; Lehman Assistant to President,” September 26, 1943, *CDT*, 1.

¹⁸⁷⁷ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

and purpose of postwar relief. Naturally the Administration designed its public relations campaign for postwar relief to convince the broad population of its necessity, but they framed the debate to refute real and possible enemies while seeking to galvanize support among those individuals most likely to display an interest in the topic of relief.

The Roosevelt Administration worried that three possible groups might oppose their plans for postwar relief. First, they feared that uninformed Republicans and Democrats might ally with cautious military officials, and then argue that the Administration's preparations for postwar relief were premature and would impair the war effort.¹⁸⁷⁸ In early 1943, the war appeared far from over. Despite the American victory at Guadalcanal at the end of January, the Japanese still appeared to have the upper hand in the Asian theatre. On May 2, 1943, they bombed Darwin, Australia. In North Africa, the tide was turning, but the Allied landings in Sicily would not occur until July, and the cross-channel invasion was more than a year in the future. American officials consequently turned relief into a matter of military necessity. While it had been used as a propaganda tool to incite insurrection in Axis occupied countries, State Department officials argued in early 1943 that relief was essential for ongoing operations in North Africa and the inevitable invasion of Europe. Even more, they contended that it would shorten the war.

This approach was largely successful. The logic of their arguments was so damning that no domestic criticism emerged, but it would also have unintended consequences abroad. According to Lehman, the Allies would "find conditions close to chaos" when liberation arrived. "Shattered economies, pestilence, starvation and death

¹⁸⁷⁸ This is apparent in the planning sessions. See previous chapters devoted to internal American planning for postwar relief.

breed riot and anarchy,” he argued. “It should be self-evident that our troops, whether in North Africa or any place elsewhere in future theatres of operations, will not be able to take the offensive successfully if they must launch their operations in countries where famine and pestilence are generating riot, revolution and complete disorder.” Relief was therefore essential. Yet following the words of Roosevelt, he took the logic a step further. Yet his diction raised eyebrows. “America must use food, clothing, shelter and the necessities of life as a real *weapon* to win complete and overwhelming victory and to *secure the peace which must follow*.”¹⁸⁷⁹ The plan to use food as a weapon, as we will see, raised concerns among foreign observers, who had worries of their own.

Conservatives and so-called isolationists constituted the second group. These individuals worried about costs, demands on American resources, and the possibility that other countries would become interminably dependent on the United States. During January and February 1943, the need for secrecy made it difficult for the Administration to fully address the question of costs and resources. Instead, officials denied the existence of plans for a “Utopian system.”¹⁸⁸⁰ The United States would neither play the “part of... Santa Claus,” nor “bestow its blessings on the entire world.”¹⁸⁸¹ Rather, it would help others help themselves. Officials also argued that postwar relief and rehabilitation would serve the interests of the United States. “The relief and rehabilitation of war-stricken

¹⁸⁷⁹ “Lehman Discusses Food As A Weapon,” February 1, 1943, *NYT*, 6. In the final quotation, I have italicized the most important phrases for emphasis. See also Vast Relief Job Pictured, February 1, 1943, *WP*, 9; Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA; Press Release No. 252, June 16, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, FO 371/35272, PRO.

¹⁸⁸⁰ “Another Weapon: Food to Help Shorten War, Lehman Says,” January 10, 1943, *WP*, 11.

¹⁸⁸¹ Arthur Krock, “In the Nation: The Lehman OFRRO Blueprints Its Task,” January 7, 1943, *NYT*, 18; “Lehman Tells Aim of Foreign Relief,” January 10, 1943, *NYT*, 28.

nations,” Lehman asserted, “is the necessary first step toward a balanced economy in which a high level of consumption will prevent the piling up of those great stocks of surplus goods which would otherwise be quickly accumulated after this war in all the primary producing countries.” The alternative was a “terrific contraction” or a “shattering post-war depression.”¹⁸⁸²

The argumentation followed the logic of Roosevelt’s remarks of November 24, 1942, in which he used the relationship between the North and South to explain why the United States should provide relief and rehabilitation assistance. If you raise the standard of the agricultural south, he explained, then they can buy the products of the manufacturing north. “Now the same thing,” he claimed, “can be worked out in those Nations... which today have practically no purchasing power.” Lehman followed this line, but spoke with more precision: “We in America must not lose sight of the fact that, once this war has ended, we again will be the greatest producers in the world and will want markets for our grain, our cotton, our tobacco and other agricultural staples as well as our steel, our automobiles and the thousands of products of our mills and factories.”¹⁸⁸³

To address cost concerns, the Roosevelt Administration deployed two arguments. First, they made the case that postwar relief would be inexpensive by comparison with the economic, political and social havoc that would result if certain people in the United States, as Roosevelt saw it, could “not see the value of putting other people on their

¹⁸⁸² Press Release No. 252, June 16, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, FO 371/35272, PRO.

¹⁸⁸³ “The Eight Hundred and Sixty-Third Press Conference (Excerpts),” Item 128, November 24, 1943, in Rosenman, ed., *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1942, 486.

feet.”¹⁸⁸⁴ By March 1943, when the Administration became more forthcoming with its postwar relief plans, they deployed a second line of argumentation that inadvertently diminished the force of the first one. While implying that relief would be relatively inexpensive, their descriptions of the task at hand suggested something otherwise. Relief and rehabilitation would be a task of “Herculean proportions,” they asserted, requiring sacrifice from everyone. Thus the Administration publicly expressed the hope that some agreement could be reached permitting the creation of an international relief organization. In this way, officials could weld “the resources and personnel of all the governments” into a “single and unified organization.”¹⁸⁸⁵ In short, the entire world would foot the bill.

Yet they did not abandon the earlier argument altogether. Instead, they reframed it by comparing the costs of relief with the costs of the war. As Lehman explained in June 1943, “This war right now is costing the American taxpayer about a billion dollars every three days. The cost in life and spiritual value,” he added, “is incalculable.” For this reason, it was imperative that the entire world work to forge the downtrodden into a cohesive group ready to cooperate in the battle of liberation. An international approach to relief was the most financially astute approach. But the United States remained critical, he suggested. “Should America’s readiness to bring relief to the weary peoples of Europe and Asia shorten the war by but a week or two,” Lehman calculated, “the United States will have saved far more on war costs than the total outlays which can be anticipated in

¹⁸⁸⁴ Throughout January and February 1943, the Roosevelt Administration stayed away from the question of directly addressing the costs. Instead, this argument was largely implied. See, for example, “Address by Herbert H. Lehman,” January 31, 1943 in *Bulletin*, February 6, 1943, No. 189, 129-132. For the quote, see “The Eight Hundred and Sixty-Third Press Conference (Excerpts),” Item 128, November 24, 1943, in Rosenman, ed., *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1942, 486.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA.

the field of relief and rehabilitation.”¹⁸⁸⁶ Yet they were remarkably circumspect about what the costs would be. When they gave precise figures, they understated the totals.¹⁸⁸⁷ In more honest moments, they stuck to generalities. “The cost of the supplies required to prevent starvation when the whole of the reoccupied sections in liberated will run into hundreds of millions, and perhaps billions of dollars.”¹⁸⁸⁸

In their public assertions, they usually disregarded the costs of many anticipated undertakings. Aware of this fact, the *Wall Street Journal* honed in on the term “rehabilitation.” This word contains “almost endless potentialities. It can mean or be interpreted to mean not only nourishment, clothing and medicines for physical restoration of human beings but a host things besides.”¹⁸⁸⁹ Indeed American and British policymakers privately worried and debated the meaning of this term. Where does relief end and rehabilitation begin? Even more problematic, where does rehabilitation end and reconstruction begin? The scope of the relief organization’s activities, in fact, was never fully defined.¹⁸⁹⁰ But for much of 1943, American policymakers refused to assign any

¹⁸⁸⁶ Press Release No. 252, June 16, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, FO 371/35272, PRO.

¹⁸⁸⁷ See, for example, W.H. Lawrence, “Tunision to be First Test of Lehman Organization,” April 18, 1943, *NYT*, E6.

¹⁸⁸⁸ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA.

¹⁸⁸⁹ “Relief and Rehabilitation,” April 7, 1943, *WSJ*, 8.

¹⁸⁹⁰ The documentary record on this debate is immense, but see Winant to Hull, “Memorandum,” March 24, 1943, File Post-War Problems Economic and Political, 1942-43, Box 65, Berle Papers, FDRL; Telegram Sever Saving 10, British Missions in DC to War Cabinet Offices, August 4, 1943, FO 371/35274; “Joint Note on Scope of UNRRA,” by Ministers of Production, Supply and Food, August 12, 1943, FO 371/35273; Leith-Ross to Law, August 30, 1943, FO 371/35275; “Note on Second Meeting on Relief Brief,” September 1, 1943, P.W. 546, FO 371/35275; Telegram 4257, DC to FO, September 22, 1943, FO 371/35276; “Note by Chairman,” Official Committee on Post-War Commodity Policy and Relief, C.P.R. (43) 24, October 6, 1943, FO 371/35278, PRO; Richard Law to Dean Acheson, October 5, 1943, 840.50/2875; “Memorandum on the Scope and Operations of UNRRA,” October 5, 1943, 840.50/2875; Stettinius to Roosevelt, October 20, 1943, 840.50/2832B; “Memorandum of Conversation,” October

concrete monetary value to the “rehabilitation” component of their plans, and they claimed that reconstruction was not “the province of a relief and rehabilitation agency.” They clearly feared criticism. Yet they argued that if the objective were self-help, they would have to “rehabilitate” the agricultural and industrial sectors of war ravaged economies, a task requiring much more than food, clothing and medical supplies.¹⁸⁹¹

Of course the possibility always existed that recipient countries might pay for these materials. But because the Administration considered this approach unwise in most cases, they did not address it until the summer of 1943. Experiences following the First World War weighed heavily in their calculations. “Where Governments had cash or assets, they were required in some cases to pay cash and in other cases to pledge assets as security for loans.” But in other cases, the United States forced governments with no cash or assets to “pay by means of loans advanced to them,” often in circumstances where the “soundness of the credit was highly questionable.” As a result, governments defaulted on these loans and the United States “was no better off than if the loans had been outright gifts.” These developments destroyed the credit of borrowing countries, making it impossible for them to secure loans “for sound reconstruction projects.” “Economic recovery was thus impaired,” setting in motion the cycle of events that led to depression, “the rise of Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese militarists,” and ultimately “global

23, 1943, 840.50/2915, all in Box 4816, RG 59, NARA; see File 49-3, UNRRA Hugh Jackson Papers, Preliminary Discussions on Scope and Functions of UNRRA and its Relationship to US Agencies, Early Update Plans and 4/43 thru 11/28/43, Box 1, Jackson Papers, CU.

¹⁸⁹¹ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA.

conflagration.” To prevent a repeat of these events, officials suggested gifts would be best in most countries.¹⁸⁹²

Humanitarians constituted the final group of concern to American planners. Persons associated with the various humanitarian aid agencies in the United States, especially those of a religious character, lamented Churchill and Roosevelt’s refusal to permit aid through the blockade of Europe. In part, this problem was solved in early 1942 when Swedish aid ships were permitted into Greece.¹⁸⁹³ But it would not totally disappear until the cross-channel invasion had begun. Hoover would not let it die.¹⁸⁹⁴ The events of 1943 in North Africa appeased these humanitarian groups further. With the liberation of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations delivered relief into these territories, and won favorable press coverage for their efforts.¹⁸⁹⁵ Yet American policymakers knew that simply executing the task was not

¹⁸⁹² Press Release No. 252, June 16, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, FO 371/35272, PRO.

¹⁸⁹³ David Anderson, “British Consider Feeding Greeks,” January 15, 1942, *NYT*, 7; “Greeks Despoiled and Starving Under Germans, Welles Asserts,” February 6, 1942, *NYT*, 1; Ray Brock, “British Rush Food to Succor Greeks,” February 15, 1942, *NYT*, 25; Donald Day, “Swedes to Send Food Cargo to Starving Greeks,” February 20, 1942, *CDT*, 7; “Greeks’ Extinction by Famine Feared,” May 27, 1942, *NYT*, 19; “500 Die in Athens Daily as Famine Stalks the Land,” June 6, 1942, *CDT*, 7; “Greece Starving George II Asserts,” June 12, 1942, *NYT*, 5; Homer W. Davis, “Greeks Getting Food Supplies,” July 21, 1942, *WP*, 2; “3 Food Ships Ready to Sail for Greece,” August 3, 1942, *NYT*, 7; “Three Food Ships Leave for Greece,” August 8, 1942, *LAT*, 6; “Greeks in Need of Relief,” August 20, 1942, *NYT*, 18; “Relief Wheat in Greece,” September 30, 1942, *NYT*, 12; A.C. Sedgwick, “Aid Sent to Greeks Called Too Scant,” October 4, 1942, *NYT*, 30;

¹⁸⁹⁴ In November 1943, Hoover recommenced his campaign to lift the blockade to permit relief into Europe: “Hoover Urges Aid to Hungry Europe,” November 5, 1943, *NYT*, 5; “Lift Blockade, Hoover Pleads,” November 5, 1943, *WP*, 1; “Hoover Advises U.S. Start Now to Feed Europe,” November 5, 1943, *CDT*, 7; “Britain Turns Down Plea to East Blockade,” November 11, 1943, *CDT*, 10; “Hoover Upholds His Plan,” November 12, 1943, *NYT*, 14; “Hoover Explains Europe Food Plan,” November 12, 1943, *LAT*, 10;

¹⁸⁹⁵ “Allies’ African Aid is Key for Europe,” March 20, 1943, *NYT*, 3; “Pattern Fixed in North Africa for Civilian Rule,” March 20, 1943, *CDT*, 4; “Tunisia to Be First Test of Lehman Organization,” April 18, 1943, *NYT*, E6; “700,000 Tunisian Civilians to Get

enough to satisfy these relief groups, who wanted to be a part of the process.¹⁸⁹⁶ For this reason, OFRRO privately began cooperating with many of these groups to obtain their knowledge and personnel, and to integrate them into America's efforts.¹⁸⁹⁷

Lehman's office reserved most all of its major public addresses on postwar relief for occasions sponsored by individuals and groups with historic interests in this field of endeavor.¹⁸⁹⁸ They carefully crafted their messages to appeal to whatever group or sector of American society they addressed. Thus the diplomatic advisor to Lehman, Francis B. Sayre, also the former High Commissioner to the Philippines, spoke of drafting a "Christian peace" to ensure a "post-war world based on brotherhood and understanding"

American Food," May 9, 1943, *CDT*, 5; E.S. Farnsworth, "Post-War Tunisia: Relief Work in Africa Test U.S. Set-Up for All Reconquered Areas," May 26, 1943, *WSJ*, 1; "Tunisian Relief On Sales Basis," June 27, 1943, *NYT*, 29.

¹⁸⁹⁶ For an example of OFRRO bringing these religious groups into the process, see Lehman to Clarence Pickett, May 22, 1943, File: United States Government Department of State, Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, Box General Administration 1943 Committees and Organizations, AFSC.

¹⁸⁹⁷ See, for example, "Conditions Governing Acceptance of Personnel Loaned by Private Agencies to OFRRO;" Clarence Pickett to James Vail, "Office Memorandum," February 25, 1943; the American Friends Service Committee insisted that they receive publicity for the personnel they loaned to OFRRO for its operations in North Africa. See Thomas Reynolds to Clarence Pickett, March 27, 1943; For the Press, No. 129, Department of State, April 5, 1943, all in File: United States Government Department of State, Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, Box General Administration 1943 Committees and Organizations, AFSC. See also "Visit of Mr. Sharp of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations," April 1, 1943, Reel 68, Folder 316, JDC AR 33/44 #316 (1of2) Organizations: Relations with Non-Government Organizations: Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO): General 1942-1944, JDC.

¹⁸⁹⁸ These groups took careful notice of these speeches: copies with analyses of all of the speeches can be found in the JDC, for example. See Reel 68, Folder 316, JDC AR 33/44 #316 (1of2) Organizations: Relations with Non-Government Organizations: Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO): General 1942-1944, JDC. This outreach to religious groups took place not only in the context of relief, but also with regard to the wider peace. See, in particular, Sumner Welles, 'Six Pillars of Peace' Program of Federal Council of Churches," May 30, 1943, *NYT*, 17.

when he addressed the Federation of Churches in January 1943.¹⁸⁹⁹ Hugh R. Jackson, Lehman's Special Assistant, told the National Conference on Social Work of the enormous social problems that would confront war ravaged territories. The United States would need their wisdom and assistance when embarking upon plans to reunite families, repatriate refugees, implement child welfare programs and reestablish school districts.¹⁹⁰⁰ Luther Gulick, Chief of Programs and Requirements in the OFRRO lavished praise upon the American Friends Service Committee for the "devotion and personal modesty" of its leadership and the "humility and humanity" of the organization's rank and file. Then, in line with the Quaker philosophy, he told them that the United States would deliver aid without discriminating against anyone based on race, color or political allegiance.¹⁹⁰¹

In the State Department's public relations out-reach to humanitarian organizations one finds the most detailed descriptions of what the Americans expected to find upon liberation. The extent of the destruction depended on the speed and behavior of the Axis as the Allies liberated Europe and Asia.¹⁹⁰² But reports from occupied territories indicated severe shortages of food, devastated agriculture, and pillaged industry.¹⁹⁰³ Mal- and undernourishment worried everyone. Weight loss among children had reached dangerous levels in many countries. Possible outbreaks of typhus, tuberculosis, dysentery and even pandemic loomed.¹⁹⁰⁴ The problem of displacement aroused particular concern. In addition to four to six million prisoners of war, four million internally displaced

¹⁸⁹⁹ "Sayre Pleads For Peace With Brotherhood," January 18, 1943, *WP*, 4.

¹⁹⁰⁰ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA.

¹⁹⁰¹ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

¹⁹⁰² *Ibid.*; Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

¹⁹⁰³ Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA.

French citizens and innumerable Soviet citizens, the Nazis had “forcefully moved over ten million peoples from their homes for industrial and agricultural slavery, for defense purposes, and as a means of altering their ethnographical distribution to suit the Nazi blueprint.” Above all, they emphasized the human factor. The Americans expected to find “broken, sick, ragged, homeless, frightened human animals.”¹⁹⁰⁵

With 540 million men, women and children affected in 35 nations, the task of addressing these problems was deemed gargantuan.¹⁹⁰⁶ “Measured by any standard,” Herbert Lehman told the graduating class at Swarthmore College, “the toll of this war has been without precedent in human history.”¹⁹⁰⁷ Even if sufficient aid and supplies were available, the Americans explained, delivering these materials would pose extraordinary challenges. They expected to find roads and railroad lines destroyed or dilapidated. Water, power and sewage systems would require rehabilitation lest unsanitary conditions precipitate a public health crisis.¹⁹⁰⁸ Fuel shortages would have to be met.¹⁹⁰⁹ And all of this would have to be done systematically, rapidly, and amidst chaotic conditions. The United States and other nations, however, could not supply the affected populations indefinitely. A crop would have to be planted and harvested as soon as possible. This would require inputs of all sorts, including seeds, fertilizer, insecticides, livestock and tractors.¹⁹¹⁰ Raw materials would be required to restart vitally important industries. Commodities and other goods would have to be reintroduced to entice farmers to sell

¹⁹⁰⁵ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

¹⁹⁰⁶ W.H. Lawrence, “Tunisia to be First Test of Lehman Organization,” April 18, 1943, *NYT*, B6.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

¹⁹⁰⁹ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA.

¹⁹¹⁰ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

their crops. Inflated or worthless currencies would have to be replaced or repaired.¹⁹¹¹

The task was daunting. “Never before in the history of the world has so massive a problem involving so many millions of people been presented to the nations for solution,” Lehman asserted.¹⁹¹²

On the supply side of the equation, the problems were equally massive. First, the United States had to procure the resources and materials required. Second, these items had to be shipped to strategic posts where they could be warehoused until needed. The problem was competing demands. According to Hugh Jackson, this task involved “forward buying and the development of adequate reserves for [relief] as well as for other contingencies of a military or civilian character at a time when our productive facilities are taxed to the utmost to meet the needs of our armed forces, our allies, and our civilian economy.”¹⁹¹³ Shipping the items posed another problem. “One ton of shipping is required to feed, clothe and carry medical supplies for a family of four for a year,” Luther Gulick explained. “Such a problem looks easy until you start multiplying by the millions that are involved in this undertaking.” Then cargo space on a limited fleet must be allocated in a manner that does not endanger the success of military operations. Administration officials repeatedly compared this job to that of “a large-scale business operation” and they hammered the themes of organization and efficiency.¹⁹¹⁴

¹⁹¹¹ Press Release No. 252, June 16, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, FO 371/35272, PRO.

¹⁹¹² Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

¹⁹¹³ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA.

¹⁹¹⁴ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

On the role of business-like procedures, see also Arthur Krock, “In the Nation: The Lehman OFRRO Blueprints Its Task,” January 7, 1943, *NYT*, 18; “Lehman Tells Aims of Foreign Relief,” January 10, 1943, *NYT*, 28.

Human resources posed another problem. Internally State Department officials knew that they would have to compete with other agencies and the military for strong personnel at a time when the best and the brightest had already been recruited. Publicly, this drove them to emphasize the need to engage people abroad. “We do not expect even on the present basis to send any army of thousands of American relief workers into the liberated areas. We expect rather, that while Americans will handle the principle administrative responsibilities and regulate distribution, the great bulk of operating personnel will be drawn from the extraordinarily rich personnel resources of the lands in which the work is to be carried out.”¹⁹¹⁵ Yet the skill sets required were so diverse as to seem to make this impossible. On the one hand, they would need experts in transport, warehousing, scheduling, public health, food distribution, and agricultural development.¹⁹¹⁶ On the other hand, they would need individuals “with a capacity for business efficiency, with the touch of human understanding, with the skill of modern social work, and with knowledge of two or more languages...”¹⁹¹⁷

Finally, the Administration appealed to the American spirit and invoked the aims of the war. In messianic terms, Roosevelt explained: “there comes a time in the affairs of men when they must prepare to defend not their homes alone, but the tenets of faith and humanity on which their churches, their governments and their very civilization are founded. The defense of religion, of democracy and of good faith among nations is all the same fight. To save one, we must now make up our minds to save all.” In short, he argued that the survival of the American way of life and its deepest values depended on

¹⁹¹⁵ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

¹⁹¹⁶ Press Release No. 101, March 11, 1943, Hugh Jackson Speech, 840.50/1676, NARA.

¹⁹¹⁷ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

its ability and willingness to save the entire world.¹⁹¹⁸ Relief was a means to take what the American people cherished most and bestow it upon all of humanity. “Even in the midst of battle,” Lehman asserted, “we still must preserve the principles and ideals which will make possible the reconstruction of a world which may flourish the freedom and the way of life for which we fight.” Anything short of this aim, he argued, would mean that thousands of lives would have been lost in vain.¹⁹¹⁹

If the United States succeeded, it would shed legitimacy on American global leadership. It was therefore critically important to avoid the impression that the United States sought to dominate the world. “Those who enter foreign relief in order to sit at the head table... are, whether they know it or not, dealing not with relief, but with the struggle for prestige and power,” one State Department official ironically asserted. It was also deemed vitally important that the United States undertake this important task without prejudice to any religion, creed or race.¹⁹²⁰ “Freedom from want is the essential prerequisite of a stable world economy,” Lehman argued, and everyone was entitled to it.¹⁹²¹ Thus if relief could be distributed without showing any preferences, it would “have a powerful reaction in demonstrating” that the United States was “working in good faith towards a new and better world.”¹⁹²² In effect, the culminating argument was that by

¹⁹¹⁸ This quote is taken from “Annual Message to the Congress,” January 4, 1939, in Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1939: *War and Neutrality* (New York: MacMillan, 1939), 1-11. This quote was used by Lehman on May 31, 1943: See Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

¹⁹¹⁹ Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

¹⁹²⁰ Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

¹⁹²¹ Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

¹⁹²² Press Release No. 122, March 29, 1943, Luther Gulick Speech, 840.50/3426, NARA.

displaying kindness and leading benignly, peace and stability would result, and the world would acquiesce to American leadership.¹⁹²³

Presenting the Relief Agreement to the Entire World

While the American people and various domestic audiences constituted the primary targets of the State Department's public relations strategy in early 1943, officials in the Roosevelt Administration always kept the rest of the world in mind. Inasmuch as the promise of postwar relief appealed to humanitarians at home, it gave populations in occupied countries hope and motivation to revolt against the Axis powers.¹⁹²⁴ If officials refuted the idea that the United States would play "Santa Claus" for the world, as officials repeatedly put it, the purpose was to not only avoid criticism from conservatives at home, but to also increase the imperative for other countries with supplies to contribute.¹⁹²⁵ Yet until the middle of 1943, nothing of this sort was said explicitly. It was implied.

¹⁹²³ For the best execution of the overall public relations strategy, see Herbert Lehman, "When Freedom Rings," August 1943, *Survey Graphic: Magazine of Social Interpretation*, Vol. 32, No. 8, 309-312.

¹⁹²⁴ In early 1943, the argument underwent a subtle change over the previous years. For populations living in occupied countries, the public promise of relief in 1940-1942 was nothing more than a promise. But by 1943, developments in Greece and North Africa provided real evidence that the United States meant what it said. These developments altered the argumentation. See press coverage on North Africa listed in previous notes; see Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

¹⁹²⁵ See "Lehman Promises 'Reasonable Help,'" April 4, 1943, *NYT*, 29; for an excellent internal discussion of the "Santa Claus" problem, see "Problems of United Nations Action on Relief and Rehabilitation," June 8, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Box 80, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA; for an example of Acheson trying to refute the Santa Claus problem with conservatives, see Teletype WA-3197, Minister in United States to SOSEA, July 1, 1943, Document 702, DEA/2295-G-40, CDEA, *DCER*, Vol. 9, 1942-1943 (Hull, Quebec: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1980), 813. The British supported American attempts to

But on May 31, 1943, at the conclusion of his speech to the graduating class at Swarthmore College, Herbert Lehman made the Administration's first statement designed exclusively for the international community. He explained that the conversations on the establishment of an international relief organization had made great progress, and that he hoped that "the productive resources of *all* the producer nations" would be drawn upon "to meet the needs of the millions who have been plundered, starved and despoiled." He underscored the military necessity for relief, and reminded the global community of America's historic predilection for unilateralism. The United States, he warned, would not "wait quietly for completion of arrangements for such concerted action." "At the direction of the President, we are proceeding with our own plans, confident that if the United States provides leadership, the other nations of 'good will' will join with us in this all-important work."¹⁹²⁶ This threat of unilateralism came less than two weeks before the relief proposal was shared with the United Nations and associated powers.

Because the successful implementation of American plans depended on wide acceptance of their proposal for an international relief organization, policymakers in the Roosevelt Administration took care, as one official put it, to "dress up" its presentation to the United Nations and associated powers. Preparations began in April 1943. Roy Veatch suggested a formal meeting in which the Secretary of State or the President would share the draft with the rest of the world, with an explanatory memorandum. A "brief statement to the press would clarify the situation." If representatives of the British, Chinese, and Soviet Governments also took part in the event, it "would underscore their support of the

disavow the Santa Claus idea. See "A Publicity Policy for U.N.R.R.A." Enclosure to Dipatch No. 9037, W. J. Gallman to SOS, May 11, 1943, 840.50/1955, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹²⁶ Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech, 840.50/4053, NARA.

draft agreement and encourage a feeling of unity.”¹⁹²⁷ Officials in the Division of Current Information, the State Department office responsible for public relations, largely agreed with Veatch’s proposal, but they also believed the draft proposal should be released to the press within hours of its transmission to the United Nations. It should include an additional press release that would explain the agreement.¹⁹²⁸

The objectives of these proposals were two-fold. First, the Americans wanted to underscore the participation of the smaller powers and give them “a feeling of importance.” A press conference would provide the United States a chance to disavow “any [apparent] desire to railroad [the agreement] through against the wishes of the separate governments.” Veatch thought the Secretary of State or even Dean Acheson could impress each of the governments with the opportunity to discuss the matter fully with the U.S. government.¹⁹²⁹ This was especially important. While the Americans had spent more than a year in negotiations with the British, Canadians, Chinese, and Russians on the relief agreement, they hoped to persuade more than twenty nations to accept the draft in “three or four weeks.” “Many of them have been quite impatient with the delay in securing agreement between the four principal Powers on this draft,” Acheson wrote Hull, “and we shall... not be in a good position to press them for hurried consideration themselves.” It therefore seemed logical to impress them with a little spectacle, either in the Secretary of State’s office, or at the White House.¹⁹³⁰

¹⁹²⁷ Veatch to Acheson, April 8, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹²⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation,” May 13, 1943, 840.50/1976, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹²⁹ Veatch to Acheson, April 8, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁹³⁰ Acheson to Hull, May 20, 1943, 840.50/2307, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

Second, American policymakers worried about the press. If someone misinterpreted the draft and turned to the press, it could create obstacles to a speedy agreement.¹⁹³¹ The explanatory note would ensure proper interpretation of the proposal, and the opportunity to share views with the U.S. Government would provide avenues to settle disputes through diplomatic channels.¹⁹³² Yet these precautionary measures would not prevent “leaks, inaccurate reports, and... criticism from the newspaper people.”¹⁹³³ As Hull wrote the President, “It would seem impossible to keep the text confidential, and it might very well be undesirable to do so if the alternative were to be rumor and speculation, distorting the project and causing excitement and misrepresentation...” Hull recommended releasing the draft to the press when the U.S. Government shared it with representatives of the United Nations. To avert the criticism that the draft was “being forced upon them,” he thought an explanatory statement would be adequate.¹⁹³⁴ Officials also decided to delay its release 12 to 24 hours, after it had been conveyed to respective

¹⁹³¹ Everyone emphasized the need for speed: see *Ibid.*; Telegram No. 3388, FO to DC, May 20, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO.

¹⁹³² Telegram No. 67, DC to FO, June 2, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO.

¹⁹³³ “Memorandum of Conversation,” May 13, 1943, 840.50/1976, NARA. The Americans and British became very worried about leaks at this particular juncture. On May 6, 1943, a *New York Times* article falsely indicated that the relief proposal had been distributed to the United Nations. See “Post-War Relief in Agreement Form,” May 6, 1943, *New York Times*, p. 20. See also Telegram Relief No. 45, Foreign Office to Washington, May 10, 1943, PRO, FO 371/35270, Document 51 (2394); Telegram Relief No. 45, Washington to Foreign Office, May 14, 1943, PRO, FO 371/35270, Document 52 (2395).). Leaks had also created problems with the European Governments in Exile. See, for instance, “Memorandum of Conversation,” April 23, 1943, NARA, Acheson Papers, Box 5, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Document 22 (8344-8345). In fact, rumors of an impending UN Conference led the Yugoslavs to dispatch a delegation to Washington to participate. See “Memorandum of Conversation,” April 16, 1943, NARA, Acheson Papers, Box 5, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Document 24 (8348-49).

¹⁹³⁴ Hull to Roosevelt, May 25, 1943, 840.50/2017A, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

Governments.¹⁹³⁵ To avoid misinformation and “garbled summaries” in the press, they would also provide a “guide” to help journalists interpret the document.¹⁹³⁶

The Americans wanted to avoid impressions of an Anglo-American effort and four-power domination of the proposed organization. They rejected a British suggestion that the American Embassy in London share the draft with the press when officials released it in Washington. It would be impossible, they argued, to make similar arrangements in other capitals.¹⁹³⁷ Yet this refusal was probably baseless. The American Embassies abroad received instructions to share the draft with their host governments.¹⁹³⁸ Why couldn’t they share it with the press of those countries as well? Simply put, the Americans wanted control of the message centralized in Washington, and did not want to abet British leadership aspirations. Policymakers also decided to abandon Veatch’s original suggestion that the four-powers participate in the proposed press conference. As this procedure might suggest four-power control, they considered it “dangerous.”¹⁹³⁹ Instead, they would authorize the four powers as well as the remaining United Nations to discuss the draft with the press of their home countries at any time after it had been

¹⁹³⁵ Veatch to Acheson, May 14, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP Matters 1/1/43 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA; Telegram Relief No. 59, DC to FO, May 24, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 60, DC to FO, May 25, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO.

¹⁹³⁶ Veatch to Acheson, May 25, 1943, 840.50/2046, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹³⁷ Telegram 3797, Received from London, June 4, 1943, 840.50/2016; Telegram No. 3531, Hull to Winant, June 5, 1943, 840.50/2016, in Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹³⁸ See editors note at top of page 908 in FRUS, Vol. 1, *General* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963). See also Telegram 56, Hull to Monrovia, June 9, 1943, 840.50/2039B; similar telegrams were sent to most of the accredited missions. See also “Circular Telegram to the Chiefs of Missions,” June 9, 1943, 840.50/2034B, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA. Some of this information went out by airgram, and may have arrived after June 10, 1943.

¹⁹³⁹ Veatch to Acheson, May 25, 1943, 840.50/2046, NARA.

released in Washington.¹⁹⁴⁰ Altogether, these measures ensured that the United States remained in control of the entire effort.

American caution did not end here. Though in late February 1943 Roosevelt shared with the press the U.S. Government's intention to call a United Nations conference to discuss relief,¹⁹⁴¹ the State Department – against the wishes of the British¹⁹⁴² – decided not to announce a date for this gathering until much later.¹⁹⁴³ Secretly, they aimed for the summer of 1943.¹⁹⁴⁴ Yet to make these plans public, even at the point when they shared the draft agreement with the world, would strip them of their primary tactic in forging agreement: the threat of unilateralism. It might also force them into the embarrassing position of having to postpone or cancel the conference if excessive opposition emerged, which would undermine the war effort. As the British understood it, the Americans hoped “to be assured of a wide measure of agreement before” fixing “the date of the Conference.”¹⁹⁴⁵ On May 25, 1943, Hull suggested the following procedure to Roosevelt. “As soon as the responses to the proposed agreement indicate that it is favorably received, you authorize the issuance of an invitation for a conference of the Powers concerned.”¹⁹⁴⁶

¹⁹⁴⁰ Telegram No. 3531, Hull to Winant, June 5, 1943, 840.50/2016, NARA.

¹⁹⁴¹ “Roosevelt Presidential Press Conference Number 882 (February 23, 1943)”, in *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 21, 175-187.

¹⁹⁴² Telegram Relief No. 48, FO to DC, May 19, 1943; Telegram No. 3388, FO to DC, May 20, 1943, both in FO 371/35270, PRO.

¹⁹⁴³ Telegram No. 67, DC to FO, June 2, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Initially they aimed for June 1943, but when this became unrealistic, they shot for the end of July 1943. See Veatch to Acheson, April 19, 1943, 840.50/2100-2/5, Box 4810; Acheson to Hull, May 20, 1943, 840.50/2307, NARA.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Telegram No. 67, DC to FO, June 2, 1943, FO 371/35270, PRO.

¹⁹⁴⁶ Hull to Roosevelt, May 25, 1943, 840.50/2017A, NARA.

The Roosevelt Administration had another related concern. From the outset, the U.S. Congress had always remained a central factor in its calculations for the postwar period. Yet until early 1943, the legislative branch of government refrained from meddling in the planning process. Most of the nation's elected officials had little awareness of many committees working on postwar problems, and they had virtually no knowledge of the State Department's secret but ongoing negotiations with the British over postwar relief. But as the process unfolded, it became increasingly apparent that such activities were underway. As we have seen, Roosevelt became more open in early 1943 about his plans, and the landings in North Africa increased the urgency for postwar planning. As a result, in February and March of 1943, a number of Senators and House Representatives began proposing postwar resolutions with a variety of overlapping and often conflicting aims.¹⁹⁴⁷ This fact caught the eye of State Department officials.¹⁹⁴⁸

Obviously fears of another League of Nations debate amidst the war terrified some officials. Members of Congress and State Department employees thought it would precipitate domestic strife, which would spread to the United Nations and impair both the war effort and their postwar program. Yet the Congressmen who put forward the resolutions argued that if preparations started now, and if the Congress went on record in

¹⁹⁴⁷ Robert De Vore, "Congress Coalition Heads for Clash With President Over Economic Planning," February 14, 1943, *WP*, 8; "George Asks for Senate Group on Post-War Plans: Action is Interpreted as Move to Counter Efforts of Some Executive Agencies," February 15, 1943, *WSJ*, 4; "The Voices of Congress," February 17, 1943, *NYT*, 20; "Byrd Disputes Post-War Planning Role; Says Congress, Not President, Must Act," February 19, 1943, *NYT*, 13; Arthur Krock, "Senate Post-War Plans: Ball-Burton-Hatch-Hill Resolution Is Only One of Seven Introduced," March 24, 1943, *NYT*, 6; "Senators to Start Post-War Study," March 25, 1943, *NYT*, 9; C.P. Trussell, "Senate Gives Attention to Post-War 'Blueprints': Efforts to Get a Firm Commitment on Future Policy Find Opinion Divided," March 28, 1943, *NYT*, E6.

¹⁹⁴⁸ Green H. Hackworth to Sumner Welles, March 6, 1943, 840.50/1572, Box 4805, RG 59, NARA.

support of certain broad objectives, it would strengthen the ties binding the United Nations and help win the war.¹⁹⁴⁹ State Department officials disagreed. Any public declarations or debates that expressed opinions that contravened the aims of America's co-belligerents would create problems. The difficulty, according to Green H. Hackworth, was to stifle debate while avoiding the impression that the State Department objected to the "consideration of post-war problems by the Congress."¹⁹⁵⁰ If they obstructed debate, they would sound like the so-called isolationists or non-interventionists, who vehemently opposed any discussion or declaration on the postwar era.¹⁹⁵¹ The secret was to permit a controlled debate that would not continue indefinitely.

Subsequent events make the Roosevelt Administration's strategy quite clear. In both the House and the Senate, the various resolutions were deferred to the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees, respectively. The House Committee acted first, endorsing a resolution from a freshman Congressman, J. William Fulbright, Democrat, from Arkansas.¹⁹⁵² On September 21, 1943, the resolution passed with a

¹⁹⁴⁹ These points of view are best described in C.P. Trussell, "Senate Gives Attention to Post-War 'Blueprints,'" March 28, 1943, *NYT*, E6; for the State Department point of view, see Hackworth to Welles, March 6, 1943, 840.50/1572, NARA.

¹⁹⁵⁰ Hackworth to Welles, March 6, 1943, 840.50/1572, NARA.

¹⁹⁵¹ As far as I know, no official at the State Department said anything of this sort, but their views make this clear. On the views of the isolationists and the non-interventionists, see C.P. Trussell, "Senate Gives Attention to Post-War 'Blueprints,'" March 28, 1943, *NYT*, E6; William Shirer, "Isolationist Strategy, A Warning in Time," October 10, 1943, *WP*, B2; Mary Spargo, "Postwar Issue Seen Stirring Bitter Debate," October 17, 1943, *WP*, M1; C.P. Trussell, "Senators Are Set For Peace Debate," October 24, 1943, *NYT*, E5.

¹⁹⁵² "The Voice of Congress," June 16, 1943, *NYT*, 20; Arthur Sears Henning, "Post-War Plan Stirs Hornets' Nest in House," June 17, 1943, *CDT*, 1; "The Fulbright Resolution," June 30, 1943, *NYT*, 20.

stunning 360-29 vote.¹⁹⁵³ With pressure now on the Senate to act, the Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Democrat Thomas Connally of Texas, took up the Fulbright Resolution, and various other measures.¹⁹⁵⁴ Initially it looked as though Connally would try to kill the measures altogether. But incessant debate, and apparent pressure from Roosevelt, forced him to produce a resolution of his own.¹⁹⁵⁵ Republican Senators like Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan felt that Fulbright's formula did too little to prevent an erosion of U.S. sovereignty and protect the Senate's constitutional prerogatives in the making of treaties.¹⁹⁵⁶ These concerns would have invited problematic amendments on the Senate floor, thereby forcing the resolution into a joint conference between the Upper and Lower Houses of Congress.¹⁹⁵⁷ With Roosevelt and the State Department eager to end the debate, the Connally Resolution was introduced and passed with a stunning 85-5 vote.¹⁹⁵⁸

Altogether, the outcome was positive for the Roosevelt Administration. It put both houses of Congress on record as supporting U.S. engagement abroad after the war; it supported U.S. participation in an international authority "with the power to prevent

¹⁹⁵³ Turner Catledge, "House Votes 360-29 For Collaboration In Peace After War," September 22, 1943, *NYT*, 1.

¹⁹⁵⁴ "The Fulbright Resolution," June 30, 1943, *NYT*, 20; "Vandenberg Gives New Post-War Idea: Meanwhile, Ball, Burton and Hill Demand Congress Vote in Fall on Their Program," July 3, 1943, *NYT*, 6; Turner Catledge, "House Votes 360-29 For Collaboration In Peace After War," September 22, 1943, *NYT*, 1.

¹⁹⁵⁵ C.P. Trussell, "Senators Decide to Drop House Bill, Write Own 'Peace,'" September 30, 1943, *NYT*, 1; "Senate Moves Ahead Slowly on Peace Stand," October 1, 1943, *CDT*, 2.

¹⁹⁵⁶ For Vandenberg's views, see "Vandenberg Gives New Post-War Idea," July 3, 1943, *NYT*, 6.

¹⁹⁵⁷ C.P. Trussell, "Senators Draw Up A Post-War Pledge On Collaboration," *NYT*, 1.

¹⁹⁵⁸ C.P. Trussell, "World Stand Made: President Expresses His Satisfaction," November 6, 1943, *NYT*, 1; "Sees Congress Aid In Moscow Parley," November 7, 1943, *NYT*, 48; Arthur Krock, "Peace-Plan Vote Rings Knell of Isolationism," November 7, 1943, *NYT*, E3.

aggression and to preserve the peace of the world;” and it recognized the necessity of establishing an international organization for the maintenance of peace and security.¹⁹⁵⁹ Yet it did all of this while avoiding a formula that would have impaired the war effort, or angered members of Congress worried about American national sovereignty or their constitutional prerogatives. The debate proved a boon for efforts to create the relief organization, which seemed less important than the broader postwar international structure.¹⁹⁶⁰ Yet officials in the State Department knew the decision to introduce the relief proposal as an Executive Agreement, as opposed to a Treaty, might create problems.¹⁹⁶¹ Congress would have to be managed carefully.

The strategy here was quite similar: they tried to avoid debate while bringing the most powerful Congressmen into their confidence. Yet, as we will soon see, there were limits to this strategy. While the Fulbright and Connally Resolutions emerged in the legislative branch of government, the relief agreement did not, and the State Department had largely kept the Congress in the dark on postwar relief. When in April 1943 it appeared that Lehman would have to appear at hearings on the Lend-Lease appropriations for 1943-44, he was instructed to say that he was not in a position to

¹⁹⁵⁹ Quote comes from the “Connally Resolution,” November 5, 1943; but see also the “Fulbright Resolution,” September 21, 1943, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy (New Haven: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, 2008): http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/decade.asp (accessed September 30, 2012). The Fulbright Resolution gave the freshman Congressman from Arkansas national attention, which facilitated his election to the Senate a year later.

¹⁹⁶⁰ This point was mentioned by Ernest K. Lindley, “Draft Agreement: A Mechanism for United Nations,” *WP*, 13.

¹⁹⁶¹ Concern over the decision to introduce the relief proposal as an executive agreement harkened back to 1942. Acheson, in fact, was advised to abandon the procedure in December 1942. See EVR to Acheson, December 28, 1943, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers. But he refused, and Veatch urged him to be prepared to defend the procedure. Veatch to Acheson, April 21, 1943, 840.50/2100-3/5, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

discuss the relief organization.¹⁹⁶² When Veatch proposed that he should inform the Congress that either Hull or Acheson would be willing to discuss it them, the Assistant Secretary rejected the idea. He also ignored a suggestion that he seek the advice of Congressional leaders as to the best procedure for handling relations with Congress on the relief issue. These matters, Acheson argued, should be left to the President.¹⁹⁶³

But how would Roosevelt manage Congress? On May 25, 1943, at the instigation of Acheson, the Secretary of State informed the President that complete agreement had been reached with the British, Chinese, and Russians on the relief proposal. He suggested the draft be shared with the United Nations and associated powers, including the two French groups. Once complete agreement had been reached, he recommended that invitations be issued for a short conference, at which the agreement would be signed. Afterwards, delegates of the various member states would convene for the first meeting of the UNRRA Council. Hull also wrote that it was his understanding that the President would share the draft and accompanying documents with Congressional leaders before it was released to the world, but cautioned him against the possibility of leaks.¹⁹⁶⁴

However, Roosevelt left for Hyde Park just after Hull's letter was sent, and would not return until June 6, 1943.¹⁹⁶⁵ The following day, the Secretary received the President's reply approving the procedure, but the President made no reference to Congress. Hull therefore insisted that he call a conference of Congressional leaders as

¹⁹⁶² Veatch to Acheson, April 21, 1943, 840.50/2100-3/5, NARA.

¹⁹⁶³ "Memorandum of Conversation," April 26, 1943, 840.50/2100-4/5, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹⁶⁴ Hull to Roosevelt, May 25, 1943, 840.50/2017A, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹⁶⁵ See President Roosevelt's day-by-day schedule, Franklin Roosevelt Day by Day: A Project of the Pare Lorentz Center at the FDRL:
<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/daybyday/> (accessed September 30, 2012).

soon as possible, and he requested that he be allowed to attend the meeting. “It is important,” he wrote, “that the project be launched at the earliest possible date.”¹⁹⁶⁶ On June 8, 1943, the President asked the majority and minority leaders in Congress to meet with him the following day. He invited Hull, Lehman and Acheson to the meeting.¹⁹⁶⁷ They would share the relief proposal and accompanying documents, make the case for the project, and inform them of the Administration’s plans to sign it as an executive agreement. To meet possible objections to this procedure, they would highlight Articles V and VI “limiting financial and other contribution commitments to those which can be taken within the constitutional procedure of each member government.”¹⁹⁶⁸ The Congressional leaders would also be asked to pledge themselves to secrecy until the relief proposal had been shared with the Allies.¹⁹⁶⁹

Upon learning of this meeting, the State Department made last minute preparations to release the draft agreement to the United Nations and associated powers. It would take place on June 9, 1943, the morning after the President’s meeting with the Congressional leadership. If ever there had been a chance to properly engage possible opponents to their scheme in Congress, it was now gone. Twelve hours after the document’s presentation to the Allies and associated powers, the State Department would issue the relief agreement and accompanying memoranda to the entire world.¹⁹⁷⁰ This

¹⁹⁶⁶ Hull to Roosevelt, June 7, 1943, 840.50/2039A, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹⁶⁷ “Memorandum for General Watson by FDR,” June 8, 1943, File: UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File, OF 4966, FDR Papers, FDRL.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Veatch to Acheson, May 14, 1943, Acheson Papers, NARA.

¹⁹⁶⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” May 13, 1943, 840.50/1976, NARA.

¹⁹⁷⁰ Congress notwithstanding, the general procedure is described in: Telegram Relief No. 62, DC to FO, May 29, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 63, DC to FO, May 29, 1943; Telegram 67, DC to FO, June 2, 1943, all in FO 371/35270, PRO; Telegram 3519, June

procedure effectively placed the American legislative branch of government in the same category as foreign countries, the Congressional leadership notwithstanding. To be sure, it would have been dangerous to involve Congress at an earlier stage; leaks to the press might have impaired the entire effort. But, as we will see, there were consequences for failing to do so. Roosevelt must have calculated that his hand was strong, that opposition was inevitable, and that the benefits of a surprise attack outweighed the risks. Perhaps competing demands on his time crippled his judgment. Maybe he was just negligent.

4, 1943, 840.50/2020J, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA. Additional descriptions included in documents listed in previous footnotes.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE EUROPEANS REACT

The public reaction to the relief agreement in the United States was astonishingly calm, but quite positive. No major newspaper devoted headlines to the proposal in the days immediately after its release. Where it was reported, the media wrote favorably but said little of the endeavor.¹⁹⁷¹ Herbert Hoover, too, offered no official reaction.¹⁹⁷² Abroad reception to the proposal was overwhelmingly positive, especially in London, where many of the major newspapers lauded and devoted lead stories to the effort. While the American media initially missed the postwar significance of the proposal, the British press clearly got it: the United States would remain engaged in the world well into the postwar period, and the relief organization would pave the way for the future.¹⁹⁷³ In other world capitals – Sydney and New Delhi, for example¹⁹⁷⁴ – the reaction was less euphoric

¹⁹⁷¹ “President to Seek Food Relief Set-Up: Confers with Congressional Leaders on Establishment of Overall Agency,” June 10, 1943, *NYT*, 28; “War Victim Relief Setup Is Drafted,” June 11, 1943 *WP*, 3; “Plan Drafted to Feed and Assist War Victims,” June 11, 1943, *LAT*, 13; “Allied Big Four Approves Plan for World Aid,” June 11, 1943, *CDT*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷² I drew this conclusion during a research trip to the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library.

¹⁹⁷³ Telegram 3939 Received, June 11, 1943, 840.50/2041, Box 4809; Telegram 4175 Received, London, June 24, 1943, 840.50/2116, Box 4810; Telegram No. 9732, June 24, 1943, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹⁷⁴ “Post-War Relief of United Nations: Draft Agreement Circulated,” June 12, 1943, *TI*, 5; “Relief from Distress: Allied Post-War Plans,” June 12, 1943, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Enclosure No. 2 to Dispatch No. 461, Johnson to Hull, June 14, 1943, 840.50/2118, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

than London, but still positive. In some capitals, the reaction came late – in a few cases as much as three months – but was favorable nonetheless.¹⁹⁷⁵

How did the forty nations who had not been a part of the four-power talks react to the relief agreement? When they readily accepted the proposal, was their decision the result of genuine approval or other intervening factors? When they opposed or protested the agreement, what factors and motivations explain their behavior? What were their central complaints? Let us begin with Europe, the region that had, according to American officials, “menaced the world with aggression,” not once, but twice in the twentieth century.¹⁹⁷⁶

Excluding France, the United States shared the relief agreement with eight European governments exiled in London.¹⁹⁷⁷ While most of them disliked the proposal’s most salient features, several accepted it with little complaint. Those who disapproved of the proposal initially endeavored to forge a unified response to the Americans, but then disagreed on the course of action to take. Usually their narrow interests, or circumstances peculiar to their wartime situation dictated the decisions they took. Oddly, when their representatives in Washington coalesced around an approach or view, the same governments reacted differently in London. This divergence reveals a lack of coordination, but also reflects on the Americans and British, who managed the

¹⁹⁷⁵ Telegram 908 Received, From Moscow, July 21, 1943, 840.50/2263, Box 4812; Telegram A-509, Dawson to Hull, September 25, 1943, 840.50/2537, Box 4814; Air Mail No. 14184, Sidney O’Donogue to Hull, November 12, 1943, 840.50/3238, Box 4817, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹⁷⁶ E Minutes 19, July 24, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹⁷⁷ Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Holland, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, and Yugoslavia. For a period, many of these governments were temporarily located in cities other than London. The Greek Government in exile, for example, was in Cairo at the time the draft agreement was circulated.

governments differently: Leith-Ross and the Foreign Office kept them better informed than State Department officials in Washington, whose approach, up until June 9, 1943, had been to keep them in the dark. As a result, the Europeans in London proved more eager to cooperate than those in Washington.¹⁹⁷⁸

Most of the diplomacy took place in the American capital. Of course the Europeans hoped to divide the Americans and British, and frequently tried to open talks with the London by sharing their reactions to the draft with the Foreign Office. In most cases, the British deferred to Washington. But when they considered it wise to intervene, they did so only in close consultation with the Americans. Thus most of the complaints and suggestions from exiled governments were managed bilaterally in Washington. In turn, American officials shared developments with the British, Chinese, and Russians, but they tried to keep time-consuming talks with the three other great powers to a minimum. The United States, in sum, ran the show.

Belgium opens the negotiations for Europe

The first reaction to the proposal came from Belgium.¹⁹⁷⁹ It illustrates the trajectory these governments often took from concern to acceptance, but also the

¹⁹⁷⁸ Telegram Relief No. 56, FO to DC, June 29, 1943, FO 371/35271, PRO.

¹⁹⁷⁹ For a general overview of Belgium postwar planning, see Diane de Bellefroid, "The Commission Pour L'Étude Des Problèmes D'Après-Guerre (CEPAG), 1941-1944," in *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain, 1940-45*, eds. Martin Conway and José Gotovitch (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 121-133. For an overview of Belgium's relations with the United States during the war, see Thierry Grosbois, "Les relations diplomatiques entre le gouvernement belge de Londres et les États-Unis (1940-1944)," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporaines: revue d'histoire*, no. 202-203 (2001): 167-188.

moderation of a country trying to balance between the need to cooperate with the Americans and the Europeans. At the outset, the Belgians voiced “strong disapproval of seeking to set up a relief organization in which representatives of the smaller nations should not be given a more prominent place than provided for in the draft agreement.” They disliked the Central Committee’s composition and lamented the fact that it could, under the terms of the proposal, assume responsibility for policy when the Council was not in session. Either the committee should be “shorn of real power or else it should be composed in such a way to allow representation for some of the smaller nations.” The Belgians also reported that it was rumored “around Washington that the Deputy Directors were to be nationals of the four big Powers.” “If this were true, it would add considerable fuel to the flames and would produce a feeling of hostility on the part of the smaller nations.”¹⁹⁸⁰

Yet the Belgians remained cautious. Representatives of the smaller nations had met at the Polish Embassy after receiving the proposal. Many were hostile to it. But instead of embracing an open line of attack, which became the preference of several governments, the Belgians endeavored to understand why the Americans had devised the draft as they did.¹⁹⁸¹ Though they had the means to finance their own relief and reconstruction, they told them that nothing should mar the creation of the relief administration. Indeed Belgium would have resources to contribute from its colonial

¹⁹⁸⁰ Quotes taken from “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 18, 1943, 840.50/2299, Box 4812; but see also “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, Box 4810, both RG 59, NARA.

¹⁹⁸¹ Ibid.; “Additional Questions put forward by Baron Boel on June 22 and 23, together with Mr. Acheson’s answers,” 840.50/2058-5/9, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

possessions in the Congo.¹⁹⁸² But they also hoped the Americans would widen the scope of the organization to include industrial reconstruction, which they considered essential.¹⁹⁸³ They would require American assistance elsewhere as well. During discussions with the Dutch and Norwegians over postwar security cooperation, they concluded that no security framework would be effective without American participation.¹⁹⁸⁴ Thus they kept complaints to a minimum.

However important cooperation with Washington might have been for the war effort and postwar stability, strong relations with their neighbors remained essential. During this period, the Belgians were engaged in complex negotiations with Luxembourg and the Netherlands to unify their economies, efforts that led to the Dutch-Belgium Monetary Agreement of October 1943, and the Benelux Customs Union of September 1944. These arrangements set the stage for the European Coal and Steel Community, which emerged after the war.¹⁹⁸⁵ Yet to achieve cooperation in Europe, they could not ignore the concerns of their Allies, who, as we will soon see, were outraged over the relief proposal. Thus they made similar complaints, but in moderated terms. The Americans and British realized quite rapidly that the Belgians would accept the agreement. U.S. Ambassador John Winant believed that with membership on the

¹⁹⁸² "Memorandum by the Treasury," May 11, 1941, War Cabinet, Official Committee on Export Surpluses, E.S.O. (41) 103, T188/248, PRO; Leith-Ross to Sir E. Benthall, January 30, 1942, T188/253, PRO; The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2154, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), 922-925.

¹⁹⁸³ "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA.

¹⁹⁸⁴ Robert W. Allen, *Churchill's Guests: Britain and the Belgian Exiles During World War II* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 95.

¹⁹⁸⁵ Allen, *Churchill's Guests*, 95.

Supplies Committee their approval could be secured.¹⁹⁸⁶ The British thought the Belgians would accept the draft as it stood.¹⁹⁸⁷

These assessments were correct. On July 19, 1943, the Belgians became one of the first Governments to accept the relief proposal. But for the record, they reiterated the views of their Allies: that the Central Committee was too exclusive and circumscribed the Council's policymaking functions. To rectify this shortcoming, they suggested that all decisions taken by the Central Committee should be subject to the approval of the Council at its next meeting; that the regional committees should be strengthened to give them more power over policymaking; and that member states should be given voting rights when the Central Committee permitted them to participate in meetings discussing matters impinging on their interests. They also maintained that the four-power formula should not provide a precedent for future international organizations. A few additional reservations notwithstanding, it was a warm and measured acceptance from a country whose role in the creation of postwar European order is too often overlooked.¹⁹⁸⁸

The Peculiarities of Greece, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia

Like Belgium, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia accepted the draft with few reservations. In each case, strategic considerations informed their decisions. Following the Axis invasion of Greece in 1941, King George II and his Government, led

¹⁹⁸⁶ Winant to Hull, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2154, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 922-925.

¹⁹⁸⁷ Telegram Relief No. 56, FO to DC, June 29, 1943, FO 371/35271, PRO.

¹⁹⁸⁸ The Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs (Spaak) to the American Ambassador to the Belgian Government in Exile (Biddle), at London, July 19, 1943, 840.50/2276, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 940-943; R.V. Straten to Hull, Belgium, August 2, 1943, 840.50/2339, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

by Prime Minister Emmanouil Tsouderos, fled the country. He had little support among the most important Greek resistance group, the National Liberation Front (EAM), and its military wing, the People's Liberation Army (ELAS). This alliance consisted of diverse factions unified not by political ideology, but by hostility towards the Axis invaders and the Greek monarchy. King George II had been pro-Nazi before the 1941 Axis invasion and had lent his support to the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas, which, in turn, smashed all anti-monarchical forces in prewar Greece. Thus during the war, the central fault line in Greek politics existed between republican and constitutional forces, on the one hand, and the monarchy and traditionalists, on the other hand.¹⁹⁸⁹

Britain played the critical role. With the aim of defeating the Axis, London provided military assistance to ELAS while supporting the exiled government doggedly. In their view, only the King could prevent civil war, tyranny, and instability in postwar Greece. Yet attempts to convince EAM and other groups to back the monarchy failed miserably. For his part, the King knew that his return to Greece depended on the British, and he also recognized that Britain could satisfy his territorial aspirations. ELAS posed the only major hurdle. If they could not be persuaded to support the monarchy, they would have to be sidelined. To achieve this aim, the King and his Prime Minister exploited Britain's fears. Though communists constituted a mere one-tenth of the ELAS, they held most of the important positions. Fearful that it might lose its strategic foothold in the Mediterranean, Britain began looking for alternative means to ensure the King's return. Thus they turned to a rival resistance group, the National Republican Greek League (EDES). This group was pro-Republican, but anti-communism served as its

¹⁹⁸⁹ Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and the United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945* (New York: Random House, 1968), 172-183.

central unifying ingredient. By the fall of 1943, Britain had withdrawn all aid to ELAS.¹⁹⁹⁰

The complex jockeying for postwar Greece took place while the relief negotiations entered their final stages. In March and April 1943, the British sought American support for their position on Greece. In the past, they argued, republican governments had only led to instability. They urged the Roosevelt Administration to back the King's return to Greece after the war. But the Americans, while recognizing the Greek government in-exile, refused to do so because of the anti-monarchical sentiments of the Greek-American population. They suggested the matter be resolved at a later date, once the Greek people had had the chance to express their will. This reaction, delivered to the British one day after the Greek response to the relief proposal, in no way precluded the King's return, but it meant that he would have to secure the legitimacy through the will of his people.¹⁹⁹¹ George II found himself in a tricky position. He had no room to complain over the contents of the relief agreement. British support alone would not ensure his return; it required acquiescence from Washington, and officials there thought the King should also have the backing of his own people. He broadcast the next day that

¹⁹⁹⁰ Ibid., 172-183.

¹⁹⁹¹ Ibid.; "Memorandum by the Advisor on Political Relations (Murray) to the SOS, March 16, 1943, 711.90/69, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 4, *The Near East and Africa*, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), 126-127; "Memorandum of Conversation," by Roy Veatch of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, July 1, 1943, 840.50/2206, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 920-922; Royal Greek Embassy to Department of State, No. 1403, July 2, 1943, 840.50/2150; American Embassy to Greece (Cairo) Kirk to Hull, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2152, both in Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

the Greek people would be “invited to decide by popular and free vote the institutions” of democracy.¹⁹⁹²

Yugoslavia bears resemblance to the case of Greece. Like King George II, the Yugoslav monarch, King Peter II, faced challenges to his authority at home. Yet here the British embraced a different policy. If in Greece they became reluctant and eventually withdrew their support of ELAS due to its communist contingents, in Yugoslavia they did the opposite. Initially they supported Peter’s Minister of War, General Draza Mihailovic, but by June 1943, just after the Americans shared the relief agreement with the Allied powers, they withdrew their support of Mihailovic’s Chetnik army and turned to Jozep Broz Tito, leader of the communist-led Partisans.¹⁹⁹³ Though Tito was a Croat, his movement included all of Yugoslavia’s minorities and proved far more effective at dislodging the Germans and Italians. Mihailovic, for his part, had refused to fight the Italians; instead, his army focused on Tito, and even revealed intelligence on his Partisans to the Nazis.¹⁹⁹⁴ The British concluded that he was hopelessly compromised and that Tito was the only figure capable of unifying Yugoslavia after the war. It became their policy to control him, but they maintained their support of Peter II as leverage.¹⁹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁹² Quote taken from “The Ambassador to the Greek Government in Exile (Kirk) to the SOS, July 3, 1943, 868.01/356: Telegram; but see also The Ambassador to the Greek Government in Exile (Kirk) to the SOS, July 3, 1943, 868.01/355: Telegram; The SOS to the Ambassador to the Greek Government in Exile (Kirk), at Cairo, July 5, 1943, 868.01/356: Telegram, all in *FRUS*, Vol. 4, 134-136.

¹⁹⁹³ The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Matthews) to the SOS, March 23, 1943, 760H.61/63: Telegram, in DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 2, *Europe* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), 984-985.

¹⁹⁹⁴ The Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government in Exile (Biddle) to the SOS, March 30, 1943, 860H.01/458: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 2, 987-988.

¹⁹⁹⁵ In addition to the footnotes just above, see also Kolko, *The Politics of War*, 132-133.

Although the British break with the Chetniks did not occur until January 1944, the opening acts of this drama played out during the final stages of the relief negotiations. Throughout 1943, the position of Milhailovic weakened, while Tito's strengthened. Naturally the Government in exile sought to counter these developments by maintaining strong American support. Its representatives in Washington not only attacked Tito, they countered charges levied against Milhailovic, namely that he was more eager to destroy his own people than the Nazis.¹⁹⁹⁶ In this context, it makes perfect sense that the Yugoslavs would rapidly accept the relief proposal, and even express disappointment upon learning that they had not been the second government to do so.¹⁹⁹⁷ Yet they appeared desperate. It made no sense to accept the agreement with no reservations. What mechanisms prevented their rivals from exploiting the agency at their expense, they might have asked. But like the Greeks, they were concerned about their existence in the short-term, and that meant complete and unequivocal solidarity with the United States.

¹⁹⁹⁶ Winant reported to Washington that the Yugoslavs had been so consumed by domestic quarrelling that they had hardly given any attention to UNRRA. See Winant to Hull, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2154, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 922-925. The following documents make this impression perfectly understandable: The Yugoslav Embassy to the Department of State, April 14, 1943, 860H.20/101; The Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government in Exile (Biddle) to the SOS, April 17, 1943, 860H.01/471; "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under SOS (Welles), April 29, 1943, 860H.01/484; "Memorandum by Mr. Cavendish W. Cannon of the Division of European Affairs," May 1, 1943, 860H.00/1477-1/2; "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under SOS (Welles), May 11, 1943, 701.60H11/305; The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the SOS, May 14, 1943, 860H.01/478; Telegram; "Memorandum by Cavendish W. Cannon of the Division of European Affairs," May 17, 1943, 860H.01/478; The Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government in Exile (Biddle) to the SOS, June 10, 1943, 860H.00/1495; "The Yugoslav Embassy to the Department of State," June 21, 1943, 860H.01/518; "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant SOS," June 22, 1943, 860H.00/1506, all in *FRUS*, Vol. 2, 989-1015. Yugoslavia was and has always been a cauldron of fire!

¹⁹⁹⁷ "Memorandum of Conversation," July 20, 1943, 840.50/2313; "Memorandum of Conversation," July 23, 1943, 840.50/2315, both in Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

The Czech Government's speedy acceptance of the relief agreement resulted not from a domestic challenge to its legitimacy, but from broader strategic considerations.¹⁹⁹⁸ The Czech President, Edvard Benes, and his Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, had elaborate plans for the postwar period.¹⁹⁹⁹ They dreamed of building "a nation of one hundred million people, consisting of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece under an arrangement" that would be "open to adherence by Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania." This "new substitute for the old Austro-Hungarian Empire" would run north south from the Adriatic to the Baltic Sea, and east west from the Black Sea to the Sudetenland. The Czechs hoped that "hegemony within this group" would "revolve around Prague." But they believed that any such arrangements depended primarily, though not exclusively, on Moscow. If Soviet Russia disapproved, then they thought the scheme could not work. Thus they argued that the proposed scheme would be "subject to Russian influence," but they also thought it would be "large and strong enough... to prevent the Russians from unduly interfering with the social structure of these countries."²⁰⁰⁰

The Czechs were not alone in their thinking. To varying degrees, Poland, Greece and Yugoslavia shared this vision, and began discussing it in 1941.²⁰⁰¹ American policymakers also weighed options for the unification in Eastern Europe. As Sumner

¹⁹⁹⁸ For an overview of American-Czech relations with a chapter devoted to UNRRA, see Carson W. Clements, *The Development and Failure of American Policy Toward Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 2004. Clements, however, does not address most of the issues discussed here.

¹⁹⁹⁹ Masaryk was more pro-Western than Benes, but as Foreign Minister, he typically advanced the policies of Benes.

²⁰⁰⁰ Berle to Acheson, Hull, Welles and Atherton, November 5, 1941, 840.50/272-1/2, Box 4796, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰⁰¹ Ibid.

Welles explained, “Such a unit would balance Germany, the Soviet Union and Great Britain. It would make the establishment and maintenance of world organization simpler than if a large number of small jockeying powers were in existence.”²⁰⁰² It would also have strategic implications: it would make it easier for the United States to control armaments in Europe.²⁰⁰³ Yet everyone, especially Welles, realized that animosity among the region’s diverse groups would make unification difficult. But he believed mutual hatred of the Great Powers, particularly Germany and the Soviet Union, would make it possible. The real problem, as he and his colleagues in the U.S. Government saw it, was how to construct such an organization without arousing hostility among the Eastern Europeans, and in Moscow. Economics constituted the answer. “We could devise economic methods that would make such an organization work even though not conceived primarily for economic ends.”²⁰⁰⁴

²⁰⁰² P Minutes 11, May 16, 1942, File Political Sub-Committee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part II), Box 55, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰⁰³ EP-5, Chronological Minutes, May 22, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA; see especially the comments of Norman Davis.

²⁰⁰⁴ P Minutes 11, May 16, 1942, Notter Papers, NARA. Welles had learned earlier in the year that Moscow might be amenable to some sort of economic union. The former PM of Belgium, Paul van Zeeland informed him: “The Soviet Government would approve such a project because of its belief that the creation of such an economic and financial federation in eastern Europe would redound to the economic advantage of Russia.” See “Memorandum of Conversation,” January 13, 1942, 840.50/1070-1/2, Box 4801, RG 59, NARA. See also P Minutes 13, May 30, 1942, File Political Sub-Committee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part II), Box 55. This belief precipitated the Political Subcommittee to instruct the Reconstruction Subcommittee to study the economic unification of Eastern Europe. See “Some Economic Aspects of a Possible Unification of Eastern European Countries,” June 25, 1942, File E Documents 1-25, Box 80. The Americans even prepared a tentative agreement between the United Nations – the United States incognito – and the Eastern European Federation. See “Minute of Agreement Between the United Nations and the Eastern European Federation,” July 31, 1942, File Subcommittee on Economic Reconstruction, Box 83. Yet the Americans admitted that the document was also a form of agreement between the United Nations and the Eastern European

Disagreement among the Eastern Europeans and the Great Powers erected intractable barriers to the creation of this union. Initially Benes obstructed Polish attempts to pursue unity due to disputes over the coal-rich Zaolzie region of Silesia, which he coveted. But when internal political pressures drove him to negotiate, leading to an agreement in January 1942, Moscow intervened, such that by November 1942, Benes had suspended the talks.²⁰⁰⁵ He considered Soviet acquiescence essential if he were to obtain Zaolzie. Yet the Poles wanted to hasten the process: despite having signed agreements of cooperation and friendship with the Soviets in July and December 1941, their relations with Moscow were deteriorating.²⁰⁰⁶ At this point, the British, who were determined to keep “Stalin in good humor,” applied the brakes, and no other East European government objected.²⁰⁰⁷ Greece and Yugoslavia, who had reached an agreement for unity in January 1942, needed their support in the face of challenges to their legitimacy from within their territory.²⁰⁰⁸

The initiative at this juncture resided with the Czechs. In February 1943, they notified the Poles that they could not conclude an agreement perceived as antagonistic to the Soviet Union, but then sought a treaty with Moscow similar to the Anglo-Soviet Pact

Federation as well. See E Minutes 20, July 31, 1942, File E Minutes 1-46, Box 80, all in ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰⁰⁵ See A.J. Biddle to SOS, No. 48, January 29, 1943, 840.50/1255, Box 4803, RG 59, NARA; see also Kolko, *The Politics of War*, 124-125.

²⁰⁰⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Assistant SOS (Berle), February 24, 1942, 740.0011: European War 1939/19956; “Memorandum,” by the Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Atherton) to the Under SOS (Welles), March 23, 1942, 740.0011 European War 1939/20193; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Acting SOS, March 25, 1942, 860C.002/3-2542, all in DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, *Europe* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), 111-112, 120-121, 123-125.

²⁰⁰⁷ “Memorandum,” by Atherton to Welles, March 23, 1942, 740.0011 European War 1939/20193, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 120-21.

²⁰⁰⁸ Jonathan Levy, *The Intermarium: Wilson, Madison, & East Central European Federalism* (Boca Raton, FL: Dissertation.com, 2006), 203.

of May 1942 modified to include a non-intervention clause in return for a Czech pledge to remain aloof from any anti-Soviet blocs in Europe. Moscow accepted the offer on April 23, 1943, precipitating Czech efforts to win American and British acquiescence to the treaty. The Czechs, primarily Benes, couched the proposed treaty in a larger program of cooperation between East and West. The British, for their part, decided to make friendly Soviet-Czech relations a reward to the Russians for cooperation on Poland. They believed the treaty would doom the Polish-Czech alliance and any East European federation.²⁰⁰⁹ Benes, however, considered the treaty a prerequisite for an accord with Poland. As he explained the previous November, “It would not be possible or friendly if the nations directly concerned agreed among themselves on these important matters and sought to present the Great Powers with a *fait accompli*.”²⁰¹⁰

The Americans appeared non-committal, but the evidence makes their opinion clear. As Atherton wrote Welles the previous March, “Benes continues to be one of the most astute and devious politicians of Europe.” In an apparent attempt to secure guarantees for Czechoslovak frontiers by all of the Great Powers, he has agreed to support “certain Soviet foreign policies.” To win Anglo-American approval, he “tries to play on both the hopes and fears of the British and the American Governments.” If the Soviet Union should become displeased with Anglo-American actions, then they will “proceed to carry out their own plans with regard to Europe, including an increase in the activities of the Communist international and a resurgence of Bolshevik revolutionary

²⁰⁰⁹ Kolko, *The Politics of War*, 124-125. See also Biddle to Hull, January 29, 1943, 840.50/1255, NARA.

²⁰¹⁰ A.J. Drexel Biddle to SOS, November 19, 1942, 840.50/871, Box 4800, RG 59, NARA.

activity throughout the continent.”²⁰¹¹ The Americans abhorred these tactics. If the Soviet Union feared the possibility of Polish membership on the Central Committee, then the Americans opposed Czech membership. They “regarded the Czechoslovakian as the least secure of European Governments in exile and would not wish to see that power on the... committee.”²⁰¹²

In this context, it is hardly surprising that the Czechs would support the relief proposal with little comment. Benes traveled to the United States days before the Americans shared the agreement with the United Nations. But he failed to secure support for the treaty with Moscow: it was considered “a step backward” in American “efforts toward international understanding.”²⁰¹³ The Czechs had no reason to give Washington further grounds to obstruct their aims, at that, over a proposal that seemed to advance the east-west cooperation Benes claimed to support. Indeed they tried to rectify false impressions in Washington with an about-face on East European Union. But alongside the Poles, who were pleading for a “far-reaching agreement,”²⁰¹⁴ their suggestion of a customs union must have fallen flat. If not, their explication of the conflict with Poland over disputed territories, followed by the devious suggestion that the United States exert

²⁰¹¹ “Memorandum,” by Atherton to Welles, March 23, 1942, 740.0011 European War 1939/20193, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 120-21. See the following quote: “Your comments with regard to Benes are interesting. We have the impression here that the Czechs may be rather heavily committed to the Russians and may be working more closely with them than they would like for their other allies to realize.” In The Acting SOS to the Ambassador to the Polish Government in Exile (Biddle), at London, April 4, 1942, 740.0011 European War 1939/20193, *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 146-137.

²⁰¹² Telegram Relief No. 17, DC to FO, January 31, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO.

²⁰¹³ Kolko, *The Politics of War*, 124-125.

²⁰¹⁴ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 3, 1943, 840.50/2172, Box 4811, RG 59, NARA.

pressure on any country or countries reluctant to join the scheme, certainly did. The Americans remained non-committal.²⁰¹⁵ The Czech leaders could not be trusted.

Apparently the Czechs worried that their own people did not trust them either. When they conveyed their official acceptance of the relief proposal to Washington, they drew a reservation to the four-power Central Committee, not because they disapproved of the formula – in fact, they considered it essential – but because their own people remained sensitive towards the appearance of dictation by the larger powers.²⁰¹⁶ It was an ironic reservation if not because of their suggestions to the Americans a month earlier, but because of what would come. By the end of 1943, the Americans and British would acquiesce to the Czech treaty with the Soviet Union. Of course Czechoslovakia would obtain large swathes of the disputed Zaolzie territory. But in their efforts to achieve this outcome, they helped ensure the disunity of Eastern Europe. By 1948, both Poland and Czechoslovakia had succumbed to communist takeovers engineered in Moscow.²⁰¹⁷

Poland's Worst Fear: The Use of Food as a Weapon

No criticism riveted the Roosevelt Administration more than the one Poland levied against the United States. Like most other countries, they worried about the composition of the Central Committee, and for many of the same reasons. It offered no

²⁰¹⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 9, 1943, 840.50/2172, Box 4811, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰¹⁶ The Czechoslovak Ambassador (Hurban) to the SOS, August 3, 1943, 840.50/2827, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 963.

²⁰¹⁷ For complete coverage with the final outcome, see Geir Lundestad, *The American Non-Policy Towards Eastern Europe, 1943-1947* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 149-182.

representation to smaller countries, and in the case of Europe, none of the continental powers save the Soviet Union. They also feared that this model would provide a precedent for the future. But the Polish critique differed fundamentally from the others. By referring to statements made in public and private by top-level American officials, including Herbert Lehman and Franklin Roosevelt, they argued that the U.S. Government intended to use the relief organization to affect the postwar political order of Europe. In short, the Roosevelt Administration planned to use “food as weapon.”²⁰¹⁸ By contrast with many of the other powers, neither pride nor prestige motivated the Poles: they worried about their national interests and the threat of Soviet power. The Soviet Union would be one of “the largest recipients of relief and would give nothing,” they asserted. “The Russian Government had no ‘right’, apart from ‘power politics’ to membership on the Central Committee.”²⁰¹⁹

These criticisms did not emerge out of thin air. Polish relations with the Soviet Union had deteriorated precipitously the previous three months. On April 13, 1943, the Germans announced that they had discovered the bodies of 20,000 Polish military officers who had been murdered and buried in the Katyn Forest, just outside of Smolensk. When Stalin blamed the Germans for the atrocity, the Poles rejected the explanation. Their Prime Minister, General Wladyslaw Sikorski, requested an investigation by the International Red Cross, but Stalin refused to cooperate and severed diplomatic relations with the Polish Government in exile on April 26, 1943.²⁰²⁰ These events took place

²⁰¹⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23 and 26, 1943, 840.50/2058-6/9, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰¹⁹ Telegram Relief No. 74, DC to FO, June 14, 1943, FO 371/35271, PRO.

²⁰²⁰ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 107, 468; George Stanford, *Katyn*

amidst the four-power negotiations over the relief organization and explain the Soviet rejection of a larger Central Committee. Polish membership on the Central Committee worried Moscow the most. These developments meant that the Soviet Union would most certainly support a rival authority once Poland had been liberated. This inevitability lurked in the background of the relief negotiations.

Dean Acheson's attempts to calm the Poles failed. During meetings that took place with the Polish Ambassador, Jan Ciechanowski, the Commercial Counselor, Wieslaw Domaniewski, and the Chief of the Economic Section of Polish Ministry of Commerce, Tadeusz Lychowski, the Assistant Secretary expressed alarm "at [the Polish] conception of the role of the new organization." His Government "had had exactly the opposite intention," he claimed, and had done everything possible to guard against the possibility that food would be used as a weapon. If the relief organization "was to be used in any way by any of its participants to further political objectives," he asserted, "the entire project would be endangered." The Poles were unmoved. Roosevelt had suggested the contrary during talks with Sikorski and these views had been confirmed in talks with Lehman, who had also bandied them in public. "The matter could not be disposed of so easily," Lychowski asserted. According to reports in London, "food would be used as a weapon in the hands of the supplying countries to restore as quickly as possible the whole political order on the continent of Europe."²⁰²¹

and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory (New York: Routledge, 2009). For statistics, documents and general commentary on the massacre, see Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, Wojciech Materski, eds., *Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

²⁰²¹ "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23 and 26, 1943, 840.50/2058-6/9, NARA.

But this was not their primary concern. “It would be even worse,” Lychowski continued, “if a receiving country should have an opportunity to use its position on the controlling body of the new relief and rehabilitation administration (namely the Central Committee) for the purpose of effecting the type of government, and the policies of governments, to be established in Europe after the end of hostilities.” Either by withholding aid to an established authority, or by providing it to a rival, presumably one supported by Moscow, the Soviet Union could use its position on the Central Committee to undermine the Polish Government in exile. To prevent such an outcome, the Poles thought the committee’s membership should be broadened to include a continental European country in addition to the Soviet Union. They refused to accept the argument that relief supplies could be distributed without influencing political arrangements: whoever provides food to starving populations has power over them, and an increased capacity to win their allegiance. Ciechanowski suggested it was misguided to think otherwise. “This approach might prove to be very useful in chaotic postwar Europe.”²⁰²²

It appears that Acheson, for the first time during this lengthy process, suddenly faced an argument that he could neither brush aside nor attack head on without undermining the entire American program. Unlike Roosevelt, he lacked the imagination to meet a realistic criticism with plausible fiction. But it probably would not have worked anyway. He also remained reluctant to meet the Polish concerns with the naked truth: that Washington intended to dominate the organization via the Director General, and ignore the Soviet Union if it stood in their way. Yet by this point he was probably concluding that even this possibility was unrealistic. Thus he told the Poles that he “took a serious

²⁰²² Ibid.

view of any such misunderstanding,” and would have to “discuss the matter with the Secretary of State and with Governor Lehman.” He would also see that these issues were “brought to the attention of the President.”²⁰²³ Though his speech at Swarthmore College suggested otherwise,²⁰²⁴ Lehman argued that he had been misunderstood.²⁰²⁵ Hull reported the matter to Roosevelt, who refuted Sikorski’s account of their meeting as “utterly contrary to the fact.” His reply did not arrive until July 10, 1943.²⁰²⁶

In the meantime, discussions with the Poles continued. They feared the Central Committee would refrain from making difficult decisions until just after the Council’s biannual meeting; then they would push through policies that suited their interests. Of course the Council could override the Central Committee at its next meeting, but six months would pass before such an opportunity arose. If the request of at least one half of the organization’s members were required for a special session, which is what the draft stipulated, it remained unlikely that the Council could be convened immediately. The Poles thought the requirement for a special session should be lowered to one third of the organization’s members. Acheson believed this arrangement could be secured, but he assured the Poles that one member of the Central Committee could not deny Poland assistance. “Failure of either the Council or the Central Committee to take action would

²⁰²³ Ibid.

²⁰²⁴ Press Release No. 281, May 31, 1943, Herbert Lehman Speech to Graduating Class of Swarthmore College, May 31, 1943, 840.50/4053, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰²⁵ No direct correspondence on the matter appears to exist with Lehman, but his response is confirmed in the following: “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 30, 1943, 840.50/2380-14/16, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰²⁶ Hull to Roosevelt, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2184A; Roosevelt to Hull, July 10, 1943, 840.50/2218, both Box 4811, RG 59, NARA. The Americans were sufficiently concerned about the charges that they instructed the Ambassador in London to refute the charge. The SOS to Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), June 30, 1943, 840.50/2177a: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 919-920.

not prevent the Director General from acting.” Within limits, he suggested the executive side of the organization could and would do as it pleased.²⁰²⁷

The Poles, however, remained unsatisfied with these explanations. They reminded Acheson that the draft, under Article I, paragraph 2(c), called for unanimous approval by the Central Committee of any individual proposal put forward by a member state, but the Assistant Secretary correctly informed them that this only applied to areas of action that extended beyond the stated mandate of the organization. While accurate, this response aroused further concern: it implied that the only possible way for Poland to influence the agency was through the Council. Here again Acheson refuted this interpretation. Poland would have other opportunities through the various committees of the Council, which would be in constant session and in regular contact with the Director General and his staff. But the Poles disputed this point as well. The committees possessed only advisory powers, they argued, and the mechanisms for collaboration with the executive were remarkably weak. The purported liaisons, the Deputy Director Generals, were not even required to attend meetings of the committees, they argued.²⁰²⁸

The issue of Deputy Director Generals raised additional concerns. How many would there be? How would they be chosen? Would they be limited to specific nationalities? Acheson knew where this inquiry was headed.²⁰²⁹ A few days prior, as we have seen, the Belgian Minister of Finance informed Francis Sayre of “reports around

²⁰²⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23 and 26, 1943, 840.50/2058-6/9, NARA. See also “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 24, 1943, 840.50/2058-6/9, Box 4810; “Points Raised by Mr. Domaniewski... concerning Draft Agreement for UNRRA,” June 24, 1943, 840.50/2177, Box 4811, both in RG 59, NARA.

²⁰²⁸ Ibid.

²⁰²⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23 and 26, 1943, 840.50/2058-6/9, NARA.

Washington that the Deputy Directors were to be nationals of the four Big Powers.”²⁰³⁰ Acheson therefore disavowed any plans to reserve these positions for the Big Powers. A proposal permitting the Central Committee to make these appointments had been summarily rejected and was not in the draft agreement. In fact, there was no limit on the number of deputies the Administration could employ, but like Governor Lehman, he thought that there should be many. Regardless, the decision would rest with the Director General, not the Central Committee. Acheson’s response was filled with half-truths and misleading statements. He knew it, but secrecy meant that he could only tell the Poles that the Director General would consult with the Central Committee before making appointments.²⁰³¹

These demonstrations did little to remove Polish fears. Thus they laid down proposals to limit the powers of the Central Committee and reduce Soviet influence over their country’s fate. With a population of 135 million people, or 260 million if overseas possessions are included, Europe, they insisted, should have representation on the Central Committee. They proposed a rotational seat. They enumerated powers that should be transferred to the Council including but not limited to the admission of new members, the appointment of standing committees, the removal of the Director General, and the exclusive responsibility for policy. Relief programs, they argued, should be based on “national plans” to be vetted by the regional committees, which would in turn suggest revisions if problems of supply, shipping or finance made them unreasonable. Finally, they believed the regional committees should be granted real powers, particularly the Committee for Europe, which could draw upon the work of the Inter-Allied Committee.

²⁰³⁰ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 18, 1943, 840.50/2299, NARA.

²⁰³¹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23 and 26, 1943, 840.50/2058-6/9, NARA.

Unless some variation of these proposals was adopted, the Poles suggested that they would refuse to participate.²⁰³²

Chez vous, sur vous, sans vous! The Netherlands and Norway

Though it initially appeared that the Netherlands would place no obstacles in the way of establishing the proposed organization, this impression quickly dissipated. Shortly after the draft was shared with the Allies, the Dutch Foreign Minister, Eelco Van Kleffens complimented the proposal. He considered the draft a “good piece of work” and told Acheson that it would provide an “acceptable basis for the organization.” He nonetheless expressed his hope that the size of the Central Committee would be expanded to include countries from occupied Europe and Latin America. Like the Canadians, he argued that their experience with the combined machinery for the war effort suggested that other countries would not be consulted when matters of pertinence to their interests arose. The proposal, he added, would also create an undesirable pattern for future international organizations. Acheson addressed his concerns with many of the same arguments deployed in discussions with Canadian officials earlier in the year.²⁰³³

²⁰³² The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Romer) to the American Ambassador to the Polish Government in Exile (Biddle), at London, July 24, 1943, 840.50/2294, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 954-957. The population figures refer roughly to the European countries on the continent that had joined the United Nations. See Gregory Frumkin, *Population Changes in Europe Since 1939: A Study of Population Changes in Europe During and Since World War II as Shown by the Balance Sheets of Twenty-Four European Countries* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Inc., 1951).

²⁰³³ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 11, 1943, 840.50/2086, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

But by late June 1943, the situation had changed drastically. Lord Halifax learned that representatives of the exiled European Governments stationed in Washington had met informally to discuss the draft agreement. While they praised the “democratic procedure” followed at the Food and Agriculture Conference, they lamented the “autocratic procedure” now being used in the case of relief. These representatives expressed particular anger over the American decision to release the draft to the press before they had had the time to study it.²⁰³⁴ As the Counselor of the Polish Minister of Finance, Josef Rucinski later explained, the agreement “had been circulated in such a form that it seemed to be a fait accompli which the smaller powers were asked to accept.”²⁰³⁵ Procedure aside, the European allies were equally perturbed by the draft’s substance. The Dutch Ambassador in Washington, A. Loudon, told Halifax that he “hoped Goebbels would not get hold of a copy of the draft.” The Reich Minister would certainly “use it for propaganda in occupied territories against the United Nations.” Under the draft scheme, “the status of the Governments of occupied countries,” Loudon added, “would be worse than that of the satellite Governments in the New German Order.”²⁰³⁶

The Americans and British believed such interpretations could be corrected through diplomatic channels and modest revisions to the draft. Halifax reported that when the Europeans learned more about the organization, particularly the powers accorded to the Director General and the whole concept of a United Nations Civil Service working in conjunction with liberated countries, “their criticisms sensibly diminish.” Like Acheson,

²⁰³⁴ Telegram Relief No. 76, DC to FO, June 26, 1943, FO 371/35271, PRO.

²⁰³⁵ “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, August 31, 1943, PRO, FO 371/35275, Folder 12 (3362).

²⁰³⁶ Telegram Relief No. 76, DC to FO, June 26, 1943, FO 371/35271, PRO.

he also believed that the number of member states required to call the Council into emergency session might be reduced from a majority to one-third or even 25 percent. Though Van Kleffens still remained “very critical of the four power Central Committee,” Halifax reported that Loudon expressed satisfaction with the explanations.²⁰³⁷ In short, it seemed that the differences could be managed quietly with no serious ruptures.

Yet the tone of the complaints worsened. On June 28, 1943, just after the worrisome exchanges with the Poles, the Dutch delivered a formal reaction to the relief proposal at the State Department. They attacked the agreement vehemently, but expressed particular opprobrium for the Central Committee. It was “too exclusive and restrictive,” they asserted. None of its members, especially China and the Soviet Union, stood in a position that would allow them to respect the interests of Netherlands. Worse, the language of the draft did not respect sovereignty. If it were not changed, the Germans would argue that the four great powers intended to use a United Nations victory to resurrect the notorious principle established with the 1713 Peace of Utrecht: *chez vous, sur vous, sans vous!* The Netherlands represented 70 million people around the globe, yet the draft afforded few avenues for Dutch influence. As such, they argued that the size of the Central Committee should be increased, the powers of the regional committees expanded, and the language describing the relationship between the administration and recipient countries revised.²⁰³⁸

Apparently the United States failed to respond rapidly enough. The Dutch released the note to the press. On July 5, 1943, the State Department learned of the news

²⁰³⁷ Ibid.

²⁰³⁸ The Netherlands Ambassador (Loudon) to the SOS, June 28, 1943, 840.50/2137, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 915-919.

and decided the Greeks should immediately inform the news media that they had accepted the draft proposal.²⁰³⁹ The following day, *The Washington Post* ran a piece recounting Dutch dissatisfaction.²⁰⁴⁰ A parallel article in *The New York Times* devoted a mere two paragraphs to the Greek decision.²⁰⁴¹ On July 8, 1943, the damage spread. *The New York Times* now reported that dissent on the relief proposal was widespread. Belgium, Norway, Poland and even Canada had opposed the procedure placing the Big Four in charge of the relief organization's Central Committee.²⁰⁴² Potentially more damaging, the Dutch ordered Radio Orange to broadcast their discontent in occupied Holland. Although the Office of War Information and British censors caught the release and managed to tone it down before it hit the airwaves, the original transcript of the broadcast had been leaked to American reporters.²⁰⁴³ The damage was done. Under fire,

²⁰³⁹ Frederick Kuh, "Dutch Not Fully Satisfied With United Nations Postwar Plans," July 6, 1943, *WP*, 18; "Memorandum of Conversation," July 5, 1943, 840.50/2196-5/8; "Memorandum of Conversation," July 6, 1943, 840.50/2196-2/8, all in Box 4811, RG 59, NARA. On June 29, 1943, the *NYT* ran an article speculating that certain of the European exiled governments in London were unhappy with the relief proposal: Raymond Daniell, "Small Allies See Rule by Big Four," *NYT*, 7.

²⁰⁴⁰ Lee Carson, "Netherlands, Congress Score United Nations Relief Pact," July 7, 1943, *WP*, 15.

²⁰⁴¹ "Greece Backs Relief Plan: Accepts Agreement Drafted for Forty-three Nations," July 7, 1943, *NYT*, 9.

²⁰⁴² John MacCormac, "Dissent on Relief Held Widespread: The Netherlands' Objections to Draft Convention Reveals Still Other Opposition," July 8, 1943, *NYT*, 10. Newspaper coverage continued for several weeks. Ernest K. Lindley, "Draft Agreement: A Mechanism For United Nations," *WP*, 13; Mary B. Palmer, "Smaller Nations: Ask Voice in Europe's Peace Plans," August 25, 1943, *WP*, 15.

²⁰⁴³ Leith-Ross to President of the BOT, July 6, 1943; To Harrison [name of author not clear], July 6, 1943; "Netherlands and the UNRRA," by the Dutch Government in Exile, July 6, 1943; To Harrison [name of author not clear], July 8, 1943; "Dutch Broadcast for Radio Orange," all in FO 371/35272, PRO; A.J. Drexel Biddle to Hull, August 14, 1943, 840.50/2418, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA; Telegram No. 4686, FO to DC, July 16, 1943, FO 371/35271, PRO.

Cordell Hull told reporters that the proposal would be reconsidered, and that the problems would not delay final agreement.²⁰⁴⁴

But this was certainly incorrect. In London, the Dutch had shared a copy of their note to the Americans with the Foreign Office, but the British became entangled in a dispute over how to address the matter. While Leith-Ross thought the State Department should handle the dispute in Washington,²⁰⁴⁵ Jebb believed the real problem resided in London. By contrast with the Polish grievances, which stemmed from a realistic assessment of their particular situation, prestige and internal political bickering among the Dutch politicians in London precipitated the reckless behavior. The problem had to be attacked at the “fountain-head.”²⁰⁴⁶ This procedure, however, would require time-consuming coordination with Washington, which in turn resurrected old disputes over the powers of the regional committees.²⁰⁴⁷ As a result, the whole saga would drag on until the

²⁰⁴⁴ “Hull to Reconsider on Allied Relief Project,” July 9, 1943, *WP*, 6. The Dutch reaction to the relief proposal was foreshadowed in previous articles regarding the postwar leadership roles of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union: “Hull Shuns Dispute Over Small Nations,” March 26, 1943, *NYT*, 6.

²⁰⁴⁵ Leith-Ross to Jebb, July 9, 1943, FO 371/35276, PRO.

²⁰⁴⁶ Jebb to Leith-Ross, July 14, 1943, FO 371/35272, PRO.

²⁰⁴⁷ Telegram Relief No. 4685, FO to DC, July 16, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 83, DC to FO, July 17, 1943, both in FO 371/35272; Telegram Relief No. 87, DC to FO, July 21, 1943, FO 371/35273, all in PRO.

middle of August 1943.²⁰⁴⁸ Fortunately Leith-Ross successfully persuaded his colleagues to refrain from highlighting differences with Washington over the committees.²⁰⁴⁹

The Americans would draft a stiff reply to the Dutch note,²⁰⁵⁰ but the important breakthrough occurred in London on August 3, 1943. In an off-the-record conversation with the Dutch Ambassador to Great Britain, Edgar Michiels van Verduynen, Nigel Ronald explained that the Foreign Office, on the one hand, had always thought the regional committees would be the real policymaking bodies, whatever the Americans preferred. But they deemed cooperation between Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States in the immediate postwar period so important that they felt it necessary to support the four-power setup. Otherwise they would run the risk of nasty disputes erupting in public. On the other hand, they believed they would have to “play up the idea of a Washington façade.” If Britain gave the Roosevelt Administration and Congress and the American tax-payer... the impression that they were running the show,” then they would “be all the more inclined to be generous as they must be if the scheme” is to be

²⁰⁴⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation,” by SOS, July 30, 1943, 840.50/2196-6/8, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 962; “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 13, 1943; To Acheson (author unknown, but probably Veatch), August 19, 1943; Noel Hall to Dean Acheson, August 21, 1943, all in File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 2 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173; Telegram No. 516 Received, August 13, 1943, 840.50/2381, Box 4812, all in RG 59, NARA.

²⁰⁴⁹ Leith-Ross to Ronald, August 10, 1943; “Minute,” by J.E. Coulson, August 11, 1943, both in FO 371/35273, PRO.

²⁰⁵⁰ Telegram Relief No. 92, DC to FO, July 29, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO; Cordell Hull to Baron W. van Boetzelaer, July 28, 1943, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 2 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA; Ronald to Jonkheer E. Michiels van Verduynen, August 13, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 67, FO to DC, August 13, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO.

successful. Positions for the Dutch on the regional and supplies committee would certainly result if they played their hand well. He therefore cautioned Baron Michiels to be “patient and not to attempt to force the pace.”²⁰⁵¹

Finally, he made an appeal to realism. The real concern, Ronald explained, was “not that the three Great Powers should run everything, but that they should not run out of things.” The British had never abandoned the “democratic principle.” They simply embraced reality. The Netherlands, he added, should not be worried about a “three-power dictatorship” but about the risks if two of them – Great Britain and the United States – withdrew from Europe. “The Dutch and others,” Ronald suggested, “would find it inconvenient if Russia alone were left in Europe.” In other words, the objectives according to Ronald were two-fold. First, Great Britain wanted to secure as much American largesse as possible; the policy mechanics of controlling the resources would ultimately fall to the regional committees. Second, it was important to keep the United States engaged in Europe. If Washington abandoned the continent, Britain might have to follow suit. This would leave Europe facing the Soviet Union alone.²⁰⁵²

The Dutch, of course, recognized this fact,²⁰⁵³ but pride made it extremely difficult for them to accept the Central Committee. The Soviet Union constituted one matter, but what irked them most was the presence of China on the committee. They

²⁰⁵¹ The substance of this meeting is reported in three different documents: “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Nigel Ronald, August 3, 1943; Ronald to Leith-Ross, August 9, 1943, both in FO 371/35273, PRO; Biddle to Hull, August 14, 1943, 840.50/2418, NARA.

²⁰⁵² Ibid. The arguments advanced by Ronald regarding the Soviet Union accord with the following: “Small Countries Revive Bloc Plan,” March 26, 1943, *NYT*, 6.

²⁰⁵³ This was evident well before the American draft was distributed: See “Summaries of Text of Speech of November 25, 1942 of Dr. van Kleffens and Memorandum concerning Dr. van Kleffens’s views on postwar planning, February 26, 1943, 840.50/954, Box 4801, RG 59, NARA.

resented the fact that “all of the United Nations having territory” in the Far East would be “represented on the committee with the sole exception of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.”²⁰⁵⁴ As they complained to John Winant, “China is only potentially, and from a long-term aspect, a great power in the sense of not being in an economic position to contribute, in the near future, to either relief or rehabilitation.” In their view, the Chinese would “not be a noteworthy factor in world reconstruction for at least another decade.”²⁰⁵⁵ This country, Baron Micheils told Ronald, “would have little to offer.”²⁰⁵⁶

On August 25, 1943, the Dutch Ambassador delivered his Government’s reply to the State Department. While acquiescing to the American proposal, its defiant and prideful tone did more to underscore Dutch weakness and humiliation than to conceal it. “The Netherlands Government... does not find the” arguments advanced by the United States “entirely convincing.” Whatever avenues the Council might have to appeal the decisions of the four powers, it remained possible that those countries without representation on the Central Committee could be confronted “with accomplished facts from which no appeal is possible.” For this reason, the Dutch maintained their objections to the proposal even while accepting it. This decision, they asserted, derived merely from the urgency of establishing a relief organization to aid war victims. It in no way implied acceptance of the “principles involved.” If at “any time in the future... a similar setup

²⁰⁵⁴ Loudon to Hull, June 28, 1943, 840.50/2137, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 915-919.

²⁰⁵⁵ Winant to Hull, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2154, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 922-925.

²⁰⁵⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 11, 1943, Enclosure to Dispatch No. 99, A.J. Drexel Biddle to Hull, Netherlands, August 14, 1943, 840.50/2418, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

should be proposed with regard to other international organizations or arrangements,” the letter suggested that the Netherlands would not accept it.²⁰⁵⁷

Without access to Dutch documents, it remains difficult to draw firm conclusions here, but several facts merit our attention. First, political jockeying within the Dutch Government appears to have precipitated the escalation with the United States. Most likely, the views of Van Kleffens hardened in the face of criticism from the Prime Minister, Pieter Sjoerds Gerbrandy; the Minister for Trade, Petrus Kerstens; and the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies, Hubertus van Mook.²⁰⁵⁸ Second, the Dutch Monarch, Queen Wilhelmina had taken a very public stand on postwar relief, which inadvertently highlighted the marginal role of the Netherlands in the American scheme. This fact only underscored the decline of the Dutch Empire and made the four-power setup an affront to their pride.²⁰⁵⁹ The Queen apparently played a role in drafting her country's reply to the United States.²⁰⁶⁰ But she and her servants knew well the dangers of non-cooperation: postwar disunity in the face of Soviet power.

Though the Dutch ultimately accepted the draft without abandoning their contempt for it, the Norwegians pursued a different course. To be sure, the possibility of facing the Soviet Union alone after the war always loomed large in their calculations. Norway could not afford to risk relations with London or Washington. Over the course of

²⁰⁵⁷ The Netherlands Ambassador (London) to the SOS, August 25, 1943, 840.50/2380-12/16, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 985-86.

²⁰⁵⁸ On this point, see Jebb to Leith-Ross, July 14, 1943, FO 371/35272, PRO; Leith-Ross to Ronald, August 10, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO; Biddle to Hull, August 14, 1943, 840.50/2418, NARA; Telegram No. 1901, DO to Canada (HC), FO 371/35273, PRO.

²⁰⁵⁹ “Relief Agency Urged by Queen Wilhelmina,” May 11, 1943, *LAT*, 5; Dutch Queen Seeks Allied Relief For Conquered Europe,” May 11, 1943, *CDT*, 2.

²⁰⁶⁰ Telegram 516 Received, August 13, 1943, 840.50/2381, Box 4812; Telegram 2308a Received, August 20, 1943, 840.50/2411, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

a “thousand years,” Trygve Lie told Berle in March 1943, “Britain had never threatened Norway, and he was certain that the United States would never do so.” The problem, he explained, resided in the east. “Russia, after all, was a dictatorship and... until there was a popular government, responsible to the will of the people, there was a degree of danger.”²⁰⁶¹ These views do not accord with the decision to accept the four-power Central Committee with little protest. If anything, they suggest the exact opposite, which is what happened. But how does one explain the Norwegian roundabout? How did Norway, which disliked the proposal as much as the Dutch, come to not only accept it, but to laud it as well?

In late June 1943, the Norwegians lined up with the other Europeans to voice their discontent, yet they displayed considerable caution. Doubtless their confrontation with the Americans and British over independent postwar purchases taught them to be careful, yet it also saved them from having to engage in a counterproductive duel over a matter that would impact the system of postwar security in Europe. Indeed the Norwegians refrained from putting their protests in writing. They delivered them informally, and without the public outcry that accompanied the Dutch reaction. In this way, they saved themselves from the humiliation of having to reverse course after having made a dramatic show of their discontent. Yet their feelings were no different than those of their European colleagues. One Norwegian official “attributed the success of the Food Conference to the fact that it made no distinction between great and small powers, and commented bitterly that the Relief Conference was apparently going to follow the opposite course.”²⁰⁶²

²⁰⁶¹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” March 10, 1943, 840.50/2030, Box 4809, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰⁶² Winant to Hull, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2154, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 922-925.

The Norwegians nonetheless drafted the “least critical” of all the responses.²⁰⁶³ It referred to the “immense task” awaiting the Allies upon liberation and appealed to the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms. The Norwegians praised the United States for embracing a program that would permit all of the United Nations to participate, and they ironically lauded the provisions in the agreement protecting the sovereignty of nations. Of course they lamented the composition of the Central Committee as “inconsistent with the principle of equality between states,” but they also praised it for “meeting the demands of the interests involved.” Like the United States, they argued that the four powers maintained a “special position... because of their vast resources and the importance of their participating in the solution of these problems.” Therefore, the problems with the draft were better resolved by adjusting the powers of the Central Committee vis-à-vis the Council than by abandoning the four-power setup. With this aim in mind, the Norwegians laid out a series of sensible revisions.²⁰⁶⁴

How does one explain this remarkable divergence in unofficial and the official reaction of the Norwegian Government in exile? In part, the answer resides in the actual response. “In view of the restrictions which in the common interest have been laid upon the different countries with regard to their free purchases of post-war supplies,” they wrote, “the Norwegian Government consider it to be of the greatest importance that an inter-allied organization should be established which can ensure that the necessary

²⁰⁶³ “Minute,” by J.E. Coulson, July 30, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO.

²⁰⁶⁴ See Enclosure to Dispatch No. 57, Norwegian Series, July 21, 1943, Utkast til note fra Ambassador Moregenstjerne til den amerikanske Utenrikminister, attached to A.J. Drexel Biddle to Hull, No. 57, from London, July 21, 1943, 840.50/2281, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

supplies will be available when required.”²⁰⁶⁵ But this explanation does not constitute the whole story. The aggressiveness with which they executed their purchasing plans allowed them a degree of flexibility unavailable to the other European countries, especially those in Eastern Europe. If they could secure sufficient provisions to undertake postwar relief independent of the relief organization, and they were well on the way to achieving this aim at this point in the war, then they could participate without worrying that Moscow would divert potential supplies elsewhere, leaving them with little or nothing.²⁰⁶⁶

It therefore made no sense to anger the United States or to disrupt their ongoing buying program. In terms of their long-term security and economic wellbeing, the Norwegians needed the United States. They envisioned a security system consisting of two components: membership in a Scandinavian regional organization, but also in a security framework for the entire Atlantic community. The United States remained the only power that could bring such a system into place. Norway also hoped the Americans would assist them in adjudicating disputes with their neighbors. A seafaring nation, they worried that either Britain or Sweden would obstruct their ability to restore their fishing and maritime fleets. “The sea,” as Lie told to Berle in March 1943, “was part of Norway’s national wealth.”²⁰⁶⁷ But in the immediate future, they simply wanted to

²⁰⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶⁶ By July 1942, the British suspected that the Norwegians were close to completing their buying program. See “Minute,” by E. Baring, July 8, 1942, FO 371/31501, PRO. I assume a year later they had purchased much more than the two-month provision desired in the summer of 1942.

²⁰⁶⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation,” March 10, 1943, 840.50/2030, NARA.

continue their purchasing program.²⁰⁶⁸ Oddly, the Canadians were holding up Belgian and Norwegian orders until an agreement could be reached on the relief proposal.²⁰⁶⁹

While their interests drove them to cooperate, the Norwegians disliked the plan. Nothing captures their sentiments more than the words of Carl Joachim Hambro, the President of the Norwegian Parliament, who lambasted the agreement in an interview with a Norwegian newspaper in Brooklyn, New York. “There is no understanding whatsoever of the importance of the small nations either in Washington or London,” he asserted. The “lack of understanding,” he explained, resulted from a “lack of intelligence.” The four-power setup would lead the world “back to the conception of great power politics before the days of the League of Nations.” If the United States continued hustling the smaller powers, then the “gratitude which the American people enjoys” would “turn to bitter ill will.”²⁰⁷⁰ A Conservative his entire life, Hambro was not a member of the Norwegian Government, which was dominated by the Labor Party.²⁰⁷¹ Though they privately shared his views, it was of embarrassment to them when the Office of War Information uncovered this interview, and reported it to the State Department.²⁰⁷²

²⁰⁶⁸ The Americans made it apparent that the relief organization would not requisition supplies already purchased for postwar relief. See “Additional Questions put forward by Baron Boel on June 22 and 23, together with Mr. Acheson’s answers,” 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA.

²⁰⁶⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Mr. Roy Veatch of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, July 22, 1943, 840.50/2314, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 947-951.

²⁰⁷⁰ “Memorandum of Conversation,” October 26, 1943, 840.50/3199, Box 4817, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰⁷¹ See Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia, s.v. “Carl Joachim ‘C.J.’ Hambro,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C. J. Hambro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._J._Hambro); see Store Norske Leksikon, s.v. “CJ Hambro,” http://snl.no/nbl_biografi/C_J_Hambro/utdypning#menuitem3 (accessed September 20, 2012)

²⁰⁷² “Memorandum of Conversation,” October 26, 1943, 840.50/3199, NARA.

This affair might not have created such a stir had it come from a lesser man, but Hambro was a widely respected figure in international politics. Like Winston Churchill, he was one of a very few European politicians who recognized the threat the Adolf Hitler posed well before his murderous reign began. Unlike most of his colleagues, he predicted the German invasion and made preparations to get the royal family, the Government, high-ranking members of Parliament, and the country's immense gold reserves out of the country literally thirty minutes before the Nazis entered Oslo. A journalist and former President of the League of Nations, he published in 1942 an important book on the postwar peace that appeared alongside works on the same topic by Herbert Hoover, Henry Wallace, and Wendell Willkie. The Americans therefore insisted that the Norwegian Embassy take steps to correct the "erroneous and undesirable impression" his comments had made. They were instructed to "get Mr. Hambro better informed and more sympathetic toward UNRRA."²⁰⁷³

Coincidentally, Mr. Hambro's book, *How to Win the Peace*, expounds upon the problem Norway and the other European governments faced in the summer of 1943: how to achieve unity in the face of American power. To have a strong national or international polity, he argued, unanimous decision-making had to be avoided. This procedure had not only destined the American Articles of Confederation to failure, but the League of Nations as well. If the diverse entities that make up a nation state or an international organization refuse to relinquish power or sovereignty, then paralysis and weakness will result.²⁰⁷⁴ Belgium, Holland, Norway and Poland all disagreed with the American proposal, but they could not present a unified stand on how to alter it to meet

²⁰⁷³ Ibid.

²⁰⁷⁴ C.J. Hambro, *How to Win the Peace* (New York: Lippincott Co., 1942), pp. 224-239.

everyone's views. For this reason, they hoped France would take the lead in forging a consensus. Ironically, the man now revered as the father of the European Union, Jean Monnet, would wreck this prospect. His concern was not the unity of Europe, but of his own country. For Charles De Gaulle, UNRRA was a grand opportunity.

France Cannot Be France Without Greatness

France constituted a critical lynchpin in the security and stability of postwar Europe. It therefore remained critical that the two competing French groups should unite around a single authority. Coincidentally, a possible pathway out of the French impasse opened in late February 1943, literally at the moment when Acheson told Alphan of the conditions for French participation in the relief conference: unity. At the instigation of Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt authorized Jean Monnet to visit North Africa, where he was given wide authority to bring about French unity. Doubtless the American President hoped Monnet would help Giraud consolidate his power. Perceived as administratively incompetent, it was believed that he could use Monnet's assistance. Thus on February 23, 1943, the Frenchman departed Washington for Algiers, and by early June, the two groups joined together under the auspices of a new authority, the French Committee of National Liberation. For the moment, Giraud and De Gaulle would share the presidency, but these arrangements would not last. Disputes emerged almost immediately.²⁰⁷⁵

²⁰⁷⁵ On the decision to send Monnet to Algiers, see André Kaspi, *La Mission De Jean Monnet A Alger, mars – octobre 1943* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1971), 67-72. For an excellent overview of the process that formed the French Committee of National

The two men took remarkably different attitudes towards the relief proposal.

Giraud, like the exiled European governments, believed four-power leadership of the Central Committee would create a “dangerous precedent” that ran counter to “democratic principles.” The exclusion of France, in his view, made no sense. The French Committee of National Liberation was *not* a refugee government, but existed on sovereign French territory. Alone with Belgium, France was one of two European countries with only part of its territory occupied, and it was the only significant continental power apart from Soviet Russia. Thanks to the French Empire, France also had resources to contribute. For these reasons, he argued that the French Committee should insist on membership on the Central Committee, but also a seat on the European Regional Committee and the Supplies Committee. He also thought France should demand restrictions on the Director General’s powers.²⁰⁷⁶ It was a forceful set of demands to make in July 1943. Neither Great Britain nor the United States had extended any recognition to the French Committee.

During the early summer of 1943, this line of argumentation informed the French discussions in London and Washington,²⁰⁷⁷ but by the end of July, De Gaulle had begun to outmaneuver Giraud.²⁰⁷⁸ As a result, the French attitude towards the relief proposal changed. Jean Monnet played the critical role. Before the French Committee’s meeting of

Liberation, see G. E. Maguire, *Anglo-American Policy Towards the Free French* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995), 75-95; For a more recent account, see Charles L. Robertson, *When Roosevelt Planned to Govern France* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 70-98.

²⁰⁷⁶ “Note contenant quelques observations du Général Giraud au sujet du projet d’accord relatif à l’administration des nations unies pour l’assistance et la reconstruction,” by Henri Giraud, E) U.N.R.R.A - 1943 (81 à 103), Dossier 2 – Organisations internationales (Pièce 45 à 195), 3AG1/262. Affaires étrangères, De Gaulle Papers, ANF.

²⁰⁷⁷ Telegram Relief No. 56, FO to DC, June 29, 1943, FO 371/35271, PRO. For the American attitude, see “Memorandum” by Ray Atherton, July 7, 1943, 840.50/2154, Box 4810, RG 89, NARA.

²⁰⁷⁸ Maguire, *Anglo-American Policy Towards the Free French*, 86-89.

August 5, 1943, he set forth the arguments that became De Gaulle's. He worried that if France insisted on an enlarged Central Committee, the United States might propose a formula allowing for rotating membership, which would have placed France in the same category as the small powers. Monnet worried that this alternative would set an awful precedent. He therefore believed the French Committee should accept the proposal, but reserve its position until France had established an internationally recognized government, whereupon it would then demand a revision to the agreement. He also feared that any expansion of the committee beyond five would weaken it. France, he argued, could not join a weak committee. It should be an exclusive club of the Five Great Powers.²⁰⁷⁹ Doubtless, this approach accorded with De Gaulle's personality and sentiments.²⁰⁸⁰

²⁰⁷⁹ "Organisation du 'Secours Immédiat' (Relief) et de la 'Reconstruction Economique' (Rehabilitation) à prévoir pour les territoires occupés, au fur et à mesure de leur libération par les armées des nations unies," July 28, 1943, Commissariat à l'Armement, à l'approvisionnement et à la reconstruction, No. 298 AAR/RLF, E) U.N.R.R.A - 1943 (81 à 103), Dossier 2 – Organisations internationales (Pièce 45 à 195), 3AG1/262. Affaires étrangères, De Gaulle Papers, ANF. I assume that Monnet authored the document from the minutes of the meeting of the French Committee of National Liberation held on August 5, 1943, "No. 26. Résumé des décisions prises au cours de la Séance du 5 août 1943," (1274) AME 35/3/4, AME 35/3 - Les antécédents de l'organisation du Relief (La Conférence de Hot Spring), Institute Jean Monnet, University of Lausanne.

²⁰⁸⁰ For a first hand look at De Gaulle's personality, see Charles De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc. 1998). For the most exhaustive portrayal of De Gaulle's life, see Jean Lacouture, *DeGaulle: The Rebel 1890-1944* (New York: Norton, 1990) and Jean Lacouture, *DeGaulle: The Ruler 1945-1970* (New York: Norton, 1992). For a less interesting but much briefer account, see Charles Williams, *The Last Great Frenchman: A Life of General DeGaulle* (New York: Wiley, 1997). As far as I can tell, De Gaulle wrote no complete document on the relief organization, but his attitude is abundantly clear in the notes he wrote on the draft letter to the United States. See "Projet de réponse au gouvernement des Etats-Unis," August 6, 1943, Commissariat à l'Armement, à l'approvisionnement et à la reconstruction, No. 346 AAR/RLF, E) U.N.R.R.A - 1943 (81 à 103), Dossier 2 – Organisations internationales (Pièce 45 à 195), 3AG1/262. Affaires étrangères, De Gaulle Papers, ANF.

Monnet had other concerns as well. If France refused to cooperate in the effort due to the composition of the Central Committee, it would run the risk of angering the American Congress and British Parliament, the source of the proposed agency's resources. Without supplies, he feared that France and all of Europe would slip into a state of general chaos with detrimental effects for the long-term stability of the continent. It would be far better, he believed, to seek membership on the regional and supplies committees while reserving France's pretensions for later. If the French Committee drew a clear line between relief and reconstruction, it could make it clear that France would insist on a seat on the Central Committee once the initial stage of relief had come to an end. By that time, a provisional government would be in place and the country would have a legitimate claim. France, he argued, might permit outside actors to assist with postwar relief, but this task could not be allowed to obtain a "political character," and it should involve French nationals. In the meantime, the organization should be established and the French Committee should reach an accord with the agency as soon as possible. Here again, De Gaulle agreed.²⁰⁸¹

By August 5, 1943, De Gaulle had completely sidelined Giraud. Thus the French Committee endorsed Monnet's report and instructed him to work with the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, René Massigli, to draft a reply to the American Government. Yet even after the letter had been written and approved by De Gaulle, Massigli had doubts. Like Giraud, he expressed concerns over the "considerable powers" the Director General would have in France, but he could think of no other approach given the possibility that they might not be able to undertake relief without assistance. A future demand to revise

²⁰⁸¹ Ibid.

the agreement, he also speculated, might endanger the entire organization, thereby putting any future French Government at risk. The United States, he believed, should therefore be informed of their intentions at the outset. He wondered if the French reply might not also anger their European allies, who had hoped France would take the lead in opposing the four-power Central Committee. He even pondered the idea of composing a joint reply with them, but this thought went nowhere.²⁰⁸²

De Gaulle probably objected. For him, the relief proposal presented opportunities. If he could not obtain official recognition for the French Committee from Great Britain and the United States, then he believed he could secure *de facto* recognition by acting as though the committee were the sole French authority, and then negotiating as many agreements with London and Washington as possible. While Monnet disagreed with this logic, Roosevelt's political advisor in North Africa, Robert Murphy, clearly considered it plausible. For this reason, he refused to share the proposed relief agreement with the French until he had investigated possible procedures to avoid recognition.²⁰⁸³ But there were none, and De Gaulle knew it. His notations on the draft letter indicate his jubilation over the chance to negotiate, a fact that certainly expedited the French Committee's reply

²⁰⁸² "Note sur le projet de reponse au gouvernement américain au sujet du 'relief,' by René Massigli, August 11, 1943, E) U.N.R.R.A - 1943 (81 à 103), Dossier 2 – Organisations internationales (Pièce 45 à 195), 3AG1/262. Affaires étrangères, De Gaulle Papers, ANF. For evidence that the European Allies hoped France would take the lead in opposing the composition of the Central Committee, see Winant to Hull, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2154, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 922-925; "Memorandum" by Ray Atherton, July 7, 1943, 840.50/2154, NARA.

²⁰⁸³ The Consul General at Algiers (Wiley) to Hull, June 11, 1943, 840.50/2098: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 910-911.

to the United States. Yet opportunism alone does not explain De Gaulle's eagerness.

He also worried about chaos and disorder at the moment of liberation.²⁰⁸⁴

On August 15, 1943, René Massigli delivered the letter to the United States Consul General at Algiers.²⁰⁸⁵ But before its contents reached London, Hervé Alphanand suggested that if France could not be recognized as one of the "Big Five," as he had proposed during the Food and Agriculture Conference,²⁰⁸⁶ then he wondered if the French Committee might chair the European Regional Committee. If Britain planned to assume this position, then he thought France should serve as Vice-Chair.²⁰⁸⁷ The British rejected this suggestion.²⁰⁸⁸ Until Great Britain had a clear idea of "when and in what form a French Government" should emerge, they deemed it unwise to make such commitments.²⁰⁸⁹ The idea was never broached in Washington, but the letter made their long-term aspirations clear. "It appears inconceivable," they wrote, "that France should not, when the time comes, resume its place by the side of China, the United States of America, Great Britain, and the U.S.S.R. on a footing of equality, in an enlarged central committee, as well as in the Councils of the United Nations charged with establishing

²⁰⁸⁴ "Projet de reponse au gouvernement des Etats-Unis," August 6, 1943, Commissariat a l'Armement, a l'approvisionnement et a la reconstruction, No. 346 AAR/RLF, E) U.N.R.R.A - 1943 (81 à 103), Dossier 2 – Organisations internationales (Pièce 45 à 195), 3AG1/262. Affaires étrangères, De Gaulle Papers, ANF.

²⁰⁸⁵ The Consul General in Algiers (Wiley) to the SOS (Hull), August 15, 1943, 840.50/2385: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 966-968.

²⁰⁸⁶ Winant to Hull, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2154, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 922-925.

²⁰⁸⁷ Leith-Ross to Ronald, August 10, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO.

²⁰⁸⁸ "Minute," by J.E. Coulson, August 16, 1943; Coulson to Leith-Ross, August 16, 1943; Leith-Ross to Coulson, August 17, 1943, all in FO 371/35273, PRO.

²⁰⁸⁹ Leith-Ross to Ronald, August 10, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO.

peace and determining the European and world conditions which shall govern the world after the war.”²⁰⁹⁰

Recognition would come well before the agency came into being, but it was much less than De Gaulle had hoped for. After considerable debate and dispute, Great Britain and the United States issued statements of qualified recognition on August 24, 1943. According to the statement prepared by Adolf Berle, the French Committee’s new status only applied in cases where it administered “territories which acknowledge its authority.” These words did “not constitute recognition of a government of France or of the French Empire by the Government of the United States,” but merely signified “recognition of the French Committee of National Liberation as functioning within specific limitations during the war,” after which the French people would choose their own government.²⁰⁹¹ For De Gaulle, this insulting statement meant that their strategy should be maintained. They would negotiate as many agreements as possible while fighting relentlessly for the use of the French language in all diplomatic conferences. Through it all, De Gaulle would never abandon his guiding principle: “France cannot be France without greatness.”²⁰⁹²

²⁰⁹⁰ French Response, August 14, 1943, 840.50/2380-13/16, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

²⁰⁹¹ The Acting SOS (Berle) to the Consul General at Algiers (Wiley), August 24, 1943, 851.01/2811b: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 2, 184-85.

²⁰⁹² Charles De Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc. 1998), 3.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LATIN AMERICA AND THE COLOMBIA INITIATIVE

Latin America has often been a source of frustration for the United States. Throughout the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, American policymakers considered the presence of European power in the region threatening. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 served to confront this menace by discouraging future colonization and asserting Washington's right to intervene in instances where American interests came under threat. The emphasis, according to Walter Lefebvre, was on the protection of "Latin American revolutionaries against foreign interventions." This would change. Theodore Roosevelt announced his Corollary to the Doctrine in 1904 for reasons not unlike Monroe's, but instead of supporting revolutionaries, he asserted Washington's right to intervene against them to prevent the sort of instability that led British and Germans to blockade the Venezuelan coastline in 1902. As Walter McDougall explains, the United States would now play the role of "gendarme and bill collector in the region."²⁰⁹³

Roosevelt's new policy had unfortunate consequences. Between 1904 and 1928, Washington intervened in various Latin American countries either militarily or covertly nearly twenty-five times.²⁰⁹⁴ By the late 1920s, hostility towards the United States in

²⁰⁹³ Bradford Perkins, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, Vol. 1, *The Creation of a Republican Empire, 1776-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 147-169; Walter LaFeber, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, Vol. 2, *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 199-200; Walter McDougall, *Promised Land Crusader State* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 57-75, 114-115.

²⁰⁹⁴ For a comprehensive list of the American interventions in Latin America, see historian Marc Becker's homepage at the Truman State University. Here he includes an itemized list: <http://www2.truman.edu/~marc/resources/interventions.html>

Latin America had reached such heights that a new way was deemed necessary.

Humbled by the Great Depression – a fact that made the United States more compassionate towards the plight of its southern neighbors – the American Government set out on a new path. With the so-called Good Neighbor Policy first enunciated by Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt disavowed America's right to intervene in the region with military force. A new wave of good relations emerged; cultural exchange flourished; it appeared that the dawn of a new era in hemispheric affairs had beckoned.²⁰⁹⁵

But with the threat of global war looming, the circumstances quickly changed. Washington became increasingly concerned about its security, and by default, the security of the entire Hemisphere.²⁰⁹⁶ As we have seen, officials in Washington began to worry that the countries of Latin America – many of which had fascist sympathies, and most of which had large German, Italian and Japanese populations – would abet dangerous regimes on the other side of the Atlantic and Pacific. It quickly swooped in to reach hemispheric agreements for collective action, first, to ensure the neutrality of Latin America when war broke out in 1939, and then to secure cooperation once the United States entered the war in December 1941. Of the Latin American countries, those in Central America quickly declared war and signed the United Nations Declaration. Most

²⁰⁹⁵ Frederick B. Pike, *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); Irwin F. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); for a more brief explanation, see George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 497-501, 529, 555-560; Akira Iriye, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, Volume 2: The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 147-148.

²⁰⁹⁶ On this issue, see especially David G. Haglund, *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought, 1936-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984).

of the nations in South America continued in their neutrality, but aided the United States. Yet two nations, Argentina and Chile proved uncooperative.²⁰⁹⁷

Three inter-related issues drove American policy. First, the United States wanted to ensure the security of the continent. Foremost among their priorities was the defense of the Panama Canal, which permitted the quick passage of warships between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The United States also desired cooperation to manage the problem of Axis attacks on Allied shipping. Second, American policymakers wanted maximum control over the economic affairs of the hemisphere to ensure that resources of strategic value did not end up in Axis hands. This policy effectively severed Latin American trade linkages with the rest of the world, a fact that created major problems: economic malaise and the accumulation of surpluses. Third, the United States feared the possibility of anti-American and/or subversive activities among firms with Axis ties, or individuals of German, Italian or Japanese heritage. Thus American policymakers wanted to put in place mechanisms to crack down on these firms and individuals.

Washington undertook a series of initiatives to meet these concerns, but to also set the stage for its postwar plans. It pressured the Governments of Latin America to enter into a range of bilateral agreements whereby they received various forms of military and economic assistance in return for their cooperation. The United States bought up surpluses, erected military bases, invested in industries vital for the war effort, and undertook an array of development projects to either buy off the Latin Governments or to

²⁰⁹⁷ The most extensive account is R.A. Humphreys, *Latin America and the Second World War*, Vol. 1, 1939-1942, Vol. 2, 1942-1945 (London: Athlone Press, 1981-1982).

improve their geo-strategic position in the Hemisphere.²⁰⁹⁸ While efforts to out Axis sympathizers facilitated immediate war aims, they also served to rid the hemisphere of European influence. Yet here, Germany and Italy were not the only victims. As Sumner Welles made clear in October 1942, the United States should seek the complete “obliteration of European power” in the region, and that applied to Great Britain too.²⁰⁹⁹ Washington observed London’s relations with the American states with suspicious eyes.

Policymakers also remained determined to forge, if not in reality, at least in appearance, the image of hemispheric solidarity. This objective necessarily meant that intra-continental conflicts would be repressed or resolved with stick and carrot. It also led American officials to encourage Latin Governments to unilaterally adhere to the United Nations Declaration in cases where it seemed unwise for them to enter the war, the prerequisite for signing the document. American officials believed the appearance of stability, solidarity, and cooperation would increase their prestige and legitimacy as a global leader. American planners – Sumner Welles above all – had always believed the prerequisite for American global leadership resided in its ability to assert complete hegemony in the Western Hemisphere.²¹⁰⁰ By 1943, this aim had been largely achieved. While the Chileans had severed relations with the Axis powers, internally at least, the Argentines, too, were questioning their position. The Good Neighbor policy and the tranquility of the Americas were touted as models for the entire world.²¹⁰¹

²⁰⁹⁸ Thomas M. Leonard and John F. Bratzel, eds, *Latin America During World War II* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007).

²⁰⁹⁹ Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), para. 488.

²¹⁰⁰ O’Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*, para. 46.

²¹⁰¹ Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 107-125.

Yet inescapable realities and increasing anger over Washington's tactics in the region revealed a façade. No serious observer missed the illiberal nature of the Latin American regimes, especially the people who experienced them. The region's dictators smashed free speech, hoarded money and guns for themselves, and brutally repressed political opponents. Old intra-state rivalries resurfaced in new ways, exposing "hemispheric solidarity" for the pretense that it was. American espionage, heavy-handedness, and attacks upon the sovereignty of these countries drove many of them to anger, despair, and disappointment. It exposed these regimes to attacks from opposition. Wartime revolutions or attempted coup d'états took place in roughly half of these countries. Often instability correlated with American aid: with the hemisphere no longer threatened by the summer of 1943, the flow of money and guns diminished, and projects were unilaterally shut down. Latin America worried that it would be forgotten and excluded from the peace. Such was the mood when the relief proposal arrived in their capitals.

Argentina and Brazil make the first move

On relief matters, America's most powerful ally in Latin America, Brazil, pursued a path not unlike Argentina, which abhorred Washington's efforts to achieve economic and military hegemony throughout the hemisphere. This similarity deserves explanation: the wartime behavior of these two countries, which historically rivaled one another, has often been portrayed as counter-opposites.²¹⁰²

²¹⁰² See Humphreys, *Latin America and the Second World War*, Vol. 2, 59-85, 146-202.

Yet in the case of Argentina, recent scholarship reveals that Buenos Aires aided the United States considerably by providing both raw materials and food for the war effort. Indeed the Argentine people loved American culture, and the Government in Buenos Aires wanted strong relations with the United States for economic and military reasons. At the same time, this country simply refused to submit to American pressure tactics, which made future aid contingent on the country's willingness to break relations with the Axis powers. In retaliation, Argentine officials sought assistance from Germany, which outraged American policymakers, who wanted Argentina to crack down on its sizeable and influential German and Italian populations. Argentina served as the central hub for Nazi intelligence and covert operations in the Western Hemisphere.²¹⁰³

Sentiments in Brazil were not unlike those in Argentina, but policymakers in Rio de Janeiro pursued a different course. The population, for one, overwhelmingly supported the Allied war effort, while the Government recognized the immediate and long-term economic and military benefits of cooperation with Washington. Thus when the United States entered the war in late 1941, Brazil agreed to host the January 1942 Pan-American meeting of foreign ministers that led much of Latin America to sever ties with the Axis powers, and in many cases, to declare war. In return, Brazil received handsome assistance in the form of arms and financial aid. It obtained promises of no less than \$165 million in early 1942, a sum that increased drastically after Nazi submarine attacks on their ships precipitated a declaration of war on August 22, 1942.

Though his time would eventually run out, the Brazilian strongman, Getúlio Vargas, played his hand with consummate skill. He understood the give-and-take of

²¹⁰³ David Sheinin, "Argentina: The Closet Ally," *Latin America During World War II*, eds. Leonard and Bratzel, 183-204.

international politics, and was willing to not only assume a subservient role, but to also sacrifice the lives of Brazilian citizens for money, guns, and influence. Yet through it all, he obeyed the axiom: give nothing without receiving something in return.²¹⁰⁴ As such, he did not sign the United Nations Declaration when his country entered the war. When pressed to do so just prior to a meeting with Franklin Roosevelt in January 1943, he agreed. “However,” he said, “this might be an opportune moment to say again that we need equipment from you for our military, naval and air force.”²¹⁰⁵ Then, when the great northeastern bulge of Brazil lost its strategic importance as a staging ground following the successful landings in North Africa, he sent troops to join the fight. Vargas worried that he would lose influence and aid would diminish.²¹⁰⁶

When it came to postwar relief, Brazilian officials were no less manipulative. Like the Argentines, they requested that Great Britain permit them the opportunity to join the Inter-Allied Committee for Post-War Requirements in London. As “an important producer of raw materials and foodstuffs,” the Brazilian Ambassador wrote in December 1943, “the Embassy considers that both from the point of view of its own interests as from those of the commission its regular association with the work of the committee should be facilitated to keep the Brazilian Government informed.”²¹⁰⁷ The Brazilians hoped to secure lucrative contracts for food and other relief supplies, and to shape the

²¹⁰⁴ Joseph Smith, “Brazil: Benefits of Cooperation,” in *Latin America During World War II*, eds. Leonard and Bratzel, 144-161.

²¹⁰⁵ The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the SOS (Hull), January 30, 1943, 740.0011 European War 1939/27588: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, *The American Republics* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1965), 655-656.

²¹⁰⁶ Joseph Smith, “Brazil: Benefits of Cooperation,” 144-161.

²¹⁰⁷ Telegram No. 584, Matthews to Secretary to State, January 21, 1943, 840.50/1202. We know of the Argentine approaches due to Telegram No. 523, Matthews to SOS, January 21, 1943, 840.50/1202, both in Box 4803, RG 59, NARA.

postwar era to their benefit. Indeed it perturbed them immensely when they learned in March 1943 of the four-power Central Committee.²¹⁰⁸ Brazil, as Noel Hall explained, did “not want to be put up by, and chosen as a protégé of the U.S.” That they desired membership was but another “indication of the general feeling of uneasiness in [the] South America countries at increasing American influence there under the guise of a good neighborhood and war co-operation.”²¹⁰⁹

The sum of these factors created both dilemmas and opportunities for the British. Initially they rejected the idea of including Brazil in the work of the Inter-Allied Committee. For one, the work of the committee concerned the postwar requirements of the European countries, not supplies. But with the United States on the Committee, how could they reject the Brazilian request on such grounds? Complicating matters further, how could they permit Brazilian membership while denying similar requests from the Argentines simply because of the outrage it would evoke in Washington?²¹¹⁰ But Winston Churchill would have none of this: “Vargas should be petted,” he told members of the British Government. Even if it seemed unwise to court the Argentines, both countries provided avenues for continued British influence in the Western Hemisphere after the war. Brazil should participate.²¹¹¹ Thus Leith-Ross and the Foreign Office endeavored to incorporate Brazil into the Inter-Allied Committee’s work.²¹¹²

²¹⁰⁸ “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, March 17, 1943, FO 371/35269, PRO.

²¹⁰⁹ Telegram No. 307, Canada (HC) to DO, February 6, 1943, PRO, FO 371/35267, PRO.

²¹¹⁰ “Minute,” by J.E. Coulson, January 8, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO.

²¹¹¹ “Minute” by Perowne, January 8, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO.

²¹¹² Jebb to Leith-Ross, January 12, 1943, FO 371/35266, PRO; Leith-Ross to Jebb, February 3, 1943; Alexander Cadogan to J.J. Ronis de Aragao, February 11, 1943, both in FO 371/35267, PRO.

The British always worried that the United States would exclude them from the economic affairs of the Western Hemisphere. In Latin America, as one British official explained, American inquiries into the allocation and production of goods had been the case of “wild rumor.” Individuals throughout the hemisphere believed American efforts to control supplies “from the raw material stage... to the ultimate purchaser of the finished article” constituted “the first step towards the economic domination of South America by the United States.” Despite the argument that such control remained essential for the war effort, these individuals suspected Washington strove to ensure the “economic slavery of all these countries” by excluding the rest of the world from the region. While supporting efforts to control supplies, the British argued that Pan-Americanism could not be “an isolationist doctrine,” but should lead “to a more efficient universal cooperation.” Just as the United States wanted to crack the British Empire, London hoped to undercut American hegemony in the Americas.²¹¹³

Statements with such implications raised eyebrows in Washington. Welles insisted that the Brazilians should be invited to participate in the relief organization as soon as the other four reached out to other nations to join in the endeavor. “From the standpoint of policy,” he informed Acheson, “it would be a fatal mistake if this were not done.” But under no circumstances should the Argentina receive an invitation. “The political effect on the other American republics... would be disastrous.”²¹¹⁴ Veatch had

²¹¹³ Air Mail No. 2749, From Montevideo, Uruguay, June 7, 1943, 840.50/2056, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

²¹¹⁴ Welles to Acheson, January 23, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1., Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

his doubts. Brazil, at this point, had not even signed the UN Declaration, he argued.²¹¹⁵ Laurence Duggan, head of the Latin America desk, thought the relief proposal should be used to lure Brazil into the United Nations, but he thought Rio should not be permitted to join the Leith-Ross organization.²¹¹⁶ Cleverly, the British eased their way around the problem by proposing that Brazil only participate as an observer.²¹¹⁷ Washington accepted, but the Brazilian request had given American policymakers further reason to move forward rapidly. Yet they insisted that the British continue in their “stalling process” with Argentina.²¹¹⁸

For the Brazilians, this development constituted a hemispheric breakout; it created an opportunity for the British as well. When the fiasco over the Central Committee arose in March 1943, Britain duly blamed it all on the United States. Thereupon the Brazilians reminded the Foreign Office of their country’s friendliness towards Britain, and claimed that they would be more than happy to help London overcome difficulties with the Central Committee. While the British expressed the hope that they might benefit from such cooperation, their efforts, as we have seen, went nowhere.²¹¹⁹ The whole affair, nonetheless, serves to illustrate the general frustration and fear the Latin American countries felt towards the United States. Brazil, as we shall soon see, was not alone. The Argentines were angry, but the smaller countries were perturbed and frightened. The so-

²¹¹⁵ Veatch to Acheson, January 23, 1943, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1,, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²¹¹⁶ “Memorandum of Conversation,” January 29, 1943, 840.50/1201, Box 4802, RG 59, NARA.

²¹¹⁷ Telegram No. 523, Matthews to SOS, January 21, 1943, 840.50/1202, NARA.

²¹¹⁸ The SOS to the Chargé in the United Kingdom (Matthews), February 1, 1943, 840.50/1135: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), 866.

²¹¹⁹ “Minute” by J.E. Coulson, March 17, 1943, FO 371/35269, PRO.

called associated powers (cooperating nations that had not declared war), worried that they would be treated in a second-class manner at the war's end. For one of them, the relief proposal appeared to provide an opportunity.

In Comes Bogotá: The Colombia Initiative

On August 3, 1943, the Colombian Foreign Minister, Gabriel Turbay, informed the American Ambassador in Bogotá, Arthur Lane, that association with the relief agency would “imply a change in the juridical and political status” of Colombia vis-à-vis the war. But, as his Government had no desire to alter its position “without consulting the other nations” in South America, he had sent a telegram the previous day to Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela suggesting that their ambassadors in Washington consult with one another and the State Department to arrive at an agreement on the relief proposal. Colombia believed these nations, which shared its status as an associated power, should work to minimize or eradicate the distinction that existed between them and those countries that had declared war. Turbay implied that these nations might adhere to the UN Declaration and possibly declare war. The purpose of this initiative, he explained, was to “bring about greater unification of the American nations, and if possible to influence Argentina,” which refused to break relations with the Axis.²¹²⁰

Bogotá's wartime cooperation with the United States made their explanations seem plausible. The first constitutional democracy in Latin America, Colombia shared

²¹²⁰ The Ambassador in Colombia (Lane) to the SOS, August 3, 1943, 840.50/2321, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 40-41.

many of Washington's ideological preferences. President Eduardo Santos of the Liberal Party had always been a staunch Francophile. He disliked Germany, and condemned the country's aggressive behavior. Yet the rival conservative party considered Washington a greater menace to Colombia's interests than Berlin. Doubtless their views placed restraints on the Government's cooperation with Washington. Consensus existed, nonetheless, over the strategic importance of the Panama Canal, which made it easier for Santos to conclude military agreements with the United States formalizing cooperation for the defense of the canal, and ensuring for Colombia that Washington would come to its aid if its territory or interests came under attack. Still, conservative forces compelled Bogotá to insist on strict limits on U.S. military operations from its territory.²¹²¹

Economic and financial cooperation also intensified, but here again political divisions created problems. Like many countries in the region, state revenues declined with the outbreak of war. No longer capable of exporting to Europe, Colombia became dependent on U.S. markets and financial and other forms of assistance. Bogotá relied on U.S. manufactured imports and received \$16.5 million in lend-lease assistance. To facilitate highway reconstruction, agricultural development, and the construction of a hydroelectric plan, the country received more than \$30 million in loans from the Export-Import Bank.²¹²² Conservatives, however, believed this aid made Colombia unfortunately dependent on the United States. While it benefited export industries, it did nothing for

²¹²¹ George M. Lauderbaugh, "Bolivarian Nations: Securing the Northern Frontier," in *Latin America During World War II*, eds. Leonard and Bratzel, 115-119; Christopher Abel, "Colombia, 1930-58," in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Vol. 8, *Latin America Since 1930: Spanish South America*, ed. Leslie Bethell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 606-610.

²¹²² Lauderbaugh, "Bolivarian Nations: Securing the Northern Frontier," 115-119.

small producers in the country and created no incentive to attract international business from other countries. The conservative leader, Laureano Gomez, argued that an “autonomous poverty was preferable to the cultural degradation and materialism of close ties with the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ powers....”²¹²³ Despite these views, Colombia became one of the “staunchest supporters of the Allies in Latin America.”²¹²⁴

The Americans had little reason to suspect ulterior motives. They knew of the limits on Colombia’s liberal Government, now led by a new President, Alfonso Lopez. For this reason, they managed the Colombian initiative gingerly. Eager to secure agreement for the relief proposal as soon as possible, but weary from efforts to avoid offending allies whose cooperation they deemed essential, they argued that accepting the agreement would in no way alter the country’s wartime status. They even encouraged consultations among the American states so long as they could facilitate the process.²¹²⁵ This message they shared with other relevant embassies in South America.²¹²⁶ The primary concern at this juncture was not an anti-American front in Latin America, but rather British machinations in the Americas.²¹²⁷ Laurence Duggan warned Hull and Welles: “There are certain signs indicating that the British are taking steps to implant in the other American republics certain seeds regarding postwar arrangements.” He advised taking Latin leaders into their confidence “on certain subjects.” “Careful cultivation

²¹²³ Abel, “Colombia, 1930-58,” 608.

²¹²⁴ Lauderbaugh, “Bolivarian Nations: Securing the Northern Frontier,” 118.

²¹²⁵ The SOS to the Ambassador in Colombia (Lane), August 5, 1943, 840.50/2321: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 42-43.

²¹²⁶ Circular Telegram, August 5, 1943, 840.50/2389A, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

²¹²⁷ Policymakers in the Roosevelt Administration, as Warren Kimball writes, did not like the phrase “spheres of influence.” On the one hand, it connoted the idea of a system akin to the ones Metternich and Bismarck constructed, which they claimed to be against; on the other hand, they wanted influence everywhere. I use the phrase here because Latin America *was* an American sphere of influence. See Kimball, *The Juggler*, 107-109.

now,” he concluded, “would result... in favorable support by them and, through them, by the other American republics in our postwar scheme.”²¹²⁸

While State Department officials feared Britain, apologies and explanations from the leadership in Bogotá worried Ambassador Lane. Turbay informed him on August 6, 1943 that his Government remained sympathetic to the relief proposal and did not want to delay matters, but that they had only received replies to their telegram from four of the seven recipients. They wanted them to sign the agreement, mechanisms for cooperating with the agency, and possible adherence to the UN Declaration. Peru and Venezuela, he reported, accepted these objectives. Uruguay had not decided on the third point. Ecuador believed adherence to the declaration might adversely affect Argentina, which, they falsely suspected, was about to break relations with the Axis.²¹²⁹ On August 10, 1943, Turbay reported further. The Chileans appeared noncommittal on the declaration, but wanted to discuss the other points. A negative response from Uruguay, he claimed, was due to their misinformed Ambassador at Montevideo, who bungled his presentation. Confused and unimpressed, Lane requested a copy of the Colombian telegram. Turbay agreed to share it with the State Department.²¹³⁰

A promise unfulfilled, the Colombians tried another tactic. It was Sumner Welles, President Lopez reported to Lane on August 11, 1943, who provoked him to seek “greater solidarity of the continent.”²¹³¹ Following Lopez’s address to welcome the

²¹²⁸ “Memorandum,” August 4, 1943, 840.50/2373, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

²¹²⁹ The Ambassador in Colombia (Lane) to the SOS, August 6, 1943, 840.50/2340: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 43-45.

²¹³⁰ The Ambassador in Colombia (Lane) to the SOS, August 10, 1943, 840.50/2354, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 45-46.

²¹³¹ The Ambassador in Colombia (Lane) to the SOS, August 11, 1943, 840.50/2363, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 46-47.

Bolivian President, Enrique Penaranda, to Bogotá in June 1943, Welles had written the Colombian President to express agreement with his assessment of the situation in Argentina, where the military had just overthrown the government of Ramón Castillo, which paved the way for the presidency of Juan Perón in 1946.²¹³² Lopez believed these events increased the need for continental solidarity, and an opportunity for the associated powers to apply pressure on the Argentines.²¹³³ Lopez explained to Lane that he had also consulted with President Isaias Medina of Venezuela, who agreed that something should be done.²¹³⁴ Medina had long promoted a regional bloc of the Bolivarian nations to deal with items of common interests.²¹³⁵ But unlike Medina, Lopez insinuated, he was not “taking advantage” of UN victories for the purpose of promoting the interests of these nations. His sole aim, he asserted, was to achieve solidarity around the relief proposal and give them “an opportunity to discuss the matter frankly among themselves and with the Department.”²¹³⁶

Yet Lopez undermined the sincerity of his presentation. “Instead of being able to render physical aid, most of [the nations whose cooperation he solicited] require such aid

²¹³² On the coup, see Scheinin, “Argentina: The Closet Ally,” 184-185. Due to Perón’s participation in the coup, he earned several key positions in the new government of President Pedro Ramírez, first as an assistant to the Secretary of War, and then as head of the Department of Labor. In the latter position, he built strong ties to the Argentine labor movement. Following the January 1944 San Juan earthquake, he also headed the relief efforts, which made him a national celebrity. When Argentina broke relations with the Axis powers in January 1944, General Eleodoro Farrell orchestrated a junta and took power from Ramírez. Perón became Vice President and Secretary of War under the new President. The sum of these experiences set the stage for Perón to run for and win the Argentine presidency in 1946.

²¹³³ Lane to Hull, August 10, 1943, 840.50/2354, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 45-46.

²¹³⁴ Lane to Hull, August 11, 1943, 840.50/2363, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 46-47.

²¹³⁵ On Medina’s proposal for a regional bloc, see Lauderbaugh, “Bolivarian Nations: Securing the Northern Frontier,” 119-123.

²¹³⁶ Lane to Hull, August 11, 1943, 840.50/2363, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 46-47.

from the United States,” he told Lane. The question was how to define their status as associated powers in a manner convenient for the war effort without forcing them to provide more “physical aid” to the cause. Lopez, however, declined to explain what unity would mean for postwar planning. His aims appeared immediate. Indeed he admitted that this initiative served him domestically. Gomez, the conservative leader, supported the President’s efforts to unify the nations of South America and had agreed to preside over Colombia’s Advisory Commission for Foreign Affairs. Lane also learned from another conservative leader, Francisco Urrutia, that they might even support adherence to the UN Declaration by all the American states.²¹³⁷ For Lopez, these developments presented an opportunity to bolster his weakening political position: the conservatives had close relationships with the military, who disliked the President’s support of their rival, the police force. In 1944, the military would attempt a coup, though Lopez survived.²¹³⁸

In the meantime, the Americans had every reason to be concerned about Colombia’s initiative. Though presented as an effort to forge wartime unity, it was easy for American diplomats to ascertain ulterior motives. The conservative endorsement, for one, provided reason to worry: Gomez, a blatant anti-American, had exhibited fascist sympathies and feared American economic imperialism.²¹³⁹ Moreover, the initiative circumvented the pan-American system, thereby excluding possible checks against anti-Americanism, notably Brazil and the Central American countries, whose smaller size and proximity to the United States made them less likely to endorse such behavior. Washington usually preferred to interact with these countries on a bilateral basis, at least

²¹³⁷ Ibid.

²¹³⁸ Abel, “Colombia, 1930-58,” 608-609.

²¹³⁹ Ibid.

until sufficient agreement, or a concentration of power permitted them to dominate any multilateral gathering, and isolate recalcitrant states.²¹⁴⁰ Though unlikely given the American largesse flowing into the region, Washington could never close its eyes to the possibility of a unified protest against its postwar plans. Nothing could have been a greater disaster: the Western Hemisphere was being touted as a model for the entire world.²¹⁴¹

Yet the Good Neighbor Policy was coming apart at the seams. Many Latin American countries resented Washington's heavy-handed approach, particularly efforts to remove purported Axis influence from the continent by targeting individuals of German, Italian and Japanese heritage, and blacklisting firms employing these people. Naturally certain countries complained that they received too little assistance for their wartime sacrifices, or that other countries unjustifiably got more.²¹⁴² This dissatisfaction generated support for regional efforts to seek equality with UN members in the

²¹⁴⁰ The Pan-American Summit held at Rio de Janeiro in January 1942 constitutes an exception. The Americans falsely assumed that they could achieve unity due to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but Argentina and Chile proved obstinate. For a discussion of the use of bilateralism before multilateral forums, see EP-2, Chronological Minutes, March 27, 1942, File Chronological Economic Minutes, Box 80, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁴¹ See Kimball, *The Juggler*, 107-126; chapter 1 in O'Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*. American officials worried that failure to show solidarity in the Western Hemisphere would undermine U.S. prestige in the world. As far as I can tell, this idea dates back to well before the United States entered the war. See, for example, Harry Hawkins to Francis Grady, June 28, 1940, File #2 Postwar ER – EP 5/7/42 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA. For example of internal discussions of the Western Hemisphere as model, see P Minutes 16, June 6, 1942, File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part I), Box 55, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA. This minute is especially striking because the planners express their horror at any international organization in which the United States would not be able to get its way in the hemisphere on account of institutionalized decision-making. See also P Minutes 4, March 28, 1942, File Political Subcommittee Minutes (Chron.) 1-20 (Part III), Box 55, ACPFP, Notter Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁴² On this point, see Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 555-560.

peacemaking process.²¹⁴³ This fact became clear when the Colombian Ambassador to Venezuela, Alejandro Galvis, told the Chamber of Commerce in Maracaibo that the President of his host and home country were promoting a “unified movement... directed towards obtaining the good offices of the United States before the other United Nations” so that they would “be admitted on the same plane of equality at the peace conference.”²¹⁴⁴ A few days later, FBI informants disclosed Chilean efforts to sound out the Colombian government on the matter.²¹⁴⁵

Like Argentina, Chile refused to suspend relations with the Axis powers at the January 1942 Pan-American Summit. Santiago held deep animosities towards the United States, dating back to the late 19th century, when Washington opposed Chile’s annexation of Bolivian and Peruvian territories. The 1930 Hawley-Smoot Tariff, moreover, had blocked Chilean imports into the United States, aggravating economic tensions and forcing the country to seek European markets. Even after a German sub sank a Chilean merchant ship in late 1941, they refused to sever relations. A large German population and strong relations with the Nazi regime left the Government unwilling to take action. But fear of their neighbors forced a change. Both Bolivia and Peru had broken relations with the Axis powers at Rio, and received American military assistance in return. These developments frightened the Chilean Foreign Minister, who worried that American diplomatic and military assistance to Bolivia and Peru could be turned against them in a

²¹⁴³ These were not merely private views held by government officials, but were also touted in the Latin American press. See, for example, the reports in Harold L. Williamson to Hull, Ecuador, August 23, 1943, 840.50/2457, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁴⁴ The Ambassador in Colombia (Lane) to the SOS, August 12, 1943, 840.50/2370: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 47-48.

²¹⁴⁵ J. Edgar Hoover to Berle, August 25, 1943, 840.50/2593, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

war to reclaim the territories they seized in the late 19th century.²¹⁴⁶ They had witnessed how the Americans rapidly intervened to shut down the 1941 Peruvian war on Ecuador, forcing the latter country to accept a humiliating loss of its territory.²¹⁴⁷

But the United States *was* a good neighbor. When a fearful Chile finally severed relations with the Axis powers in March 1943, the money and guns started to flow.²¹⁴⁸ The balance of power would be restored. But Bolivia, with no plans to make any significant contribution to the war effort, and no coastline to defend – thanks to Chile – decided to declare war on the Axis powers and even suggested that the other Bolivarian nations, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, do the same. They cited the fear that Chile might declare war, but also the fear that the Europeans would not be treated as equals in whatever postwar conferences might take place.²¹⁴⁹ The Bolivian Government's decision angered officials in Santiago, who believed it was directed at Chile.²¹⁵⁰ The United States, not surprisingly, welcomed the Bolivian decision and immediate plans were drawn up to send additional military assistance to the country.²¹⁵¹ These

²¹⁴⁶ Throughout the war, this possibility was published in the Bolivian and Chilean press: see "The Chargé in Bolivia (Woodward) to the SOS," No. 1650, May 8, 1943, 824.20/260, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 549-550. The survey information for this paragraph can be found in Graeme S. Mount, "Chile: An Effort at Neutrality," in *Latin America During World War II*, eds. Leonard and Bratzel, 162-182; Paul Drake, "Chile, 1930-58," *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, 269-304.

²¹⁴⁷ Daniel M. Masterson and Jorge Ortiz Sotelo, "Peru: International Developments and Local Realities," in *Latin America During World War II*, eds. Leonard and Bratzel, 129-133.

²¹⁴⁸ See note in *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 816-817.

²¹⁴⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under SOS (Welles)," March 29, 1943, 740.0011 European War 1939/28836, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 543-545.

²¹⁵⁰ Mount, "Chile: An Effort at Neutrality," 174-176.

²¹⁵¹ The SOS to the Ambassador in Bolivia (Boal), August 28, 1943, 821.24/839: Airgram, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 550-551.

developments placed the Chileans on alert and presaged their reaction to the Colombian initiative.

Santiago wanted to hear from Paraguay and Uruguay before replying at Bogotá.²¹⁵² Paraguay also worried about Bolivia. The previous decade the two landlocked countries fought the most devastating Latin American war of the century. Control of the Chaco region, presumably blessed with oil resources, would provide access to the Paraguay River, the only navigable route to the Atlantic Ocean. Bolivia, while securing marginal access to the river, lost nearly two-thirds of the territory. The conflict resulted in nearly 100,000 deaths. While in Bolivia it sparked a coup, in Paraguay it ignited a nationalist revolution and a counter-revolution, which led to the dictatorship of General Higinio Morinigo. With La Paz jockeying for influence in Washington, it seems that Paraguay, like Chile, hoped to offset Bolivia's strategic machinations. Though Morinigo severed relations with the Axis Powers in 1942, fascist sympathies and Argentine influence in the country placed limits on what he could do.²¹⁵³ Colombian efforts to change the juridical and political status of this country faced enormous obstacles.

Uruguay, too, would have problems with the Colombian initiative. For most of the 1930s, this country had been led by an authoritarian regime that included an anti-American and pro-fascist contingent of the Nationalist party, which governed the nation in collaboration with a similarly minded element of the Colorado party. These odd arrangements came undone with the outbreak of the Second World War, when liberal-

²¹⁵² Telegram 1435 Received, Colombia, August 19, 1943, 840.50/2416, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁵³ Paul H. Lewis, "Paraguay since 1930," *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, 233-245. One scholar has called Paraguay an "economic colony of Argentina." Humphreys, *Latin America and the Second World War*, Vol. 2, 76.

minded sectors of the Colorado party reentered the government and the nationalist wing withdrew from the Cabinet. The Uruguayan population overwhelmingly supported the Allied cause. These factors made it easier for the Governments of Alfredo Baldomir and Juan José Amézaga, who served from 1938 to 1942, and 1943 to 1947, respectively, to cooperate with Washington.²¹⁵⁴ Uruguay's primary international concern in 1943 was to obtain assistance from the United States to meet their petroleum requirements, improve public works, and complete the Rio Negro hydroelectric plant.²¹⁵⁵ Relations with Argentina naturally soured. Yet the Nationalists maintained influence: thus proposals to establish an American naval airbase in Uruguay never came to fruition.²¹⁵⁶

Uruguay and Paraguay revealed their views to the Americans before they shared them with Colombia. On August 24, 1943, the Uruguayan Foreign Minister, José Serrato, told the U.S. Ambassador in Montevideo, William Dawson, that his country had no plans to join in "an attempt to form a 'league' for the purpose of imposing conditions on the United States and other United Nations in return for collaboration." Uruguay, he explained, "opposed blocs in America."²¹⁵⁷ Two days later, the Paraguayan Foreign Minister, Luis A. Argana, shared a similar message with the U.S. Ambassador in Asuncion, Wesley Frost.²¹⁵⁸ But while Uruguay did not want to upset its efforts to obtain

²¹⁵⁴ Henry Finch, "Uruguay since 1930," *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, 195-206.

²¹⁵⁵ See entire section, "Discussions Between the United States and Uruguay Concerning Petroleum," and "Negotiation of an Agreement for An Export-Import Bank Loan to Uruguay for Public Works," in DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 6, *The American Republics* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1965), 762-774, 783-792.

²¹⁵⁶ Finch, "Uruguay since 1930," 201.

²¹⁵⁷ The Ambassador in Uruguay (Dawson) to the SOS, August 24, 1943, 840.50/2439: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 48-49.

²¹⁵⁸ The Ambassador in Paraguay (Frost) to the SOS, August 26, 1943, 840.50/2446: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 50.

American aid, Paraguay worried of offending Argentina. Frost also learned that Paraguay hoped to sign an economic treaty with Buenos Aires in October, and thought that joining a bloc would impair his country's ability to secure concessions in the negotiations. Argana, for his part, feared an Argentine-supported coup d'état by the Paraguayan military, and lend-lease assistance constituted the best check against this possibility.²¹⁵⁹

While Uruguay and Paraguay worried that Colombia's initiative would damage their ability to obtain aid, Ecuador and Peru had already received assistance through the Lend-Lease program and the Export-Import Bank. In 1942, Washington promised Ecuador nearly \$60 million in aid;²¹⁶⁰ Peru obtained agreements in excess of \$20 million, but had secured much of the territory over which they had fought a brief war with Ecuador the previous year.²¹⁶¹ In return, Washington earned the right to construct military installations on their territory.²¹⁶² These countries either desired more aid or renunciation of liabilities and responsibilities previously incurred vis-à-vis the United States.²¹⁶³

²¹⁵⁹ Telegram 468, From Paraguay, August 27, 1943, 840.50/2462, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁶⁰ Lauderbaugh, "Bolivarian Nations: Securing the Northern Frontier," 111-114.

²¹⁶¹ Masterson and Sotelo, "Peru: International Developments and Local Realities," 129-133.

²¹⁶² On Ecuador, see, for example, "The Minister in Ecuador (Long) to the SOS, No. 2534, January 25, 1942; "Agreement Concerning the Use of the Salinas District as a Defense Site," January 24, 1942. See also documents in section entitled "Lend-Lease Agreement Between the United States and Ecuador, Signed April 6, 1942." On Peru, see "Lend-Lease Agreement Between the United States and Peru, Signed March 11, 1942. All in *FRUS*, Vol. 6, *The American Republics* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), 365-368, 379-382, 673, see also references 664.

²¹⁶³ See "Aid by the United States in the Restoration of the National Library of Peru." But on Peruvian failures to comply with their responsibilities under previous agreements, see "The Ambassador in Peru (Norweb) to the Under SOS (Welles)," April 6, 1943, 823.51/1477. In this document, Norweb writes: "We must convince them that we mean business." On Ecuador, see section entitled, "Discussions and Understandings

Adherence to the UN Declaration depended on benefits. They agreed with the Colombian suggestion that the status of the associated powers should be defined: but Ecuador claimed it would not adhere to the UN Declaration if the definition failed to meet their expectations; Peru demanded outright equality with the other United Nations. But their responses diverged on one critical point. While Ecuador accepted the idea of consultations among the seven associated powers, Peru thought they should take place on a Pan-American basis. Lima took offense at another country trying to push them into the war.²¹⁶⁴

By this point, it was not only clear what the Colombians were doing, it was apparent that the effort would fail. Of the four nations who had replied at Bogotá, only Ecuador agreed to seven-power negotiations among the associated power. This fact placed the Colombians in an embarrassing position. In meetings with Ambassador Lane, President Lopez openly criticized Turbay for leaking the initiative to the press. He also began distancing himself from the whole affair, though Lane suspected him of using the effort to forge reconciliation with the conservatives and distract the Colombian population from the country's unfavorable political fortunes.²¹⁶⁵ When Lane asked Turbey if the original memorandum had been shared in Washington, the Foreign Minister dodged the question. When he was told that other countries preferred that consultations take place on a pan-American basis, he did not object, but believed it would be

Concerning the Obtaining of Strategic Materials from Ecuador and Financial Assistance to Ecuador," all in *FRUS*, Vol. 6, 284-304, 746-747, 758-761.

²¹⁶⁴ For the Ecuadorian and Peruvian reactions, see Telegram 748, Received, Ecuador, August 24, 1943, 840.50/2463; Scotten to Hull, No. A-440, Colombia, August 27, 1943, 840.50/2478; Telegram 1151, Received, August 26, 1943, 840.50/2479, all in Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁶⁵ Telegram 1505, Bogotá, August 27, 1943, 840.50/2456, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

“cumbersome.” He remained wedded to the idea that the initiative would succeed. It all depended on Chile, Venezuela, and Paraguay.²¹⁶⁶ The Paraguayans, quite humorously, had shared their reaction with the Americans, but had not bothered to convey their views at Bogotá.²¹⁶⁷

The Venezuelans prevaricated. Like Colombia, they had been staunch supporters of the Allied cause, while having maintained a policy of strict neutrality. In return, they obtained considerable U.S. material and financial assistance, and found opportunities to recover a greater share of the profits made by the American companies that dominated the Venezuelan oil industry. Caracas curiously asked for little military assistance, reasoning that if the country came under attack, Washington would come to its aid. The Venezuelan President therefore had little desire to anger the Americans, even though he liked the idea of unifying the Bolivarian nations.²¹⁶⁸ The problem, it seems, was that the Colombian conception included Chile, which had attacked Bolivarian unity as hostile to its interests.²¹⁶⁹ Medina might also have worried that President Lopez sought to steal his assumed position as leader of the Bolivarian nations. Of course Turbay claimed that Colombia did not seek “national prestige.” But if such claims served to appease Caracas, the idea that Chile might serve as the group’s spokesman in Washington probably had the opposite effect. Thus mixed motives, coupled with wide opposition to the Colombian initiative, led Medina to join those advocating pan-Americanism.²¹⁷⁰

²¹⁶⁶ Telegram 1516, August 28, 1943, 840.50/2460, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁶⁷ Frost to Hull, August 26, 1943, 840.50/2446: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 50.

²¹⁶⁸ Lauderbaugh, “Bolivarian Nations: Securing the Northern Frontier,” 119-123.

²¹⁶⁹ Telegram No. 4780, August 27, 1943, 840.50/2480, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁷⁰ Telegram 1504, From Bogotá, August 27, 1943, 840.50/2461, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

Initially the Chileans showed modest sympathy towards the initiative, and insisted that they serve as the group's spokesman in Washington. But they wisely held off until after Foreign Minister, Joachin Fernandez's scheduled talks in Washington.²¹⁷¹ Chile remained engaged in complex negotiations with the United States over the control of materials of strategic interest for the war effort;²¹⁷² for their cooperation, Fernandez hoped to obtain further financial and material assistance for the country's industrial program and postwar economic development.²¹⁷³ It made little sense to take steps towards adherence to the UN Declaration before the country had wreaked the benefits of severing relations with the Axis powers, and it served no purpose to anger Washington by joining a unified effort to apply pressure, even if the Chileans abhorred the heavy-handed approach of the Americans. By late September, the Colombians knew failure was imminent. They hoped to sign a trade deal with Santiago shortly, and they could not

²¹⁷¹ Telegram No. 1493, August 26, 1943, 840.50/2450, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁷² See "Negotiations to Procure for the United States Strategic Materials from Chile and Efforts to Limit Exports of Such Materials to Other Countries," *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 1943, 826-862.

²¹⁷³ See "Chilean Aide Urges Trade Treaty Here: Foreign Minister Fernandez Tells of Post-War Hopes," September 24, 1943, *NYT*, 14; Virginia Prewett, "Good Neighbors: New Trade Trend," August 28, 1943, *WP*, 4; for an overall assessment of Chile's economic dependence on the United States, see Paul R. Olson and Charles Addison Hickman, *Pan American Economics* (New York: J. Wiley and Sons, 1943). For a concise depiction of Chile's trade negotiation efforts in 1943, see article, "As They Saw It: 1943: Chile," <http://astheysawit.com/1813-1943-chile.html> (accessed January 2012).

ignore Chile's wishes at this juncture.²¹⁷⁴ President Lopez duly told Lane that "Turbay's idea" was going nowhere, and the Foreign Minister was removed.²¹⁷⁵

Why the Americans Successfully Defeated the Colombia Initiative

The Americans managed the whole affair adroitly. Instead of applying pressure and making promises of aid, they let national rivalries, fears, and jealousies undo the effort. It serves as testament to their skill that Turbay complimented American "wisdom and tact," and praised Washington for "using no pressure whatever on the other American Republics." The decision to encourage informal discussions among the associated powers won accolades as well, even if it did not, as we will soon see, lead the Latin American countries to accept the relief proposal without criticism.²¹⁷⁶ Yet the Americans, who preferred bilateral discussions with the Latin American nations, disliked the idea of an inter-American conference on postwar problems. Laurence Duggan, head of the Latin America desk, believed the Department should take Colombia into its confidence. "I feel that these countries if properly handled will support this Government's policies in

²¹⁷⁴ A general trend emerged in Latin America during the war. Despite territorial disputes and military competition, they believed that by trading with one another, they could – to a certain degree – reduce dependence on the United States and other areas of the world. See Virginia Prewett, "Good Neighbors: New Trade Trend," August 28, 1943, *WP*, 4.

²¹⁷⁵ Telegram 1775, Lane to Hull, October 3, 1943, 840.50/2653; Telegram 1762, Lane to Hull, October 2, 1943, 840.50/2644; Telegram 1759, Lane to Hull, October 1, 1943, 840.50/2633, all in Box 4814, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁷⁶ Lane to Hull, August 6, 1943, 840.50/2340; Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 43-45.

connection with the postwar provided that they are *given the feeling* of being consulted in connection with the formulation of these policies.”²¹⁷⁷

American diplomats neither neglected nor missed an opportunity to protect and advance their interests. Consultations among the associated powers could take place, but with State Department participation.²¹⁷⁸ Surveillance remained critical, and if the Latin American countries refused, American intelligence entities had penetrated many of the key governments. On September 24, 1943, FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover, confirmed what State Department officials already believed about the Colombia initiative. Bogotá feared it would be denied full participation rights in postwar discussions.²¹⁷⁹ Thus American officials had been wise to suggest there would be no distinction between the associated powers and the United Nations.²¹⁸⁰ Welles told one Latin Ambassador that it was doubtful that the Europeans would agree to such a formula, but implied that the United States would insist upon it.²¹⁸¹ The Americans also reminded the Colombians that they could always “adhere” to the UN Declaration without signing it, which required open belligerency.²¹⁸² At this juncture in the war, Washington believed declarations of war would needlessly subject miles of Latin American coastline to attack.²¹⁸³

²¹⁷⁷ Quote taken from “Memorandum,” by Duggan to Bonsal, September 2, 1943, 840.50/2460; but see also Bonsal to Duggan, August 31, 1943, 840.50/2460, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁷⁸ Telegram 971 Sent, August 4, 1943, 840.50/2321, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁷⁹ J. Edgar Hoover to Berle, September 24, 1943, NARA, Decimal File, Box 4815, Document 87 (5681).

²¹⁸⁰ Telegram 971 Sent, August 4, 1943, 840.50/2321, NARA; but for origins of this conception, see Philip W. Bonsal to Laurence Duggan, File #2 – Post War – ER & EP 1/1/43 PART 1, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁸¹ Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under SOS (Welles), March 29, 1943, 740.0011 European War 1939/28836, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 543-545.

²¹⁸² Lane to Hull, August 12, 1943, 840.50/2370, *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 47-48.

²¹⁸³ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 556.

Apart from the delays it created, the Colombia initiative would seem insignificant had the United States not considered the “American system” a model for the entire world. It was thus important to give an impression of stability, cooperation, and hemispheric solidarity. In 1942, Roosevelt had told the press corps: “I should say that the outstanding feature [of the Hemisphere] is the very great unanimity of thought, not just as illustrated by my talks with” Lopez, but “as illustrated also with many other talks I have had with other heads of other governments to the south of us.”²¹⁸⁴ But the reality was much different. Unanimity had been purchased at high cost by the United States. The South American countries were at constant odds with one another over territory, trade, and relations with Washington. Where imbalances led to or threatened war, the United States intervened, not with overt military operations, as in the past, but with financial, military and development assistance. In return, Washington received cooperation.

Yet resentment towards and fear of the United States still existed. The Colombian initiative constituted but one manifestation of this fact. But when fear of or opposition to American aims arose, the United States strove not for unity, but permitted and even promoted disunity. Withdrawal and reserve usually did the task, but aid to competing countries did so as well. It was not, to be sure, the crude divide-and-conquer tactics of earlier empires, but it served Washington’s hegemonic aspirations nonetheless. As Christopher O’Sullivan explains, “before the United States could begin to play a great role in the world, it had to first establish its leadership in the Western Hemisphere.”²¹⁸⁵ Benign relations might have served this purpose, but power politics did so too. “We must

²¹⁸⁴ Press Conference No. 835, July 17, 1943, in *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Volume 20 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 12-13.

²¹⁸⁵ O’Sullivan, *Postwar Planning*, para. 46.

convince them that we mean business,” one American diplomat wrote.²¹⁸⁶ The appearance of unity and cooperation, achieved preferably in some institutional context, worked to conceal this toughness. UNRRA was yet another ploy in this grand strategic game.

They All Accept, But Santiago Proves Difficult

The reaction to the relief proposal of the countries involved in the Colombian initiative is amusing and revealing. Few of these countries responded promptly enough to have any impact, even had this been possible: the United States simply ignored the Latin replies when contemplating revisions.²¹⁸⁷ Bogotá ironically accepted the draft agreement with no complaint.²¹⁸⁸ Bolivia did not want to contribute any of its resources, but offered its “moral support”,²¹⁸⁹ Peru agreed to offer material and financial assistance only after their domestic requirements had been met, and insisted the draft be altered to guarantee that the United States could not force them to give up their resources.²¹⁹⁰ Paraguay

²¹⁸⁶ Norweb to Welles, April 6, 1943, 823.51/1477, *FRUS*, Vol. 6, 746-747.

²¹⁸⁷ The Department of State drew up a matrix with all of the complaints and suggestions. The Latin American countries were simply ignored. Canada was the only country in the Western Hemisphere worthy of consideration. See final untitled document, Matrix, Not Date, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 2 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁸⁸ Telegram No. 1435, Received, Colombia, August 19, 1943, 840.50/2416, Box 4813; Telegram No. 1883, October 20, 1943, 840.50/2805, Box 4815, both RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁸⁹ On Bolivia, see Air Mail No. 2059, Robert F. Woodward to Cordell Hull, August 10, 1943, 840.50/2394, with Enclosure No. 1 and 2: “Memorandum” to U.S. Embassy, July 27, 1943; Bolivian Reply, August 9, 1943, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA. The apathy of Paraguay suggests it falls into this group. See Air Mail No. 1350, Wesley Frost to Cordell Hull, September 25, 1943, 840.50/2635, Box 4814, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁹⁰ See Telegram No. 759, August 30, 1943, 840.50/2477, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

worried about contributions too; indeed Ascuncion had been perpetually delinquent in paying what it owed the Pan-American Union.²¹⁹¹ Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela complained about the Central Committee, and insisted that it should not become a precedent. But these nations accepted the proposal nonetheless.²¹⁹²

Chile, however, constituted a case unto itself. Like many of the other Latin American Governments, Santiago made it clear that its “possible” participation was “subordinate to her economic situation,” which depended on foreign trade. If the United States erected an international economic regime unfavorable to Chilean interests, the country would be unable to contribute even if it accepted the agreement. Chilean officials issued a stiff critique of the draft: it suffered from “vices and defects,” and was “rigid and confused.” The Central Committee, they claimed, might possibly “arouse suspicions and misgivings” that would impair the organization’s work. They therefore insisted that it be enlarged to include other countries. Of course many governments made this same suggestion. But the Chileans distinguished themselves by insisting that both the Central Committee and the Council utilize unanimous voting.²¹⁹³

²¹⁹¹ Paraguay was completely negligent towards the UNRRA relief proposal; see Air Mail No. 1350, Wesley Frost to Cordell Hull, September 25, 1943, 840.50/2635, Box 4814; Telegram No. 593, Frost to Hull, November 2, 1943, 840.50/2967, Box 4816, both RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁹² On Peru, see Air Mail No. 7439, Jefferson Patterson to Cordell Hull, July 24, 1943, 840.50/2322, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA; “Memorandum of Conversation,” October 23, 1943, Veatch and Chaves, NARA, Records Relating to U.S. Participation in UNRRA (Lot File No. 58 D 173), Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 2 of 2, Document 9 (2516-2517). On Uruguay, see Telegram No. 856, Dawson to Hull, September 21, 1943, 840.50/2559; Telegram A-509, Dawson to Hull, September 25, 1943, 840.50/2537, Box 4814, RG 59, NARA. On Venezuela, see The Chargé in Venezuela (Flack) to the SOS (Hull), November 3, 1943, 840.50/2978; Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 1012-1013.

²¹⁹³ Initially it appeared that the Chileans would create no problems. See Telegram 852, August 13, 1943, 840.50/2371, Box 4812; The Ambassador in Chile (Bowers) to the SOS

The Americans tried to deal with the Chileans reasonably. If unanimous decision-making were required of the Council, then the responsibility for policy would inevitably fall to the Central Committee, they argued. But if this body also had to take its decisions by unanimous vote, then there might be no policies at all. As a result, the Director General would have no choice but to run the whole show.²¹⁹⁴ The Chileans, however, believed the Americans planned to do it this way in any case. More worrisome, they expected Washington to push resolutions through the Council and Central Committee that would burden Santiago with financial and material obligations against its will. For this reason, the Americans told the Chileans that only governments would have control over what they contribute.²¹⁹⁵ They then insisted that the Chileans accept the draft immediately. The American Government, Acheson wrote the Chilean Ambassador in Washington, Don Rodolfo Michels, had “plans for expediting action” on the matter. With the war progressing, other nations were becoming anxious.²¹⁹⁶

On October 9, 1943, the Chileans accused the United States of demanding “joint signature” of a “proposed agreement without previous discussion of it and [a] conference

(Hull), August 13, 1943, 840.50/2378, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 965; Air Mail No. 7390, Donald R. Heath to Hull, August 25, 1943, 840.50/2516, Box 4813; quotes are taken from J. Allard to Claude G. Bowers, August 20, 1943, Enclosure No. 2 to Dispatch No. 7390, Donald R. Heath to Hull, August 25, 1943, 840.50/2516, Box 4813; “Memorandum of Conversation,” September 11, 1943, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 1 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, all in RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁹⁴ Telegram 1001 Sent to Santiago, September 15, 1943, 840.50/2516, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁹⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation,” September 14, 1943, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 1 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁹⁶ Acheson to Senor Rodolfo Michels, September 16, 1943, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 1 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA.

between the delegates.” Thus the same government that had played the greatest role in smashing Colombian efforts to forge a united front in the face of American power now bemoaned the absence of an opportunity to do just that. Further, it falsely accused the United States of providing no opportunity to discuss the agreement bilaterally.²¹⁹⁷ An angry Cordell Hull upbraided them. But in doing so, he confirmed the premise of their argument: that Washington was avoiding joint discussions of the draft. “In conversations with representatives of all interested Governments,” he wrote, “officers of the Department made it clear from the first that this Government had *no intention of calling a conference for the purpose of discussing details of the agreement*, and that a conference if called would be only for the purpose of formal final action by Governments upon the text of an agreement which had already received general approval.” While he agreed to a “further exchange of views,” he urged them to swiftly accept the agreement.²¹⁹⁸

The Chileans still proved uncooperative, prompting an exchange of words. They instructed their Ambassador in Washington, Don Rudolfo Michels, to request a brief conference before the signing ceremony and to insist upon an enlargement of the Central Committee.²¹⁹⁹ On October 21, 1943, the Chilean Ambassador made his country’s case to Acheson, who rebutted their arguments and argued that a meeting of the United Nations before the signing ceremony would wreck the whole plan. It was “certain,” he claimed, “that the agreement would never be signed if the governments should begin to discuss the composition of the Central Committee.” By this point, time had run out. The Chileans

²¹⁹⁷ Telegram No. 1765, Heath to Hull, October 9, 1943, 840.50/2694, Box 4815, RG 59, NARA.

²¹⁹⁸ The SOS (Hull) to Chargé in Chile (Heath), October 13, 1943, 840.50/2694: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 1003-1004.

²¹⁹⁹ Telegram 1815, Heath to Hull, October 19, 1943, 840.50/2797, Box 4815, RG 59, NARA.

begrudgingly agreed to sign, but insisted that the four-power Central Committee should never become a precedent. Michels also made it known that Chile, unlike the United States, considered the relief agreement a treaty. As such, it would require the approval of the Chilean Congress. That, he added, could take months.²²⁰⁰

Central America, the Caribbean and Back to Brazil

The Central American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama all accepted the relief proposal with little complaint.²²⁰¹ Like most of the Hemisphere, these nations had faced immense pressure

²²⁰⁰ “Memorandum of Conversation,” October 21, 1943, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 1 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA; but see also The Acting SOS to the Ambassador in Chile (Bowers), October 22, 1943, 840.50/2916a: Telegram; The Chargé in Chile (Heath) to SOS (Hull), October 23, 1943, 840.50/2848: Telegram, both in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 1009-1010.

²²⁰¹ For **Costa Rica**, see Alberto Echandi to Fay Allen Des Portes, July 16, 1943, Enclosure 2 to Airgram No. 276, Fay Allen Des Portes to Cordell Hull, July 19, 1943, 840.50/2271, Box 4812. For **El Salvador**, see A.R. Avila to Thurston, July 24, 1943, A.710 D.1610, Enclosure No. 1 to Airgram No. 604, Walter Thurston to Cordell Hull, July 24, 1943, 840.50/2297 and Airgram No. 617, Walter Thurston to Cordell Hull, July 28, 1943, 840.50/2310, both in Box 4812. For **Guatemala**, see Carlos Salazar to Ambassador Long, June 25, 1943, Enclosure No. 4 to Dispatch No. 471: Boaz Long to Hull, September 28, 1943, 840.50/2664, Box 4814 and Telegram No. A-522, Hull to Ambassador in Guatemala, July 16, 1943, 840.50/2242, Box 4811. For **Honduras**, see Airgram No. 434, John D. Erwin to Cordell Hull, October 5, 1943, 840.50/2708 and Salvador Aguirre to John D. Erwin, October 4, 1943, Enclosure to dispatch No. 434, John D. Erwin to Cordell Hull, October 5, 1943, 840.50/2708, both in Box 4815. For **Nicaragua**, see Telegram No. 419, Stewart to Hull, July 26, 1943, 840.50/2274, NARA, Decimal File, Box 4812, and Mariano Arguello to James B. Stewart, October 11, 1943, Enclosure No. 2 to Airgram No. 1604, James B. Stewart to Cordell Hull, October 12, 1943, 840.50/2774, Box 4815. For **Panama**, see Octavio Fábrega, September 8, 1943, Enclosure No. 1 to Air Mail No. 4629, John J. Muccio to Cordell Hull, September 14, 1943, 840.50/2546 and Air Mail No. 4629, John J. Muccio to Cordell Hull, September 14, 1943, 840.50/2546, both in Box 4814, all RG 59, NARA.

from the United States to cooperate in the war effort. Washington expressed grave fears over the security of the Panama Canal, the transport of Venezuelan oil, and the viability of the Caribbean sea-lanes. To ensure their protection, they insisted on military bases and various forms of cooperation. In return, Central America received far less than South America: a total of \$4.1 million in lend-lease assistance, slightly under ten percent of all aid given to Latin America under the program. Yet the United States agreed to purchase their surplus goods, often at above-market prices, and to develop industries producing for the war effort.²²⁰²

Were it not for two factors, it would seem odd that these countries did not create more trouble for Washington during the war. First, proximity to the United States and the relative size of these states meant that they often had little choice but to acquiesce to American demands. Second, dictators ruled all but one of these countries, Costa Rica. Their ability to remain in power, in no small part, depended on the United States. Certainly they had witnessed the events that took place in Panama in October 1941. The United States showed not the slightest reluctance to support a coup that led to a more pro-American regime in the country. It is hardly surprising that all of Central America declared war on the Axis powers shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and that these nations were among the original signatories to the United Nations Declaration.²²⁰³ The hope for assistance and the requirements to remain in power made cooperation all but inevitable.

²²⁰² Thomas M. Leonard, "Central America: On the Periphery" and Orlando J. Pérez, "Panama: Nationalism and the Challenge to Canal Security," *Latin America During World War II*, 36-74.

²²⁰³ Ibid.

These factors certainly influenced decision-making with respect to postwar relief. For much of 1943, most of Central America remained engaged in negotiations with Washington over the War Department's sudden cancellation of various highway projects running through Central America. Though no longer deemed strategically necessary for the war effort, the affected countries considered them essential for domestic reasons. The financial largesse, on the one hand, was attractive, but on the other hand, the resulting displacement of workers, left them worried about political consequences.²²⁰⁴ With war-induced scarcities and high inflation, the cost of living in these countries had swelled by as much as 700 percent, as was the case in Nicaragua.²²⁰⁵ These countries necessarily hoped for concessions or recompense from the United States.

Not unlike South America, regional disputes, not only in Central America, but also among the Caribbean nations, played a role as well. Honduras and Nicaragua became embroiled in a territorial fight over areas along their border rich in rubber trees.²²⁰⁶ Tensions also flared up between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, quite astonishingly, over a Haitian refusal to withdraw from circulation a series of postal stamps that depicted all of Hispaniola as greater Haiti. Of course there were deeper issues involved: in 1937, the Dominican strongman, Rafael Trujillo, had order the slaughter of between 17,000 and 35,000 Haitians living in his country. His government thus renewed the assault: offensive postage stamps ignited conflicts over fishing rights and the revamping of border posts, and the Dominican Republic threatened to terminate various

²²⁰⁴ "Efforts to Minimize the Problems Caused by the Liquidation of the United States Army's Emergency Highway Construction Project in Central America," in *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 76-98.

²²⁰⁵ Leonard, "Central America: On the Periphery," 44.

²²⁰⁶ See "Boundary Disputes: Honduras and Nicaragua," in *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 349-358.

commercial agreements with its neighbor.²²⁰⁷ In all of these conflicts, the disputing parties looked to Washington to advance their cause. Thus there was no reason not to agree to the relief proposal, even if its significance was not apparent to many of these nations.²²⁰⁸

Chile and a number of other countries worried that the United States would use the organization to expropriate resources from their territory. Thus while these nations agreed to its provisions, they insisted that they would only contribute after they had met their own resource requirements.²²⁰⁹ Most of these countries turned a blind eye on the composition of the Central Committee. Cuba and Mexico, however, clearly disliked the idea of placing so much power in the hands of the four powers. Mexico insisted that the Council annually elect four additional members to the Committee to serve alongside the four powers. But when the U.S. ignored this proposal, they agreed to participate anyway, reasoning that the four-power setup could be justified so long as hostilities existed. But

²²⁰⁷ See “Efforts of the United States to Improve Relations Between the Dominican Republic and Haiti,” *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 359-364.

²²⁰⁸ For the most obvious case of a country that missed this agreement’s importance, see the case of **El Salvador**: Airgram No. 597, Walter Thurston to Cordell Hull, July 27, 1943, 840.50/2284, Box 4812; but see also the cases of **Honduras**: The Acting SOS to Certain Diplomatic Representatives, November 2, 1943, 840.50/3120e: Circular Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 1011; Airgram No. 434, John D. Erwin to Cordell Hull, October 5, 1943, 840.50/2708, Box 4815, all in RG 59, NARA.

²²⁰⁹ For examples, see **Guatemala**: Telegram No. A-522, Hull to Ambassador in Guatemala, July 16, 1943, 840.50/2242, Box 4811; **Mexico**: E. Padilla to George S. Messersmith, October 7, 1943, Enclosure No. 2 to Airmail No. 13529, George S. Messersmith to Cordell Hull, October 11, 1943, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 1 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173; **El Salvador**: Airgram No. 597, Walter Thurston to Cordell Hull, July 27, 1943, 840.50/2284, Box 4812, all RG 59, NARA.

they insisted that this procedure could not constitute a precedent.²²¹⁰ The Cubans, for their part, concurred with this view.²²¹¹

Likewise, the Government in Rio de Janeiro expressed its disappointment at having been excluded from the Central Committee. “The appointment of Brazil as one of the four chairmen of the committees at the Food Conference had made a favorable impression,” they told the Americans.²²¹² It would have sent a positive message had the United States considered this conference a pattern. Yet they warmly – perhaps we should say smarmily – accepted the agreement.²²¹³ But behind the scenes they worked to protect their interests. They accepted the British proposal that they be allowed observer status on the Inter-Allied Committee, and continued working to improve their relations with Argentina.²²¹⁴ They also created an awkward situation in the State Department by demanding access to published and non-published documents on America’s postwar

²²¹⁰ Padilla to Messersmith, October 7, 1943, Enclosure No. 2 to Airmail No. 13529, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 1 of 2, Lot File No. 58 D 173; Memorandum of Conversation, October 6 & 7, 1943, 840.50/2818, Box 4815, both in RG 59, NARA.

²²¹¹ Emeterio S. Santovenia to Spruille Braden, August 19, 1943, Enclosure to Dispatch No. 4243, Braden to Hull, August 1943, 840.50/2438, Box 4813; A.F. Concheso to Cordell Hull, September 23, 1943, 840.50/2595; Emeterio S. Santovenia to Spruille Braden, November 3, 1943, Enclosure to Dispatch No. 5037, Ellis O. Briggs to Cordell Hull, November 5, 1943, 840.50/??? [Poor photograph], Box 4817, RG 59, NARA.

²²¹² “Memorandum of Conversation,” July 9, 1943, 840.50/2326, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

²²¹³ Air Mail No. 11894, John F. Simmons (Rio de Janeiro) to Hull, July 8, 1943, 840.50/2231, Box 4811. The Brazilians had the American Ambassador in Rio buffaloed. In a telegram to Hull, he wrote: “Brazil has no real interest in UNRRA but as usual Brazil ‘is going along with us.’” Telegram No. 5151, Caffery to Hull, November 4, 1943, Box 4816, both in RG 59, NARA.

²²¹⁴ J.J. Moniz de Aragao to Alexander Cadogan, February 17, 1943, FO 371/35267, PRO. The most poignant example of Brazilian outreach was Rio’s recognition of the Argentine military government of General Ramirez, who overthrew the Argentine government of President Castillo in June 1943. See Humphreys, *Latin America and the Second World War*, Vol. 2, 78.

plans. How could Washington refuse the request after all that they had done?²²¹⁵ But back home, the Brazilians, who knew of the immense demands on resources to come, began destroying large portions of their coffee crop. The immediate stability of prices was important, but like everyone in Latin America, they also wanted to make money.²²¹⁶

²²¹⁵ “Memorandum” from the Brazilian Embassy, August 9, 1943, FW 840.50/2663; Randolph Harrison to Harley Notter, August 12, 1943, 840.50/2663; “Note,” by John Patterson, August 25, 1943, FW 840.50/2377 all in Box 4814, RG 59, NARA.

²²¹⁶ Air Mail No. 10876, W.J. Gallman to Hull, August 27, 1943, 840.50/2527, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONGRESS AND THE WORLD

As we have seen, certain groups and individuals within the American policymaking establishment, particularly the New Dealers, believed the Second World War provided an opportunity to erect a global system of governance led by the United States. While many of these policymakers considered the inter-American system a model for the entire world, they also looked to the U.S. constitutional structure as a template for the United Nations system. But for these people, the apparent stability of the United States was not only a product of the system itself, but also the country's cultural and historical evolution. As such, they believed it would be dangerous to simply replicate American constitutional governance at the global level: their plans would have to account for culture and history. They took the criticisms of certain conservatives seriously. Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, for example, argued that American ideas on liberty and government came into conflict with the history, culture and values of many countries.

Two historical developments led serious thinkers in the Administration to believe such problems could be surmounted. Adolf Berle argued that modern communications technologies would "minimize cultural differences" in time, and serve as "the foundation for a flowering of a human civilization," or what Roosevelt called a "world civilization." These men believed that radio, television, and telephones would allow the United States, through vehicles such as the Office of War Information (OWI), to project the best of American culture into every nook and cranny of the globe, thereby making the exterior world more like the United States. Though Berle never commented on the possibility that

illiberal aspects of other cultures might also penetrate the United States, thus sowing the seeds of the very instability he hoped to prevent abroad, he appears to have believed that the allure of American culture would prevail in the face of any such challenges.²²¹⁷

Paul Appleby argued that the war provided an opportunity to establish patterns of peaceful cooperation that would persist well into the postwar period if they could be institutionalized to make non-cooperation after the war painful. The “necessities of the war,” he wrote, “dictate [a] closer and closer collaboration of the United Nations.” This cooperation could be developed into “organisms,” which in turn could be “supported by separately developed organisms for common action in the late-war and post-war periods.” If states were to become “so deeply and widely involved” in these entities of cooperation, it would make “withdrawal in the early post-war years very difficult.”²²¹⁸ Appleby appears to have believed, as constructivists in the field of international relations theory do today, that through repeated iterations of collaboration durable patterns would be forged, and the entire world would “learn” how to live together in peace. The byproduct, of course, would be stability.²²¹⁹

²²¹⁷ “The Uses of Victory,” Draft, September 19, 1942, File Post-War Plans 1939-44, Box 65, State Department Subject File, 1938-45, Berle Papers, FDRL; “The Better World... Will Be Made Possible Only by Bold Vision, Intelligent Planning, and Hard Work – The President Addresses the International Student Assembly,” September 3, 1942, in Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 1942, *Humanity on the Defensive* (New York: MacMillan, 1942), 347.

²²¹⁸ “Propositions and Possibilities on the International Front,” by Paul Appleby, attached to letter from Appleby to Oscar Cox, November 10, 1942, File 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

²²¹⁹ For major constructivist tracts, see Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Appleby's thought did not end here. Unlike Acheson and a few other conservative nationalists in the State Department, he believed the "post-war settlement must be as far in the direction of establishing international government as it is possible to go." This system of "organisms," as he called it, should be modeled after the U.S. constitutional system.²²²⁰ Throughout the negotiations that led to the relief proposal, especially those that took place in the State Department and with Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, he and others, particularly Milo Perkins, had been adamant that the relief organization should draw upon the division of powers in the American government borrowed from Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*.²²²¹ Appleby's departure from the State Department in early 1942 hardly signified the end of these ideas. Dean Acheson and his accomplices would use the American constitution to sell the relief proposal to those countries that protested it.

The meaning of this fact can only be ascertained through an assessment of the events that played out on Capital Hill during the summer and fall of 1943. Its antecedents go back to the Treaty of Versailles, which was defeated on the Senate floor in 1919. But our story begins in May 1943, when Herbert Hoover penned a letter to the Republican Senator from Michigan, Arthur Vandenberg, encouraging him to use his power in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to obtain copies of the executive agreements of which he was unaware.²²²² The Senator duly replied, "I entirely agree with you that it would be well worthwhile to put a microscope on all of the agreements which are being

²²²⁰ "Propositions and Possibilities on the International Front," Appleby, Cox Papers, FDRL.

²²²¹ Charles de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²²²² Herbert Hoover to Arthur Vandenberg, May 6, 1943, File Vandenberg, Arthur Correspondence and Print Matter 1940-1943, Box 243, PPIC, HHPL.

made by the executive department in respect to international economic relationships.”²²²³ By early July, the two men had agreed to rendezvous.²²²⁴ This meeting, of which there is no apparent record, precipitated a hurricane in Congress.

Here we seek to understand how the final negotiations over the proposal for the international relief proposal played out, both in the Congress, and among the diverse powers that criticized the UNRRA agreement. What issues motivated the two houses of Congress? What solutions were found to work through the ordeal precipitated by Vandenberg and his colleagues in both houses on both sides of the aisle? Equally important, how did Acheson and his colleagues in the State Department meet the challenges posed by the United Nations? What proposals did other powers put forward to meet their concerns? To what degree were these proposals accepted by the United States, but also the other three great powers? Did they compromise the integrity of the agreement or Washington’s ability to achieve its objectives? As we will see, the two sets of discussions implicitly turn on one another. The story is dripping with irony.

The Congressional Storm

Shortly after the State Department released the relief proposal to the press, Senator Vandenberg carefully read it. His private reactions are unknown, but thereafter he wrote a letter to the Secretary of State, asking whether the Roosevelt Administration

²²²³ Arthur Vandenberg to Herbert Hoover, May 10, 1943, File Vandenberg, Arthur Correspondence and Print Matter 1940-1943, Box 243, PPIC, HHPL.

²²²⁴ Western Union Telegram, Arthur Vandenberg to Herbert Hoover, July 6, 1943; see also Arthur Vandenberg to Herbert Hoover, July 24, 1943; Herbert Hoover to Arthur Vandenberg, July 21, 1943, all in File Vandenberg, Arthur Correspondence and Print Matter 1940-1943, Box 243, PPIC, HHPL.

intended to submit the proposal to the Congress for approval.²²²⁵ On June 22, 1943, Hull replied: "It has been decided, after consultation with the majority and minority leaders of both houses of Congress that the United States' participation in the establishment of this United Nations' administration should be through an executive agreement."²²²⁶ Thereupon Vandenberg inquired with his Republican colleagues, the minority leaders in the Senate and House, Charles L. McNary of Oregon, and Joseph Martin of Massachusetts, to know "exactly how far [they had gone] in giving their approval to this proposition." Both men replied that they had not agreed to any procedure allowing the Administration to bypass the Congress.²²²⁷ Thus in this way, the clouds of a "severe cyclonic disturbance," as Dean Acheson described it, gathered in the United States Congress.²²²⁸

The hurricane not only consumed the Upper House of Congress; Republicans in the Lower House, too, began questioning the relief proposal. Two Congresswomen, Frances Payne Bolton of Ohio, and Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts, were the principal protagonists. While Bolton met with Acheson and other members of the House in early July,²²²⁹ Rogers led a brief but important debate on the House floor on July 7, 1943. To her astonishment, the press had hardly reported on the proposed organization, which, she worried, would have "far-reaching" powers. Her Republican colleague, Roy

²²²⁵ Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 67.

²²²⁶ Cordell Hull to Arthur Vandenberg, June 22, 1943, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7436.

²²²⁷ Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 67-68.

²²²⁸ Dean Acheson, *Present At The Creation: My Years In The State Department* (New York: Norton and Company, 1969), 71.

²²²⁹ See "Testimony of Hon. Dean Acheson Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, 78th Congress," July 7, 1943, 840.50/2573, Box 4814, RG 59, NARA.

O. Woodruff of Michigan, expressed similar annoyance at the lack of press coverage and promised “to enlighten the people of this country where we are being led and what we are being led into by an administration that thinks it is wise enough, powerful enough and rich enough to bring the ‘four freedoms’ to all the people of the world.” Before Roosevelt “attempts at our expense, to bring the ‘four freedoms’ to the peoples of all the world, we should first establish them here.”²²³⁰

Meanwhile, Vandenberg had taken action in the Senate. On July 6, 1943, he introduced a resolution instructing the Foreign Relations Committee, of which he was a member, to investigate the relief agreement to determine “whether in its judgment” the relief proposal constituted an executive agreement, as the Administration claimed, or a treaty.²²³¹ In the latter case, American participation would require a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate, as stipulated by the Constitution.²²³² The following day, as Acheson explained years later, he and Hull “made their pilgrimage to do penance at Canossa on Capital Hill.”²²³³ In a sensational session, the committee unanimously agreed, “without regard to political parties,” that the agreement should be “promptly explored,” not with “respect to the merits of the arrangements... but in respect to the procedure involved in the creation of this tremendous instrumentality.”²²³⁴ Tempers flared when the Committee’s Democratic Chair, Senator Thomas Connally of Texas, accused the

²²³⁰ See House record, July 7, 1943, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7410.

²²³¹ See Senate record, July 6, 1943, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7237.

²²³² See Article II, Section 2, Paragraph 2, “U.S. Constitution,” The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy (New Haven: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, 2008): http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/usconst.asp (accessed September 20, 2012).

²²³³ Acheson, *Present At The Creation*, 72.

²²³⁴ See Senate record, July 6, 1943, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7433-7434.

administration of trying to bypass the Congress. In a pique, Hull attempted to storm out of the meeting, but Acheson and Vandenberg interceded and persuaded him to remain.²²³⁵

For the Senator from Michigan, procedure constituted the central issue. “To what extent is it safe, to what extent is it wise, to what extent is it constitutional for executive authority to proceed independent of Congress with respect to the great decisions now pending,” he asked his colleagues on July 8, 1943. This question, in his view, had far-reaching implications: what transpired with respect to relief would become a precedent impinging on the many “transcendental questions involved in the liquidation of the war.” The international machinery proposed by the Administration, he told the Senate, was “reminiscent of the League of Nations,” yet the State Department had planned to “totally bypass the Congress of the United States except at that ‘long last’ moment when finally an appropriation is to be sought... to implement... pledges and promises... made in the name of the total resources of the United States, by the President and his executive associates.” To have chosen this procedure in “this initial venture” on a matter of such “incalculable magnitude in respect not only to policy but to resources” was, in his view, a “substantial error.” The investigation was justified.²²³⁶

²²³⁵ The UNRRA records at NARA do not contain a transcript of this meeting; I would assume one exists in RR 46 (Records of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 1789-1988). We know of this sensational exchange due to the newspapers. See William Moore, “Urges Congress Take Control of Post-War Plans: Vandenberg Says Scheme Needs Ratification,” July 9, 1943, *CDT*, 3; “Senators May Vote Pacts by Majority Along With House: Vandenberg Reveals Progress in Talks With Acheson on United Nations Treaty,” August 18, 1943, *NYT*, 1.

²²³⁶ See Senate record, July 8, 1943, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7433-7436.

Although Vandenberg disavowed any attempt to attack the merits of the proposed program – postwar relief, in his view, was essential – he justified his efforts with direct references to the draft agreement. Nothing aroused his indignation more than Article V, in which each government would pledge “its full support to the administration, within the limits of its available resources, and subject to the requirements of its constitutional procedure, through contributions of funds, materials, equipment, supplies, and service for use in its own, adjacent, or other areas in need, in order to accomplish the purpose of” the organization. This language, according to Vandenberg, entailed a “moral commitment... of all the available resources of the United States” to an administrative agency that would be “world-wide in scope.” The country, he implied, could not “recede” from such a “commitment” without exacting damage to its reputation. It was not only unconstitutional to ignore the Congress, but undemocratic as well. “We pay the bills – that is, the people do – but we have nothing to say about what the bills shall be. I respectfully submit that government by executive decree could not aspire to much greater totalitarian authority.”²²³⁷

On the House side, the denunciations of the Administration were less sharp, but equally forceful. While the Constitution provides the Lower House no powers with regard to treaties, this body’s importance could not be ignored. By convention, appropriations bills function like revenue bills, which, according to the constitution, must originate in the House of Representatives.²²³⁸ Thus the State Department took notice when representatives criticized Roosevelt for his failure to invite members of the Senate

²²³⁷ See Senate record, July 8, 1943, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7433-7436. See also Arthur Vandenberg to Charles McNary, July 7, 1943, in Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 67-68.

²²³⁸ See Article I, Section 7, Paragraph 1-2, “U.S. Constitution,” The Avalon Project.

Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee to the White House during the President's consultation with the Congressional leadership. Here again, Representative Bolton led the charge. "If the executive department is committing the United States to an agreement of vast implications imposing a moral obligation on the Congress for the fulfillment of these commitments, every Member of this House will want to be thoroughly informed." "Even a superficial reading [of the draft]," she asserted, "develops the certainty that this proposal can well be the outline of a possible pattern contemplated... for the post-war international structure." It was, in her view, a "shadow of things to come."²²³⁹

Until this point in our story, the press, as many members of Congress noticed, had given very little attention to the relief proposal. Apart from the *New York Times*, which covered the release of the UNRRA agreement, few other news outlets even bothered to mention the initiative with any analysis.²²⁴⁰ Acheson considered this fact "most extraordinary." He told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the Department of State had received bitter criticism from the press for its failure to share all of the relevant information on the Food and Agriculture Conference. Thus he and his colleagues had decided to give the newspapermen everything on the UNRRA agreement. But they failed to report it. "If you hand out everything," one journalist told Acheson, "they just take it and send it in to the newspaper office and nobody reads it because they do not think it has

²²³⁹ See House record, July 8, 1943, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7482.

²²⁴⁰ "President to Seek Food Relief Set-Up: Confers with Congressional Leaders on Establishment of Overall Agency," June 10, 1943, *NYT*, 28; Bertram D. Hulén, "U.S. Offers Plan for World Relief: Draft Agreement for Central Agency to Aid Needy Peoples Is Sent to United Nations," June 11, 1943, *NYT*, 1. See also "War Victim Relief Setup Is Drafted," June 11, 1943 *WP*, 3; "Plan Drafted to Feed and Assist War Victims," June 11, 1943, *LAT*, 13; "Allied Big Four Approves Plan for World Aid," June 11, 1943, *CDT*, 3.

any importance.” But if you “say it is terribly confidential or you don’t give it to them or say the national security be involved,” Acheson explained, “then they are terribly excited about it.” For this reason, he surmised, the newspapermen neglected it.²²⁴¹

Yet, as he wrote years later, Vandenberg “huffed and puffed in the Senate press gallery.” In turn, his “indignation” gave the hound dogs a “controversy, which is to journalism what a fox is to fox hunting.”²²⁴² By mid July, the eye of the storm was approaching the capital. So-called isolationist newspapers lashed out at the President for “world planning, world WPAing, and world spending of U.S.A. money,” as the *Washington Times-Herald* charged.²²⁴³ These press outlets coalesced around the Senator and commenced smashing Roosevelt for his “autocratic and socialistic activities.” They accused the Administration of seeking to put the United States in “this post-war agency... by chicanery.” They ridiculed the relief proposal, claiming that Vice President Henry Wallace’s “provision of a quart of milk a day for every human being” was “child’s play for the relief administration as projected.” Arthur Sears Henning of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* attacked so-called internationalists in the Administration for desiring a “world state with an international police force supplied by the member governments in the manner that food, fuel, and clothing” were to be “supplied to the relief administration.”²²⁴⁴

²²⁴¹ See “Testimony of Hon. Dean Acheson Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, 78th Congress,” July 7, 1943, 840.50/2573, NARA.

²²⁴² Acheson, *Present At The Creation*, 71.

²²⁴³ Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 69.

²²⁴⁴ Quotes taken from Arthur Sears Henning, “Senate Forces F.D.R. to Yield on Pact Making: Post-War Treaties to Be Submitted,” August 2, 1943, *CDT*, 3.

The Executive Meets the Storm

When the tempest arrived, administration lawyers were pondering how to obtain resources from Congress for the relief organization. They considered siphoning off lend-lease funds for the agency, but Congressional critics attacked this procedure when the State Department attempted it for OFRRO.²²⁴⁵ It became clear that another device would be necessary, either an amendment to the Lend Lease Act, or a separate appropriations bill. Oscar Cox of the Lend-Lease Office worried that if the Administration pursued an amendment, it would come up for renewal in six months, forcing them to go back to the Hill again.²²⁴⁶ Myres McDougal, the State Department's Legal Council, preferred a new appropriations bill, but wanted it introduced before the President had signed the relief agreement.²²⁴⁷ But Roy Veatch believed the legislature would never sign a blank check before the agreement's final form was known.²²⁴⁸ The storm's arrival made this assessment even more probable.

Alarm bells went off in the executive branch. Cox advised his office to withhold funds and supplies from UNRRA until Congressional action had been taken. Under no circumstances would he acquiesce to a procedure that might endanger the lend-lease program.²²⁴⁹ The situation did not look good. "I have a hunch," he wrote Harry Hopkins,

²²⁴⁵ See Veatch to Acheson, April 21, 1943, 840.50/2100-3/5, Box 4810; "Memorandum" by Oscar Cox to Dean Acheson, June 18, 1943, 840.50/2262, Box 4811, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁴⁶ See 5:00 PM in "Calls and Messages," July 9, 1943, File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

²²⁴⁷ Myres S. McDougal to Roy Veatch, July 29, 1943, 840.50/2476, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁴⁸ Veatch to Acheson and Lehman, July 31, 1943, 840.50/2400, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁴⁹ Ibid.

“that UNRRA will not be set up this year or possibly at all.”²²⁵⁰ The Administration had miscalculated. “Herbert Hoover stayed away from an allied organization on relief” as he feared “the political consequences.” If the American public were to “stand for the Allies deciding how American supplies should be divided and distributed,” it was imperative, he had written Acheson in June, 1943, that they “do a proper educational job with the public and Congress.”²²⁵¹ Now he urged the same advice onto Hopkins. But he wondered if Congress would “ever be satisfied” without the “chance to either approve the agreement, or to pass on this issue by an amendment to the Lend-Lease Act, or otherwise.”²²⁵²

Veatch had urged Acheson to take action as well. To avoid “unnecessary suspicion and criticism,” he suggested in April that the State Department “voluntarily” discuss the relief proposal with the relevant congressional committees. He also encouraged Acheson to consider appointing members of Congress to the American delegation assigned to the relief conference.²²⁵³ But the Assistant Secretary, as we have seen, left responsibility for congressional relations to the President. He took no decisive action.

With the relief agreement now in peril, Veatch redelivered his advice in altered form. Members of the interested congressional committees should be invited to assist in

²²⁵⁰ “Memorandum” by Oscar Cox for Harry Hopkins, July 10, 1943, File UNRRA 1942-45 (1), Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

²²⁵¹ “Memorandum” by Oscar Cox to Dean Acheson, June 18, 1943, 840.50/2262, Box 4811, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁵² “Memorandum” by Cox for Harry Hopkins, July 10, 1943, Box 105, Cox Papers, FDRL.

²²⁵³ Veatch to Acheson, April 21, 1943, 840.50/2100-3/5; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Acheson and Veatch, April 26, 1943, 840.50/2100-4/5, both in Box 4810, RG 59, NARA.

preparing the legislation necessary to implement the agreement, he argued, and a group of Congressmen established to liaison with the State Department on relief and related matters. He also thought the President should inform the legislature of his intention to invite two members of Congress to serve on the American delegation to the first UNRRA Council meeting.²²⁵⁴ By this point, it was unnecessary for Veatch to suggest discussions with Congress. Consultations had begun in early July, but these meetings were neither the result of Veatch's suggestions nor the consequence of Acheson's initiative: Bolton and Vandenberg had forced the Assistant Secretary to come to Capital Hill. The Congress was both critical and suspicious of the Administration's motives.

The circumstances placed Dean Acheson in a difficult position. If on the Senate side the challenge was to avoid having to obtain a two-thirds majority vote to win approval for the UNRRA agreement, on the House side it was to ameliorate the fear that another power would assume control over American resources, though the Senate worried about the financial aspects as well. Meeting these challenges proved difficult. Whatever Acheson told the Congress could be subjected to the scrutiny and criticism of another power if it were to become public knowledge. While Dean Acheson ventured across the tightrope, the Congress threw stones. The show began in the United States House of Representatives.

Here Representative Rogers led the charge. Clearly she believed England would assume control of the Council and dominate the allocation of American resources. "Does the United Kingdom have one vote or more than one vote [on the Council]," she asked?

²²⁵⁴ Veatch to Acheson and Lehman, July 31, 1943, 840.50/2400, NARA.

Acheson replied that it would only have one. In disbelief, she asked him about Canada and New Zealand? Would they not vote in accordance with London's wishes? "I do not think so," the Assistant Secretary replied. But then Rogers insisted that this interpretation could not possibly be true. Acheson, who was eager to squelch the debate, retorted: "I suppose the British would say the same thing about us. We are going to have Nicaragua, Cost Rica, El Salvador, and a good many more."²²⁵⁵ In effect, the United States intended to balance against any anti-American coalition in the Council by hustling Latin America.

Franklin Roosevelt clearly shared this point of view. As a candidate for the Vice Presidency in 1920, he had confronted similar criticism over the League of Nations. Republicans charged that Britain would control six votes in the League Assembly due to its imperial possessions. Instead of disputing this claim, Roosevelt argued that the United States would control at least a dozen votes in Latin America. He then went on to brag about having written Haiti's new constitution, which Washington imposed upon the Caribbean nation. These comments angered America's southern neighbors, and provided Republicans fodder with which to attack the campaign. Roosevelt consequently had little choice but to backtrack on his remarks, claiming that he had been misquoted.²²⁵⁶ Acheson, by comparison, had it much easier. He simply expunged his remarks from the record.²²⁵⁷

²²⁵⁵ See "Testimony of Hon. Dean Acheson Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, 78th Congress," July 7, 1943, 840.50/2573, NARA.

²²⁵⁶ James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York: Konecky & Konechy, 1956), 75-76

²²⁵⁷ Acheson to Sol Bloom, September 23, 1943, 840.50/2573, Box 4814, RG 59, NARA.

Meanwhile, he faltered again. When the Republican Representative from New York, James W. Wadsworth, Jr., countered Rogers with the argument that “the Central Committee and the Director General” were “going to run the show,” Acheson agreed, but then realized that this viewpoint would offend the smaller powers that had complained about the Central Committee’s composition. “I do not think it will run the whole show,” he insisted. It “will be the steering committee.” Wadsworth immediately accused the Assistant Secretary of exaggeration. Now aware that he had offended the sensibilities of the body that would fund the organization, he told the group what they wanted to hear and what his colleagues in the State Department hoped to be so: “I think the real center of power and authority in the organization is the Director General,” who will “have control over the property of the organization.” He need not say anything further; he had already assured them that the Director General would be an American.²²⁵⁸ Weeks later, he also asked that his mistaken agreement with Wadsworth be deleted from the record.²²⁵⁹

With no written account of Acheson’s July 1943 discussions with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it is impossible to know if he had comparable exchanges in the Upper House of Congress.²²⁶⁰ But we know that he and his colleagues worried about another possibility. To evade the constitutional requirements of a treaty, they had to convince the Senate that the relief proposal constituted an executive agreement, which required nothing more than a simply majority vote in both houses on an appropriations bill. With the Democrats in control of Congress, this could be achieved. The Foreign

²²⁵⁸ See “Testimony of Hon. Dean Acheson Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, 78th Congress,” July 7, 1943, 840.50/2573, NARA.

²²⁵⁹ Acheson to Sol Bloom, September 23, 1943, 840.50/2573, NARA.

²²⁶⁰ No record of the July 1943 discussions with the Senate Foreign Relations is included in the UNRRA records at NARA. I would assume one exists in Record Group No. 46 (Records of the Committee on Foreign Relations, 1789-1988).

Relations Committee, however, refused to accept the procedure and the State Department proposed an alternative in which the appropriations bill would be preceded by “an authorizing act of Congress.” Acheson later claimed that they had merely changed the semantics of an executive agreement.²²⁶¹ For reasons we will soon see, this is correct. But for the Senate to accept this procedure, the State Department had to modify the relief agreement.²²⁶²

But here is where they faced a critical challenge vis-à-vis the rest of the world. The agreement could *not* be changed significantly without forcing the State Department to renegotiate its terms with the other nations. Any requirement of this sort would lead to incessant delays, particularly if the Soviet Union became involved.²²⁶³ Similar fears, in fact, had driven Woodrow Wilson to refuse to entertain reservations to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Like Acheson, President Wilson believed reservations would obviate many of the promises and tough compromises he made with the Europeans.²²⁶⁴

But fears of possibly having to renegotiate portions of the agreement hardly constituted the only problem. If drastic alterations in the draft were introduced to lessen the obligations of member states in order to appease the Senate, Veatch wrote Acheson, then the “other Powers would become lukewarm towards the agreement in the fear that

²²⁶¹ Acheson, *Present At The Creation*, 72.

²²⁶² Apparently the general procedure was agreed to on August 9, 1943, but the details had not yet been determined. Regrettably the relevant “Memo of Conversation” drawn up after the August 9 meeting is not in the Acheson files, the UNRRA files, or the decimal file held at NARA. But it was referred to in later discussions. See “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 16, 1943, 840.50/2471, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁶³ Veatch to Acheson, July 10, 1943, 840.50/2230-4/8, Box 4811, NARA.

²²⁶⁴ On this point, see especially Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition: The Treaty Fight in Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[the United States was] trying to weaken [its] own commitment to it.”²²⁶⁵ This impression would undermine one of the central purposes of the multilateral approach to postwar relief: to secure as much largesse from the rest of the world as possible. Nonetheless, the State Department had little choice but to try this procedure.

Two additional issues would also require decision: what would the act authorize the President to do, and when would Congress debate and vote on it? These two issues turned on one another. If the Administration sought an immediate vote on a bill, it would, according to McDougal, “disarm... congressional critics... insisting that they have not been properly consulted.” But more important, McDougal believed the Administration could seek wide powers for the President to procure through any department or agency any type of material, and to transfer it as outright gifts to the relief organization, but also governments, associations of governments, agencies of the United Nations, or any group of individuals representing any people anywhere in the world. If UNRRA never came into being or proved unworkable, then these powers would permit the President to act unilaterally to achieve American objectives, or to use the threat of unilateralism to pressure the organization to act in accordance with Washington’s wishes.²²⁶⁶

This procedure, in McDougal’s opinion, had other benefits as well. He worried that Congress might commence debating the relief agreement after the summer recess even if no legislation were introduced. In this case, tensions could escalate; disunity would result; Congress would take offense at the President’s decision to sign the agreement without its consent; and funding for the organization would be jeopardized.

²²⁶⁵ Veatch to Acheson, July 10, 1943, 840.50/2230-4/8, NARA.

²²⁶⁶ Much of what is written here was stated explicitly, but the final statement – the threat of unilateralism – is understood in the wider context. See McDougal to Veatch, July 29, 1943, 840.50/2476, NARA.

Even worse, a Congressional revolt against the organization could possibly break out during the United Nations conference.²²⁶⁷ Veatch conveyed these dangers to Acheson. “It would be a catastrophe of major importance with repercussions much wider than the relief and rehabilitation field, if Congress should launch any sort of a major attack on the UNRRA program while the representatives of the United Nations are in session in this country at our invitation, or if Congress should refuse to provide funds or supplies for distribution through UNRRA once it had been established.”²²⁶⁸

Yet this procedure, according to Veatch, presented one major problem. It would most certainly delay the UN conference until December or January. With the war turning in the Allies favor, he did not believe the United States could afford further postponements. The authorizing act and related appropriations bills, he argued, should be introduced *after* the President had signed the relief agreement, and *after* the first UNRRA Council meeting. This approach entailed grave risks, to be sure, but if the Administration would accept the advice he advanced in April, and then again after the crisis erupted in early July, Veatch believed it would reduce the risks: “there would be minimum... Congressional opposition to our program in Congress if we give all of the interested committees and all of the major leaders of both Houses... an opportunity to know everything that we are doing and to participate in our planning.” He also advocated a vigorous public relations campaign.²²⁶⁹

Acheson finally accepted his advice. But to read his memoirs, you would never know it. Though Veatch backstopped for Acheson during the complex four-power

²²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²²⁶⁸ Veatch to Acheson and Lehman, July 31, 1943, 840.50/2400, NARA.

²²⁶⁹ Ibid.

negotiations, the discussions with the United Nations, and the debate in Congress, providing incisive advice, countless proposals, and innumerable suggestions, the future Secretary of State is not known to have paid him one iota of tribute. But even more striking in view of the warnings Veatch provided the Assistant Secretary, Acheson explained years later that he had been completely surprised by the actions in Congress.²²⁷⁰ “In extenuation,” he wrote, “I can only plead that it no more occurred to me that Congress would feel left out of organizing a relief organization than in not being included in a Washington Community Chest drive.” Understatement to be sure, but Acheson recognized the real problem. Foreign policymaking requires secrecy. But this necessity, he implied, requires that the executive either exclude the legislature, or include it... at the last minute. The problem, he confessed, was that either approach affirmed Congress’ “right to be indignant.”²²⁷¹

Matters rapidly escalated to the Oval Office. Cordell Hull advised the creation of a Congressional liaison committee consisting of influential members of the relevant committees in both Houses of Congress. He suggested it work with the State Department on relief matters, but also other postwar planning issues. Hull also requested the President’s approval of an immediate public relations campaign.²²⁷² To this date, educational efforts had been targeted towards narrow interest groups, and the press had

²²⁷⁰ Veatch was not the only individual in the U.S. Government urging the State Department to consult with Congress. Milo Perkins had made similar suggestions as early as July 1942. See E.H. Caustin to Dudley Ward, July 14, 1942, T160/1404/4, PRO.

²²⁷¹ Veatch is not mentioned at all in Acheson’s memoirs. Quotes taken from Acheson, *Present At The Creation*, 72.

²²⁷² “Memorandum” to Roosevelt from Hull, August 10, 1943, 840.50/2570J, Box 4814, RG 59, NARA.

largely neglected to report on the matter.²²⁷³ Now the time had arrived to widen the campaign. Roosevelt readily accepted these proposals. He also agreed to announce plans to place members of Congress on the U.S. delegation to the UNRRA conference, and his intention of recommending legislation to authorize American participation in the endeavor and appropriations. This procedure would provide Congress the opportunity to discuss and debate the UN relief plan.²²⁷⁴ By this point, it appeared the Senate leadership would accept this course of action.

The Critical Breakthrough: Constitutional or Unconstitutional?

The critical meeting took place on August 16, 1943 in the office of Rhode Island Senator Theodore Green, who served on the Foreign Relations Committee. Vandenberg was the only other member who participated.²²⁷⁵ Acheson attended the meeting with Francis Sayre, a former professor at the Harvard Law School who joined the State Department as Hull's Special Assistant in 1933. With Harry Hawkins, he negotiated many of the trade agreements signed before the war. Doubtless he attended the meeting due to his position at Deputy Director of OFRRO, a position he assumed after serving

²²⁷³ See above but also previous chapter on the press strategy.

²²⁷⁴ We know of Roosevelt's agreement with this procedure on account of two factors. First, Roosevelt noted his agreement on the August 10, 1943 memorandum from Roosevelt. "Memorandum" to Roosevelt from Hull, August 10, 1943, File: UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File, FDRP, FDRL. Second, the sequence of events recorded in the following cross references: "Hull, Hon. Cordell, SOS, 8-10-43," File: UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File 4966, FDRP, FDRL.

²²⁷⁵ "Memorandum of Conversation," August 16, 1943, 840.50/2471, NARA.

several years as the American High Commissioner to the Philippines.²²⁷⁶ But his legal expertise certainly played a role as well. When the constitutionality of the 1934 Trade Agreements Act came under attack, Sayre defended the Administration with a fierce

²²⁷⁶ Sayre is another figure ignored in the scholarship on this period. Born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on April 30, 1885, he obtained national recognition when he married Jessie Woodrow Wilson, daughter of the former President. After receiving the BA and JD from Harvard, he worked as Deputy Assistant District Attorney in New York before joining the faculty at Harvard Law School. From 1933 to 1939, he served as Special Assistant to Cordell Hull. In 1939, Sayre became HC to the Philippines, but resigned due to conflicts with Harold Ickes and the Japanese assault through Southeast Asia. In early 1943, he received a dual appointment as Deputy Director of OFRRO and Special Assistant to the SOS. He would play central roles in the Congressional negotiations and the public relations campaign for relief. He was also intimately involved with religious groups seeking to erect a "Christian Peace" following the war. After the establishment of UNRRA, he became the organization's chief diplomat. While serving as the U.S. representative on the UN Trusteeship Council, Sayre became entangled in the perjury trial of Alger Hiss, who worked for him from 1936-38. I have found no comprehensive biographical information about him, but his life was covered in the press. See "Francis Sayre Is Appointed Hull's Assistant: Wilson's Son-in-Law Well Known Educator," November 19, 1933, *WP*, 1; "Francis B. Sayre Nominated as Philippines Commissioner," July 27, 1939, *CDT*, 5; "Sayre At Capital Sees Foe Baffled," March 24, 1942, *NYT*, 4; "Sayre Says Peace Bars Use of Force: He Tells Presbyterians World Must Build Anew on Idea of Human Brotherhood," May 27, 1942, *NYT*, 28; "Sayre, Dempsey Quit Posts Under Ickes," June 17, 1942, *NYT*, 26; "Organize World Tie-Up For Peace Now, Sayre Asks," January 17, 1943, *CDT*, 13; "President Accepts Sayre Resignation," July 3, 1943, *NYT*, 8; "Beat Savagery by Faith, Says Francis Sayre," November 2, 1942, *CDT*, 25; "Sayre to Aid Lehman and Assist Hull," January 1, 1943, *NYT*, 17; Francis Sayre, "'Six Pillars of Peace' Program of Federal Council of Churches," June 13, 1943, *NYT*, 43; "Sayre Says Allies Must Feed 150,000,000," October 11, 1943, *NYT*, 21; "Plan to Feed 150 Million in Freed Europe," *CDT*, 1; "Sayre Asks U.S. Aid 40 Million Victims of Axis," December 15, 1943, *CDT*, 4; "Urges Peace Based on 'Human Values,'" April 15, 1944, *NYT*, 12; "Spy Case Jury Hears Sayre, Then Recesses Until Jan. 3," December 23, 1948, *NYT*, 1; Jean R. Hailey, "Francis B. Sayre Sr., Diplomat, Dies," March 30, 1972, *WP*, B6.

rebuttal in the *Columbia Law Review*.²²⁷⁷ Many of his arguments would serve as the legal basis for the procedure advanced for the UNRRA agreement.²²⁷⁸

At the August 16, 1943 meeting, Acheson and Sayre endeavored to convince the two Senators to accept enabling legislation as a substitute for the treaty ratification formula provided for in the constitution. It was important, Sayre pointed out, to avoid partisanship and conflict. Though a Democrat, Senator Green shared Vandenberg's view that the relief agreement "should constitute a treaty and handled as such." But if the State Department would accept certain changes to the text, which had been discussed with Acheson the previous week, he agreed to "withdraw his insistence that this [matter] be handled as a treaty." Thus the men had to agree to the revisions in the draft agreement proposed by the State Department. Yet Acheson and Sayre conveniently refrained from discussing the crucial issue of when the required pieces of legislation would be introduced in Congress. Vandenberg, for reasons that will become apparent, seemed more enthusiastic about the general arrangements than Green.²²⁷⁹

The State Department's tactics had apparently angered the Senator from Rhode Island. Instead of consulting with Congress early in the process, the Administration had shared the relief plan at the last minute and under circumstances that made non-cooperation difficult without undermining the war effort and damaging the postwar interests of the United States. Acheson let Sayre remind the two Senator's of this fact. If the United States were to "preserve the fruits" of victory, he argued, relief assistance was

²²⁷⁷ Frances Sayre, "The Constitutionality of the Trade Agreements Act," *Columbia Law Review* 39, no. 5 (May, 1939): 751-775.

²²⁷⁸ See "Memorandum Concerning the Constitutionality of the UNRRA Agreement," File #2 UNRRA – Congressional Action (No. 1), Box 2 – Records Relating to UNRRA's Founding, 1940-1944 [Box 1 of 2], Lot File No. 58 D 173), RG 59, NARA.

²²⁷⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation," August 16, 1943, 840.50/2471, NARA.

essential to prevent “chaos and disaster” after the war. The multilateral approach, he explained, was necessary to prevent the American people from having to undertake “such a worldwide and stupendous task single-handedly.” Vandenberg “expressed hearty agreement with this general view.” Green clearly agreed but said nothing of the position the State Department had put the Senate.²²⁸⁰

To understand how the debate played out, we must say something of the distinction between a treaty and an executive agreement. The two legal forms had been blurred by the actions of previous Presidents, but also the Roosevelt Administration’s use of the war to circumvent the Congress.²²⁸¹ In 1941, Wallace McClure of the State Department, had published a book, *International Executive Agreements: Democratic Procedure Under the Constitution of the United States*, which concluded, according to one scholar writing in 1946, “that anything that could be done by a treaty could also be done by executive agreement, with the approval of Congress if necessary, without its approval if possible.” Although many State Department officials accepted this line of reasoning, others did not.²²⁸² It serves, nonetheless, to illustrate the trend towards increased Presidential power over the management of international affairs in the Roosevelt Administration.

Under this school of thought, the distinction between the two forms revolves around procedure. If an international agreement enters into force only after ratification by the Senate with a two-thirds majority vote, then it constitutes a treaty. If its entry into

²²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²²⁸¹ On this point, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Imperial Presidency* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 113-115.

²²⁸² Edwin M. Borchard, “American Government and Politics: Treaties and Executive Agreements,” *The American Political Science Review* 40, no. 4 (Aug. 1946): 729-730.

force occurs in any way other than through the “advice and consent of the Senate,” it is classified as an executive agreement. While this distinction appears to grant the executive arbitrary powers, legal scholars have pointed out that the constitution establishes certain limits, even under this interpretation. An executive agreement, for example, can neither grant the Congress nor the President powers unstipulated in the constitution. Such feats can only be achieved through a treaty, which requires a two-thirds vote, a procedure not unlike that required of a constitutional amendment. (Though an amendment also requires three-fourths approval from the states). An executive agreement, moreover, cannot repeal an act of Congress.²²⁸³

These distinctions are significant. The State Department offered a few alterations that clarified the proposed organization’s mandate, but none of them had any bearing on the constitutional issues at hand.²²⁸⁴ According to Acheson’s memoirs, the only change that flowed “from the congressional teapot” occurred in Article V, which dealt with appropriations.²²⁸⁵ While the original version utilized the phrase “pledges its full support,” the final draft employed the words “insofar as its appropriate constitutional bodies shall authorize.” This change might have meant something, but the original version, as we have seen, also subjected appropriations to congressional procedures, only the stipulation came at the end of the sentence, not at the beginning.²²⁸⁶ As such, the revision did little more than add emphasis to the necessity of following constitutional

²²⁸³ Ibid., 735-739.

²²⁸⁴ For a full record of these changes, see the attachments to “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 16, 1943, 840.50/2471, NARA. For the various options the State Department considered, see Veatch to Acheson, July 8, 1943, 840.50/2230, Box 4811, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁸⁵ Acheson, *Present At The Creation*, 72.

²²⁸⁶ For a full record of these changes, see the attachments to “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 16, 1943, 840.50/2471, NARA.

procedure. Oddly, the Senators considered these revisions sufficient, as well as similar changes to Article VI, which concerned the organization's administrative expenses.²²⁸⁷

If one assumes the President could implement the agreement without obtaining additional powers, then both drafts qualify as executive agreements. But the accepted procedure assumed something different. A general act, or enabling legislation, as it was sometime called, would be introduced in Congress authorizing the executive to "expend such sums as Congress might from time to time deem appropriate for the purpose of carrying out the American participation in the UNRRA agreement." Then, an appropriations bill would be submitted to Congress for approval. As such, the first action constituted a delegation of power; the second merely provided resources to the executive. Thus the procedure accords more with the requirements of a treaty than an executive agreement. A week prior, Green and Vandenberg had already agreed to this procedure. Now Acheson tried to bargain for more. He asked that the enabling bill give the President wide powers, such as those McDougal suggested. But Vandenberg rejected the idea, claiming that the bill would never pass.²²⁸⁸

Another aspect of the procedure poses further problems. According to Article IX of the draft proposal, the UNRRA agreement would enter into force at the time of signature. This stipulation implied that the President should possess the power to

²²⁸⁷ Ibid. Final agreement on the precise details of these changes did not take place for weeks. See Vandenberg to Acheson, August 19, 1943, 840.50/2697, Box 4815; "Memorandum of Conversation," August 25, 1943, 840.50/2471, Box 4813; Theodore Francis Green to Francis Sayre, August 26, 1943, 840.50/2474, Box 4813; Sayre to Green, August 28, 1943, 840.50/2474, Box 4813; Sayre to Acheson, September 8, 1943, 840.50/2551, Box 4814, all RG 59, NARA.

²²⁸⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation," August 16, 1943, 840.50/2471, NARA.

implement the agreement *before* he signed it. Yet by this point the State Department planned to have the enabling legislation in Congress *after* the President had signed the agreement, while Green and Vandenberg appear to have accepted this procedure.²²⁸⁹ Ironically, the Administration could have avoided the constitutional problems this decision caused by opting out of the entry-into-force mechanism at the time of signature, which the agreement permitted. In total, fourteen countries considered the UNRRA agreement a treaty and utilized this procedure. But the United States did not, certainly because they did not want the Soviet Union acting similarly, probably because they did not want to set a precedent that would have weakened the executive vis-à-vis the legislature.²²⁹⁰ The State Department believed the President already had the powers to implement the agreement, but appears to have supported the enabling legislation to ensure that the Congress passed the essential appropriations bill.²²⁹¹

Legal officials in the State Department ignored the general act and its implications when they made internal preparations to defend the adopted procedure's constitutionality should it come under attack. The cases they cited – all from Sayre's scholarship – to justify their behavior involved no authorizing acts at all: Congress merely passed appropriations bills to allow for participation in the Pan American Union (1889), the International Postal Union (1874), and the International Labor Organization (1919). Reasoning by association, these officials argued that UNRRA paralleled these

²²⁸⁹ When Vandenberg asked Acheson if the Congress might put forward reservations to the agreement, Green told him that it would be pointless since the President would have already signed the agreement by that point. Implicitly, I take this as recognition that they knew the enabling act was little more than a show. See *Ibid.*

²²⁹⁰ See Telegram Relief No. 100, DC to FO, September 12, 1943, FO 371/35276, PRO.

²²⁹¹ On these points, see Herbert W. Briggs, "UNRRA Agreement and Congress," *The American Journal for International Law* 38, no. 4 (Oct. 1944): 650-658.

organizations in both structure, which was correct, and the scope of its mandate, which is debatable.²²⁹² If this logic applies, then the enabling act was a ruse,²²⁹³ and the case can be made that the procedures utilized were constitutional. Yet even this interpretation did not allow the Administration to totally escape the constitutional problems they created, with the Senate's acquiescence of course.

The agreement stipulated that each member government would determine the size and content of its own contribution in accordance with its constitutional procedure. Yet it was the UNRRA Council, not the constitutional bodies of the individual member states that ultimately made the determination.²²⁹⁴ To ensure no country contributed less than any other nation as a percentage of its wealth, the Council approved a resolution stipulating that all countries would contribute one percent of their annual gross domestic products. Now of course this plan did not originate in the Council. Harry Dexter White of the U.S. Treasury devised the formula, which the State Department promoted at the first Council meeting.²²⁹⁵ Congress had also approved the plan, but in strict statutory terms, it

²²⁹² "Memorandum Concerning the Constitutionality of the UNRRA Agreement," File #2 UNRRA – Congressional Action (No. 1), Box 2, Lot File No. 58 D 173, NARA.

²²⁹³ Quite humorously, Senators Vandenberg, Connally and others submitted reservations when the act came before Congress, even though they had no legal status in international law. It is inconceivable that Vandenberg did not know of their legal uselessness: Green pointed this out on August 16, 1943 when Vandenberg queried Acheson on the possibility of reservations. Like the act itself, these reservations were purely show. For a discussion of the reservations and their meaninglessness, see Briggs, "UNRRA Agreement and Congress," 650-658.

²²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²²⁹⁵ "Memorandum" from White to Morgenthau, October 6, 1943, Morgenthau Diaries, Roll No. 194, Book #670, Page 60, FDRL; White to Acheson, October 7, 1943, 840.50/2874, Box 4816, RG 59, NARA; "Memorandum: A Tentative Plan for Financing UNRRA," October 11, 1943, Box 4816, RG 59, NARA; Telegram No. 497 Carner, Foreign Office to Washington, October 15, 1943, CAB 123/225, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 105, DC to FO, October 16, 1943, CAB 123/225, PRO; "Memorandum of Conversation," October 26, 1943, 840.50/3106-1/2, Box 4817, RG 59, NARA; Circular

originated with an international organization, not the United States Congress. In view of this procedure, an international treaty would have been a more appropriate instrument for the agreement.

In fact, the State Department actually considered presenting the UNRRA agreement to Congress as a treaty in December 1942.²²⁹⁶ Officials probably held to the belief that executive agreements were only suitable when the related negotiations involved a single transaction, which is how they justified the procedure for the British-bases-for-destroyers deal of 1940.²²⁹⁷ UNRRA, by contrast, would involve future commitments and repeated transactions. But when the Chinese and Russians began demanding curbs on the power of the Director General during the four-power negotiations, officials suddenly changed their minds.²²⁹⁸ Herein one finds a final reason for the executive agreement: they are much easier to abandon than treaties. Either the President can unilaterally withdraw from such an agreement, or the Congress can repeal it. Treaties, by contrast, usually persist until their terms have expired, even if they are violated.²²⁹⁹

Telegram, October 30, 1943, 840.50/2948B, Box 4816, RG 59, NARA; George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, Vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 81-93.

²²⁹⁶ EVR to Acheson, December 28, 1943, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

²²⁹⁷ Schlesinger, Jr., *Imperial Presidency*, 107.

²²⁹⁸ Here this point is based on mere circumstantial evidence.

²²⁹⁹ On this point, see Borchard, “American Government,” 729-739.

Final Reactions: Vandenberg and the Dissent of Others

But what can be said of the Vandenberg's behavior? Why did he accept minimal changes to the relief proposal in return for the bogus procedures employed? It is quite possible that the legal complexities of the issues consumed him. But that remains doubtful. Ulterior motives were in play. He hoped to retrieve lost political capital by ingratiating himself with the so-called isolationist press and constituents who had turned against him for his increasingly internationalist positions.²³⁰⁰ But, as Acheson explained years later, his actions "threatened to engulf him." When his "erstwhile isolationist friends" learned of the final deal, they accused him of "selling out."²³⁰¹ This left him with little choice but to stage a grand victory. He would boast in a letter to one prominent newspaperman that he had "forced" the Administration "to substantially rewrite the text [of the agreement]." "I shall consider it a one man victory against the precise Executive Dictatorship to which you feel it would be the final symbol of surrender," he wrote.²³⁰² Several months later on the Senate floor, he explained it in this way:

²³⁰⁰ Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 72. It should be noted that Vandenberg's turn towards internationalism might have been the result of "sexspionage," as one author refers to it. Nigel West, *Historical Dictionary of Sexspionage* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), p. 299. British intelligence planted "social companions" close to Vandenberg with the aim of seducing, persuading, and compromising him out of his isolationist fold. See Stephen Dorril, *MI6: Inside the Covert World of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service* (New York: Free Press, 2000), p. 45.

²³⁰¹ Acheson, *Present At The Creation*, 72.

²³⁰² See Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 72. See also the other statements and letters shared with the press that are included in this volume. Vandenberg exploited the fact that nearly thirty changes occurred to the draft agreement between June and November 1943. But most of them were the result of discussions with other countries, not the Congress.

“The entire agreement was rewritten in its fundamental character. It was stripped of every general obligation and responsibility. It was brought back to a simple authorization of appropriations for an international purpose, and it was written in a form which textually undertakes to limit our obligation without any question whatsoever to the specific appropriations that are to be made under the authorization from time to time by the Congress. I repeat, we entirely changed the character of the document, and obviously I think it ceased to be a treaty.”²³⁰³

While Vandenberg’s political fortunes explain much, they do not help us understand why the entire Senate Foreign Relations Committee, especially the Democrats, accepted these arrangements. Like Vandenberg, they found themselves in a difficult position. They had supported the Senator’s investigation because, on the one hand, they agreed with its premise, but on the other hand, because they feared Vandenberg and constituent scorn for ignoring the constitution. But with the Administration holding firm, they could not risk a rift with Roosevelt with elections due in 1944. They also worried of incessant delays or even inaction: either of these scenarios would have imperiled the possibility of achieving a sustainable postwar peace. It therefore made little sense to obstruct the organization on procedural grounds. If the relief organization failed to serve American purposes, the Congress could always cut its funding down the road. The Republicans probably accepted the procedures for the latter reason.

As for the House, they were more than happy to be consulted and to receive the opportunity to vote on the new agencies. Inasmuch as Wallace McClure hoped to wreck

²³⁰³ Quote taken from Briggs, “UNRRA Agreement and Congress,” 655.

the old treaty prerogatives of the Senate, members of the House hoped to do the same.

During the war, the Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Sol Bloom, published a widely read pamphlet proposing a constitutional amendment that would have given both houses of Congress the opportunity to vote on treaties through a simple majority vote. These and other efforts went nowhere,²³⁰⁴ but when the State Department presented the procedures for the relief agreement to the House Foreign Affairs Committee in late September 1943, they were more than happy to accept, even if the vote occurred after the President had signed the agreement.²³⁰⁵ In any case, they knew that they always had power over the purse, and could later pull the string on any commitment that they opposed.

The debate over the constitutional status of the UNRRA preserved and aggrandized the President's power. The United States joined all but one of the international agencies set up during and immediately after the war using similar procedures. The United Nations organization created in the summer of 1945 constitutes the only exception to this rule. The Senate ratified several bilateral treaties with former belligerents, to be sure, but on matters concerning global governance, the executive agreement became the norm. In most every case, the objective was to prevent excessive public debate, and to avoid the two-thirds majority procedure that wrecked the League of Nations and the Treaty of Versailles. Doubtless the Administration made this process easier by embracing an incremental strategy whereby the postwar order was erected

²³⁰⁴ Borchard, "American Government," 729-730.

²³⁰⁵ "Memorandum of Conversation," September 23, 1943, 840.50/2676, Box 4815, RG 59, NARA.

piecemeal, one agency or agreement at a time. The Senate agreed to this procedure so long as it was consulted.²³⁰⁶

Acheson and Sayre accepted these arrangements when proposed by Vandenberg on August 16, 1943. The official account fails to mention it. But the following day, Ray Tucker of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported: "President Roosevelt has flatly refused to approve an arrangement by which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should be informed in advance of all private and postwar covenants."²³⁰⁷ Vandenberg took notice. Perhaps his fears resided when the *New York Times* reported the opposite on August 18, 1943,²³⁰⁸ but he rapidly wrote Acheson about the Tucker story.²³⁰⁹ Sayre responded that though he and Acheson had not yet discussed their meeting of August 16, 1943 with the President, Roosevelt had "frequently indicated... that he would most heartily welcome proposals for Congressional cooperation."²³¹⁰ Acheson reiterated these words after returning from vacation. "I do not think that you need to be concerned by this article which I am sure does not represent the attitude of the President."²³¹¹

Not everyone approved of these developments, even if they led to more cooperation between the State Department and the Congress. On November 8, 1943, just before the UNRRA agreement was signed, the Democratic Senator from Georgia, Walter

²³⁰⁶ These matters are discussed in Borchard, "American Government," 729-730.

²³⁰⁷ Ray Tucker, "Letter from Washington," August 17, 1943, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 840.50/2697, Box 4815, RG 59, NARA.

²³⁰⁸ "Senators May Vote Pacts by Minority Along With House: Vandenberg Reveals Progress in Talks With Acheson on United Nations Treaty," August 18, 1943, *The NYT*, 1.

²³⁰⁹ Vandenberg to Acheson, August 19, 1943, 840.50/2697, NARA.

²³¹⁰ Sayre to Vandenberg, August 25, 1943, 840.50/2697, Box 4815, RG 59, NARA. This letter is merely a draft and may not have been sent, but this possibility is rendered irrelevant by Acheson's letter of September 11, 1943.

²³¹¹ Acheson to Vandenberg, September 11, 1943, 840.50/2697, Box 4815, RG 59, NARA.

George, made it clear during a meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee that “he would have preferred to have the United States do the relief and rehabilitation job by itself through an American agency.” Though his reasons were peculiar – he worried that the Europeans would horde American aid at the expense of China – there was an implicit message in his statement. Neither the Congress nor the American people ever had the opportunity to express their opinion on what type of agency would be created.²³¹² This would be equally true with the many other agencies established much later. Although Congress was consulted on a more routine basis, the Administration usually manipulated the process to achieve its desired outcome.

While Senator George worried about the mechanism for delivering relief, the Republican Senator from Ohio, Robert A. Taft, attacked the underlying premise of not only the relief organization, but of Roosevelt’s objectives for the entire postwar era. In his view, the Administration stood to squander a great opportunity by “reaching out to create utopias of individual freedom where individual freedom has never existed and might not be recognized.” The “talk of bringing... the four freedoms... to the rest of the world” constituted a “dream language.” But he was most incisive when he spoke of the dangers of the Administration’s wide program. “If we crusade for the four freedoms,” he warned, “Russia can crusade for communism.”²³¹³ Perhaps he could have said the opposite, but his logic is irrefutable nonetheless. Roosevelt’s program risked legitimizing

²³¹² “Memorandum of Conversation, Senate Foreign Relations Committee,” November 8, 1943, File #2 UNRRA – Congressional Action (No. 1), Box 2, Lot File No. 58 D 173, NARA.

²³¹³ Taft’s speech with these statements was covered in Arthur Sears Henning, “Draft Global Relief Pact: Scheme Must Be Approved By Congress: Plan Is Submitted to 43 Nations,” September 24, 1943, *CDT*, 1.

Soviet aggression. As such, it increased the likelihood of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The State Department Explains the Agreement to the World

Negotiations with Congressional leaders unfolded alongside efforts to appease the representatives of the allied nations in Washington, especially those that had attacked the relief proposal. In meetings that spanned five months, Acheson and Veatch addressed an array of concerns. Most of the complaints, as we have seen, concerned the powers and composition of the Central Committee. While explaining how each country would have the opportunity to participate in and influence the organization, these men downplayed the committee's importance. Paradoxically, they accomplished this task by comparing the proposed relief organization to the American system of government. The Council, they explained, would serve a role similar to that of Congress, which was to legislate policy and allocate funds. The Director General would play a part like the American President. As for the Central Committee, it would be of and subservient to the Council.²³¹⁴

Within this framework, various avenues would permit member states opportunities to participate. Each government would have a vote in the Council, but also

²³¹⁴ This approach is evident in most of the memoranda of conversation with the various delegations, but see in particular, The SOS to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant), June 30, 1943, 840.50/2177a: Telegram, DOS, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, *General* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), 919-920; "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, Box 4810, RG 59, NARA. The latter document records Acheson's conversation with the Belgian delegation in Washington. It was sent to the U.S. Embassy in all of the relevant capitals to serve as a guide. See Department of State to Certain American Diplomatic Officers, July 13, 1943, 840.50/2191A, Box 4811, RG 59, NARA.

the chance to partake in its committee system. In Congress, the “committees have tremendous power,” Acheson told the Belgians. When a committee brings a problem before one of the houses of Congress, its members debate the general policies involved, but the committee settles the language of any bill submitted for a vote. Similarly, the regional committees of the UNRRA Council would “study and propose the main lines of policy,” after which they would come before the Council for debate and vote. This process, he implied, would work for the supplies and technical committees as well.²³¹⁵ Acheson did not discuss voting procedures until the Canadians forced it on him, whereupon he proposed simple majority voting unless stated otherwise in the agreement, or by action of the Council.²³¹⁶

Acheson and Veatch routinely stressed the “very special role” of the Director General, who would assemble an international staff with technical expertise in diverse fields. Each nation could contribute to the administration’s personnel, but the Director General would have the exclusive power to hire and fire. In appointments, the Central Committee would have little more than advisory powers. The Director General would also “consult more or less constantly” with the various committees of the Council to glean and share information about the circumstances in the relevant countries, and the experience of actual operations on both the supply and demand sides of the equation.²³¹⁷

²³¹⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA.

²³¹⁶ The Canadian Minister (McCarthy) to the SOS, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2155, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 925-926. The voting procedure was included in the changes submitted by the Americans on August 19, 1943. See “The Assistant SOS (Acheson) to the British Chargé (Campbell), August 19, 1943, 840.50/2380-10/16, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 978-984.

²³¹⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA. Obviously this description made Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, who had long advocated for strong regional committees, very happy. See Leith-Ross to Ronald, August 10, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO. On the role of the Central Committee in appointments, see

The Director General would serve as the organization's fulcrum, revolving around and turning over the diverse entities and aspects of its work.

As a way of illustrating, Acheson described how the regional committees would provide the Director General information on the requirements of the countries in the region, and the supplies committee would offer data on the available resources. The Director General would then coordinate the two arms of the organization, and provide information to both committees so that they could write policies. In turn, he would lay *their* policy recommendations before the Council for debate and a vote. As such, the organization would have three focal points: the Supplies Committee, the Regional Committees, and the Director General.²³¹⁸

Acheson told the angry allies that the Central Committee would play virtually no role in this process. With neither the knowledge nor the technical expertise to make policy, it would serve as a mere nominating and steering committee that would provide agendas for meetings of the Council. It would enter into the field of policy only on rare occasions, when an emergency required immediate action so the Director General could meet the exigencies of some unanticipated situation. To rebut the claim that the Central Committee might seek to make policy while the Council was not in session, Acheson argued that it would serve no one's interest for the four powers to enter into a "trial of

"Memorandum of Conversation," June 23 & 26, 1943, 840.50/2058-6/9; "Memorandum of Conversation," June 11, 1943, 840.50/2086, both in Box 4810, RG 59, NARA; Hull to Winant, June 30, 1943, 840.50/2177a: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 919-920.

²³¹⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA; "Memorandum of Conversation," June 11, 1943, 840.50/2086, NARA.

strength” with the Council, and that the Council could always revisit whatever decisions the Central Committee might take while it was not in session.²³¹⁹

While eager to draw comparisons with the American system of Government, Acheson also drew distinctions when it served his purposes. A number of countries worried that the Council might force obligations on the member states against their will.²³²⁰ But Acheson pointed out that it would not have the full powers of a typical legislature. As the Council would neither tax nor wield police power, it would not be a sovereign entity. But if nations refused to cooperate and contribute, even if these deeds were voluntary, then the entire effort would be to no avail and the whole scheme was pointless. In such a case, he suggested the only alternative would be American unilateralism.²³²¹

Acheson addressed the problem of the organization’s scope. Just as he told members of the Congress, he claimed the agency’s scope was limited to the “rehabilitation” of industries vital for the provision of relief.²³²² While he wanted to

²³¹⁹ Hull to Winant, June 30, 1943, 840.50/2177a: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 919-920; “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA.

²³²⁰ See, for example, “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Roy Veatch of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, July 22, 1943, 840.50/2314, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 947-951; Telegram 852, August 13, 1943, 840.50/2371, Box 4812; Donald R. Heath to Hull, No. 7390, August 25, 1943, 840.50/2516, Box 4813; Telegram No. 759 Received, August 30, 1943, 840.50/2477, Box 4813; Telegram 1001 Sent Santiago, September 15, 1943, 840.50/2516, Box 4813; J. Edgar Hoover to Berle, September 24, 1943, 840.50/2682, Box 4815; Telegram 1568, Boal to Hull, September 24, 1943, 840.50/2579, Box 4814; Telegram 1208, September 28, 1943, 840.50/2579, Box 4814, all in RG 59, NARA; The Acting SOS to the Ambassador in Bolivia (Boal), September 29, 1943, 840.50/2579, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 998-999.

²³²¹ “Memorandum of Conversation,” June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA.

²³²² For the Congressional explanation, I assume this was discussed with Vandenberg given the nature of his complaints, but I have found no verbatim record in the limited Congressional records I obtained. Acheson’s testimony with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is not in the UNRRA records at NARA.

ensure members of Congress that they were not signing up for commitments of which there were no limits, he endeavored to erase aggrandized hopes of recipient nations.²³²³ Many allied delegations had protested the Central Committee's power to veto plans to "formulate and recommend" actions by "any or all of the member governments" to undertake tasks "related" to relief and rehabilitation.²³²⁴ Acheson explained that the power of the Central Committee over this matter had nothing to do with curbing the Council's prerogatives. Rather, it was a provision to prevent the organization from expanding into fields of endeavor beyond what it was established to do, unless wide agreement could be secured, most importantly, from the American Congress.²³²⁵

The issue of a precedent also occupied much of Acheson's time. Like the Canadians earlier in the year, the Allied nations had lambasted the four-power Central Committee as setting an undesirable pattern that would be used in future international organizations.²³²⁶ Acheson refuted this suggestion incessantly. He suggested to the Dutch and the many other allied delegations that the evidence made this inference wholly

²³²³ "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA.

²³²⁴ For the portion of the draft quoted here, see Article I, Paragraph 2, Section C of "Draft Agreement for the Establishment of United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, March 25, 1943," *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 890-895. Belgium and Poland were angry about this clause. See "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA; "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23 & 26, 1943, 840.50/2058/6-9, Box 4810; "Memorandum of Conversation," June 24, 1943, Box 4810; "Points Raised by Mr. Domaniewski... concerning Draft Agreement for UNRRA," June 24, 1943, 840.50/2201, Box 4811, both in RG 59, NARA.

²³²⁵ See "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA; "Memorandum of Conversation," August 5, 1943, 840.50/2380-3/16, Box 4812, RG 59, NARA.

²³²⁶ "Memorandum of Conversation," June 11, 1943, 840.50/2086; "Memorandum," by Mr. Atherton, July 7, 1943, 840.50/2154, Box 4810; A.J. Drexel Biddle to Hull, No. 57, July 21, 1943, 840.50/2281, Box 4812; "Memorandum of Conversation," August 13, 1943, 840.50/2230-6/8, Box 4811; French Response, August 14, 1943, 840.50/2380-13/16, Box 4812, all in RG 59, NARA; The Norwegian Ambassador (Morgenstjerne) to the SOS, August 19, 1943, 840.50/2424, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 974-978.

unreasonable. The wheat discussions of 1941 had not utilized the four-power formula; the ongoing monetary discussions were not using it; and the Interim Commissions recently established at the Food Conference had not employed it either. The methods of organization proposed for the relief administration, he asserted, had been chosen to meet the peculiar task at hand.²³²⁷ This argument was misleading: the four-power concept had been chosen to unify the powers to win the war and set a pattern for future international organization. Yet the complaints brought Roosevelt's formula into question.

The Great Contradiction and its Meaning

In this description, Acheson digressed from the draft agreement and the separation-of-powers principle employed in the American constitution. The relief proposal suggested that the regional and supply committees would present policies to the Council or Central Committee,²³²⁸ but Acheson claimed the Director General would play this role.²³²⁹ The flow of information, according to the draft agreement, would be from the Director General to the committees so they could act on this knowledge to craft policies.²³³⁰ Acheson, however, indicated that it would flow in the opposite direction as

²³²⁷ "Memorandum of Conversation," June 11, 1943, 840.50/2086, NARA; Signature unreadable to Assistant Secretary Acheson, August 19, 1943, Box 4811, 840.50/2230-6/8; The Acting SOS to the Ambassador in Chile (Bowers), October 22, 1943, 840.50/2916a: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 1009.

²³²⁸ See Article III, Paragraph 4, 5 & 6 of the draft agreement in Senate record from July 8, 1943, 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7434-7435.

²³²⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA.

²³³⁰ See Article IV, Paragraph 4 of the draft agreement in Senate record from July 8, 1943 in 78th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 89: 7435.

well.²³³¹ In effect, the Director General would play a central role in the policymaking process.

This fact underscores a contradiction in the American position. In the summer of 1942, the postwar planners, particularly Paul Appleby and Milo Perkins, had endeavored to keep the Council out of the Director General's executive operations, citing the division of powers in the American constitution as their model. Officials did not want to provide the British undue influence by giving the regional committees any power beyond advisory functions in the making of policy. Yet they did not want to exclude the Director General from the policymaking process. In short, the separation-of-powers principle applied only up to the point where it might limit American influence.

This logic also applied elsewhere. The State Department had followed Roosevelt's preference for four-power leadership. Officials imagined that these countries would work in a committee that directed the relief organization's executive. For this reason, the body earned the title Executive Committee. But the desire to give the Director General a free hand led the planners to propose a Policy Committee instead. In this arrangement, the Director General had a non-voting seat on the committee, presumably to influence policy. Yet his control over the administration would give him the power to act unilaterally in any case. However, this conception conflicted with the Council's apparent policymaking functions and the four-power body became the Central Committee, though the draft still permitted the four-powers to make policy between biannual meetings of the Council.

²³³¹ "Memorandum of Conversation," June 23, 1943, 840.50/2058-5/9, NARA.

Before the State Department shared the draft with the world, officials imagined the following. The Council would devise policy on functional and technical issues, but on matters of supreme importance, the Central Committee would make the decisions. If either pathway to the desired policy appeared destined for failure, then the United States could turn to the other body regardless of a topic's importance. In any case, the Director General would play an influential role due to his access to information on the supply and demand sides of the equation, but also his relationship to the American Government. Yet he would maintain the power to act unilaterally in all cases if necessary. Should this path prove dangerous, the United States could easily scuttle the organization given that it was signing an executive agreement, not a treaty.

By July 1943, there was an apparent effort to place the policymaking functions more firmly in the hands of the Council, particularly the regional and supply committees where many of the European countries would have legitimate claims to membership. This change paralleled a concomitant effort to reduce the reputed importance of the Central Committee, except in emergency situations requiring immediate action. This fact raises critical questions. Was this shift a mere ploy to convince countries that disapproved of the Central Committee's composition, or does it constitute a more fundamental change in the State Department's attitude towards the relief organization, and more broadly, the postwar period? If the latter explanation holds true, what explains this apparent change?

The need to convince countries that disapproved of the Central Committee played a considerable role. But when numerous countries urged the State Department to alter the

draft providing more powers to the regional committees, Acheson ultimately refused.²³³² While this outcome may suggest no real change, the State Department had no desire to precipitate time-consuming negotiations with the Soviet Union, and Moscow evinced no real commitment to alter the power relationships in the organization as defined in the agreement. Yet officials in the U.S. Government also realized that the four-power Central Committee could not dominate the policymaking process if the international organization were to have any degree of legitimacy with the wider international community.²³³³ Thus Acheson made verbal commitments while keeping the Director General involved in the policymaking process. Leith-Ross, of course, expressed hearty approval when he learned of Acheson's arguments.²³³⁴

The State Department, by this point, had come to consider the Soviet Union a fundamental problem. While American officials always hoped to dominate the postwar international system, it was never prepared to achieve this end crudely, but through ruse,

²³³² For countries supporting strengthened regional committees, see "Memorandum of Conversation," June 24, 1943, 840.50/2058-6/9, Box 4810; "Points Raised by Mr. Domaniewski... concerning Draft Agreement for UNRRA," June 24, 1943, 840.50/2201, Box 4811; R.V. Straten to Hull, Belgium, August 2, 1943, 840.50/2339, Box 4812; "Memorandum of Conversation," August 3, 1943, 840.50/2356, Box 4812, all in RG 59, NARA. The Netherlands Ambassador (Loudon) to the SOS, June 28, 1943, 840.50/2137; The Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs (Spaak) to the American Ambassador to the Belgian Government in Exile (Biddle), at London, July 19, 1943, 840.50/2276; The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Romer) to the American Ambassador to the Polish Government in Exile (Biddle), at London, July 24, 1943, 840.50/2294, all in *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 915-919, 940-943, 954-957. Telegram Relief No. 56, FO to DC, June 29, 1943, FO 371/35271; Memorandum of Conversation by Nigel Ronald, August 3, 1943, FO 371/35273; "Minute" by J.E. Coulson, August 11, 1943, FO 371/35273, all in PRO. For evidence that the United States refused to increase the powers of the regional committees, see Ronald to Leith-Ross, August 9, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO, but also see the final draft agreement of November 1943.

²³³³ "Memorandum," by Mr. Atherton, July 7, 1943, 840.50/2154, NARA.

²³³⁴ Ronald to Leith-Ross, August 9, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO; Leith-Ross to Ronald, August 10, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO.

pretense, and its largesse. It would deploy the stick only when absolutely necessary.

The Soviet Union, by contrast, knew only the stick, and believed that military power alone should be the legitimizing factor in the management of international affairs. Ray Atherton noted this fact when he refuted the claim that the reaction of the exiled governments to the draft was preliminary and “need not be taken seriously.” “I am afraid,” he wrote, “that the problem is basic, arising from the fear of the smaller States, who definitely regard the pattern of the Relief Administration as a precedent for other international organizations, of an international order dominated by the great powers.” The dilemma, he continued, is that “the Soviet Government apparently has just such an order in mind.”²³³⁵

The State Department, it seems, no longer planned to rely primarily on the Central Committee, but now hoped to use the regional and supply committees of the Council to make policy. Acheson and other officials claimed the Director General would work with these committees, but their behavior vis-à-vis the American Congress suggests that this individual would use whatever stratagems were necessary to achieve their objectives, even if it went against the spirit of the UNRRA agreement. Acheson’s willingness to diverge from the word of the draft to persuade the allies to accept it constitutes an implicit confession of this fact, but also indicates his hope that the nations of the world would simply trust the United States. Each of the prospective member states was well aware that the Director General would be an American. But for many, even this fact was difficult to accept. Acheson’s maneuvers inevitably aroused suspicions.

²³³⁵ “Memorandum,” by Mr. Atherton, July 7, 1943, 840.50/2154, NARA.

The Allied Proposals and the End Game

Despite Acheson's explanations, many nations barraged the State Department with proposals to rectify what they considered an undemocratic form of organization. The suggested revisions usually accorded with the peculiar interests of the state making the proposal. The Norwegians, for example, advocated a Transportation Committee. They did not want their merchant fleet to be used for relief purposes without their consent, but they also knew their ability to contribute considerable shipping would give them a strong claim to chair the committee.²³³⁶ The Canadians, for their part, believed the Council should appoint members to the various committees to reduce some of the hostility towards the Central Committee. But they did not want the four-power body stripped of its nominating powers. They feared difficulties that might make it difficult for Ottawa to assume the chairmanship of the Supplies Committee, as promised to them.²³³⁷

The Poles suggested that each of the recipient nations should prepare "national plans" that would be "coordinated by the proposed regional committees." To facilitate this idea, they believed the regional committees should have a "voice in determining... the ultimate extent of aid for the various regions and countries." Like the British, they believed the regional committees should have a "voice in determining... the ultimate extent of aid for the various regions and countries."²³³⁸ Obviously they aimed to contain the Director General and knock the Soviet Union out of the process altogether. Veatch reminded them that they would have the opportunity to collaborate with the Director

²³³⁶ Morgenstierne to Hull, August 19, 1943, 840.50/2424, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 974-978.

²³³⁷ McCarthy to Hull, July 5, 1943, 840.50/2155, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 925-926.

²³³⁸ Romer to Biddle, July 24, 1943, 840.50/2294, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 954-957.

General in drafting plans, and that no relief scheme would be implemented in Polish territory without their consent. But the poor Poles read the writing on the wall: if they refused, they might receive nothing at all.²³³⁹

The State Department faced the unwieldy task of assessing these and other proposals to determine if changes could be made to entice the weary allies into cooperation. How they managed this work bespeaks of the complexities involved in reaching international agreement. With more than forty countries involved, U.S. officials eliminated nations from their analysis that voiced no complaint, failed to respond promptly, or were simply too weak to matter. Not one single Latin American country figured in their assessments.²³⁴⁰ Mexico's response came too late and Brazil made no substantive suggestions.²³⁴¹ The State Department considered the views of Australia, Canada, and most of the exiled allied governments. Officials devised a chart with roughly two-dozen rows, each representing a specific section of the draft either under dispute or

²³³⁹ "Points Raised by Mr. Domaniewski..." June 24, 1943, NARA.

²³⁴⁰ See final untitled document, Matrix, No Date, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 2 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA.

²³⁴¹ On Mexico, see E. Padilla to George S. Messersmith, October 7, 1943, Enclosure No. 2 to Airmail No. 13529, George S. Messersmith to Cordell Hull, October 11, 1943; Airmail No. 13529, George S. Messersmith to Cordell Hull, October 11, 1943, both in File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 2 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA. On Brazil, see John F. Simmons to Hull (Rio de Janeiro), No. 11894, July 8, 1943, 840.50/2231, Box 4811; "Memorandum of Conversation," July 9, 1943, 840.50/2326, Box 4812, both in RG 59, NARA. "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on Political Relations (Duggan), July 9, 1943, 840.50/2218-1/2, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 931.

where revisions had been proposed; columns were delegated to the various countries, and their ideas placed in the rows corresponding with the section of the draft in question.²³⁴²

Of the complaints and proposals received, the single most difficult one concerned the Central Committee. With most of the allied countries insisting on its enlargement or a reduction in its powers, officials concluded that they had four options. They could refuse to make any changes, but this option would have damaged perceptions of the United States. They could reopen negotiations with Moscow and try to increase the size of the committee. Though Britain still preferred this option, Acheson never forcefully advocated it. They could abandon the four-power formula altogether, and devise another scheme, but this alternative received no support due to time constraints. Or they could strip the committee of modest prerogatives without altering the fundamental power dynamics of the organization as stated in the draft. Here they found the best alternative.²³⁴³

The allied governments provided them a variety of options. If some combination of them were acceptable to the other great powers, officials believed the draft would become more palatable. Without foreclosing any of the four options, Acheson shared several of these ideas with the British, Chinese and Soviets on July 21, 1943. He suggested that one-third of the member states might call the Council into special session

²³⁴² See final untitled document, Matrix, Not Date, File Country Comments on UNRRA Agreements Folder 2 of 2, Box 5 – Records Relating to the UNRRA Council, 1943-1949 [Box 2 of 26], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA.

²³⁴³ Of the four alternatives, Ray Atherton articulated the first three in “Memorandum” by Mr. Atherton, July 7, 1943, 840.50/2154, NARA. Acheson suggested the fourth alternative, which was used. See “Memorandum of Discussion in the Office of the Assistant SOS (Acheson), July 21, 1943, 840.50/2369, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 943-947. On Britain’s preference for enlarging the Central Committee, see “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 3, 1943, 840.50/2357, Box 4812; “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 9, 1943, 840.50/2448, Box 4813, both in RG 59, NARA.

as opposed to a simple majority. The power to nominate committee members and admit new states to the organization could be transferred from the Central Committee to the Council. Unanimous voting of the Central Committee *and the Council* should be required to pass amendments. Finally, he thought the draft might formally commit the Central Committee not to reverse decisions of the Council and explicitly limit its policymaking powers to emergency situations. Acheson asked the other three powers to consider these changes.²³⁴⁴

On July 31, 1943, the British responded. A nominating committee of the Council, they argued, would offend the Canadians, who would wonder how the Big Four intended to secure for them the chairmanship of the supplies committee under such arrangements. If amendments to the draft became desirable, the requirement of unanimity would make them impossible: any country could obstruct to suit its purposes. The British accepted the remaining suggestions. But they reiterated their preference for an enlarged Central Committee and wanted to know what the State Department thought of proposals to permit countries invited to participate in its meetings the right to vote as members. They also suggested that no matter could be taken up by the Central Committee without first referring it to the appropriate committee for action.²³⁴⁵

²³⁴⁴ “Memorandum of Discussion in the Office of the Assistant SOS (Acheson), July 21, 1943, 840.50/2369, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 943-947; Telegram Relief No. 86, DC to FO, July 21, 1943, FO 371/35272, PRO; Telegram Relief No. 91, DC to FO, July 26, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO. Acheson formally put the suggested revisions to pen. See “The Assistant SOS (Acheson) to the First Secretary of the British Embassy (Thorold), July 23, 1943, 840.50/2196b, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 952-953.

²³⁴⁵ Telegram No. 1901, Secret, DO to Canada (HC), July 31, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO. The telegram with the British reaction arrived in Washington on July 31, 1943, but it appears that additional ideas came on August 2, 1943, though the telegram is missing. See “Memorandum of Conversation,” August 3, 1943, 840.50/2357, Box 4812;

By mid August, the State Department had embraced a series of revisions despite not having received China and Russia's views on the July proposals. With the exception of voting on amendments, Britain's suggestions were uniformly rejected. The American changes stripped the Central Committee of its power to choose the Council's committee members, and denied member states called to participate in the four-power committee's meetings the right to vote.²³⁴⁶ Clearly they hoped to manipulate the Council into selecting Canada to chair the Supplies Committee.²³⁴⁷ They also worried that smaller powers attending Central Committee meetings might outvote the four great powers. Eager to maintain secrecy, the State Department also rejected a proposal from Norway suggesting that any power have the right to invite itself to the four-power body's meetings.²³⁴⁸ Finally, they refused to delegate any explicit powers to the various committees of the Council, despite the degree to which they had pumped up their importance.²³⁴⁹

Yet the State Department made several concessions. The Council obtained the power to set its own rules and admit new members. Unless stipulated otherwise, it would vote by a simple majority vote. One-third of its membership, for example, could call the body into emergency session at any time of its choosing. The Council also secured the right to appoint members of the regional and supplies committees, though the member

"Memorandum of Conversation," August 9, 1943, 840.50/2448, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA.

²³⁴⁶ Acheson to Campbell, August 19, 1943, 840.50/2380-10/16, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 978-984.

²³⁴⁷ I assume they hoped to do this as Canada obtained chair of the Supplies Committee.

²³⁴⁸ Biddle to Hull, July 21, 1943, 840.50/2281, NARA.

²³⁴⁹ Acheson to Campbell, August 19, 1943, 840.50/2380-10/16, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 978-984; Telegram Relief No. 94, DC to FO, August 21, 1943, FO 371/35274, PRO; Telegram 74 Sent, August 31, 1943, 840.50/2483, Box 4813, RG 59, NARA; Telegram Relief No. 95, DC to FO, August 31, 1943, FO 371/35275, PRO.

states could assign the Central Committee the power to make emergency appointments. Most importantly, the new draft explicitly stated that the Central Committee would only make policy in emergency situations, and that decisions would be communicated to the Council for possible review at its next meeting. Yet the State Department discarded the idea of committing the Central Committee to never overturn decisions of the Council. These modest changes constituted an attempt to appease the fretful.²³⁵⁰

The Soviet Union remained the problem. In late July, the Russian Chargé d’Affairs, Andreas Gromyko, expressed bafflement over the tepid reaction of the United Nations. Why had so few countries responded favorably, he asked Acheson, who informed him “that the delays were due to genuine apprehension about the powers and composition of the Central Committee.” Yet nothing was forthcoming from Moscow. Gromyko could have cared less. He wanted the note drafted to the Dutch circulated to all of the United Nations.²³⁵¹ The Soviet attitude placed the United States in a straightjacket vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Thus the changes amounted to little. When shared with the British, Chinese and Russians on August 20, 1943, Halifax reported: “None [of the alterations] appear to me to raise any point of substance and all have been designed to make text acceptable both to U.S. Senate and to a number of Allied governments.”²³⁵²

From here, it became a waiting game. Acheson continued meeting with the various allied representatives in Washington to persuade them to accept the draft, but he could not share the revisions with them until he had received approval from Britain,

²³⁵⁰ Ibid.

²³⁵¹ Telegram Relief No. 87, DC to FO, July 21, 1943, FO 371/35273, PRO.

²³⁵² Telegram Relief No. 94, DC to FO, August 21, 1943, FO 371/35274, PRO.

China and the Soviet Union.²³⁵³ The British rapidly accepted the latest version.²³⁵⁴

China and the Soviet Union did not convey their approval until the middle of September.²³⁵⁵ At this juncture, the United States shared the draft with the rest of the world along with an invitation to sign it and participate in the first meeting of the

²³⁵³ Yet the U.S. Department of State still transmitted the changes to the various embassies to expedite the process once they had received responses from the British, Chinese and the Soviets. See “The SOS to Certain Diplomatic Representatives,” August 23, 1943, 840.50/2439a, *FRUS*, Vol. 984-985. They also knew it would be difficult to get the Soviets to accept the changes rapidly and began putting pressure on Moscow. See “The SOS to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Standley), August 25, 1943, 840.50/2481a: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 986-987. This telegram is noteworthy due to the following statement: “This Government is also of the opinion that the proposed changes do not modify the essential powers or procedures of the organization substantially; this is particularly true of the powers of the Central Committee, which have been modified in various minor respects but which remain unchanged in all essential respects, without any change in the composition of the Committee.”

²³⁵⁴ Telegram Relief No. 68, FO to DC, September 2, 1943, FO 371/35275, PRO. Minor changes to the draft after the British replied required further approval: “Memorandum of Conversation,” by Mr. Roy Veatch of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, September 8, 1943, 840.50/3146, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 989-990. The British, at this point, expressed doubts over an American inquiry with the United Nations requesting to know how many countries would sign the agreement with reservations to the entry-into-force mechanism. London did not want too many countries making a reservation, thereby delaying its entry-into-force. Thus they proposed that a new clause be added to the draft stipulating that even in the case of reservations, countries could sit on the Council. The United States, however, did not want to provide this alternative to Moscow. It was essential, in their view, that the Soviet Union should be a member of the Council from the outset. The matter was ultimately resolved. See Telegram Relief No. 97, DC to FO, September 9, 1943, FO 371/35275; Telegram Relief No. 99, DC to FO, September 11, 1943; Telegram Relief No. 100, DC to FO, September 12, 1943, both in FO 371/35276, PRO.

²³⁵⁵ The State Department had great difficulty obtaining a reply from China and the Soviet Union, which led Acheson to call another meeting of the four powers on September 3, 1943. See “Memorandum of Conversation,” September 3, 1943, 840.50/2650, Box 4814, RG 59, NARA. I have not found the Chinese response in the records, but it is referred to in the following: “The SOS to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Standley), September 16, 1943, 840.50/2481a: Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 991-992. On September 16, 1943, Acheson made one last plea with Gromyko: Acheson to Gromyko, September 16, 1943, 840.50/2658a. Moscow responded two days later. Telegram 1399, Standley to Hull, September 18, 1943, 840.50/2550, both in Box 4814, RG 59, NARA.

UNRRA Council, which would take place immediately afterwards.²³⁵⁶ Acheson deployed Sayre and Veatch to the Senate and House of Representatives to close the deal.²³⁵⁷ Acceptances of the new draft arrived until the week before it was signed at the White House. While many nations still complained, and many stated reservations to the agreement, everyone accepted it. The long ordeal had finally come to an end.

²³⁵⁶ “The SOS to Certain Diplomatic Representatives,” September 21, 1943, 840.50/2567a: Circular Telegram, *FRUS*, Vol. 1, 994-996.

²³⁵⁷ “Memorandum of Discussion” Deficiencies Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee,” October 8, 1943; “Memorandum: Mr. Sayre’s Discussion with Members of Congress,” October 18, 1943; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Group of Republican Members of Congress, Little Ways and Means Committee, October 25, 1943; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Sayre and McNary, October 28, 1943; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Sayre and Bloom, October 28, 1943; “Memorandum of Discussion,” House Foreign Affairs Committee, November 5, 1943; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Senator Connally’s Office, November 6, 1943; “Memorandum of Conversation,” Senate Foreign Relations Committee, November 8, 1943, all in File #2 UNRRA – Congressional Action (no. 1), Box 2 – Records Relating to UNRRA’s Founding, 1940-1944 [Box 1 of 2], Lot File No. 58 D 173, RG 59, NARA.

CONCLUSION

Just before noon on November 9, 1943, Franklin Roosevelt rolled into the White House's historic East Room. It was exquisite. Dazzling chandeliers hung from the high ceilings, flickering light off the gilded mirrors resting above the fireplaces. A crimson drapery brought the long green felt-covered table stretching the length of the room into relief. Roosevelt's wheelchair maneuvered behind it and followed a palisade of 44 flags stationed against the wall – one for each of the United Nations and associated powers – to his seat. Upon arrival he lifted his flaccid legs over onto the high-backed chair waiting for him. Taller and more ornate than the 44 seats around the table, its embroidered carvings gave it the look of a throne out of a late medieval castle.²³⁵⁸

Roosevelt just sat there, with a beautiful copy of the UNRRA agreement before him. The State Department had duly prepared it for signature as if it were a treaty. The event was too important to do otherwise, whatever they told Congress.²³⁵⁹ Arrangements for the photographers, cameramen, and journalists had been completed. Invitations had

²³⁵⁸ I have pieced together this description using photographs and accounts from the newspapers. See especially Russell B. Porter, "44 Nations Sign Relief Pact; President Hails World Aid," November 10, 1943, *NYT*, 1; Christine Sadler, "44 Nations Sign Relief Pact Here," November 10, 1943, *WP*, 1; "Signers of Relief Pact at White House; Envoys of 44 Nations at the Ceremony," November 10, 1943, *NYT*, 4. Pictures are included in several of these articles, but see also The White House Museum: <http://www.whitehousemuseum.org/floor1/east-room-history.htm> (accessed September 12, 2011).

²³⁵⁹ William V. Whittington (Acting Chief, Treaty Division) to Mr. George T. Summerlin, October 30, 1943, File UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File 4966, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

been distributed.²³⁶⁰ Anybody who was anyone in the nation's capital was going to be there: Supreme Court Justices; the leadership of Congress; the Vice President and members of the Cabinet; figures critical for securing appropriations; peoples whose cooperation remained essential for the endeavor to work. In all, nearly 250 people would attend. Roosevelt had wanted it this way. He had helped with the planning from the beginning, choosing the location,²³⁶¹ determining who would attend,²³⁶² and deciding to sign the agreement himself despite the absence of other heads of state.²³⁶³

The affair would signify the inauguration of something new. What had begun in 1941 at St. James's Palace, the official residence of the British monarchy, had moved to the White House. Ambassador Halifax would sit across the table from Roosevelt. From there he would see Stuart Gilbert's famous portrait of Washington looking over Roosevelt's shoulder. One hundred and thirty-one years prior, Dolly Madison and one of her husband's slaves rescued that painting just before the British set the White House ablaze.²³⁶⁴ The Americans understood that new beginnings always come with trial, but this one brought opportunity as well. To defeat Hitler, the British had sought a closer

²³⁶⁰ For information on the planning, see Memorandum Regarding November 9th, October 28, 1943, File UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File 4966, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

²³⁶¹ Memorandum for the SOS, September 6, 1943, File UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File 4966, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

²³⁶² Many people played a role in determining who would be invited, but Roosevelt made the final call. See Lehman to Kelchner, October 27, 1943; "Suggestion with Regard to Persons to be Invited to the Signing of the UNRRA Agreement," October 27, 1943; George T. Summerlin to General Watson, October 27, 1943; "Memorandum for General Watson," October 28, 1943, File UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File 4966, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

²³⁶³ Memorandum for President by Stettinius, November 3, 1943, File UNRRA 1943, Box 2, Official File 4966, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

²³⁶⁴ Davie Gura, "Descendants Of A Slave See The Painting He Saved," August 24, 2009, *NPR Online*: http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2009/08/descendants_of_the_slave_who_s.html (accessed September 12, 2012).

relationship with the United States, but weakness made them vulnerable to exploitation. Proximity allowed Roosevelt and his men to use the knife. American strategy has always had a dash of Clausewitz in it: that shameless “desire to wait for a better moment before acting.”²³⁶⁵

The irony of Washington’s portrait notwithstanding, the Administration focused on internationalism. Roosevelt would retain references to the Anglo-American partnership in his remarks, but insist that it yield to multilateralism. He also deleted references to the Big Four in his draft speech. The displeasure caused by the composition of the Central Committee taught him a lesson: the image of power politics could not be allowed to undercut the desired feeling of internationalism. In his remarks, Roosevelt would speak the words “United Nations” nearly twenty times in a mere twelve minutes. To widen the net, he inserted “and associated powers” at every opportunity.²³⁶⁶ If the location and attendees of the event alluded to American history and constitutional governance, the flags stationed behind the President symbolized 44 voices. They were the United Nations and associated powers.

²³⁶⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 82.

²³⁶⁶ I ascertained how Roosevelt altered the draft speech by comparing the copy given to him and the copy he gave. It is possible, however, that other individuals made these changes, but that seems to me unlikely. Those revisions probably would have been in Samuel Rosenman’s file. Rosenman was responsible for accumulating ideas from diverse individuals in the Government and writing the speech. See Speech of President, Draft 4, November 5, 1943, File: Establishment of UNRRA, Nov., 1943, Box 24, Rosenman Papers; “Address of the President in Connection with the Signing of the Agreement Setting up the United Nations’ Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in the East Room,” November 9, 1943, Broadcast Nationally at 12:30 PM., EST, File FDR Radio Address/Signing UNRRA Agreement, Nov. 9, 1943, Box 75, Speeches, PPF, Roosevelt Papers, both at FDRL.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Gallons of ink have been spilt on the mysteries of Franklin Roosevelt. Five accounts are especially useful here. The President's most brilliant defender, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., argued that Roosevelt was a pragmatist who saved American democracy. In international affairs, Schlesinger wrote that Roosevelt's "realism kept American participation in the Second World War closer to a sense of national interest than of world mission."²³⁶⁷ These claims, it seems to me, are spurious. If he saved democracy, it was at no small cost: the expansion of presidential power over domestic and international affairs came at the expense of constitutional governance. Roosevelt, to be sure, was a realist, but his Administration's understanding of the national interest, as we have seen, translated into a global mission to spread an American ideology around the world. Relief constituted his Administration's pipeline into the world.

In contrast to the court historians, James MacGregor Burns' assessment remains more critical. He derides the President for pursuing a contradictory grand strategy, which placed too much emphasis on minimizing the cost of the war in American lives, while promoting the advancement of the Four Freedoms around the world. This contradiction, Burns argues, paralyzed American relations with Russia and Asia.²³⁶⁸ But we have shown

²³⁶⁷ Quote taken from Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "America: Experiment or Destiny?" *American Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (June 1977): 521. But see also Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "A Comment on 'Roosevelt and His Foreign Policy Critics,'" *Political Science Quarterly* 94, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 33-35. Schlesinger makes his central argument about Roosevelt in the following: Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt*, Vol. 1-3, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003).

²³⁶⁸ James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York: Konecky & Konecky, 1956); James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom* (New York: Konecky & Konecky, 1970).

that the Administration's pursuit of the ideal often served realistic aims; the medium of relief shows that Roosevelt endeavored to mediate the imperial designs of Britain and the Soviet Union. While garnering international support, the idealistic proclamations worked to strip the British of what they had, and keep the Soviets away from what they wanted. These aims were prerequisites for an American system.

Here Fredrick Pike's thoughts are useful. In his view, the controversy surrounding Roosevelt's career stems from one fact: he was a "trickster." Individuals of this sort, he wrote, can be "seen from different perspectives." They can be both a "culture-hero" and a "'chaos-maker' who 'sows discord among human beings by wantonly breaking the taboos' that heretofore had helped maintain social cohesion." "Tricksters," Pike continued, "lack a moral center..." Yet they can "provide images and visions that... inspire... 'a more tolerant and comprehending psychological world-view' – one that transcends mere rationality." Tricksters "respond to the persisting human need 'to imagine the socially unimaginable and thus to envisage the possibility of social change.'" Roosevelt, in effect, was a gifted hustler. As Pike explained, his talents transcended "the identifying gift of the vast majority of political leaders: mere trickiness."²³⁶⁹

Well before Pike provided this descriptive framework, two other scholars assessed Roosevelt's conflicting behaviors and manipulative ways in a more positive light. In the past, court historians had denied or downplayed the existence of Roosevelt's more sinister attributes; when the revisionist attacked this position, they faulted the President for his deceit and chicanery. Robert Dallek, however, attributed the President's trickery to the context of the times. He believed Roosevelt's proclivity for saying one

²³⁶⁹ Fredrick B. Pike, *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin: University of Texas, 1995), 351.

thing and doing the opposite was essential for success in the circumstances he inherited.²³⁷⁰ Warren Kimball explained the President's policy inconsistencies in much the same way. Yet he provided more evidence, quoting Roosevelt verbatim:

“You know I am a juggler, and I never let my right hand know what my left does... I may have one policy for Europe and one diametrically opposite for North and South America. I may be entirely inconsistent, and furthermore I am perfectly willing to mislead and tell untruths if it will help win the war.”²³⁷¹

This logic applied just as well to the postwar peace. For Roosevelt, internationalism was a play for American hegemony; multilateralism served to conceal possible unilateralism. The United Nations, which captured it all, was his greatest trick.

Roosevelt exploited the idealism of Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations and the concomitant principles of liberal internationalism in hopes of stabilizing the system of states, and making the world over in America's image. He wanted the United Nations, both as a unifying concept and a future international organization, to embody these ideals and principles. If Washington championed and even endeavored to fulfill them, he and officials in his Administration believed the United States would secure a strategic edge over its primary competitors, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. London's imperial record and Moscow's aggressive behavior undermined their leadership potential. But for Washington to become the alternative, it would have to avoid impressions of imperialism or aggression. The United Nations helped the Administration achieve this aim.

²³⁷⁰ Robert Dallek, *Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

²³⁷¹ Warren Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 7.

Strategically, it was a dynamic device conceived to exploit the opportunities and meet the challenges of diverse scenarios. When countries joined the UN and evinced support for the principles behind its mission, American policymakers believed the United States would accrue opportunities to lead and shape the world in ways commensurate with its interests. In situations where a country proved skeptical of Washington's motives, the UN would provide a forum where the United States could work with other countries to sway the wavering officials of these nations. More dramatic perhaps, the UN might also send missions to the country for any number of purposes, and the United States could use its presence to influence the internal politics of the host country. This, in fact, was what the Americans planned to do with postwar relief.

If the recalcitrant behavior of a specific country obstructed these and all other efforts to build an American-led system in certain areas of the world, as occurred in Eastern Europe and several other areas of the world, the United States would then use the United Nations to construct alignments against this nation. It would also use the organization and its principles to wage a propaganda war against the obstructionist state. The postwar planners, as we have seen, considered the UN a potential makeweight against possible enemies, and thought the Soviet Union the state most likely to assume this role. In such a scenario, it is clear that the Americans intended that the UN would become an instrument through which to execute a strategy of containment.

In this way, the United Nations would facilitate the creation of an imperial edifice under American leadership, while also providing for the contingency that circumstances in certain countries might make it difficult, at least in the short to medium term, to

achieve this objective on a global scale. In its conception, the United Nations was as alluring, complicated, and wily as Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The Signing Ceremony

When the clock struck noon, ushers opened the doors of the East Room and escorted Washington's political elite to their seats. The diverse foreign delegations took their places around the table where Roosevelt sat. According to the *New York Times*, the President was in "fine fettle and a gay mood." He grinned at everyone as they came into the room, whispered confidentially to some, and even engaged in "an occasional joke, which left him and those close to him chuckling."²³⁷² Once everyone had been seated, an aide to the President opened the meeting. Then, in alphabetical order, each of the delegates came to the front of the table, where he bowed to the President, shook his hand, sat down next to him, and then signed the document. By fifteen minutes after noon, each of the 44 nations represented had joined UNRRA. It happened too fast, and Roosevelt told those present to enjoy themselves for fifteen minutes.

As scheduled, the microphones came on at half-past noon. Samuel Rosenman and Robert Sherwood, Roosevelt's speechwriters, had prepared the President's remarks using drafts written by Oscar Cox, Thomas Reynolds and Herbert Lehman. Ultimately they decided on brevity to increase the addresses' dramatic impact, which was to be delivered in a national radio broadcast.²³⁷³ The speech endeavored to accomplish three aims. First,

²³⁷² Russell B. Porter, "44 Nations Sign Relief Pact; President Hails World Aid," November 10, 1943, *NYT*, 1.

²³⁷³ See File Establishment of UNRRA, Nov. 9, 1943, Box 24, Rosenman Papers, FDRL.

it sought to recount the signing ceremony that had just taken place, and explain the purpose of UNRRA. Second, it would address real and anticipated criticisms of the President's management of postwar affairs, particularly attacks on UNRRA. And finally, it would hammer the themes of unity and cooperation on a global basis. Roosevelt, in effect, would seek to turn the United Nations into something more than the name of an alliance.

His opening remarks captured the public essence of his entire postwar project. It placed the United States at the helm of a grand endeavor to build a brighter future for the entire world. "Seated about a table in the historic East Room," he explained, "are representatives of forty nations – United Nations and those associated with them." These countries, he added, "include approximately eighty percent of the human race." Implying that there could only be one world civilization, Roosevelt stated that these people were "devoted to the cause of civilization and by a common determination to build for the future a world of decency and security, and above all peace." For this reason, he told his countrymen and the world, they have just signed an agreement establishing "the United Nations' Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, commonly known as UNRRA..."

The agency's objective, Roosevelt explained, was "to put into practical effect some of the high purposes that were set forth in the declaration of the United Nations..." It would therefore provide food, clothing and shelter for destitute populations; assistance against pestilence and aid in rehabilitating the health of the sick; and sustenance for the displaced as well as the resumption of basic services. The destruction wrought by the Axis Powers meant that upon retreat they would leave behind "a generation of half-men – undernourished, crushed in body and spirit, without strength or incentive to hope." If the

world failed to ensure a “fair distribution of available supplies” or “ward off death by starvation of exposure,” the results would be catastrophic. As he put it: “It would be a supreme irony for us to win a victory, and then to inherit world chaos simply because we were unprepared to meet what we know we shall have to meet.”

Roosevelt stared down the critics. For those who had attacked his Administration for failing to plan for the future or meet the humanitarian problems Europe faced, he had these words: “this agreement means that we mean business in this war in a political and humanitarian sense, just as surely as we mean business in a military sense.” For those inclined to denounce the endeavor as soft, or excessively generous, he argued, as Lehman had done months earlier, that it was “a clear matter of enlightened self-interest – and of military strategic necessity.” He also cited the example of French North Africa to show that the organization would not play the role of Santa Claus.

To conservatives, like Arthur Sears Henning at the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, who would reprimand UNRRA on cost grounds that morning,²³⁷⁴ and the foreign delegations, who had attacked the agency’s structure as authoritarian during the previous months, he had these words: “The sufferings of the little men and women who have been ground under the Axis heel can be relieved only if we utilize the production of all the world to balance the want of all the world.” Thus the funds and resources would be drawn on a United Nations basis; thus the effort would have to be global. “In UNRRA,” he continued, “we have devised a mechanism... based on the processes of true democracy,” which, he asserted, would “go far toward accomplishment of such an objective in the days and months of desperate emergency that will follow the overthrow of the Axis.”

²³⁷⁴ Arthur Sears Henning, “44 Nations Sign Allied Relief Accord Today,” November 9, 1943, *CDT*, 3.

In Roosevelt's view UNRRA was an agreement of historic importance. It was the first international operational organization with the United Nations name. As such, it was not only a "strong link joining the United Nations and their associates in facing problems of mutual need and mutual interest," it was an opportunity for the world to learn to work together. "As in most of the difficult and complex things in life," Roosevelt explained, "nations will learn to work together only by actually working together.... Such is the spirit and such is the positive action of the United Nations and their associates at the time when our military power is becoming predominate, when our enemies are being pushed back – all over the world." Unity, in sum, was an objective unto itself.

Yet it would serve a cause. According to Roosevelt, the United Nations had never "deviated from adherence to the basic principles of freedom and tolerance, independence and security." UNRRA constituted a step towards the fulfillment of these principles. It would take "bold steps." It would move the world "toward the practicable, workable realization of a thing called freedom from want." In Roosevelt's view, this freedom was an essential steppingstone to security. On that note, he concluded. "The forces of the United Nations are marching forward, and the peoples of the United Nations march with them." He then lifted his head, and departed from his prepared remarks. "So, my friends, on this historic occasion, I wish you all the success in the world."²³⁷⁵

²³⁷⁵ "Address of the President... Signing of the Agreement Setting up the United Nations' Relief and Rehabilitation Administration..." November 9, 1943, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

The Central Role of Public Relations: The United Nations as an Alliance

Our story began with Herbert Hoover, who precipitated the debate over relief during the Second World War. His wartime statements and experiences as a humanitarian during and after the First World War led the exiled leaders of various occupied countries to appeal to him for assistance: these individuals wanted relief delivered through the British blockade of Europe to their home populations. On the one hand, they worried that failure to provide assistance would undermine their legitimacy after the war; on the other hand, they had genuine concern for the wellbeing of their people. Following Churchill's assumption of the premiership, the British concluded that aid allowed into Europe would defy the purpose of the blockade: to prevent imports that would abet the Nazi economy, and strike at Germany's ability to wage war. Thus divisions erupted among the Allies, pitting Britain against those governments who wanted immediate relief for their people.

The blockade caused another problem. Large areas of the world depended on European markets for their economies to flourish. Both the dependent and independent colonies of the British Empire relied on Europe, as did the colonies of the invaded countries – Belgium, France and the Netherlands. Absent this market, these areas of the world faced economic catastrophe and possible political instability. The British worried that the Nazis would exploit the situation to undermine their empire. A similar situation existed in the Western Hemisphere, particularly in the countries of Latin America, which relied heavily on exports to Europe. If these problems went unaddressed, the British reckoned they would be exposed to blockade runners and Nazi incursions into these areas

of the world. Inasmuch as Hoover had to be confronted, something had to be done to avert economic disaster in these countries.

On August 20, 1940, Churchill spoke on relief. His immediate aim, to be sure, was to undermine Hoover. But in promising that the Allies would provide immediate relief to any and every country liberated from Nazi oppression, the British Prime Minister also encouraged the populations of these lands to rise up against the Germans. Yet this pledge meant that Britain would have to accumulate supplies for the day of liberation. For this purpose, they reasoned it made sense to buy up surplus commodities. Financial restraints, however, undermined the degree to which London could pursue this policy, and it seemed foolish that Britain would take on this responsibility alone. As a result, the British turned to the United States in hopes of cooperating on surpluses, but also in their efforts to thwart Hoover. It was in this context that Sir Frederick Leith-Ross first proposed an international organization, not for relief, but to direct the production, stockpiling, and marketing of surplus commodities.

Yet the forces of disunity prevailed. Though the Americans ultimately agreed to cooperate with the British when surpluses existed for the same commodity in the colonial empires and the Western Hemisphere, they preferred unilateralism: they did not want the British meddling in South America. And while the United States generally agreed with the British on cross-blockade relief, Roosevelt forced London, against its wishes, to permit minimal supplies into unoccupied France to keep Hoover at bay. This, however, angered the European Allies who received no relief, which in turn fueled the forces of disunity and gave the Nazis fodder for propaganda. Were it not for London's dependence on the United States for financial assistance and war materials, Britain might have shifted

away from Washington. But Churchill desperately hoped that the United States would enter the war. Consequently all energies focused on pro-British propaganda in the United States, which meant relentless attacks on Hoover, efforts to sanctify Anglo-American relations, and stratagems to obtain aid and lure America into the fight.

Meanwhile, Britain had to dispel all appearances of disunity. In October 1940, Churchill proposed a meeting of the Allies. He wanted the British Empire and exiled governments to formally commit themselves to work together until victory. But the Canadians criticized the plan as pretense; the Greeks refused to participate, citing fears that it would provoke the Germans into attacking them. Thus the British postponed the meeting until June 1941, after the Germans invaded Greece. At this meeting, or “parade”, as Churchill called it, the participants signed the St. James’s Palace Resolution, which bound them together in war and peace. Though a milestone towards the creation of the United Nations alliance, it left the rump governments with little to show their people, and the British suggested another meeting. Held in September 1941, this event led to a second St. James’s Palace Resolution on relief. It established the Inter-Allied Committee for Postwar Requirements, which assumed responsibility for preparing estimates of postwar relief needs for the occupied countries. Yet everyone knew this step meant little without commitments from the major supplying countries, particularly the United States.

By this point, Roosevelt had begun preparing public opinion at home and abroad for American leadership of the postwar world order. In January, he gave his famous four freedoms speech, an idealistic appeal to rally the American people behind his policies, and the world behind the United States. Then, in August 1941, he and Churchill released the so-called Atlantic Charter. The governments attending the second allied meeting at St.

James's Palace, which by this point included the Soviet Union, adhered to this statement. While the British limited the Charter's principles to "Western Civilization," Roosevelt touted it as blueprint for a new "World Civilization." As such, it was global in its application. Following the American entry into the war, all of the nations at war with the Axis Powers signed the so-called United Nations Declaration, in which they adhered to the Atlantic Charter and agreed to fight in common until ultimate victory.

The United Nations alliance emerged incrementally and resulted from an array of factors, but one theme runs through the entire story: the primordial importance of public relations. The allied meetings held in London and the creation of the Inter-Allied Committee served the purpose of propaganda. These efforts sought to make a show of unity when disputes over surpluses and relief, both the result of the British blockade of Europe, threatened the war effort. The economic and military might of the United States placed it in a revered position, which allowed the Roosevelt Administration to subsume these British initiatives in a program of its own. With lofty appeals and promises of freedom, justice, democracy, security and prosperity for people all over the world, the administration downplayed the problems of the war, provided a program around which the alliance could coalesce, and implicitly assaulted the British Empire and other potential challengers such as the Soviet Union.

The Machinery Behind the Glamour of Public Relations

The world could not be built on public relations alone. American officials knew that they would have to devise concrete policies for the postwar period. Yet impediments

to action abounded. If insufficient staff and present demands delayed action, Roosevelt's administrative style all but paralyzed the American bureaucracy. By assigning competing officials overlapping responsibilities, not least in the area of postwar planning, he ensured disputes would erupt, which guaranteed that decisions were brought to him. The resulting inefficiencies meant delays. As a result, little planning had been done before the United States entered the war. But four factors – all either directly or indirectly related to postwar relief – helped break the logjam. Though they did not have simultaneous bearing on the planning process, each of these factors influenced it to varying degrees and at different points during the first half of 1942.

First, American officials realized that the need for postwar relief would come fast and furious as the Allied armies defeated the Axis powers. If the United States could not manage the problem, Europe would face famine, possibly pandemic, an uncontrolled refugee crisis, and even outright revolution. Any combination of these developments would hurt the war effort and the postwar peace. Acheson would later capture the gravity of the situation: “there could not possibly be a greater disaster to our armies and to the United Nations than to have our forces, the British forces, or any other United Nation forces occupy any area and then find themselves unable to feed that area. If we then had a famine with hundreds of thousands or millions of people dying after our people assumed control, it would be one of the greatest blows to our conduct of the war, to say nothing of the prestige of the United States throughout the world.”²³⁷⁶

²³⁷⁶ Statements of Acheson and Stettinius before the Food Requirements Committee, November 11, 1942, File #2 Post War – ER & EP May 7 PART 2, Box 5, WRPR, Acheson Papers, RG 59, NARA.

Second, American officials, particularly Adolf Berle, worried that if the Roosevelt Administration failed to have an adequate plan and infrastructure in place to address the demands of the postwar period, then the British, perhaps in collaboration with the Soviet Union, which submitted a proposal for an international relief organization in December 1942, would assume the responsibility themselves. Notably, Berle worried that the Inter-Allied Committee would blossom into a full-scale operational agency with mandates to manage relief and reconstruction after the war. The British, he feared, would then use this entity to advance policies that served the narrow interests of the British Empire. Though Berle evinced the most vitriolic Anglophobia in the Administration, most everyone shared his worries to varying degrees.

Third, impatience drove the European Governments exiled in London to engage in independent purchases of scarce resources for the immediate relief of their populations after the war. These governments, on the one hand, wanted to send a message to their people that they would be prepared for liberation; this impressions would enhance their legitimacy. They also wanted to ensure that they would have adequate material resources to address the many problems they would face. This behavior, however, created problems for the war effort. It angered the allied governments unable to make purchases due to inadequate resources, which in turn created conflict and disunity. It also placed demands on resources that, in many cases, were no longer in surplus. These efforts had to be coordinated and controlled in some broader framework.

Finally, key bureaucratic conflicts paralyzing the Roosevelt Administration found a degree of resolution. Dean Acheson outmaneuvered his competitor and rival in the State Department, Adolf Berle, to assume complete control of the relief portfolio. Cordell Hull

facilitated the process. After a lengthy absence from the department due to illness, he returned and sidelined his *bête noire*, Sumner Welles, who aided Berle's efforts. In turn, Acheson's power increased. Yet he still had to fend off incursions from the New Dealers. This faction controlled the Board of Economic Warfare, which also secured postwar planning responsibilities from Roosevelt. These individuals considered the relief portfolio a gateway towards rebuilding the entire world. Their presence and influence with the President inevitably meant that Acheson would have to compromise to maintain control.

When the Soviet relief proposal and fears of British chicanery prompted the State Department into action, officials decided that political as opposed to economic factors should guide the Administration's approach to relief. These officials intended to use relief to thwart the actions of what they considered the two central obstacles to the construction of an American-led international system: the British Empire and the Soviet Union. In the first case, the Americans did not want the British to use the Inter-Allied Committee to channel trade through London, and they did not want them to use this entity, or relief supplies, for the purpose of maintaining their influence or imperial possessions. Similarly, they hoped to undercut Soviet ambitions in Central and Eastern Europe. Relief constituted a means to this end. Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union would need American assistance after the war; and they thought the United States should use its financial and material supremacy to obtain what it desired in these countries.²³⁷⁷

²³⁷⁷ Though beyond the chronological scope of this work, Marc Trachtenberg has argued that the United States did not have a policy towards Eastern Europe at the end of WWII. If that was the case, the United States certainly had a policy or strategy towards the region in 1943. See Marc Trachtenberg, "The United States and Eastern Europe in 1945: A Reassessment," in *The Cold War and After: History, Theory, and the Logic of International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 69-109.

The international approach to postwar relief had advantages. Officials believed it would prove an immediate asset for the war effort if an international relief organization could be constituted under the United Nations mantra during a multilateral conference held at the earliest possible date. With the war effort going poorly and the impression that the alliance lacked unity, they reasoned that such an event would provide immeasurable propaganda benefits. This international approach would also allow the United States to subsume the Inter-Allied Committee without offending its members, and would provide the world a favorable vision of what was to come: Washington hoped to establish a global system in which every country had a voice in the management of global affairs. The approach would have domestic advantages as well. It would provide the Roosevelt Administration a means to obtain resources from other countries, thereby giving the impression that the United States would not foot the entire bill for postwar relief.

Yet everyone knew this approach had risks. If the American Government hoped to achieve its goals, it would have to maintain control. This fact increased the importance of the organization's structure, which would include three bodies: a Council representing the United Nations; an Executive Committee reserved for Roosevelt's four policemen; and an administrative arm led by an American Director-General. A debating society, the Council would have no real authority. On paper the Executive Committee would wield most of the policymaking power, but if it moved in a direction that ran counter to American interests, the Director General and his staff, to be dominated by Americans, would see that the organization operated in accordance with Washington's preferences. Overtly the administration would procure supplies and implement relief programs, but it

would secretly see that these tasks were carried out the “American way.” It would also provide a means to influence political outcomes in areas of interest to the United States, particularly those occupied by the Red Army.

How could the United States bring such an organization into being? If it were set up multilaterally, it would have maximum legitimacy. But with this approach came the risk that the United States might lose control of the constitutive conference and its ability to craft the organization in a manner commensurate with its wishes. For a period, they thought the United Nations might establish a four-power directorate, which would have the authority to create subsidiary agencies, one of which would be a relief agency. But delays, bureaucratic shuffling, and time constraints made this approach impossible. The relief agency would have to be created first. But this sequence of events had benefits. It would provide a model for postwar international organization, and an example of how the global system should work.²³⁷⁸ The process of bringing it into being would unfold piecemeal. The first step involved negotiations with Britain.

While in Washington politics quickly won out over economics, in London the story unfolded differently. American officials spent their time thinking about how to structure the organization and bring it into being; the British, by contrast, wondered how much they should contribute in the way of resources. The Board of Trade and the Foreign Office preferred that Britain make some concrete pledge to show the country’s goodwill,

²³⁷⁸ After UNRRA came into being, American officials and employees of the organization, never ceased touting it as a model. See Philip C. Jessup, “UNRRA, Sample of World Organization,” *Foreign Affairs* 22, no. 3 (April 1944): 362-373. Even after it had become clear that UNRRA would be dissolved, the argument that this organization constituted a pattern for the future persisted. For an articulation of this argument by Herbert Lehman’s chief deputy, see R.G.A. Jackson, “UNRRA: Pattern for World Peace,” *The Australian Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (Sept., 1946): 38-42.

and entice the Americans into action. Officials in London believed Britain's influence and ability to preserve its global position depended on its willingness to make a commitment. The Treasury, however, worried of the country's diminishing resources and weakening balance of payments position. These differences of opinion locked the groups into a struggle that escalated all the way to the War Cabinet.

The controversy erupted before Leith-Ross's scheduled visit to the United States: the Americans had invited him to discuss postwar relief. He and his allies hoped to make reference to the Prime Minister's speech of August 1940 during the talks, but officials at the Treasury believed the British Government should abandon these pledges. Leith-Ross also wanted Britain to publicly pledge that it would maintain rationing after the war. In this way, he could demonstrate the country's willingness to sacrifice in order to relieve Europe. If pressed on possible contributions, he would mention Britain's raw material resources and other stocks held abroad. But the Treasury disagreed on both points. Leith-Ross should make no further pledges and commit no resources unless he received assurances that Britain would receive something in return. Highly controversial, his instructions were still not finalized when he departed for Washington.

American officials liked the *appearances* of multilateralism and internationalism, but hated the risks these forms of governance entailed. Thus they pursued them only after their desired outcome had become just short of inevitable. In this way, they could seek legitimacy for the system they envisioned while remaining true to their unilateral instincts and strategic preferences for bilateralism. For the Americans, two facts always remained axiomatic: it is less frustrating to act without having to consult anyone, and much easier to achieve hegemony in one-on-one negotiations with diverse parties than through a

multilateral forum, where any combination of countries can endeavor to obstruct the ambitions of a superpower. Consequently, the Americans sought to amass sufficient power and obtain broad agreement before widening the net to include other states. They would begin by seeking agreement with Britain.

Uncle Sam Corners, Rejects, and Ignores John Bull

Sir Frederick Leith-Ross arrived in Washington D.C. with two objectives: to get the Roosevelt Administration to move forward as rapidly as possible towards the creation of an international relief organization; and to secure as much influence for Great Britain in that organization as possibly. Sir Frederick's emphasis on speed revolved, first and foremost, around the need to appease the European allies, particularly those undertaking independent purchases threatening to the war effort. It also stemmed from his concern that the organization might not be functional in time if delays persisted. In terms of influence, Leith-Ross wanted Britain to be in a position to shape the European postwar settlement, and to preserve its Empire.

To achieve these aims, he employed a double-pronged strategy. As evidence of Britain's commitment to postwar relief, he reminded the Americans of Churchill's August 1940 promise to relieve suffering populations after the liberation of Europe, and he provided them a copy of a statement making clear Britain's intention to continue rationing after the war. He also suggested Britain would be willing to provide from its raw material resources and stocks held abroad. In turn, he hoped the Americans would agree to decentralize the organization by creating regional committees and deputies,

which would work with the agency's operational arm. He suggested the Inter-Allied Committee take on this responsibility for Europe, and that additional committees and deputies be established at outposts in the British Empire, namely Cairo and New Delhi.

The Americans refused to devolve power away from Washington. Instead of viewing potential British contributions as signs of strength and commitment, they saw the opposite. If Britain contributed, it would only weaken its ability to rectify its worsening balance of payments position; the statement on rationing, while welcomed, was further evidence of Britain's inability to make significant material contributions. The Americans had no incentive to back away from their plans. While in agreement with the concept of regional committees, they insisted that the committees remain completely detached from the agency's operational arm. The Director General, they reasoned, should reign supreme with no infringements upon his prerogatives. The more Leith-Ross endeavored to place checks on this position, the more they sought to increase his powers and weaken the regional committees. Several American officials even tried to abolish them altogether.

British officials in London responded to the resulting draft agreement with horror. The American plan evoked words like "dictator" and "empty show," provoking one official to advocate for the creation of a non-American system after the war, and another to suggest pouring "cold water" on the plan. The British worried that the New Dealers sought to grant the Council powers over reconstruction. Acheson ultimately agreed that the Council could discuss reconstruction and make suggestions, but that action would require a unanimous vote of the Central Committee. Yet this proposal worried the British. These factors and a variety of interpretive questions led them to recall Leith-Ross, and to begin reaching out to the Russians. Both efforts failed. When the British learned that

Leith-Ross would meet with Roosevelt, they agreed that he should remain in Washington. The Russians, for their part, agreed with the Americans on most of the critical issues.

The British secured only one clear victory, but the Canadians challenged it before Sir Frederick left the continent. Divisions within the Roosevelt Administration over the composition of the Executive Committee provided him an opportunity to secure the four-power setup, which the Foreign Office preferred. Leith-Ross quietly worried that the formula would anger the Governments in exile. In this assessment he was correct, but at this juncture, the Canadians created a stir. Ottawa had hitherto made little fuss over its exclusion from the Anglo-American war councils. But the leadership became fearful that its exclusion would anger the Canadian people. Thus on relief they decided to put up a fight. During Sir Frederick's visit to Ottawa during the summer of 1942, he endured a fusillade of attacks on the four-power committee. The Canadians, citing the principle that a country's representation on international bodies should equal its contribution, even threatened to withdraw financial support for the British war effort.

In this environment, the British retreated to another strategy. Rather than push for immediate changes in the draft agreement, and thereby anger the Americans or thwart the entire effort, they decided to wait. As Leith-Ross and others reasoned, circumstances would bring about the desired decentralization whether the Americans wanted it or not. They also figured that they would have other opportunities to secure changes that accorded with their preferences. It might even be the case that other powers – the Chinese or the Russians – would do their dirty work for them. Keynes believed the Soviet Union would never accept the extraordinary powers granted to the Director General, and would

take steps to resolve this matter. Yet he still feared that Congress would always have the ultimate say on account of its power over the purse. Anything that should not go the way of the American interest would lead Congress to terminate the agency's work.

Asymmetries of power between Britain and the United States allowed American policymakers to run roughshod over the British. After obstructing Sir Frederick's efforts to decentralize the organization, they shared the draft agreement – against London's wishes – with the Chinese and the Russians. This decision infuriated the British, who had not had the chance to respond to the Soviet relief memorandum of the previous year. When Churchill insisted that Leith-Ross retract the rationing statement, the Americans declined to accept it. They also failed to share their program to stop the allied purchases with the British. And finally, they ignored Leith-Ross's concerns that their relief program and procedures for bringing it into place might offend the European Allies. When he sought a statement to share with them upon his return to London, the State Department used language, which Roosevelt endorsed, that looked as though they intended to "inter" the whole program. When protest from one American official led to changes, the revised version exalted the United States and left Leith-Ross looking weak and out of control.

Four Power Reflux: The Policemen Negotiate

Following the elections of November 1942, the Americans shifted into high gear. Acheson began pressuring the British, Chinese, and Russians to provide their views on the American draft agreement for the relief organization. Roosevelt appointed Herbert Lehman to head America's relief efforts. Without consulting anyone, either within his

Administration or among the Allies, he asked the Governor of New York to resign his office and join the State Department, where he would set up the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO). If the relief negotiations succeeded, this new office would become the operational arm of the new international organization. If they failed, OFFRO would undertake relief unilaterally. The British, Chinese, and Russians each responded to this threat differently.

The country that worried the most about American unilateralism – Britain – found itself constricted in its ability to stop it. Canada's threat to eliminate or reduce its financial and material support for the British war effort forced officials in London to reconsider their preferences for a four-power Policy Committee. As a result, the British War Cabinet decided to reverse course on the Executive Committee, which, by this point had been renamed the Policy Committee, and support a seven-power setup despite the enormous difficulties this formula presented. The British also elected to maintain their preference for strengthened regional committees, which served two purposes: the maximization of British influence, and the appeasement of the European Allies. The degree to which they would pursue this agenda, however, would depend upon their success in obtaining support for the seven-power Policy Committee.

The Chinese worried less about American unilateralism: the Nationalists saw little benefit in turning to the British, whose empire threatened their rise, or the Soviets, who might abet the Chinese communists. Thus they would rely on bilateral relations in any case. They would need massive amounts of assistance from the United States for relief, reconstruction, and to reinvigorate their forces, who would face a communist threat as the Japanese retreated. For this reason, they had no reason to obstruct the relief plans of the

United States, which elevated China to a great power despite its weaknesses: China was fractured, occupied, and dependent. Chiang Kai-shek, moreover, could not afford to anger top-level American officials at the moment when he sought to outmaneuver General Stillwell, whose agenda would have threatened his hold on power. The Chinese also agreed with what the Americans planned for the postwar period: they embraced the Atlantic Charter and preferred postwar international organization.

China consequently made a mere two suggestions for the relief organization. The Nationalists disliked provisions for unanimous voting for amendments due to fears emanating from their experiences with the League of Nations following the Japanese invasion. They also wanted some restrictions on the Director General's ability to operate on Chinese territory. Yet they made it clear that they would not obstruct in either case. Despite a confluence of interests on a wide array of matters, the Chinese clearly had regional ambitions: though Chiang sought to repress any appearance of these aspirations, they hoped to establish a hegemonic position in the region. The United States could abet the Nationalists in this objective.

Soviet behavior proved more complex. Moscow feared independent American action, but also collaborative efforts Washington might pursue with the British, Chinese, or any other country. They therefore tried to reduce American influence, preserve their own, and ensure that they would have access at every level and in all aspects of the relief organization's work. These contradictory aims – blocking American machinations while preserving and even increasing opportunities for themselves – required a careful balancing act. If Moscow went too far, it might hurt the war effort, undermine its ability to obtain American resources after the war, or even provoke the United States into

outright hostility. But if Moscow did not go far enough, it might find itself threatened by American capital, finance, and technological prowess. In either case, the menace of German or Japanese arms in the postwar period remained a paramount concern; the United States could either help avert or abet this danger.

The Russians altered their strategy to account for such nuances. Stalin's regime fell back on Russian tradition to survive. It abandoned its non-cooperative posture and overt revolutionary doctrine to maximize the benefits of working with the West. Yet Moscow secretly intensified its support of communist parties in Europe, but instead of urging them to foment revolution, they encouraged them to promote national fronts, of which the communists would be members. Therein they hoped to manipulate the domestic politics of Europe to fashion support for their programs, hopefully with few Western objections. In time, this strategy would lead to the creation of regimes controlled by Moscow all over Europe. On the defensive side, they feared the United States would use the relief agency to execute a similar strategy. They therefore insisted that the agency obtain the consent of the governing authority in recipient countries to provide relief, and where possible to help that authority undertake the whole responsibility for relief itself.

This proposal and differences over the composition of the Policy Committee made negotiations among the four powers, which the Americans had hoped to avoid, essential. Two central fault lines framed the discussions. The first line existed between Great Britain and the Soviet Union over the composition of the Policy Committee. While the United States proved flexible on the issue – Brazilian and Canadian membership would have made it easier for the Americans to achieve their aims – the British could not support the four-power formula due to pressure from Ottawa. The Soviets, by contrast,

would not support an enlarged committee. They worried that it would diminish their power and ability to achieve vote outcomes that accorded with their interests. For this reason, they raised the specter of unanimous voting to keep this possibility at bay.

The second line existed between the United States and the Soviet Union over the organization's ability to operate in a given territory. While the Russians worried about giving the agency's operational arm a free hand to operate with few limits on its ability to enter into a given territory, the Americans insisted upon such provisions because they controlled the funds, on the one hand, and because they hoped to use the agency to pursue their geopolitical objectives, on the other. But the Soviets insisted that the organization obtain the consent of the government in a territory before initiating operations in that area; moreover, they wanted the relief agency to endeavor to make it possible for that government to undertake "full responsibility" for the distribution of relief in its territory.

These two issues proved so intractable that failure appeared imminent, leading Roosevelt and other American officials to propose the Food and Agriculture Conference. They had hoped the public relations benefits of a relief conference would abet the war effort. The specter of the United Nations deliberating over a postwar issue in a multilateral forum would have given the world the impression that everyone would have a seat at the table, and a role to play in postwar global governance.

But Canada refused to yield on its demands for a seat on the Policy Committee. Thus to deemphasize its importance, the Americans changed its name to the Central Committee. Then they proposed a supplies committee as a substitute to meet Ottawa's demands. But nothing worked. Worse, the British exploited the conflict in their campaign to strengthen the regional committees, and even proposed regional deputies to facilitate

this objective. Such proposals looked like chicanery to Moscow, which insisted that it obtain a Deputy of Russian nationality, and membership on the newly proposed supplies committee. In the end, the powers had little choice but to meet these requests, albeit through secret agreements permitting each of the four powers similar rights. Yet while these arrangements helped the Russians, the Canadians held steadfast.

They believed they had been taken for granted. Despite the sizeable contribution they made to the Allied cause, the Americans and British excluded them from most all of the wartime decision-making bodies. As the political consequences became apparent to Mackenzie King's government, the Canadians determined to play hardball on relief. Foolishness in Washington made them even more determined: the Americans called an international conference to be held on Canadian soil without informing Ottawa. Only after Anthony Eden visited Ottawa did a solution emerge; this, however, was the result of the self-promoting machinations of Lester Pearson. The Canadians accepted as a substitute the chairmanship of the Supplies Committee and the right to participate in meetings of the Central Committee when it discussed supplies.

The remaining problem concerned control over the distribution of relief. The Soviet proposals insisting on consultation and collaboration rights for governments in areas receiving aid served two purposes: they worked to reduce American influence in the field, and to provide the Russians or their proxies tools with which to influence the political makeup in those countries. The Soviets, however, were not alone in their hopes of influencing operations to their advantage: the British also wanted in on the action: they wanted to strengthen the regional committees to have increased influence not only over policy, but also operations. While the Americans thwarted the British with ease, they

struggled with the Russians. They reached an agreement on the first provision that left the United States a minor loophole: consent of the government would only be required if it had “administrative control” over the territory in question.

But the second aspect of the question proved more difficult to resolve: the Americans simply refused to include provisions in the draft requiring the agency to aid the government in the assumption of either “complete or partial responsibility” for the distribution of relief. To be sure, they feared that this provision would provoke every government to demand full responsibility for reasons of prestige. They also worried of the reaction of Congress. But most importantly, they disliked the measure because it increased the likelihood that they would lose control. Ultimately, they had little choice but to accept the measure lest they damage the war effort. However, they convinced the Russians to secretly record the measure in the minutes of the last four-power meeting.

Throughout the negotiations, each of the powers had means of leveraging the others: The British cited Canada and concerns over the European allies to advance their agenda. While the Russians repeatedly threatened to reintroduce their demand for unanimous voting procedures on the Central Committee, they maintained a catalogue of obstructionist ploys up their sleeves. The Americans, for their part, flashed the unilateral card or revealed their strong suit: the possession of vast resources. Even the Chinese had means of shaping outcomes: by simply supporting one side or the other. On the Central Committee and the debate over the organization’s ability to operate, the Chinese view accorded with the Soviet position. This fact raised questions about the suitability of Roosevelt’s concept of the four policemen, which assumed Britain and China would side with the United States during conflicts with the Russians.

Yet the more enduring results of these conversations turned on America's ability to pursue its objectives via the relief organization. From Washington's point of view, the agency had been conceived to obtain as much legitimacy as possible for an American-led postwar international system. Yet the Canadian challenge to the four-power formula suggested this setup might be perceived as illegitimate. The organization was also designed to provide the United States a public relations tool, and a means of influencing the postwar political arrangements of Europe. Perhaps the Russians did little to hurt the organization's usefulness in the realm of propaganda, but they most certainly dealt the United States a blow in the other realm. By forcing the organization to obtain the consent and involve the governing authority of a recipient territory in the distribution of supplies, they restricted Washington's ability to use relief for political ends.²³⁷⁹

If the United States failed in these negotiations – still a debatable question – the Second World War bears responsibility. Acheson might have preferred to play hardball with the Soviets, but this option presented dangers so long as the war continued. He might have linked concessions on the size of the Policy Committee to the Soviet Union's willingness to concede in areas concerning the powers of the Director General and his

²³⁷⁹ This fact is relevant for the debate over American policy towards Eastern Europe in 1945. Again, see Trachtenberg, "The United States and Eastern Europe in 1945: A Reassessment," 69-109. Trachtenberg's conclusion that the United States had no policy towards the region during this period stems, in large part, from Litvinov's success at limiting UNRRA's freedom of action. The message Litvinov sent was unequivocal. The United States would not be permitted to hustle the Soviet Union in its backyard. The Americans tried nonetheless. For an interesting discussion of how the United States sought to use UNRRA to impact the politics of Czechoslovakia despite the restrictions placed on the DG by the Soviet Union, see Carson W. Clements, *The Development and Failure of American Policy Toward Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 2004; see 75-124, but especially 100-124. Clements explains how the Americans used public information, labeling of UNRRA supplies, and even the Czech government's spending decisions to facilitate Washington's objectives in the country.

agency's ability to operate. Indeed he could have pursued any number of different strategies. But the circumstances did not allow for such options. Had Acheson pursued any of these routes, or simply backed out of the relief negotiations in early 1943, he might have endangered the wartime alliance. Thus the United States ultimately spent millions on relief for Eastern Europe,²³⁸⁰ but failed to achieve its political objectives in the region.²³⁸¹ By 1945, its policy towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was shifting.²³⁸²

The expenditures spent on relief in this region and elsewhere certainly saved lives, and we know that the food and various forms of assistance provided by UNRRA helped improve perceptions of the United States in several of the recipient countries.²³⁸³ But they did not stop the Soviet Union from erecting communist regimes in Eastern

²³⁸⁰ For an overview of the work UNRRA had done in Eastern Europe by the end of 1945, see E.R. Henson, "Rehabilitation of Eastern Europe," *World Affairs* 108, no. 4 (December 1945): 255-259. For the full picture, see George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, vol. 1-3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950). See the appendices at the end of volume three. They provide the total contributions given by each member state, as well as the total amounts received by recipient nations.

²³⁸¹ For a brief statement on UNRRA's failure as a political instrument for the United States, see Charles S. Maier, "The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II," *International Organization* 31, no. 4 (Autumn, 1977): 623. In this article, Maier is working on a different problem, but note the following statement: "Increasingly, policy makers rejected those forms of international assistance which provided no direct political dividend, such as the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)." For a contemporary but remarkably accurate explanation of how UNRRA came apart due to political factors, see the brief discussion of the organization in Jack N. Behrman, "Political Factors in U.S. International Financial Cooperation, 1945-1950," *The American Political Science Review* 47, no. 2 (June 1953): 431-460.

²³⁸² For an excellent analysis of how the United States moved from the Second World War into the Cold War, see Wilson D. Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman: Potsdam, Hiroshima, and the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

²³⁸³ See Herbert Lehman, *Reminiscences of Herbert Henry Lehman*, *Columbia University Oral History*, 1961 (New York: Columbia University, 1972), 471-472.

Europe, and they clearly did not preserve the Nationalists in China. Perhaps the costs should be added to the ledgers listing those sums paid out to defeat Germany, Japan, and Italy during the Second World War. Maybe they attest to the decency of the American people, who, along with the inhabitants of the British Dominions, paid higher taxes and donated their scarce resources in hopes of preventing starvation and famine, and making the world a better place. But there is always the more cynical view, namely, that charity got the best of them: the American people were hustled by their Government.²³⁸⁴

The United States and the World

It is inconceivable that any Administration in American history devoted more time and resources to propaganda than that of Franklin Roosevelt's. Following his visit to Washington in mid 1942, Richard Law, the British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, reported on the centrality of public relations in Roosevelt's universe, but also his failure to shoot straight with the American people: A number of officials "whom I have hitherto regarded as being among his staunchest supporters are beginning to wonder whether he is anything more than a fool of genius, with an extraordinary nose for public opinion."

Law explained further. "A fairly intelligent newspaperman gave me the sardonic advice that I should visit Hollywood, for, he said, no one who does not understand Hollywood can possibly understand contemporary Washington." The Roosevelt White

²³⁸⁴ But there is also another way of thinking of it: "All [Americans] seek to hustle each other or, if charity gets the best of them, be hustled in return." Walter McDougall, *Freedom Just Around the Corner: A New American History, 1585-1828* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 2.

House, he told his colleagues, “was already spending \$30 million annually on public relations.” Yet he lamented the President’s failure to properly prepare the American people for the postwar world, and his apparent refusal to shoot straight with anyone. “It struck me that this kind of feeling, that the President is far more interested in effects than in results, and that he has become incapable of dealing honestly with his own people, is gaining ground.”²³⁸⁵ The time had come for the Administration to shift gears.

As the four-power negotiations came to a close, the diplomatic process gave way to the demands of public relations. Domestic pressure to move forward on planning for the peace, the need to turn the United Nations into something more than a mere idea, and the fear of Congressional opposition to the Roosevelt Administration’s relief plans led American officials to piece together a propaganda strategy. To avoid criticism from those who would argue that relief planning was premature, officials explained its importance for military strategy. To rebut criticism from conservatives and non-interventionists, they framed the financial aspects of relief in a positive light. And to ensure the support of their most natural allies – humanitarians and specialists who could help them – they began integrating them into the process. It was in the latter context that they painted the most vivid picture of what they expected to find following the liberation of Asia and Europe.

The Roosevelt Administration both succeeded and failed in its presentation of the relief agreement to the world. Domestic press outlets largely ignored the endeavor; those abroad considered it evidence that the United States would remain engaged in the world after the war. Yet in Congress and diplomatic circles the reaction was different. If the

²³⁸⁵ “Mr. Richard Law’s Visit to the United States,” Richard Law, September 21, 1942, attached to Memorandum by the SOSFA, A.E., October 26, 1942, War Cabinet, W.P. (42) 492, CAB 66/30/22, PRO.

Administration succeeded in its efforts to repress debate over the postwar world when the House and Senate debated the Fulbright and Connelly Resolutions, respectively, key individuals in Congress, notably Arthur Vandenberg, expressed outrage at the way in which the Roosevelt Administration shared the relief agreement with the legislature. The Congressional leadership learned of UNRRA twenty-four hours before the agreement was distributed. The rank-and-file received the proposal only when the Administration shared it with the rest of the world. Debate became inevitable.

Foreign delegations expressed concern with American antics as well. The State Department sought to avoid the impression that Britain and the United States conceived the agreement bilaterally. It tried to downplay the fact that the Big Four had agreed to its provisions in advance. But these efforts could not cover up the contents of the agreement, and they did little to diminish the fact that the United States gave the relief proposal to the press and foreign governments at the same time. The State Department threatened unilateralism and let it be known that Washington would not play the role of Santa Claus. They wanted complete agreement with the proposal within three weeks and refused to set a conference date until this aim had been achieved. For many diplomats, the entire affair looked like a *fait accompli*, even though officials hoped to avoid this impression.

Two competing factors made it difficult for the European governments in exile to stand up to the Roosevelt Administration. First, many of these governments believed their ability to stay in power depended on the United States. When, for example, domestic factions challenged the recognized governments of Greece and Yugoslavia, they clearly believed it would harm their interests to anger Washington, which they considered essential for their survival. Even in cases where a particular government harbored the

deepest of resentments over the relief agreement, as was the case with Holland and Poland, the threat of Soviet power in the postwar era ultimately led them to acquiesce to American wishes. Many of these governments also worried that if they played their hand foolishly, then they might receive little postwar assistance.

Had these governments wanted to stand up to the United States, a second factor made it impossible: no country possessed sufficient power to forge a unified response to the United States. Division resulted. The Czechs hoped to reassemble the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the suzerainty of Prague, but knew they would need Moscow's approval. This brought them into conflict with the Poles, whose relations with Russia were fast deteriorating. Similarly, countries such as Belgium and Norway did not possess sufficient reason to join the agreement's fiercest opponents – the Netherlands and Poland. If one country might have had the ability to forge unity, it was France. But when De Gaulle outmaneuvered Giraud to assume leadership of the French Committee of National Liberation, he decided to use the relief agreement, and any other opportunity to negotiate with the allies, as a means of obtaining legitimacy for the French Committee. It made no sense to oppose the United States at this juncture.

Yet an important distinction is worth making. While considerable aid poured into Eastern Europe, very little UNRRA assistance went to Western Europe.²³⁸⁶ The Western Europeans feared the organization, especially the powers the agreement granted the Director General and the Central Committee. Thus they were quite happy to accept an UNRRA Council resolution whereby countries with resources would pay for their own

²³⁸⁶ For details of who received what and a contemporary explanation of events, see Nathan Brodsky, "Some Aspects of International Relief," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 62, no. 4 (August 1948): 596-609. See also Woodbridge, *UNRRA*.

postwar relief without assistance from the new organization.²³⁸⁷ But the countries of Eastern Europe, as well as China, did not have the resources to take this route. For the United States, these facts had ironic consequences. While Washington pumped enormous sums via UNRRA into areas that would fall into the communist camp, Western Europe, which would become a bulwark for the policy of containment, exhausted its exchange resources paying for its immediate relief and reconstruction needs. This fact threatened the economic recovery of Western Europe, an essential prerequisite for the new policy towards the Soviet Union. The result was the Marshall Plan.²³⁸⁸

A parallel set of factors shaped the outcome in Latin America. Many countries in the region worried that they would be excluded from the peace table, or treated poorly at the end of the war. These fears were especially pronounced among countries that had not declared war, a decision pushed over on them by the United States: military officials had

²³⁸⁷ For a humorous description of the French attitude towards UNRRA assistance, see Andrew J. Williams, "'Reconstruction' Before the Marshall Plan," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 3 (July 2005): 555. For information on the resolution and a favorable account of the contributions issue, see Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, Vol. 1, 104-143.

²³⁸⁸ For an interpretation of the Marshall Plan that places the balance of payments crisis front and center, see Alan Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51* (New York: Routledge, 1987). Oddly, none of the scholarship on the Marshall Plans gives much attention to UNRRA. See especially John Gimbel, *The Origins of the Marshall Plan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976); Michael Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: American, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For a more recent example, see Greg Behrman, *The Most Noble Adventure: The Marshall Plan and How America Helped Rebuild Europe* (New York: Free Press, 2008). As far as I can tell, only one work considers the economic implications of UNRRA worthy of serious study. Its authors write that they "hope to examine its effects [on speeding up the reconstruction process] in future work." However, they say nothing of its strategic implications. See J. Bradford DeLong and Barry Eichengreen, "The Marshall Plan: History's Most Successful Structural Adjustment Programme," in Rüdiger Dornbusch, Wilhelm Nöling, and Richard Layard, eds., *Postwar Economic Reconstruction and Lessons for the East Today* (Cambridge MA: M.I.T. Press, 1983), 189-203. Another recent work also underscores the idea that the Marshall Plan should be viewed as part of a larger continuum that began much earlier than 1945. See Williams, "'Reconstruction' Before the Marshall Plan."

expressed concern that they would be unable to defend the long coastline of south America if it were to come under attack. Thus Colombia tried to use the relief agreement to eliminate the juridical distinctions that existed between those countries that had declared war and those that had not. They sent a memorandum to six Latin countries in the same category, seeking to forge cooperation in the face of what most of them considered an American threat. But disunity and dependence on the United States guaranteed that the entire effort would fail. Indeed a conglomeration of similar factors brought the entire Hemisphere into fold.

If the Latin American Governments feared the United States, they worried of external and internal challenges as well. Consequently, they maneuvered to obtain assurances, weaponry, or economic support from the United States; this was deemed necessary for protection against potential aggression from their neighbors or internal insurrection. Often intrastate conflicts went back to the nineteenth century, as was the case with Chile, Peru and Bolivia; often these disputes simmered over from the previous decade, as was the case with Bolivia and Paraguay in the Chaos War. Sometimes these disputes were outright petty: words on a postage stamp almost brought Haiti and the Dominican Republic to blows. In need of American support, these nations, especially the smaller ones, had little reason to evoke the wrath of Washington by either opposing the relief scheme or conniving with Colombia. While Chile sought to frustrate American efforts, the country's size and resources permitted this behavior to a degree unimaginable for one of the smaller countries in Central America. Yet even Santiago knew it would ultimately have to go the American way.

In all of this something larger was at play. These countries had endured the American hand since the threat of global war emerged in the 1930s. Washington worried about military threats to the hemisphere, Axis exploitation of the region's economic resources, and other forms of subversive or anti-American activity. The Roosevelt Administration therefore turned to the Pan-American system to secure cooperation in managing these matters, but more importantly, it employed stick and carrot on a bilateral basis to secure collaboration and resolve the wartime problems of the hemisphere. It ultimately angered and disappointed most every country in the region, especially when the aid suddenly dissipated after threats to the hemisphere abated. Thus by 1943, the Good Neighbor Policy was in tatters. Yet the United States still touted the Hemisphere as a model for the world, which was ironic to begin with: few places in Latin America knew the Four Freedoms; repressive dictatorships propped up by Washington abounded; the entire region lived under the microscope of American surveillance.

By analyzing why Europe and Latin America responded to the relief agreement as they did, we see the degree to which the United Nations was a façade to conceal deep fissures on both continents. Competing interests, circumstances peculiar to each country, and age-old rivalries fractured both the old and the new worlds. Ultimately the source of wartime unity was a common threat and American power. But when the objectives of the United States encountered opposition, officials in Washington were more than happy to watch as regional conflicts shattered all hope of opposing or speaking to the United States in one voice. Indeed Washington saw no need to intervene in these disputes if they were limited and remained below the radar of what could be seen.

Yet these circumstances did not mean Washington could ignore the complaints of Europe and Latin America. The legitimacy of the organization depended on America's ability to convince them of its merits. Thus while making modest changes to appease those who complained about the Central Committee and the Director General, State Department officials explained the UNRRA agreement as an international extension of the American constitutional system of governance. The Council, they repeatedly told delegations at Washington, would operate like the American Congress. Its regional and technical committees would function like the powerful committees of Congress. In this way, they suggested that every country would not only have an important voice, but would have the chance to shape policy as well.

The State Department undercut its message by seeking to avoid the treaty-making procedures required of the American constitution. It sought to push the UNRRA agreement through Congress as an executive agreement. A trend long in the making but clearly on the rise during the Roosevelt years, this procedure set the stage for all but one of the postwar international organizations. While the constitutionality of executive agreements can be defended in many cases, its use here remains suspect. Congress would vote on enabling legislation, which suggested the agreement should have been considered a treaty: historically executive agreements had been reserved for instances in which the President did not need additional powers from Congress to sign and implement an agreement. Oddly, the vote took place *after* the President had signed the agreement, which contradicted the legislation's purpose: to give the President the power to sign and implement the agreement. More striking, the procedures for determining contributions to

the organization did not emanate from the specific member states, but by a vote of the UNRRA Council, a procedure that also suggested the agreement constituted a treaty.

But it was a ruse designed to meet unusual circumstances. The procedure allowed angry members of Congress to save face before their constituents. Senator Vandenberg could boast of the great changes he had secured in the agreement, but they amounted to very little. He and other members of Congress confronted a *fait accompli*; they had little choice but to support the endeavor. The Administration's public relations campaign increasingly left Congress vulnerable to the charge that it would threaten the entire postwar peace if it obstructed the organization's creation. Furthermore, the United States could not significantly alter the agreement without forcing the State Department to renegotiate portions of the text, or giving the impression that the United States was less committed to the endeavor than it claimed. Otherwise it might compromise the country's ability to secure resources from the rest of the world.

The Director General, like the President of the United States, would be at the center of the entire process. Herein resides a final irony. The evolving role the Americans envisioned for the individual in this position necessarily contradicted the theoretical underpinnings of the American constitutional system: the separation of powers. Just as Roosevelt attacked and then used the Great Depression and later the war to reduce the checks on his power, American officials cited postwar expectations of chaos, threats of revolution, and the need to act rapidly to justify powers of a similar if not broader scale for the Director General. This position was nothing less than an extension into the world

of what Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. called the imperial presidency.²³⁸⁹ He was to be an agent of America's aspirations, a sort of global arm. In thinking of him, and how the institution he led came about, we can understand why UNRRA symbolizes a movement away from what the United States once was, and we can know more of how America and its relations with the world changed in the process. The emergency that led to this transformation at home and abroad would not end, and has not to this day.

²³⁸⁹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Imperial Presidency* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973). But on the relationship between Roosevelt and the DG see especially "Memorandum for the President," by Samuel Rosenman, October 1, 1943, Folder UNRRA, Box 17, Rosenman Papers, FDRL. It reads: "Governor Lehman is acting as Special Assistant to you and is really acting for you in the premises."

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