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STATIC OR FLUX?

Experience and the Evolution of Harry S. Truman's Decision-Making Process

AN HONORS THESIS
PRESENTED BY
JOANNA ALYSE GILLIA

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT
IN PARTIAL FUFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
HONORS IN THE MAJOR FIELD

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT
MAY 4, 2007

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Chapter I

Introduction

On August 6th, 1945 the US dropped the first of two atomic bombs on Japan, a decision that effectively terminated the Second World War. During the four months that followed former President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death in April of 1945, President Harry S. Truman and his closest adviser, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, engaged in an analysis of the available intelligence in the hopes of determining whether the atomic bomb could feasibly end the war in Japan. The analyses of Truman and Byrnes were based primarily on information obtained from the scientists who designed the bomb, members of the Interim Committee that studied the question of the bomb's use, and the reflections of various diplomats and ambassadors with intimate knowledge of Japanese culture and intentions. By and large, Truman's senior advisers and the atomic scientists, with the exception of Byrnes, assessed that the bomb's use would not be necessary to end the fighting in Japan. Instead, they calculated that altering the terms of surrender to include a stipulation allowing the Emperor to retain his throne would also stop the fighting. In spite of this analysis, Truman and Byrnes made the assessment that ending the war in Japan was contingent upon the successful deployment of the atomic bomb over the Japanese homeland.

Almost a year and a half later, on March 12th 1947, President Truman delivered the "Truman Doctrine" to Congress, emphasizing the urgent need for economic aid to protect Greece and Turkey from the "totalitarian" advances of the Soviets. The Truman Doctrine, though hastily produced subsequent to Britain's withdrawal of financial support to Greece and Turkey on February 21st 1947, was the product of almost a year and a half of debate and speculation amongst Truman and his advisers. Ultimately, Truman's speech was effective, and two months later on May 15th Congress approved a bill that appropriated aid to both Greece and Turkey.

Three months later on June 5th, 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall stood in front of a crowd of thousands at Harvard's annual commencement ceremony elucidating his vision for a "comprehensive" aid program to Europe, a program that would later become known as the Marshall Plan. This plan dictated that the Europeans would assume the "initiative" and responsibility for planning the aid program. Over the next four months Marshall and his advisers would remain at arm's length, merely observing and offering limited advice to the European planning Commission as the European nations worked together to devise a comprehensive program of aid. However, in September 1947, Marshall suddenly altered the policy of minimal US engagement in the planning stages. Specifically, he advised the US delegates to wrest some of the "planning initiative" from the Europeans in order to facilitate

the formulation of a recovery plan that would be workable and acceptable to the US Congress and public.

Rationality and Foreign Policy Making

As a thorough analysis of the above case studies reveals, rational decision-making is frequently an elusive and intangible goal. Most individuals do not have the cognitive ability to make rational decisions, especially when faced with obstacles such as time constraints, emergent political and military disasters, and conflicting belief systems. In essence, everyday pressures and the hectic nature of the decision-making environment limit rationality.

The purpose of studying the Truman administration's approach to foreign policy decision-making in the aforementioned case studies is threefold. On the first and most general level, foreign policy decisions are worthy of analysis when another set of decision makers, faced with the same situation and given access to identical intelligence, would have chosen a different policy alternative.[1] For example, after the attacks on Pearl Harbor President Roosevelt's only feasible policy alternative was to enter World War II. It is safe to say that any other set of decision makers would have made a similar assessment in that situation, calculating that any action short of a declaration of war would have signaled the US's weakness to vital actors in the international arena. However, in the cases I will be analyzing, including the decision to drop

[1] Alex Roberto Hybel and Justin Matthew Kaufman. *The Bush Administrations and Saddam Hussein: Deciding on Conflict*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3.

the atomic bomb, design the Truman Doctrine, and formulate the Marshall Plan, alternative courses of action were available and could have very well been chosen by another set of decision makers.

The more specific purpose of the study is to identify if, and how, Truman and his advisers deviated from the "ideal rational choice model" when they made the decisions to drop the atomic bomb, deliver the Truman Doctrine, and formulate the Marshall Plan. In pursuit of this goal I set forth a series of inter-related questions in order to elucidate if, how, why and when deviation from the rational process occurred. For each case study I address and answer the following questions:

1) What role, if any, did President Roosevelt's foreign policy legacy play in shaping Truman and his administration's decisions in each case?

2) What was the role of Truman's advisers in the decision-making process? How did they present information to Truman?

3) Did Truman and his advisers engage in a thorough analysis of alternatives to their chosen course of action? Were they cognizant of the risks and problems associated with their preferred policy alternatives?

4) How did aspects of Truman and his advisers' personalities and belief systems affect the decision-making process?

Initially, I hoped to be able to discern and apply a comprehensive theory of decision-making, which would explain the actions of the lead decision makers in all three case studies. However, this final goal was not fully realized, given the fluctuating membership of the decision-making group. Moreover, it was further impaired by the virtual disappearance of President Truman from the decision-making apparatus, especially in the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan Cases.

As I continued to analyze Truman's decision-making process, taking note of Truman's withdrawal from the decision-making body, I began to ask myself, are decision-making processes really static? In laymen's terms, do decision makers learn from their previous foreign policy blunders and successes? Thus, the second purpose of this study soon became to map out and then analyze the evolution of President Harry S. Truman's decisions in the hope of ascertaining if and how Truman's experiences as president altered his decision-making process. Specifically this study asks, and tries to answer the question: Does experience change how presidents choose their advisers and interact with their core decision-making body? Likewise, does gaining valuable

decision-making experience foster the development of rationality, or is the decision maker a perpetual victim of the same cognitive impediments to rationality?

Theoretical Framework: Theories of Foreign Policy Decision-Making

In order to effectively answer the aforementioned questions a working knowledge of the alternate theories of foreign policy decision-making is necessary. The theories to be presented strive to explain how rationality in foreign policy-making is often impeded by the actions and conceptions of the individual decision maker and the entire decision-making body.

The earliest studies of the dynamics of decision-making were based on microeconomic models. They assumed that decision makers were rational when identifying and defining problems and assessing the costs and benefits of various alternatives. The authors of these studies assumed that decision makers did not allow their own personal biases, or previous experiences to dictate their decisions.[2] Moreover, these early scholars emphasized that the rational decision-making was a multi-step and multifaceted operation.

For decision-makers to be rational they have to perform a series of inter-related and simultaneous tasks. First, the decision-maker has to be able to define the problem, and determine how, if at all, the problem impacts the interested parties. To perform the first function, the rational decision-maker

[2] Hybel and Kaufman, 9-10

must have access to reliable information, while concurrently remaining cognizant of her own personal interests. Second, the decision-maker must have a series of isolated goals, which are ranked in order from most to least important. The next step in this rational calculus is to formulate viable policy alternatives, weigh the costs and benefits of these alternatives against each other, and then select that policy alternative that is not only most likely to succeed, but also maximizes the identified goals. This entire process is often complicated by the fact that decisions are made over an extended period. Thus, the rational decision-maker must be able to constantly re-evaluate the problem, and adjust their conceptions to fluctuating circumstances. [3]

After attempting to explicate a variety of foreign policy decisions using the rational choice model, a number of scholars of decision-making argued that the model was an ideal to aspire to, not an attainable reality. Following this contention, a new generation of scholars derived a series of explanatory theories that sought to identify and explain the "hurdles to rationality" faced by both individual decision-makers and groups.

One group of scholars began by focusing on the impediments or "hurdles to rationality" faced by the president's primary decision-making body. Typically, a president's decision-making body consists of advisers whom the president has handpicked to keep him informed about all matters of foreign

[3] Hybel and Kaufman, 10-11

and domestic policy, assess troublesome situations, and help him form coherent and well thought out policy alternatives. Thus the president's decision-making process is to a significant extent dictated by the quality, openness and competence of his most trusted advisers.

Under specific circumstances the functioning of this decision-making group can be paralyzed by a phenomenon known as groupthink. Scholars have defined groupthink as "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action."[4] In short, a decision-making body pervaded by groupthink will often formulate, favor and reject alternatives based on the personal biases of the dominant decision-makers. Likewise, the presence of groupthink tends to stifle dissent against the dominant decision makers' "favored" plan. In the end, groupthink causes decision-makers to "ignore the risks behind their preferred choice, fail to reappraise alternatives and neglect to work out a contingency plan."[5]

Individual decision-makers are also confronted by impediments to rationality. One group of theorists argues that individual decision-makers are limited by the variables of time and energy. Given these limitations, the decision-maker cannot possibly absorb all the information needed to make a

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[4] Hybel and Kaufman, 13; see also Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 9.

perfectly rational decision. As a result of these limitations, schema theorists purport that decision-makers utilize familiar analogies to ascertain the significance and scope of a new and unfamiliar problem. By using a familiar analogy the decision-maker drastically reduces the amount of time and energy spent on defining the problem and producing viable alternatives. The decision-maker, operating in the framework of a familiar problem set, will attempt to solve the new problem with the same "standard operating procedures" utilized in the earlier case. This method of reasoning, though sometimes successful, can backfire if the new problem is not entirely analogous to the old one, thus necessitating the employment of a different set of standard operating procedures.

Alternately, other theorists explain the actions of decision-makers by asserting that all human beings have a set of core beliefs and values that they utilize to order the seemingly random world around them. Essentially, "human beings…are driven to shape an unwieldy, contradictory world into a coherent ideological construct that simplifies the nature of problems and gives concrete meaning and explanation to seemingly random stimuli…"[6] As a result, decision-makers unconsciously attempt to keep their core beliefs and values consistent when they define a problem and derive possible policy alternatives.

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[5] Hybel and Kaufman, 13

[6] Hybel and Kaufman, 14

Recent theorists have approached the study of cognitive impediments to rationality with a more comprehensive set of theories. The starting point for these theorists was the classic "compensatory" theory of decision-making. Much like the rational choice theorists, compensatory theorists argue that when decision-makers derive policy alternatives, they give values to each of the alternatives dimensions, and then choose the alternative whose overall score is the highest. Examples of dimensions that a decision maker may consider include the political or military benefits of an alternative. Thus, "a particular alternative—for example the use of force—may score low on the political dimension…but such an alternative could be adopted if it scored high on the military dimension."

More recent research indicates that decision-makers do not engage in a compensatory process. Instead, decision-makers are more likely to perform what has become known as a non-compensatory process. Essentially, non-compensatory theorists postulate that "foreign policymakers, instead of comparing both the positive and negative aspects of a number of viable options, stress the positive factor of its favored policy and the negative elements of other alternatives."[7] In essence, decision-makers systematically negate viable alternatives while simultaneously supporting their preferred courses of action.

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[7] Hybel and Kaufman, 15; See also Alex Mintz, "The Decision to Attack Iraq: A Noncompensatory Theory of Decision-making," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 37, no. 4, (December 1993), 598.

Structure of the Study

In order to achieve the aforementioned goals, I have divided this study into eight separate chapters. In the first chapter I briefly introduce the three cases, define the purposes of the study and then give a brief explanation of the most relevant foreign policy decision-making theories.

In chapters two and three I examine the Truman administration's decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan. Specifically, in chapter two I give a detailed account of the information and intelligence available to Truman and his advisers regarding the destructive power of the bomb, its probable effect on the international balance of power, the intentions of the Japanese, and the bomb's relevance to relations with the Soviet Union. The analysis of this account, which appears in chapter three, reveals that Truman's Secretary of State James F. Byrnes dominated the decision-making apparatus in both the individual and group settings. Ultimately, Byrnes' dominance made Truman virtually impervious to the chorus of advisers and atomic scientists who were against utilizing the atomic bomb on Japan.

I discuss the decision to formulate the Truman Doctrine in chapters four and five. In chapter four I present a thorough analysis of the intelligence that Truman and his top advisers received with regards to Soviet or "totalitarian" subjugation in Greece and Turkey. In particular, I focus on the reports and assessments of the American ambassadors to Greece and Turkey,

both of whom emphasize the deteriorating economic and political environments in their respective host countries. Then, in chapter five I analyze the decision to provide aid to Greece and Turkey, and to do so in such a public statement in front of Congress. I contend that the aid program, though warranted given the dire economic positions of these countries, was not devised through an entirely rational process. Specifically, Truman and Byrnes, though cognizant of the impending economic collapse as early as 1946, were not proactive in mitigating it, given their rigid adherence to the policies of their predecessor, former president Franklin D. Roosevelt. However, I argue that rationality was not totally absent from the process, given Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson's ability to systematically assess the alternatives to, and risks associated with his preferred policy.

Throughout chapters six and seven I analyze the Marshall Plan decision. Chapter six describes the decision-making process of the plan's chief formulator, Secretary of State George Marshall. It is divided into three sections, which is indicative of the three disparate planning stages. In the first section, I describe how Marshall and the administration originally defined the problem, and drafted the speech presenting the plan and its rationale. In the second part, I summarize the difficulties that the Europeans encountered at the planning conference for European Recovery in Paris, during the summer of 1947. The final section highlights the importance of the American diplomat's analyses of

the results of the Paris conference, analyses that ultimately spearheaded Marshall's decision to give some of the planning initiative back to the US.

In chapter seven I analyze and discuss how Marshall made the decisions to publicly proclaim at Harvard his support for a comprehensive European recovery program, give most of the initiative for its planning to the European's and then later revoke that initiative and assign it to the US delegates in Paris. My analysis reveals that Marshall was able to do what few decision-makers do. That is, he carefully and methodically assessed both the risks and benefits of alternative policies while simultaneously weighing the advice of all of his advisers. More importantly, however, Marshall was able to revisit and reassess the problem and reorient his plan when his advisers ascertained that a program based on "European Initiative" would not engender the results hoped.

Finally, in chapter eight, I track the changes in Truman's decision-making process, using the three separate cases and analyses to come to specific conclusions about Truman's individual evolution as a decision-maker. Specifically, I highlight how Truman's involvement in the main decision-making environment diminished substantially from the first to the final case, to the point where Truman was barely, if at all, involved with the Marshall Plan decision. Concurrently, I point out how the quality and "rationality" of Truman's closest advisers improved markedly with each successive decision, thus facilitating the formulation of carefully designed foreign policies.

CHAPTER II

Dropping the Bomb

Introduction

During April, 1945, things were going well for Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration and the US. The economy was booming, and most importantly, the Second World War, which had been raging for almost four years, was coming to a close in Europe. Roosevelt and his administration predicted that soon Germany would have to surrender unconditionally.[8] Additionally, relations amongst the members of the Allied forces, though slightly strained between the US and Soviet Union because of disagreements over the post-war status of Poland, were relatively stable. This relative stability allowed the Allied forces, with the US at the forefront of the operation, to begin to refocus their energies on quickly ending the long and drawn out conflict in Japan. In fact, Roosevelt was particularly confident in the abilities of the Allied powers to put an end to the fighting in Japan, given the ongoing development of a new weapon that would, according to Roosevelt's Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, "be the most terrible weapon ever known in human history... [and] could destroy a whole city."[9]

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[8] Martin J. Sherwin. The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War: U.S. Atomic-Energy Policy and Diplomacy, 1941-1945. *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 78, No.4. (Oct., 1973), 945-968.

[9] Barton J. Bernstein. "Roosevelt, Truman, and the Atomic Bomb, 1941-1945: A Reinterpretation." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.90, No.1. (Spring, 1975), 36.

During his tenure as president Roosevelt had formed a relatively coherent set of policies in pursuit of victory in Germany and Japan. In 1941, Roosevelt, in conjunction with Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill, initiated a top-secret project, code named the Manhattan Project. The Manhattan Project, known previously as S-1, was directed by General Leslie Groves and sought to harness the power of the atom to create a weapon that if utilized would end the war on the European and\or Japanese fronts. From the beginning of the project Roosevelt, his policy makers and his advisers assumed that the weapon, if it could be developed, would be used to defeat Germany and Japan. Thus, by 1943, the bomb was viewed by Roosevelt and Churchill as an essential diplomatic tool, which could be used "to shape his post war policies."[10]

From the project's earliest phases, Roosevelt understood the importance of creating policies to govern this new technology. The first policy that Roosevelt considered, which was supported by the scientists working on the project, involved placing international controls on atomic energy. From the outset of the project scientists like Niels Bohr literally pleaded with Roosevelt to consider the international and long-term effects of using the new weapon. He pointed out that after the atomic weapon was used the world system would be drastically altered. Further, Bohr predicted that if Roosevelt informed the

[10] Martin J. Sherwin, 946.

Soviets of the atomic weapon before it was utilized then the world system, post drop, would be regulated by some international atomic commission, and thus, a nuclear arms race *could be* avoided. Alternately, Bohr believed that a nuclear arms race would ensue if the weapon was used without Soviet notification, and "that post war Soviet-American relations would be hopelessly embittered."[11]

On the other hand, Churchill was in favor of an Anglo-American monopoly of atomic power, which would be used to counter the post-war ambitions of other states. Roosevelt, a clear proponent of "Big Power Domination" was inclined to agree with Churchill's position. Ultimately, by September, 1944 Roosevelt solidified his commitment to Churchill's policy with the Hyde Park Agreement. Essentially, Hyde Park indicated the US and Britain's refusal to proactively establish international controls on atomic energy; it established a collaborative effort between the US and Britain to control atomic energy even after the defeat of the Japanese; and it pledged to use the bomb against Japan in order to achieve a decisive victory in the Pacific.[12] Most importantly, the agreement excluded the Soviets from obtaining any intelligence about the bomb until a much later date.

By April, 1945, the project to construct an atomic bomb was almost complete and had progressed to the point where the use of bomb was perceived as forthcoming. During the last months of his life Roosevelt

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[11] Barton J. Bernstein, 27-28.

expressed his desire to use the weapon against Japan, stating that "It might perhaps, after mature consideration, be used against the Japanese, who should be warned that this bombardment will be repeated until they surrender."[13]

However, Roosevelt left very few written clues as to his exact intentions and often neglected to inform his closest advisers of his thought process. At points, Roosevelt was so secretive about the project that even his closest advisers were unaware of the discussions and agreements he made with Churchill, including Hyde Park.[14] Roosevelt's secrecy and lack of a mapped out path with regard to atomic energy would inevitably come back to haunt members of Roosevelt's administration when on April 12th, 1945, the unthinkable happened; President Roosevelt suddenly collapsed, dead on the spot form a cerebral hemorrhage.

Changing of the Guards: Harry S. Truman Assumes the Presidency

The death of Roosevelt after 12 years in the White House came as a complete shock to both the American public and government. The unexpected nature of Roosevelt's death meant that Vice President Harry S. Truman had not been prepared for his duties as president.[15] In fact, Roosevelt had never shared

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[12] Martin J. Sherwin, 959.

[13] David McCullough. *Truman.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 379.

[14] Martin J. Sherwin, 960.

[15] David McCullough, 345.

information concerning foreign policy and top secret projects with some of his closest advisers, let alone his Vice President. Thus, Truman, an inexperienced politician when it came to matters of foreign policy, was thrust into a political environment that would have intimidated even the most experienced politician. Within hours of assuming his new role as president Truman was barraged with a myriad of classified information concerning his upcoming duties as Commander and Chief. Included in these briefings was intelligence concerning the top-secret Manhattan Project, or the project to create the first atomic bomb.

The sheer momentum of the events leading up to the use of the atomic bomb was exhausting for Truman and all the members of the administration. In reality, the decision to drop the bomb was made in less than four months from the day that Truman was actually informed of the project. Records indicate that when Truman made his first address to Congress, on April 16th, just four days after Roosevelt's death, Truman was not fully aware of the enormity of the project. Still, in his address to Congress Truman pledged to carry on the policies of his predecessor, including policies mandating unconditional surrender from the German's and the Japanese. Truman emphasized that "Our demand has been and it remains—unconditional surrender. We will not traffic with the breakers of the peace on the terms of peace."[16]

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[16] Gar Alperovitz, The *Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of an American Myth*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 39.

Trouble with the Soviets

One of Truman's immediate tasks was to maintain peaceful relations with the Soviets. Beginning April 25th, the US hosted a United Nations (UN) conference in San Francisco. An April 2nd memo to Roosevelt (later provided to Truman) from the US Ambassador to the Soviet Union William Harriman, took note of the rift that had already begun to form between the US and the Soviets. Harriman was particularly concerned about this rift, as he estimated that "Russia will emerge from the present conflict as by far the strongest nation in Europe and Asia…in the easily foreseeable future Russia may well outrank the United States."[17]

On April 23rd the Soviet Ambassador to the US, V. Molotov, stopped in Washington D.C. to have a private discussion with Truman. Prior to the meeting Stimson informed Truman that it would be beneficial to take a hard-line with Soviets.[18] Truman, unaccustomed to dealing with the Soviets, or any foreign diplomat for that matter, was "anxious to appear decisive," and in control of the situation.[19] Ultimately, Truman's "decisiveness" came off as rudeness, and only widened the gap between the US and Soviet interests.

Despite the tensions produced by Truman's meeting with Molotov a breakthrough in Soviet-US relations occurred. On April 24th, the Soviets

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[17] David McCullough, 372.

[18] Martin Sherwin, 962.

[19] Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Volume One, Years of Decisions*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 243.

informed Japan they would not renew their Neutrality Pact.[20] This move was significant as it signaled the Soviets recommitment to aid the US in a conventional invasion of the Japanese homeland. As early as April 15th the Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin had stated his intention to aid the US in a military campaign in Japan approximately three months after victory in Europe was achieved.

However, American officials, such as the Joint Staff Planners were not sure how they felt about allowing the Soviets to enter the war. In fact, the Joint Staff Planners cautioned the Joint Chiefs of Staff that "If Russia enters the war, her forces will probably be the first into Manchuria…This will raise the question of introducing at least token U.S. forces in Asia."[21] Thus, Soviet aid in Japan, though beneficial as far as casualties were concerned, might result in the Soviets gaining territory in Asia, and thus the deployment of additional US forces to that region as well.

Truman Tackles Foreign Policy

Meanwhile, Truman was attempting to become knowledgeable about the intricacies of US domestic and foreign policy. On April 23rd, James Byrnes, Truman's future Secretary of State, gave Truman a brief introduction to the atomic bomb, noting that the possession and possible use of such a powerful weapon would put the US in a position to dictate its own terms at the end of

[20] Gar Alperovitz, 113-117.

the war. [22] Just two days later, on April 25th, Stimson, accompanied by Groves, met with Truman and presented him with a memo about the atomic bomb. Stimson's memo highlighted that "Within four months we shall, in all probability have completed the most terrible weapon ever known in human history, one bomb of which could destroy a whole city."[23] Henceforth, the primary purpose of the meeting was to brief Truman on the problems associated with the creation of the bomb, including: a potential arms race, the need to establish international controls, and the possibility of an atomic war.[24] Stimson explained that the bomb would not only change the nature of civilization, but the way in which wars were conducted. However, Stimson insisted that the use of the atomic bomb would bring the campaign in the Pacific to a swift conclusion with fewer US casualties.

During the briefing Truman inquired as to what Roosevelt had thought about using the bomb to end the war in Japan. At the time Roosevelt's only available commentary regarding the bombs use on Japan was recorded in the Hyde Park agreement. The agreement merely expressed Roosevelt's desire to utilize the weapon to draw the war to its conclusion. At the culmination of the meeting Stimson suggested that an Interim Committee be assembled to

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[21] Gar Alperovitz, 175.

[22] Harry S. Truman, 87.

[23] Henry Stimson's 4\25\45 Memo to the President on the "Political Aspects of the S-1 Performance." Available at: http://www.doug-long.com/index.htm

[24] Martin J. Sherwin, 963.

consider the possible "implications of this new force."[25] The committee would be responsible for:

> Recommending action to the Executive and Legislative branches of our government when secrecy is no longer in full effect. The committee would also recommend the actions to be taken by the War Department prior to that time in anticipation of the postwar problems.[26]

By May 1st, Truman had already approved the creation of the Interim Committee, and Stimson began to handpick its members.

Events in early May confirmed that Japan was becoming concerned about the burgeoning US-Soviet alliance. As early as May 2nd the US intercepted sets of communiqués from the Japanese Army Vice Chief of Staff Kawabe to his military attaches in Sweden and Portugal. The communiqués revealed Japan's unease about the possible effects that Soviet entry into the war would have on Japan's forces. In one particular communiqué, which was made available to Truman and his advisers, Kawabe stated that "Russia's anti-Japanese attitude has clearly become more vigorous since her recent action with respect to the Neutrality Pact…we must view with alarm the possibility of future military activity against Japan."[27]

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[25] Harry S. Truman, 87.

[26] 5/1/45 Stimson Diary entry, Available at: http://www.doug-long.com/stimson2.htm

[27] Gar Alperovitz, 119.

A Shift in Concentration

The May 8th, 1945 Allied victory on the European front allowed for a rapid shift in concentration to the war still raging in Japan. Truman's first act following the German's surrender was to deliver a speech clarifying the terms of 'unconditional surrender' for the Japanese. In his speech, Truman expressed:

> Just what does unconditional surrender of the armed forces mean for the Japanese people? It means the end of the war. It means the termination of the influence of the military leaders who have brought Japan to the present brink of disaster…Unconditional surrender does not mean the extermination or enslavement of the Japanese people.[28]

Truman's speech was of particular importance to members of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) and military leaders who believed that clarifying the meaning of "unconditional surrender" could elicit an earlier surrender from Japan. The JIC was not the only party concerned about the use of the term "unconditional surrender." In fact, on May 12th Truman received a memo from OSS Chief William J. Donovan advising that the terms of surrender should be modified to assure the retention of Japan's sacred Imperial Institution. Donovan wrote:

> One of the few provisions the Japanese would insist upon would be the retention of the Emperor as the only safeguard against Japan's conversion to Communism… Undersecretary of State Grew…the best US authority on Japan, shares this opinion.[29]

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[28] Gar Alperovitz, 39.

[29] Gar Alperovitz, 42-43.

With the conflict on the European front resolved, Stimson and Truman could now refocus their energies on reviewing plans to bring the campaign in the Pacific to a close. Stimson, in a May 16th meeting with Truman and the Joint Chiefs continuously emphasized "the need for speed in the Pacific." At this point, the atomic bomb was not yet finished, thus necessitating the formulation of alternate plans. By May the Joint Chiefs had already drawn up an invasion plan for Japan, which they viewed as "adequate for the defeat of Japan without such a sacrifice of American lives…"[30] The military plans for invasion, known as "Operation Olympic" called for a two phase invasion. The first phase would take place on November 1st, 1945 and would consist of an amphibious landing on the shores of Kyushu by the 6th Army under General Walter Krueger. Four months later a second, larger invasion would be launched on the Kanto Plains near Tokyo. The Generals estimated that they could "bring Japan to her knees" by late fall.[31]

Records indicate that many of the Generals held onto the hope that the casualties resulting from this invasion might be low, and that the battle would be short. An April 29th memo issued by the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff was the catalyst for such hope. The memo emphasized that increasing:

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[30] Harry S. Truman, 235 and 236.

[31] Harry S. Truman, 416.

> Numbers of informed Japanese, both military and civilian, already realize the inevitability of absolute defeat…the collapse of Germany (with its implications regarding redeployment) should make this realization widespread within the year…The entry of the U.S.S.R into the war would, together with the foregoing factors, convince most Japanese at once of the inevitability of complete defeat.[32]

After reading this memo, the Generals hoped that the Japanese, facing mounting pressures from all sides, would surrender in an expedient manner.

The Interim Committee is Assembled

Another matter of importance during this time period was the establishment of Stimson's Interim Committee, which would meet and discuss issues related to the use and future of atomic power. The Committee was chaired by Stimson and consisted of prominent members of the political, scientific and military communities. Members included Stimson's assistant George Harrison, the Assistant Secretary of State William L. Clayton and the Undersecretary of the Navy Ralph Bard. James Byrnes, though still a private citizen, was appointed by Truman to be Truman's personal representative on the committee. Essentially, Byrnes was chosen "by the president to make a study of this project on which some 2 billion dollars had already been spent…Byrnes, seemed to be favorably impressed with the possibilities of this new explosive."[33] The Committee also included prominent scientists who had worked on the bomb's development such as: Dr. James B. Conant, Chairman,

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[32] Gar Alperovitz, 113.

[33] Gar Alperovitz, 214.

National Defense Research Committee; Dr. Vannevar Bush, Director, Office of Scientific Research and Development; Dr. Karl Compton, Chief, Office of Field Service and Office of Scientific Research and Development; and Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, the head of the atomic lab in Los Alamos. General Groves and the US Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall were not permanent members, but attended many of the Committee's meetings.[34]

The purpose and scope of the Interim Committee's work has been contested over the years. Originally, scholars and historians believed that the Interim Committee was established as a forum to discuss whether or not the bomb should be used on Japan. However, access to secret documents revealed that there was not a significant exploration of that topic. In reality, the Committee was established to consider the implications that would arise *when* the weapon was used. Still, the Committee did engage in occasional discussions regarding alternatives to direct atomic use. At the May 9th meeting, Stimson outlined the objectives of the Committee:

> Appointed by the secretary with the approval of the president, the Committee was established to study and report on the entire problem of temporary war-time controls and later publicity, and to survey and make recommendations on post- war research, development, and control, and on legislation necessary for these purposes."[35]

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[34] Robert A. Strong, Decisions *and Dilemmas: Case Studies in Presidential Foreign Policy Making,* (New Jersey: Englewood Press, 1992), 2.

[35] **Robert A. Strong, ??????**

Many members of the Committee, including Groves confirm this analysis, asserting that the "story of the Interim Committee having any influence on the decision to use the atomic bomb…is just plain bunk." Bard and the other members of the Committee had a similar "impression that the Committee approved a decision that had already been made."[36] That is, the Interim Committee, though free to make suggestions about *how* to use the bombs, acted under the assumption that the bomb would be used.

The Soviet Problem

In early May Truman's administration was still exploring alternatives to the atomic bomb, which might cause Japan to surrender. On May 10th and 12th Truman's administrators considered the prospect of a joint US-Soviet invasion of Japan. At a meeting of the top Navy officials Harriman made it clear that he thought pursuing Soviet aid in the fight against Japan might mean the collapse of China into the Soviet's Communist sphere of influence. Harriman assessed that "Russian influence would move in quickly and toward ultimate domination…the two or three hundred millions in that country would march when the Kremlin ordered."[37]

Meanwhile, the Interim Committee was still discussing the atomic bomb. The Interim Committee's second meeting on May 14th progressed similarly to the first, with the discussion focused on the prospects of developing

[36] Gar Alperovitz, 167 and 164.

an international control system for atomic power. Despite the narrowness of the Committee's stated objectives, it did briefly address the subject of Soviet entry into the war. In a separate meeting with Marshall, Stimson would convey that that the atomic bomb might be a solution for the US's diplomatic problems with the Soviets. Stimson recorded:

> The time now and the method now to deal with Russia was to keep our mouths shut and let our actions speak for words. The Russians will understand them better than anything else. It is a case where we have got to regain the lead and perhaps do it in a pretty rough and realistic way.[38]

Stimson recognized that the bomb would be instrumental in obtaining two inter-related goals: controlling Soviet behavior in Poland and Manchuria, and maintaining US dominance in the post-war international system.

Discussions surrounding the Soviets continued on May 15th in a Committee consisting of Stimson, Grew, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, Harriman, and Major Mathias Correa Special Assistant to the Sec. of the Navy. Throughout the meeting Stimson expressed his concern about the Soviets. He was particularly troubled by the fact that Truman was scheduled to meet in Potsdam with the "Big Three," (Truman, Stalin and Churchill) as early as July 1st to discuss important issues such the political future of Europe, and the occupation of Germany.

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[37] Gar Alperovitz, 176.

[38] Gar Alperovitz, 156.

Essentially, Stimson ascertained that the successful test of the atomic bomb would be a valuable asset in the manipulation of the Soviets at Potsdam. For Stimson it seemed to be "a terrible thing to gamble with such big stakes in diplomacy without having your master card in your hand."[39] The only solution that Stimson could muster was convincing Harriman to delay his trip back to the Soviet Union until some other plan was worked out.

Second Thoughts: Politicians, Scientists and the Atomic Bomb

While the Interim Committee was discussing the future implications of atomic power, the scientists who had worked on the project were having second thoughts. Particularly, O.C. Brewster, a scientist who had worked on the isotope separation project was having reservations about using the bomb and chose to voice his concerns in a May 24th letter to Stimson. Brewster believed that "the idea of the destruction of civilization" by the atomic bomb was "not melodramatic hysteria or crackpot raving. It is a very real, and I submit, almost inevitable result."[40] Essentially, Brewster advised that the atomic project be abandoned. If this was not possible, he recommended the demonstration of one bomb on Japan to elicit surrender, and then the cessation of all production of nuclear material. Brewster related that "As horrible as it may seem. I know it would be better to take greater casualties now in the conquering of Japan then to bring upon the tragedy of unrestrained,

[39] Stimson Diary, 5/15/45, Available at: http://www.doug-long.com/stimson3.htm

competitive production of this material." [41] After receiving the document, Stimson promptly forwarded it to Marshall, requesting that he review the document before the Interim Committee meeting on May 31st.

Truman remained busy during the month of May, meeting with various government officials in an attempt to develop a coherent strategy to end the war in the Pacific. On May 28th Truman met with former president Herbert Hoover to discuss the end of the war in Japan. The meeting, though not officially recorded, produced a memo that was widely circulated among Truman's administrators and advisers. In the memo Hoover insisted that Japan could be convinced to surrender without using the atomic bomb. According to Hoover, Japan's surrender was imminent because of a few inter-related factors: The appointment of a former anti-militarist Prime Minister, Suzuki; Japan's desire to preserve Mikado as the spiritual head of the nation; the fear of complete destruction; and the large middle class in Japan, who are liberal-minded and exert pressure to form a stable government. [42]

Later that afternoon Truman would have a similar discussion with Grew. Grew, a man known for his long and dedicated service to as an ambassador to Japan for 10 years was knowledgeable about their government

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[40] David McCullough, 391.

[41] David McCullough, 391.

[42] Gar Alperovitz, 44.

and culture. [43] During the meeting Grew advised Truman to abandon Roosevelt's policy of unconditional surrender in Japan by allowing the emperor to retain his status as head of state. Grew pointed out that:

> …the Japanese are a fanatical people and are capable of fighting to the last ditch and the last man. If they do this, the cost in American lives will be unpredictable. The greatest obstacle to unconditional surrender by the Japanese is their belief that this would entail the destruction or permanent removal of the Emperor and the institution of the Throne. If some indication can now be given the Japanese that they themselves…will be permitted to determine their own future political structure, they will be afforded a method of saving face without which surrender will be highly unlikely.[44]

Truman, after listening to Grew requested that he draft a formal memo on the subject and then arrange for a meeting with the Secretaries of War, Navy, and General Marshall. Grew, later reflecting on this meeting, would leave with the general impression that Truman agreed with his assessment and suggestions.[45]

Politicians, former scientists and military advisers were not the only ones reformulating many of their conceptions. On May 28th three of the scientists from Chicago's Metallurgical Lab traveled to Washington to meet with Truman. Leo Szilard, one of the primary precipitators of this meeting, had been concerned about the implications of developing an atomic weapon for some time. Initially, Szilard had scheduled a meeting to speak with Roosevelt

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[43] Harold F. Gosnell, *Truman's Crises: A Political Biography of Harry S. Truman*, (London, Greenwood Press), 42.

[44] Gar Alperovitz, 45

[45] Gar Alperovitz 46.

about his concerns, as he believed that the use of "the atomic bomb would precipitate a race in the production of these devices between the United States and Russia."[46] Szilard felt strongly that the future of US and Soviet relations would be marred by the use of such a weapon. He predicted that the continuation of the war in Japan was far less threatening than the possibility of a breakdown in relations between the US and the Soviets.

For Szilard and his colleagues, meeting directly with Truman to discuss their concerns was their number one priority. Yet, when they arrived in D.C. they were redirected to South Carolina, where they met with James Byrnes, then a mere private citizen. At their meeting with Byrnes, Szilard voiced his objections to using the bomb against Japan without prior warning. Szilard related that "the psychological advantages of avoiding the use of the bombs against Japan and, instead, of staging a demonstration of the atomic bombs," would be a better alternative to the unquestioned and unregulated direct use of the bomb.[47] A demonstration, insisted Szilard, might enable the US to avoid a catastrophic collision between US and Soviet interests and the precipitation of a nuclear arms race..[48]

Byrnes, citing two rationales, refuted Szilard's suggestions. First, he stated that the sheer expense of the project warranted that the weapon be used

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[46] Robert A. Strong, 4.

[47] Gar Alperovitz, 186.

[48] David McCullough, 396.

in a combat setting. He reasoned that if the bomb was not utilized, then procuring money for future atomic research would be impossible. Also, Byrnes strongly believed that the US's possession of atomic energy would not damage relations with the Soviets. On the contrary, Byrnes asserted that "American possession of enormously destructive weapons would make the Soviets more cooperative in the disputes about Poland and Eastern Europe

The following day, on May 29th, a group of high level officials met to discuss Grew's May 28th proposal to alter the surrender terms for Japan. The group consisted of Grew, Stimson, Forrestal, McCloy, General Marshall, Director of OWI Elmer Davis, Counsel to the President, Judge Samuel Rosenmann, and Eugene Dooman from the Department of State. By the meetings culmination those in attendance agreed that such an alteration to the terms of surrender should occur, but not immediately. Stimson captured this sentiment, noting:

> I told him (Grew) that I was inclined to agree with giving the Japanese a modification of the unconditional surrender formula…I told him that I thought the timing was wrong and that this was not the time to do it. After a discussion a round the table I was backed up by Marshall and then by everybody else.[49]

There is some speculation as to whether Stimson and Truman delayed modifying the surrender terms because of the atomic bomb. In his *Memoirs* Truman indicates that he wanted to inform the Japanese of the altered

surrender terms at the upcoming Potsdam Convention in July because it would "demonstrate Allied unity." Yet, there is evidence indicating that Truman and Stimson were concerned with another overriding factor: the successful test of the first atomic bomb. Truman estimated that if the bomb worked it could be used as diplomatic leverage with the Japanese. If the bomb did not work, Truman believed that he would need to sell the Japanese on the altered surrender terms in order to avoid a massive invasion and the subsequent loss of American lives.[50]

At the culmination of the May 29th meeting, Stimson, Marshall and McCloy remained in order to talk more openly about the atomic bomb project. A memo entitled "Objectives toward Japan and methods of concluding war with minimum casualties," was composed for Truman after the meeting. According to them memo, the three agreed that the alteration of surrender terms should not take place until a later date. Stimson then questioned Marshall as to when and if the atomic bomb could be used, in lieu of traditional incendiary bombs, against the Japanese. Marshall stated that he was a clear proponent of initially utilizing the bomb against military objectives, or large naval installations in Japan. If the first attacks did not render a sufficient

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[49] Gar Alperovitz, 50.

[50] Harry S. Truman, 417.

reaction, Marshall proposed that others be dropped on manufacturing centers, but only after the Japanese citizens had been sufficiently warned.[51]

May 29th was also a day of regrouping for Szilard and his group of scientists, who had met with Byrnes on the afternoon of the 28th. The three scientists returned from South Carolina to the Chicago lab intent on persevering in their endeavor to stop the use of the atomic bomb. By this time, research in Chicago was winding down, and many other Chicago scientists had time to ponder the implications of this new weapon.[52] Now, the scientists were beginning to develop moral qualms about using a weapon of such great destructive force against Japan. At this point, James Franck, another Chicago scientist, decided to draft a report in conjunction with Szilard objecting to the use of the atomic bomb on Japan.

On June 11th the "Franck Report" prepared by Franck, Szilard and their Chicago Metallurgical Lab colleagues, was presented to officials in D.C. In the report the scientists requested that there be an international demonstration of the bomb before its use on Japan, and preferably, that the bomb not be used on Japan at all.[53] The scientists rationalized that such a demonstration would achieve a variety of ends including: fostering the development of an

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[51] **Memorandum of Conversation with Marshall May 29, 1945 - 11:45 a.m.**
Present: Secretary of War

[52] Robert A. Strong, 4.

[53] Robert A. Strong, 4.

international control system on atomic energy and weapons; coercing Japan to surrender sooner; and possibly giving atomic use justification if surrender was not achieved.

Additionally, in the report the scientists consistently emphasized that an "arms race" would ensue between the US and the SU if the bomb was used. More specifically, the scientists insisted that chaos and insecurity would govern U.S.-Soviet relations in the years to come if the bomb was utilized without prior explanation or warning to the Soviets.[54] Originally, the Franck Report was meant for Stimson, Byrnes and other high ranking politicians. Instead, bureaucratic boundaries necessitated that it be left with a petty staff officer.

The scientists, though unable to impress government officials, continued to voice their opinions. During July, 69 of the Chicago scientists signed a petition insisting that President Truman to clarify the terms of surrender, and wait for a response from the Japanese before authorizing the use of the bomb.[55] Specifically, the petition requested that Truman carefully consider the moral implications of the bombs use. Also, it requested that the bomb only be used if the surrender terms were altered and then subsequently rejected by Japan's diplomats. Szilard, the initial proponent of the petition, attempted to procure the signatures of scientists from the Manhattan Project's headquarters; however, the petition was not well received. Similarly, the

[54] Robert A. Strong, 5.

circulation of the petition at another lab, Oak Ridge, though successful in procuring 88 signatures, was eventually stopped by Grove's staff.

Leslie Groves, reacting to the efforts of the scientists, created a survey to counteract the petition. Groves' survey, the Farrington-Daniels survey, questioned the Chicago scientists as to "which of the following five procedures comes closest to your choice as to the way in which any new weapons that we may develop should be used in the Japanese war." [56] Of the 150 scientists polled, 46%, or 69 favored the option that entailed giving a military demonstration in Japan, which would be followed by an opportunity to surrender. If the Japanese did not surrender at this juncture, the bomb should be used. Compton, who was in charge of survey's distribution was struck by the fact that 87% of the scientists polled favored options where the weapon would be used only after other non-military means were exhausted. On July 19th Compton, sent the results of the Farrington-Daniels survey, as well as Szilard's survey to Groves for consideration. The results took six days to reach Grove's office, where Groves held them until August 1st until he sent them to D.C. Thus, by the time Truman received the data he was already back from the Potsdam Convention and had issued the orders to drop the bombs.[57]

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[55] Gar Alperovitz, 191.

[56] Gar Alperovitz 189-190

[57] Gar Alperovitz, 190-191

While many of the scientists in Chicago were vehemently opposed to atomic use, the scientists in Los Alamos were still unsure. On June 16th the scientists at Los Alamos met to discuss the suggestions contained in the Franck Report. The scientists in attendance included Compton, Lawrence, Oppenheimer and Fermi. Ultimately, they concluded that a 'demonstration blast' would not be feasible because there were only three atomic weapons in existence, one of which needed to be used as a "tester" in July. Moreover, the panel assessed that if the international demonstration failed it might provoke the Japanese to fight harder. In the end, the scientists did release a fairly clear statement supporting atomic use, noting "We can propose no technical demonstration likely to bring an end to the war; we see no acceptable alternative to direct military use."[58]

The statement, though seemingly indicative of a consensus among the scientists, was later qualified by Compton in a memo to Grove's Deputy Kenneth D. Nichols on July 24th. Compton wrote that despite the earlier report of a consensus, "There was not sufficient agreement among the members of the panel to unite upon a statement as how or under what conditions such use was to be made."[59] Still, in the end this statement of support from the scientific community in Los Alamos over rode the earlier dissent, and sent the project hurtling toward its culmination.

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[58] Gar Alperovitz, 188

The Interim Committee Makes a Decision

While the scientists in Chicago were working to halt the use of the bomb, many of their colleagues were attending the final Interim sessions on May 31st and June 1st. The central focus of the discussion on both days was how, when and where to use the weapon in Japan, while concurrently influencing the Soviets. Oppenheimer insisted that when choosing targets the Committee should consider that "the visual effect of a bombing would be tremendous. It would be accompanied by a brilliant luminescence which would rise to a height of 10,000 to 20,000 feet. The neutron effect would be dangerous to life for a radius of at least two-thirds of a mile."[60] For Oppenheimer, the psychological implications of such a blast would be the primary catalyst for Japanese surrender, while concurrently impressing the Soviets.

Oppenheimer, in conjunction with Marshall also suggested that the Soviets be informed of the bombs existence, and perhaps, be allowed to have two scientists witness the first explosion. Byrnes, upon hearing this suggestion intervened, noting that such a demonstration would be inadvisable. Specifically, Byrnes believed that "if information were given to the Russians, even in general terms, Stalin would ask to be brought into a partnership. He felt this to be

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[59] Gar Alperovitz, 189.

[60] Robert A. Strong, 19.

particularly likely in view of our commitments and pledges of cooperation with the British." [61]

By the culmination of the meeting it was decided that the Committee would recommend that the bomb be used as soon as possible. The Committee reasoned that the bomb would achieve dual aims: it would be instrumental in procuring the Japan's surrender and controlling the Soviets. The Soviets, because of Byrne insistence, would not be allowed to witness a test of the weapon. By the end of the meeting:

> Mr. Byrnes expressed the view… that the most desirable program would be to push ahead as fast as possible in production and research to make certain that we stay ahead and at the same time make every effort to better our political relations with Russia.[62]

At the conclusion of the meeting the minutes were assembled into a memo for President Truman. The memo included recommendations that were generally agreed upon. First, that the bomb should be dropped on Japan without warning and second, that it should be dropped on a vital war plant in order to make a "profound psychological impression." [63] The memo to Truman neglected to mention Oppenheimer's concern about the "neutron effect," probably because "in May 1945, no one fully knew what the first nuclear weapon would be like."[64] Truman's reaction when he read the document was

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[61] Gar Alperovitz, 171.

[62] Gar Alperovitz 158.

[63] Robert Strong, 20.

[64] Robert Strong, 3.

one of reluctant agreement. According to Byrnes, Truman "had to agree that he could think of no other alternative" to dropping the bomb on Japan.[65] Thus by June 1st the plan to go ahead with the atomic bombing of the Japan was solidified by the recommendations of the Interim Committee and the scientific panel, and the sentiments of Truman himself.

A Policy Shift

The release of the Interim Committee's final recommendations regarding the atomic bomb directly coincided with a major shift in Truman's policy. Recall, that on May 8th, Truman's speech subtly declared America's willingness to allow the Japanese to retain the Imperial Institution if they surrendered. Yet, on June 1st Truman reversed this policy in a speech, stating that the Japanese:

> "Hope that our desire to see our soldiers and sailors home again and the temptation to return to the comforts and profits of peace will force us to settle for some compromise short of unconditional surrender. They should know better…We are resolute in our determination—we will see the fight through to a complete and victorious finish."[66]

A pivotal meeting took place on June 6th between Stimson, General Marshall and President Truman to further discuss the conclusions reached by the Interim committee. Prior to the briefing, Truman indicated that he had been able to postpone the Conference of the "Big Three" to July in order to

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[65] David McCullough, 391.

[66] Gar Alperovitz, 52.

"give us more time." Though there is no record of what Truman needed more time for, scholars speculate that Truman wanted to allot the scientists more time to test the atomic bomb, in order to use it as leverage in negotiations with the Soviets at the upcoming Potsdam meeting. Statements made by Oppenheimer, support this contention. Upon reflecting about the months leading up to the bombing Oppenheimer noted, "we were under incredible pressure to get it done [the atomic bomb] before the Potsdam meeting…" [67] Moreover, an entry from Stimson's diary reconfirms this hypothesis, indicating that he wanted to postpone the conference because "it seems a terrible thing to gamble with such big stake in diplomacy without having the master card in our hands."[68]

Alternatives Revisited

Truman, in spite of agreeing with the Interim Committee's Assessments, still continued to hear other alternatives. On June 18th the president, the Joint Chiefs, and other high ranking officials met to discuss Operation Olympic, or the plan for conventional invasion of the Japanese homeland. Prior to the meeting Truman had instructed Admiral William Leahy to inform all of the military leaders that:

> "It is the President's intention to make his decisions on the campaign with the purpose of economizing to the maximum extent possible in

[67] Gar Alperovitz, 146 and 148.

[68] Gar Alperovitz, 178.

> the loss of American lives. Economy in the use of time and in money cost is comparatively unimportant."[69]

This statement shocked Truman's military advisers, who up until this point had not made plans based solely on minimizing American casualties. For many of the military officials Truman's statement was counterintuitive, especially since the preliminary plans for invasion had already been drawn up and approved as of May 25th.

The primary topic of discussion on the 18th included the military, diplomatic and political issues surrounding the campaign in the Pacific. Truman emphasized that he still approved of the military plan set forth in May by the Joint Chiefs, but he also "still hoped for some fruitful accomplishment through other means."[70] Stimson concurred, as he believed that an invasion of the Japanese homeland would be considered heinous by most Japanese citizens, thus provoking fierce fighting. Stimson stated: "there was a large submerged class in Japan who do not favor the present war and whose full opinion and influence had never yet been felt…He felt that this submerged class would fight and fight tenaciously if attacked on their own ground."[71] For this reason, Stimson was also pushing to consider alternatives to direct invasion.

Throughout the course of the discussion the Joint Chiefs emphasized that an invasion of the Japanese homeland would involve a high human cost,

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[69]Gar Alperovitz, 63.

[70] Gar Alperovitz, 65.

with as many as 31,000 American causalities.[72] General Marshall pointed out that a reduction in American casualties could be achieved if the commitment of Soviet ground troops was secured. Marshall believed that "the impact of Russian entry on the already hopeless Japanese may well be the decisive action levering them into capitulation at that time or shortly thereafter if we land in Japan."[73]

Despite Marshall's reassurances, the plans they had drawn up earlier for the two phase operation were worrisome to the Generals. Military leaders were still hurting from the losses they had sustained about Okinawa and Iwo Jima. In Iwo Jima the military had lost more American soldiers than on D-Day. More recently, the campaign in Okinawa had killed at least 12,000 soldiers thus far, and left 36,000 wounded. The Japanese too, had suffered incredible losses of about 110,000 men, or roughly equivalent to 1/3 of the islands population, yet they were not giving up.

Japan's determination and their ability to sustain massive casualties without remorse worried the US Generals. The Japanese, with the use of their Kamikaze warriors, and their lack of reaction to the devastating firebombing raids that had killed at least 100,000 citizens in Tokyo, had illustrated that they would fight to the death. An attack on the Japanese mainland, asserted the

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[71]Gar Alperovitz, 64.

[72] Gar Alperovitz, 518.

[73] Gar Alperovitz, 123.

Generals, would be far more devastating, and elicit a much more unforgiving reaction from its citizens. General Marshall insisted that the Generals "regarded the matter of dropping the bomb as exceedingly important…we had to end the war, we had to save American lives."[74]

Even with the approval of the invasion plans, military officials were still open to alternative means of surrender. At the June 18th meeting Admiral Leahy made it obvious that he thought a change in surrender terms could eliminate the necessity for invasion, and perhaps dropping the bomb. Leahy, in accordance with Stimson's perceptions stated:

> He could not agree with those who said to him that unless we obtained the unconditional surrender of the Japanese that we will have lost the war. He feared no menace from Japan in the foreseeable future, even if we were unsuccessful in forcing unconditional surrender. What he did fear was that our insistence on unconditional surrender would result in making the Japanese desperate and thereby increase our casualty lists.[75]

Like many advisers before him, Leahy predicted that an actual attack on the Japanese mainland would be extremely costly. Forrestal shared a similar opinion, noting "our determination to stick to the unconditional surrender position would possibly produce the result that every living person in Japan would prefer to die fighting rather than accept military defeat."[76]

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[74] David McCullough, 395.

[75] Gar Alperovitz, 65.

[76] Gar Alperovitz, 65.

By the culmination of the meeting the plans for the invasion of Kyushu in November of 1945 were solidified. Truman, however, was unwilling to definitively commit himself to one course of action. In fact, Truman "said he considered the Kyushu plan all right from the military standpoint and, so far as he was concerned the Joint Chiefs of Staff could go ahead with it; that we can do this operation and then decide as to the final action later."[77]

At the culmination of the meeting, McCloy engaged in a private discussion with Truman. Essentially, McCloy believed that the US needed to consider taking diplomatic action in Japan before initiating an all out invasion or dropping the bombs. He suggested that the US open diplomatic channels with the Japanese and delineate exactly the terms of surrender. These terms were that the US will allow Japan to continue to be a nation, choose their own form of government, retain the Imperial Institution, and control their own borders. McCloy stated:

> *I do think you've got an alternative*; and I think its an alternative that ought to be explored and that, really, we ought to have our heads examined if we don't explore some other method by which we can terminate this war than just by another conventional attack and landing.[78]

Truman's reaction to these statements was that he too, had considered taking a similar route, and that McCloy should bring his proposal to James Byrnes. Later that day, when McCloy presented his argument to Byrnes, Byrnes

[77] Gar Alperovitz, 66; author added italics.

replied that "he would have to oppose my proposal because it appeared to him that it might be considered a weakness on our part."[79]

The following afternoon, on June 19th, Truman's cabinet members reconvened to discuss the previous day's meeting. The high level officials such as Stimson, Grew and Forrestal were all in agreement that a clarification of surrender terms, which would guarantee the preservation of Japan's imperial institution, might eliminate the need for the bombs and the invasion. The consensus on this matter was widespread amongst officials such as Forrestal, Grew, Stimson, Leahy, and Admiral Nimitz. Stimson's diary entry for that day revealed:

> There was a pretty strong feeling that it would be deplorable if we have to go through the military program with all its stubborn fighting to a finish. We agreed that it is necessary to plan and prepare to go through, but it became very evident today in the discussion that we all feel that some way should be found of inducing Japan to yield without a fight to the finish…[80]

As part of the extended effort to change the attack procedures, Bard and Grew issued a resolution requesting that other viable alternatives to the bomb be *seriously* considered. The resolution, which was composed on June 26th and 27th, reached Truman and Byrnes on July 2nd. In the resolution, Bard insisted that there should be at least two or three days of warning before the atomic bomb was used on Japan, in order to maintain "the position of the

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[78] Gar Alperovitz, 62.

[79] Gar Alperovitz, 70.

United States as a great humanitarian nation..."[81] Additionally, Bard and Grew determined that the way to achieve peace without invasion or the use of the bomb was to "eliminate the serious single obstacle to Japanese unconditional surrender, namely, concern over the fate of the throne." [82]

On July 2nd, Stimson presented a similar argument to Truman via a memo that had been drafted by McCloy. Essentially, Stimson and McCloy asserted that defeating the Japanese with "conventional" methods would be markedly more difficult than it was in Germany. Victory for the Allied forces would come, but it would come at a higher monetary and human cost than initially calculated. Specifically, Stimson highlighted that "the attempt to exterminate her armies and her population by gunfire or other means will tend to produce a fusion of race solidity and antipathy which had no analogy in the case of Germany." [83] Stimson, in alignment with Grew and Bard's statement, insisted that the US give Japan a very detailed warning regarding the use of atomic weapons and their ability to destroy the "Japanese race and nation" in the hopes that it would elicit a premature surrender. Stimson's memo also reconfirmed Grews' suggestion that allowing the emperor to retain his status would be instrumental in achieving an expedient Allied victory. Essentially,

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[80] Gar Alperovitz ,74 and 75.

[81] Robert A. Strong 7; see also Gar Alperovitz 224 and Memorandum on the use of S-1 bomb, Ralph A. Bard, June 27 1945.

[82] Gar Alperovitz, 76.

[83] Gar Alperovitz ,77.

Stimson, standing on the cusp of the release of the most destructive power ever known to man, began to deviate from the hard-line approach set forth by the Roosevelt administration, which demanded that nothing less than unconditional surrender be accepted from the Japanese.

Stimson had the distinct impression that the president was impressed with his memo, and "his attitude was apparently very well satisfied with the way in which the subjects were presented and he was apparently acquiescent with my attitude towards the treatment of Japan and pronounced my paper a powerful paper." [84] Yet, Truman, in conjunction with Byrnes:

> Chose not to clarify the surrender terms during this period…he continued to hold to this policy even though by the third week of June all of the president's official advisers—his chief of staff, the secretary of war, the secretary of the navy…, the acting secretary of state, the Joint Chiefs of Staff—favored some form ofclarification.[85]

After receiving these various opinions Truman recorded in his diary his obvious dilemma; he was faced with the impossible, yet inevitable decision of whether he should invade, bomb, blockade, or use another alternative approach to coerce the Japanese to surrender.[86]

The Road to Potsdam

At 2:45 pm on July 3rd, Stimson held one of his last meetings with Truman prior to Truman's departure for Potsdam. Much of the meeting

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[84] Gar Alperovitz, 78.

[85] Gar Alperovitz, 304.

[86] David McCullough, 400.

centered around how Truman should handle Stalin in Potsdam. Truman had never met Stalin, and had little experience with foreign diplomats. His situation was further complicated by the existence of the atomic bomb. Earlier in May, the Interim Committee had suggested and Truman had approved of not informing Stalin about the bomb until it was utilized on Japan. However, as of June 21st, the Interim Committee members had decided to alter that stipulation. Regarding the bomb, Stimson advised Truman to tell Stalin:

> We were busy with this thing working like the dickens…and we intended to use it against the enemy, Japan; that if it was satisfactory we proposed to then talk it over with Stalin afterwards, with the purpose of having it make the world peaceful and safe rather than to destroy civilization. If he pressed for details and facts, Truman was simply to tell him that we were not yet prepared to give them.[87]

On July 7th Truman, accompanied by Byrnes, began his trip to Potsdam to meet with the Soviet and British leaders. Stimson and McCloy traveled separately to the meeting because they were not invited to accompany the president and Byrnes on their ship, the *Augusta*.[88]

The Potsdam Conference, which began on July 15th, was a forum in which the leaders of the Big Three could discuss the political future of Europe, the occupation and dismantling of Germany, and whether or not the Soviets would commit to helping defeat the Japanese in a conventional military invasion. Initially, Truman's primary goal had been to reconfirm that the

[87] Stimson Diary, 7/3/45, Available at: http://www.doug-long.com/stimson6.htm

Soviets would provide aid in the invasion of Japan. Estimates from the Joint Chiefs had stipulated that Soviet aid was necessary in order to minimize US casualties. A July 8th memo that Truman received from the JIC further articulated the importance of obtaining Soviet commitment, as "an entry of the Soviet Union into the war would finally convince the Japanese of the inevitability of complete defeat."[89]

However, key events began to unfold between the Soviets and the Japanese while Truman and Byrnes were en-route to Potsdam. On July 12th, the Japanese Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Naotoke Sato, received a secret and urgent radio message from the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Togo. The message contained orders from Tokyo to begin discussions with the Soviets about ending the war. According to Togo, the emperor was disturbed by the number of citizens perishing in incendiary raids and was ready to look for a peaceful solution. The message read:

> His majesty's hearts desire is to see the swift termination of this war...so long as England and the United States insists upon unconditional surrender the Japanese Empire has no alternative but to fight on with all its strength for the honor and the existence of the Motherland.

Grew immediately forwarded the message to Truman and Byrnes, accentuating that "if the President, either individually or jointly with other, now

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[88] Gar Alperovitz, 234.

[89] Gar Alperovitz, 227.

conveys the impression that unconditional surrender may not be as bad as they had first believed, the door may well be opened to an early surrender. This of course is guesswork but it seems to be sound guesswork."[90]

Grew, though decidedly optimistic about the cable, was countered by more cautious responders, like Forrestal. Forrestal was more hesitant to accept the cable given Japan's history of sending out "peace feelers" through Switzerland, Portugal and the Vatican, and then not acting on them. Yet, on July 13th Forrestal cited the message as the "first real evidence of a Japanese desire to get out of the war…." [91] Like Grew, Forrestal believed that procuring a surrender would only be possible if the terms were changed to allow the retention of the Imperial Institution.

Stimson and McCloy were also informed of the telegram's contents and seemed relatively excited about its implications. Earlier, McCloy and Stimson had been advocates of giving advanced warning to the Japanese while changing the terms of unconditional surrender. Now, they were even more steadfast in that opinion and worked to make it known to Truman throughout his trip to Potsdam.[92]

A series of important events began to unfold in the US, while the conference progressed in Europe. The first event, which took place on July 16th

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[90] Gar Alperovitz 232 and 233.

[91] Gar Alperovitz, 233 and 234.

[92] Gar Alperovitz, 238.

in Alamogordo, New Mexico, was the successful explosion of the first atomic bomb. Prior to the test a group of scientists formed a betting pool, placing bets on what the destructive capacity of the bomb would be. Every single scientist guessed too low.[93] According to scientific measurements the explosion's force was equivalent to the force of an explosion caused by 20,000 tons of TNT. The largest bomb ever used during WWII was equivalent to a "mere" 10 tons of TNT.

Government officials had hoped that the bomb would make a profound psychological impact, and they got what they hoped for. The flash at Alamogordo was visible for 250 miles and the sound from the explosion could be heard from at least 100 miles away. The destruction caused by the bomb was unprecedented. The tower that the bomb was held in was vaporized, and another steel tower half a mile away had collapsed and been mangled. The so called "neutron effect" that Dr. Oppenheimer had warned about was realized in full when weeks later, radiation was detected at least 120 miles from the site of the explosion.[94] The scientists, in awe of what they had created, immediately sent the message of the successful trial to Potsdam. The first notification of the bombs success was sent directly to Stimson, and was received on the evening of July 16th. The message from was brief, and stated "operated on this morning.

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[93] Robert A. Strong, 3.

[94] Robert A. Strong, 8.

Diagnosis not yet complete, but results seem satisfactory and already exceed expectations…Dr. Groves pleased."[95]

That same evening, Truman also received a memo that had been authored by Stimson and McCloy while en route to Potsdam. The memo stated:

> It seems to me that we are at the psychological moment to commence our warnings to Japan….the great marshalling of our new air and land forces in the combat area in the midst of the ever greater blows she is receiving…is bound provoke thought even among their military leaders."

In light of these developments, Stimson and McCloy proposed that the U.S. formulate a warning to the Japanese, which would be drafted during the conference. According to Stimson and McCloy the warning should be a "double warning." That is, if at first the Japanese did not surrender, the U.S. would offer them another chance before utilizing the bomb. Ultimately, Stimson and McCloy's suggestions were discarded by Truman, because of Byrnes's objections to issuing any warning to Japan regarding the bomb.[96]

On the afternoon of July 17th at 1:00 pm, just 21 hours and 30 minutes after the first atomic bomb was successfully tested, Truman was scheduled to meet with Josef Stalin for the first time.[97] The July 17th meeting with Stalin went better than Truman and his advisers expected. In fact, Truman was fond of

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[95] Gar Alperovitz, 240.

[96] Gar Alperovitz, 235 and 238.

[97] Gar Alperovitz, 241.

Stalin, and believed that he was misunderstood, strong, fearless, and an expressive leader with a good judge of character. To Truman, Stalin was "honest—but smart as hell."[98]

During this first meeting Truman was able to achieve his primary objective of securing Soviet commitment to aid in the potential land invasion of Japan. Looking back on the situation scholars assert that Truman was deceived about Stalin's true nature. In actuality "Truman and Byrnes did not know the true nature of Stalin."[99] The only two officials in the American government to truly understand Stalin's actual personality were Ambassadors Harriman and Kennan, but they were not present at the conference to advise Truman, nor were they in close enough contact with Truman to warn him. Regardless, Truman viewed the meeting as a success, recording in his diary that "I've gotten what I came for—Stalin goes to war August 15th with no strings on it."[100]

Truman believed Soviet participation, or the threat of its participation would be an integral factor in eliciting Japan's surrender. Yet, the following day Truman expressed a somewhat contradictory sentiment. Truman wrote: "Japanese would fold up before Russia comes in. I am sure they will when Manhattan appears over their homeland."[101] Alternately, this statement

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[98] David McCullough, 419.

[99] Harold Gosnell, 249.

[100] Gar Alperovitz 242; see also, Harry S. Truman. *Dear Bess: the Letters from Harry to Bess Truman*, 1910-1959. ed. Robert Ferrell (new York, 1983), 519.

[101] David McCullough, 427.

indicated that Truman was at least aware of, if not excited about the prospect that Japan's surrender might be obtained through the use of the bomb, prior to a joint US-Soviet invasion.

The following day Truman received a more detailed account of the atomic bomb's first test. After receiving this report Truman met with Churchill in order to notify him of the bomb's success. Churchill had already been informed about certain aspects of the test by Stimson. Churchill's reaction the previous evening, as gauged by Stimson had been one of excitement and Churchill had been "intensely interested and greatly cheered up, but was strongly inclined against any disclosure *[to Russia about the a-bomb]*. I argued against this to some length."[102] Yet, on the 18th it appeared that Truman and Churchill were relieved that the bomb had worked, and that the coordinated and expensive efforts of British and American scientists had finally produced tangible results.

Despite the bomb's success, Churchill would continually emphasize that he thought it would be wise to alter the terms of surrender for Japan. Churchill's assessment was partially based on a July 17th cable, intercepted from Japan's Foreign Minister Togo. In the cable Togo stressed that:

> If today, when we are still maintaining our strength, the Anglo-Americans were to have regard for Japan's honor and existence they could save humanity by bringing this war to an end…If however,

[102] Stimson Diaries, 7/17/45

> they insist unrelentingly upon unconditional surrender, the Japanese are unanimous in their resolve to wage a thorough-going war.

Churchill reasoned that altering the terms of surrender would be advantageous for both sides because there would be "a tremendous cost in American life, and, to a smaller extent, in British life…involved in forcing "unconditional surrender" upon the Japanese." Truman's reaction to Churchill's position, though vague, was interpreted by Churchill as a sort of "soul searching." Essentially, Churchill believed that Truman, like other members of his administration was deeply engaged in assessment of numerous alternatives, and thus chose not to push Truman farther on the matter.[103]

Also on July 18th, Stimson held a short meeting with McCloy in order to express his frustration with his exclusion at Potsdam. In many ways, Stimson and McCloy felt that they were being left out of the major decision-making circle. Stimson expressed candidly that "we *[McCloy and Stimson]* were all troubled by the wastage of time in getting information about what is going on."[104] They were most troubled by the fact that "Informal as well as formal conferences are being held, and we have to wait until they are finished and then McCloy gets hold of some one of the State Department subordinates who has been present, finds out from him what has happened and then brings it to

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[103] Gar Alperovitz 243-44.

[104] Stimson Diary, 7/18/45 , Available at: http://www.doug-long.com/stimson7.htm

me."[105] In response to their concerns Stimson decided to "go to see Byrnes and see whether I could not get admittance for McCloy into the conferences where other Assistant Secretaries were present."[106]

Stimson was able to meet with Byrnes, the following morning on July 20th, regarding his concerns. Byrnes was somewhat accommodating and insisted that only one of them could attend the formal meetings. However, when Stimson asked Byrnes to acquire minutes of the formal meetings, Byrnes replied that there were none kept. Thus, Stimson concluded that:

> My meeting with him [Byrnes] was a rather barren one. He gives me the impression that he is hugging matters in this Conference pretty close to his bosom, and that my assistance, while generally welcome, was strictly limited in the matters in which it should be given.[107]

On July 21st, Stimson presented Truman and Byrnes with Grove's formal assessment of the first atomic test. Truman and Byrnes were "immensely pleased. The president was tremendously pepped up by it and spoke to me[Stimson] of it again and again when I saw him...He said it gave him an entirely new feeling of confidence."[108] Upon viewing the report, Truman also asked for Marshall's input. Marshall, given the information before him "no longer thought it urgent to have Soviet help."[109]

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[105] Stimson Diary, 7/18/45.

[106] Stimson Diary, 7/18/45

[107] Stimson Diary, 7/18/45

[108]Gar Alperovitz, 250.

[109] Gar Alperovitz, 496.

The same night that Truman received Groves' formal assessment, he had a meeting with Stalin. Throughout the meeting Churchill and Truman's advisers were impressed with Truman's behavior and attitude toward the Soviets. Churchill told Stimson that to him, Truman seemed like a new man. He was confident and able to assert himself in front of Stalin. In his diary entry for that day Stimson described Churchill's reaction to Truman's transformation:

> Truman was evidently much fortified by something…and that he stood up to the Russians in a most emphatic and decisive manner…when he got to the meeting after having read the report [Groves' report] he was a changed man. He told the Russians just where they got on and off and generally bossed the whole meeting.[110]

Truman's new found confidence was contagious. Churchill, after witnessing the meeting was no longer nervous about informing the Soviets about the bomb. Instead, Churchill was "rather inclined to use it as an argument in favor of negotiations."[111]

Truman continued to take the hard-line approach with the Soviets during the negotiations on July 22nd. For example, when Stalin questioned Truman about Poland and the type of government that would be established Truman essentially ignored him. Eventually, Truman told Stalin that the

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[110] Gar Alperovitz, 260.

[111] Ibid

American's were not budging, and that Poland would need to have a democratically elected government.[112]

Truman's outburst at the meeting with Stalin was not the only significant event of the day. That afternoon, potential targets for the atomic bombing of Japan were chosen. Hiroshima, a primary production center for war equipment, was the favored target. An entry in Stimson's diary for that day, regarding a meeting with Truman indicates that the bomb was now a clear factor in the decision-making process. Stimson highlighted "the US was standing firm and he was apparently relying greatly upon the info as to S-1."[113]

July 23rd and 24th were formative days for Truman and his advisers in Potsdam. As the hours progressed it became clear that both Truman and Byrnes desired to speed the conference to its culmination and return to the US. During Truman's 10 am meeting with Stimson, Truman seemed anxious obtain a definitive assessment of whether Soviet participation was still a necessity in the war. He asked Stimson to inquire further into this matter by asking for Marshall's opinion during their afternoon meeting. Marshall would later reveal to Stimson that he did not believe that the US would need the assistance of the Soviets in order to win in Japan. Yet, Marshall did caution that "even if we

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[112] Gar Alperovitz, 261.

[113] Ibid

went ahead in the war without the Russians and compelled surrender to our terms that would not prevent the Russians from marching into Manchuria."[114]

While Stimson was meeting with Marshall, Byrnes was conducting business of his own. On the morning of July 23rd Byrnes sent out a cable to the Chinese Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs T.V. Soong, suggesting that he break off negotiations for a short while with the Soviets. The cable instructed Soong "not to give way on any points to the Russians, but to return to Moscow and keep negotiating."[115] Churchill, upon hearing about this cable deduced that the US wanted to make sure that the Soviets could not negotiate on any matters until after the Japanese surrendered. In a cable to his Foreign Service secretary, Churchill notes, "It is quite clear that the US do not at the present time desire Russia's participation in the war."[116]

Other members of the administration saw the cable in a similar light. An employee in the secretary of state's office Walter Brown also believed that the cable was Byrnes' attempt to halt negotiations until the war was over. In a July 24th diary entry Brown narrates "JFB still hoping for time, believing after that atomic bomb Japan will surrender and Russia will not get in so much on the kill, thereby being in a position to press claims against China."[117] Later, in

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[114] Gar Alperovitz 270

[115] Gar Alperovitz 271

[116] Gar Alperovitz 271

[117] Gar Alperovitz 268

his 1958 manuscript, *All In One Lifetime*, Byrnes would admit that the assessments were correct. Byrnes writes that he was trying to:

> Encourage the Chinese to continue the negotiations after the Potsdam conference. I had some fear that if they did not, Stalin might immediately enter the war…on the other hand, if Stalin and Chiang were still negotiating it might delay Soviet entrance and the Japanese might surrender. The president was in accord with that view.[118]

The morning of the 24th brought an onslaught of important information to Truman. At 9:20 am Stimson provided Truman with two crucial pieces of information. The first was Marshall's assessment that the Soviets would not be needed in the invasion of Japan. The second piece was a message from D.C. stating that the bomb could be used any time after August 1st. When Truman received the message, he was clearly excited and exclaimed "that was just what he wanted, that he was delighted." [119] Just as Truman was receiving his report from Stimson, Byrnes was at his morning meeting with the Foreign Ministers. At the end of the meeting Byrnes expressed the US's desire to depart the convention as soon as possible. The desire to depart Potsdam was not just apparent in Byrnes that day. In his afternoon meeting with Stalin, Truman also made it clear that he wished to leave Potsdam as soon as possible.[120]

However, Truman could not depart without first informing Stalin of the atomic bomb. As the afternoon discussions were winding down, Truman took a

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[118] Quoted in Gar Alperovitz 274.

[119] Gar Alperovitz 262, see also Stimson's diaries

moment to privately approach Stalin and reveal to him that the US was in possession of a massively destructive weapon, which could be used against Japan to end the Pacific campaign. Much to Truman's dismay Stalin was not at all surprised by this news. Stalin calmly expressed his desire that the Americans use the weapon against the Japanese in the most expedient manner. Stalin's nonchalant reaction left Truman perplexed. How could a project and a development of this magnitude not impress the Soviet leader? It was later discovered that a Soviet Spy, Klaus Fuchs, had infiltrated the project, giving the Soviets a heads up on the development of the new "super-weapon."[121]

Potsdam Declaration and Unconditional Surrender

In reality, Truman and Byrne's restlessness in late July was not unfounded; in their eyes little was left to accomplish in Potsdam. The Potsdam declaration, an ultimatum by the Big Three to Japan was almost complete, with the exception of a few points. Fundamentally, the declaration consisted of 13 points, which the Allies insisted gave the Japanese ample opportunity to end the war. The declaration warned the Japanese that the combined land, sea and air forces of the US, and UK would be applied to the Pacific until surrender was issued. The proclamation cited the devastation caused by Allied forces in Germany as a cautionary tale illustrating the futility of resistance. Additionally,

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[120] Gar Alperovitz, 263-264.

[121] David McCullough, 442.

the declaration related that the Allied powers would occupy Japan after the surrender until the country was deemed "stable."

What the declaration did not include was a stipulation ensuring Japan that they could retain their emperor. Initially, there had been extensive deliberation over whether to abandon Roosevelt's unconditional surrender, and allow the emperor to retain his status. At one point, the Potsdam Declaration contained a stipulation that allowed the Japanese to pick their government, and thus maintain the Imperial Institution. Stimson was one of the many officials in favor of this, while Byrnes asserted that to abandon unconditional surrender after all this time was equivalent to appeasement. Yet, by July 24th it was clear that Byrnes' insistence that unconditional surrender not be abandoned was more convincing to Truman, and the stipulation guaranteeing the retention of the Imperial Institution was removed from the final document.

Similarly, the Proclamation did not contain an explicit warning about the US's possession of the atomic bomb, and their plans to utilize it on the Japanese homeland if the declaration was rejected. The only mention of a use of force was decidedly vague, stating that "the full application of our military powers…will mean the complete and inevitable destruction of the Japanese Armed forces and the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland." [122] This warning, though ominous, was not nearly as explicit as many scientists and

[122] Harry S. Truman, 391.

politicians, including Grew, Bard and Stimson, had advised. It gave the Japanese absolutely no incentive, other than the precedent set by victory in Germany, to surrender. With the document sent the Allied forces had only to wait for a reply before undertaking one of the most controversial and deadly operations of the century.

Only July 28th the US received word that the Premier of Japan rejected the Potsdam declaration. The previous day during a July 27th press conference, Premier Suzuki had read his response to the proclamation, stating:

> The government does not regard it as a thing of any great value; the government will just ignore it. We will press forward resolutely to carry the war to a successful conclusion.[123]

Japan's response warranted quick and decisive action. Immediately, the suggestions of the Interim Committee were put into motion. On July 30th, a single presidential directive was issued permitting the drop of the atomic bomb on two different cities. The infamous order read "suggestion approved. Release when ready, but no sooner than August 2nd."[124]

Truman and his advisers boarded the *Augusta* on August 2nd to head back to America. During their voyage Truman and Byrnes each received MAGIC (Marine Air\Ground Intelligence Cell) documents pertaining to Tokyo's ongoing pursuits for a diplomatic peace. The intelligence came in two parts. The first part, received on August 2nd, read "Unanimous decision of top

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[123] Gar Alperovitz, 407.

leaders in Tokyo that Japan should seek peace." The second cable, an assessment from the War Department Analysts back in the US was received on August 3rd. Their assessment emphasized the genuine nature of the Japanese communications. It stated "the Japanese Army is interested in an effort to end the war with Soviet assistance."[125]

Dropping the Bombs

The first bomb, which was dropped at 8:15 am August 6th, 1945, targeted an industrial center in Hiroshima, Japan. As expected, the blow was devastating to the human population and the surrounding infrastructure. Oppenheimer had originally predicted that 20,000 would die, which was less than in a conventional incendiary raid. It would be the "stunning" visual effect that would leave the impression on the citizens, thus eliciting the surrender. Oppenheimer was right on one count; the visual effect was literally out of this world. However, Oppenheimer greatly underestimated the loss of life that would ensue. In reality at least 200,000, not 20,000 were killed. Truman received word of the successful operation and its "stunning visual effect" around noon on August 6th.

Just days later, on August 9th, the US dropped another bomb on Nagasaki, inflicting similar devastation. Many argue that a two day interval was not enough time for the Japanese to assess the situation and damage done to

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[124] McCullough, 448.

the human population. However, Truman was not directly involved in the decision to drop the second bomb, because authorization for the second release was guaranteed under the authority granted by the first directive.[126]

The acceptance of the Potsdam Proclamation was received by the United States on August 10th, a day after the second bomb was released over Nagasaki. Upon receiving the acceptance US officials agreed to allow the emperor to retain his symbolic status, though just as a subordinate to the occupying forces, so long as the Japanese would agree to fully surrender. On August 14th this concession coupled with the massive loss of Japanese lives because of the bombs finally produced surrender from the Japanese government, effectively ending World War II.

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[125] Gar Alperovitz, 412.

Chapter III

Assessing Alternatives: An Analysis of the Decision to Drop the Bomb

Introduction

For Truman's close-knit circle of advisers the decision to use the atomic bomb, though questioned substantially during the months prior to detonation, was inevitable given the thrust of his individual advisers to reap the strategic benefits of the atomic project. The Prime Minister of England, Winston Churchill, an informed observer during this period asserted:

> The historic fact remains, and must be judged in the after time that the decision whether or not to use the atomic bomb to compel the surrender of Japan was never an issue. There was a unanimous, automatic, unquestioned agreement around the table…[127]

Here, it is important to ascertain why Truman and the advisers in his core decision-making body held fast to the conception that the atomic bomb, regardless of the other alternatives, was still the best way to end the conflict in Japan. In point of fact, during the four months leading up to the use of the atomic bombs, there were numerous alternatives available to Truman and his advisers. These alternatives included: awaiting Soviet entry into the war to speed it to its culmination; relying on a conventional invasion of the Japanese

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[126] David McCullough, 459.

[127] David McCullough. *Truman.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 442.

homeland; giving the Japanese a non-combat demonstration of the bomb while also redefining the terms of surrender to guarantee the preservation of the Imperial institution (the emperor); and finally, to pursue a diplomatic peace process with the Japanese.[128]

Until now, most scholars have proposed a unilateral rationale for the bombs use, isolating a single variable to explain the administration's decision. A more thorough analysis reveals that there were numerous factors that caused the decision-makers to perceive the use of the atomic bomb as the most desirable course of action. Ultimately, the rationale behind utilizing atomic power in lieu of other alternatives is multifaceted and deeply intertwined with the composition of Truman's core decision-making body, the quality of intelligence that was available, and the individual decision-making process of President Truman.

The Impact of the Roosevelt-Truman Transition

It was 7:09 pm on April 12th, 1945 when Truman was sworn into office during a private ceremony in the White House.[129] After the swearing in Truman was faced with his first task as president: to reorganize former President Franklin D. Roosevelt's cabinet to fit his own needs. The former president had selected his cabinet based on their competence and prior years of experience.

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[128] Barton J. Bernstein. "Roosevelt, Truman, and the Atomic Bomb, 1941-1945: A Reinterpretation." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.90, No.1. (Spring, 1975), 50.

[129] Harry S. Truman. *Memoirs: Volume One, Years of Decisions*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 8-9.

Moreover, Roosevelt's cabinet operated under the "competitive" system, which "involved giving duplicate assignments and holding many decisions in abeyance until one seemed the best."[130] In fact, Roosevelt was known for taking his time to make decisions and seriously considering all pieces of advice that came from his cabinet members. This process, though tedious, facilitated the formulation and execution of sound policy decisions.

On the other hand, Truman selected a cabinet that personally catered to his cognitive shortcomings, including his lack of education and knowledge of foreign policy. In fact, when Truman was sworn into office he had not yet met the Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, England's Prime Minister Winston Churchill, or the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union William Harriman. Truman's isolation and ignorance stemmed from a variety of sources. In particular, Truman had gaps in his foreign policy knowledge because Roosevelt "never did talk to me [Truman] confidentially about the war or about foreign affairs or what he had in mind for peace after the war."[131] Similarly, Truman had not attended college. Instead, he had been an artillery captain during World War II, fighting on the front lines with the common man.

At his very first cabinet meeting Truman made it abundantly clear that his administration would be run differently from Roosevelt's. While he would

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[130] [130] Harold F. Gosnell, *Truman's Crises: A Political Biography of Harry S. Truman*, (London, Greenwood Press), 228.

[131] David McCullough, 355.

welcome advice, the "final decisions would be his."[132] Truman was determined to choose his cabinet members on the basis of impressions and loyalty.[133] He wanted cabinet officers that would "carry out presidential decisions faithfully," and keep decision-making focused at the presidential level.[134] In other words, once Truman made a decision he did not want to be questioned. He also wanted a cabinet that was strong and that he could delegate many responsibilities to. In many ways, this hierarchical organization was reminiscent of the military, an organization that Truman had belonged to during WWI.

The composition of Truman's cabinet during the key months in which the decision to drop the bombs was made was sufficient to bridge the gap between the two administrations. The cabinet consisted of four Roosevelt holdovers and six new appointments. The holdovers included Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, and Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace. Of these holdovers Stimson was the most important. At the age of 70, Stimson was an experienced politician who had held many important government posts. Stimson, because of his experience would become one of Truman's closest advisers. However,

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[132] David McCullough, 348.

[133] Harold F. Gosnell, 218.

[134] Harold F. Gosnell , 228.

Stimson, given his old age, poor health and close proximity to retirement, was often sidelined by Truman. [135]

Truman chose to replace Roosevelt's Secretary of State Edward Stettinius with James. F. Byrnes, a personal friend of Truman's that Truman greatly admired. Byrnes, who had worked in all three branches of the government and spent seven terms in the House and the Senate, was an obvious candidate for the position. He had been a member of the Supreme Court in 1941, as well as Roosevelt's War and Mobilization Director. Truman was particularly enamored with James Byrnes, given Roosevelt's reliance on and fondness for him. In fact, Roosevelt had viewed Byrnes, unlike Truman, as an "insider" in the administration. Roosevelt's high opinion of Byrnes carried weight with Truman, because on numerous occasions Truman's advisers, especially Stimson, were impressed with Byrnes' ability to influence Truman, and at points, even reverse his thinking on an issue.[136] In fact, Byrnes increasingly became Truman's right hand man on all matters of policy, eventually surpassing Stimson's influence.[137]

Truman, in making the decision to retain many of Roosevelt's former advisers, inadvertently inherited many aspects of Roosevelt's foreign and domestic policies. The inheritance of Roosevelt's policies was only natural,

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[135] Gar Alperovitz, The *Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of an American Myth*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 195.

[136] Gar Alperovitz, 199, see also Stimson Diary, April 27 to April 29, 1945.

because Truman "depended heavily on the advisers he inherited from Franklin Roosevelt..."[138] This reliance was an inevitable necessity given the prestige of Truman's predecessor, Roosevelt, as well as Truman's ignorance regarding foreign affairs. Truman, in his first address to Congress, vowed to carry out his predecessors policies. Roosevelt's atomic policies were no exception. To some extent Roosevelt's atomic legacy was relatively clear. It assumed that the bomb was a legitimate force, which would be used in a military setting without informing the Soviets, or issuing a warning and demonstration to the Japanese. These policies had been defined clearly in the Hyde Park agreement with Churchill.

The force of Roosevelt's legacy, Truman's own ignorance, and his cast of advisers made it so Truman "was not free psychologically or politically to strike out on a clear new course."[139] Accordingly, Truman's beliefs about atomic use and alternatives to it during the months prior to the drop of the atomic bomb were dependent on the beliefs of those around him. In essence, Truman was a veritable ideological chameleon. Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace took note of the phenomena on April 25th, 1945, writing, "Truman was exceedingly eager to agree with everything I said..."[140] In the end it was

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[137] Gar Alperovitz, 200.

[138] Strong, 12.

[139] Barton J. Bernstein, 34.

[140] William E. Pemberton, *Harry S. Truman: Fair Dealer and Cold War Warrior*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 39.

Truman's inexperience, and his excessive reliance on the advice of his advisers that constrained his ability to forge a new path with regards to the use of the atomic bomb.[141]

Individual Advisers and the President: Stimson and Byrnes

Truman's reliance on and interactions with his closest advisers was paramount in shaping his final decision to utilize the bombs. In particular, the beliefs and experiences of two of the decision-making bodies' most influential members, Stimson and Byrnes, greatly affected the course and outcome of the final atomic decision. Specifically, Stimson and Byrnes, Truman's chief advisers during the months leading up the bombing, never truly reconsidered the use of the bomb in a combat situation until it was too late.

For Stimson, his inability to reconsider the bombs use in the face of a variety of alternatives stemmed partially from his commitment to the policies of Truman's prestigious predecessor, Roosevelt. Stimson's views regarding the use of the atomic bomb were nearly identical to Roosevelt's. So, when Stimson asserted that "at no time from 1941 to 1945 did I hear it suggested by the President (Roosevelt) or by any other responsible member of government that atomic energy should not be used in war," it can be assumed that his thought process ran along similar lines.[142] As a former member of the Roosevelt

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[141] Martin J. Sherwin. "The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War: U.S. Atomic-Energy Policy and Diplomacy, 1941-1945." *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 78, No.4. (Oct., 1973), 962.

[142] David McCullough, 440.

administration, Stimson was literally caught up in the momentum of a project that he had been involved with since 1941. He had been part of an administration that had viewed the bomb as a legitimate combat weapon. Imagine for a moment how hard it would have been to change a policy in just four months that had been hurtling forward for nearly three years.

Additionally, Stimson, like Roosevelt was concerned about the bomb's ability to shape the post-war environment, and to end an already costly campaign in the Pacific. For Stimson, Roosevelt, and the entire administration, ending the war in Japan as quickly as possible was of the utmost importance. They did not want another drop of American blood on their hands. Thus, Stimson's adherence to the policies of Roosevelt essentially determined the type and nature of advice that he offered to Truman in the months prior to the drop of the atomic bombs. However, of Truman's two closest advisers, Stimson was markedly less influential than Byrnes. In fact, Stimson would complain "bitterly that he was being denied access to the President—by the man who had almost total access: Byrnes."[143]

Historical records and testimonies indicate that the primary source of influence on Truman was his newly appointed Secretary of State, James Byrnes. Byrnes was able to exert such a powerful influence over Truman for numerous reasons. First, Byrnes was greatly respected by Truman. Unlike Truman,

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[143] Gar Alperovitz, 196; see also Stimson Diary, July 19th 1945.

Roosevelt had considered Byrnes an "insider," someone to be consulted when it came to making important decisions. Documented evidence indicates that this relationship was not reciprocal. Matthew Connelly, Truman's friend, adviser and secretary reported, "Mr. Truman to Mr. Byrnes, I'm afraid, was a non-entity, as Mr. Byrnes thought he had superior intelligence…Mr. Truman was completely loyal to Senator Byrnes."[144] Additionally, Byrnes was also able to influence Truman's policies because of Truman's ignorance regarding foreign affairs. Essentially, Byrnes was Truman's crutch when it came to foreign policy. Quite literally, Truman's ignorance necessitated that he rely on Byrnes until he could acquire enough experience to form opinions of his own.

The informal character of Truman and Byrnes' political interactions also strengthened Byrnes' influence on Truman. In many cases Byrnes "commonly conducted business in private meetings or on the telephone…Byrnes even invented a private stenographic note taking code."[145] Decision-making scholars purport that informal, as opposed to formalistic advisory systems, produce far less coherent and well-thought out decisions. Contrary to the informal advisory system, the formalistic requires that intelligence and policy alternatives be provided to the president by various members of his staff. This ultimately

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[144] Gar Alperovitz, 197.

[145] Gar Alperovitz, 202.

allows the president to consider multiple perspectives at once, and then, make a well-informed decision.[146]

As is often the case in informal systems, Byrnes' recommendations were valued highly by Truman, because in these types of settings "information and recommendations are given weight because of the properties of the recommender, not because of their intrinsic merit."[147] Truman's conceptions were not challenged by a panel, but instead were confirmed or nullified by an individual, Byrnes, who had a single conception of the problem. General Omar Bradley noticed this trend, writing "Many of our most important moves were decided upon at informal conference where no memoranda were kept." [148] Stimson, too, complained that the informal nature of many of the meetings at Potsdam impeded his access to Truman. Ultimately, Byrnes' policies, which reflected his desire to maintain diplomatic and military dominance over the Soviets, constituted Truman's policy preferences as well. Essentially, "Truman and the secretary of state designate, James F. Byrnes, began to think of the bomb as something of a diplomatic panacea for their postwar problems."[149]

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[146] John P. Burke and Fred I. Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1989), 6.

[147] Burke and Greenstein, 280.

[148] Gar Alperovitz, 200.

[149] Martin J. Sherwin, 965.

Groupthink and the Core Decision-Making Body

Individual members of the core decision-making body, though integral to the formulation and manipulation of the administrations policies, were not the only factors that influenced the decision-making process. The president's core decision-making body is composed of a group of advisers chosen by the president, to analyze intelligence, define the scope of problems and formulate feasible policy alternatives for the president. In an ideal decision-making body the analysis of a problem and the subsequent formulation of policy is purely rational and not tainted by personal beliefs, values or biases.[150] As we will see, aspects of the core decision-making body, including the interactions between many of the individual members and the types and quality of information that they made available to Truman influenced, and some would say, impeded Truman's ability to make an informed decision.

During the months prior to the drop of the atomic bombs Truman's advisers spoon fed him information and intelligence regarding feasible alternatives to direct atomic use. One of the most significant impediments to rationality for any decision-maker is the manner in which they decision-making body considers intelligence and then subsequently derives policy alternatives. Oftentimes advisers, because of their own personal biases or beliefs about what the decision-maker wants to hear can filter, and potentially alter intelligence,

[150] Burke and Greenstein, 5.

thus making it incomplete and often, inaccurate. This process, known officially as groupthink, is defined as "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action."[151]

From the beginning, the Interim Committee's membership almost guaranteed that it would be affected by groupthink. The Committee was headed by Stimson, a proponent of the atomic project since its inception. Thus, Stimson's established conviction that the bomb was a legitimate combat weapon helped dictate the Committee's recommendations. Ultimately, the "responsibility for the recommendation to the president rested on me (Stimson), and I have no desire to veil it. The conclusions of the Committee were similar to my own…"[152] Additionally, the Committee's prestigious and influential scientific panel consisted of scientific holdovers from the Roosevelt era. The scientists, including Robert Oppenheimer, were some of the most notorious proponents of the bombs use.

By far, the most influential and detrimental member, with regards to a sound decision-making process was Byrnes. Early on, Byrnes was assigned to be Truman's "personal representative" on the Committee. It was Byrnes'

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[151] Alex Roberto Hybel and Justin Matthew Kaufman. *The Bush Administrations and Saddam Hussein: Deciding on Conflict*. (New York: Palgarve, 2006), 14.

[152] David McCullough, 394.

presence on the Committee that ultimately locked the Committee into the conception that an alternative to direct military use of the bomb did not exist. Under the influence of Byrnes, the Committee "Far from formulating policy independently and upon due deliberation…responded for the most part to the interventions of the most important member when any significant difference of opinion arose: Byrnes spoke for the president."[153] Thus, it is not a surprise that the Committee, given its membership, recommended exactly the course of action that Roosevelt had formerly approved, and that Byrnes favored: the dropping of the bomb on military targets without warning to the Japanese. Essentially, the Interim Committee became "part of the bureaucratic strategy of a handful of American officials with a stake in the bomb…to head off opposition in the scientific community, lest the opposition succeeded in widening the range of options before the president on wartime use."[154]

Exacerbating Stimson and Byrnes' influence was the fact that members of the Interim Committee were not properly informed about political and diplomatic events, which could have feasibly altered the nature of their recommendations. Government officials, including Stimson, Marshall and Byrnes had access to information that was crucial to their decision-making process, such as the cables from Japan relating their willingness to surrender given an alteration to the surrender terms. However, this essential information

[153] Gar Alperovitz, 167.

was not made available to lower ranking, civilian and scientific members of the Committee.

Specifically, it was the scientists on the Committee who were at the greatest disadvantage with regards to the intelligence they received. Specifically, the scientists did not have formal access to intelligence regarding the intentions of the Soviets or the diplomatic advances made by the Japanese. In particular, the scientists were not aware that the Japanese were willing to surrender, as long as they could retain their emperor. Robert Oppenheimer, a scientist and temporary member of the Committee was well aware of his ignorance and noted that "we didn't know beans about the military situation in Japan. We didn't know whether they could be caused to surrender by other means..."[155]

Of particular importance is the fact that Marshall neglected to inform the Committee that, according to his educated assessment, the Japanese were close to surrendering, and could be pushed along if the terms of surrender were altered. Essentially, Marshall remained silent, because it was the military mans obligation to "follow—not buck—directions which came from the ultimate civilian authority…he advised mainly on the strictly military aspects of the problem…the basic atomic decision was not to be made by the military."[156] In this case, the ultimate civilian authority was the president, who was represented

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[154] Gar Alperovitz, 167.

[155] Gar Alperovitz, 165.

[156] Gar Alperovitz, 172

by Byrnes on the Committee. Byrnes made it clear that the weapon would be useful in the post war era to control the Soviets, and thus, Marshall, despite any personal reservations, accepted that assessment and stifled his objections during the crucial sessions of the Committee. Ultimately, the gaps in intelligence, Byrne's biased presentation of the situation, and Marshall's reluctance to voice his opinion, converged to produce a decision-making body pervaded by groupthink.

The Role of Intelligence

The accuracy and overall quality of intelligence that decision-makers receive is integral to the way in which they define a problem and then formulate viable policy alternatives. Under ideal circumstances, the decision-maker receives a complete and accurate set of intelligence to aid them in their decision-making process. However, time constraints and the quality of the intelligence collectors and providers dictates that the intelligence received by the primary decision-maker will be incomplete, inaccurate, or, in the worst case scenario, both. As we will soon ascertain, these "intelligence" failures have a negative effect on the quality of alternatives available to and chosen by the decision-maker.[157]

The first intelligence failure occurred when the heads of Truman's decision-making body failed to relay to Truman the criticism and dissent of the

[157] Hybel and Kaufman, 87-88.

scientists who had worked on the atomic project. For instance, Leo Szilard and his Chicago Lab colleagues were not permitted to speak directly with Truman about the atomic bomb and how they thought its use would negatively affect the balance of power and integrity of the world system. Instead they were re-directed to James Byrnes, then a private citizen in South Carolina.

Byrnes was not sympathetic to the views of the scientists and refused to believe that the use of the atomic bomb would cause an arms race to ensue. Instead, Byrnes, like Stimson and Roosevelt, asserted that the bomb would allow the US to gain an upper hand in negotiations with the Soviets. In the end, Byrnes was blinded by his conquest to manipulate the Soviets with the threat of atomic power. Thus, he refused to accept the scientist's educated evaluation and subsequently, did not present their dissent to Truman.[158]

Byrne's refusal to heed the warnings of Szilard and his colleagues was not the only instance where sound scientific advice was casually discarded. The top-policy maker's ignorance of the Franck Report, a document prepared by the Chicago scientists objecting to the bombs use without warning, is indicative of the government's refusal to recognize powerful scientific dissent. In fact, the Franck Report was only viewed by the scientific advisory Committee, which was staffed by the head of the Los Alamos Lab Robert Oppenheimer, Director the Chicago Lab and former Nobel laureate Edward Teller, James B. Conant,

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[158] Robert A. Strong, *Decisions and Dilemmas: Case Studies of Presidential Foreign Policy Making*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992), 5.

Enrico Fermi and E.O Lawrence. This prestigious Committee rejected the report, as they were "wary of pushing for a change in tactics if they might be held responsible for the future of those tactics."[159] Their analysis carried particular weight with Truman given the prestigious achievements of the scientists and of course, their extensive involvement in the project.

Later, the same group of policy-makers ignored and blocked the circulation of a petition to the president that called for an alteration in the way the bomb would be used. Again, the preconceptions generated by the Roosevelt administration regarding the bombs potential ability to "control" the Soviets clearly outweighed the presentation of sound advice and viable alternatives from the scientific community. Ironically, it was the scientists that created the weapon who had the most accurate conception of what the bombs capabilities were, and thus, should have been allowed to come into direct contact with Truman. Yet, it is evident that "of the main contestants for and against the use of the bomb for military purposes without warning, Truman did not hear the full case of those who were most opposed to its use."[160] Instead, important intelligence was withheld from Truman, as he was compelled to listen to his closest military adviser, Byrnes, who favored atomic use in order to speed the war to its culmination and hasten US domination of the Soviets.

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[159] Barton J. Bernstein, 38.

The Role of the President

The personality, beliefs, experiences and values of the individual decision maker also have a significant impact on any decision-making process. Decision-making scholars purport that "a president may have a personal impact on decision-making through his core personal attributes, the dispositions he brings to working with his advisers and other principal associates."[161] Not surprisingly, certain prominent aspects of Truman's personality, specifically his lack of education and his interrelated propensity to make quick knee jerk, decisions, were detrimental to his decision-making process.

Truman was extremely conscious of his lack of education and was continually forced to rely on the expertise of his advisers to acquire knowledge of current affairs. The atomic bomb decision was no different. For instance, Henry Wallace, the Secretary of Commerce during those four crucial months observed how easy it was to influence Truman. Thus, early on, many of his cabinet members had little respect for Truman's opinions, as he tended to parrot the views of the last person he had spoken with.

However, Truman strove to compensate for his obvious lack of education and knowledge by being a "decisive decision maker." Almost as a way of compensating for his lack of knowledge, Truman would emphasize that the final decision in all matters was his decision. Essentially, Truman's

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[160] Harold F. Gosnell, 254.

insecurities caused him to be obsessed with being seen as the person who "makes the final decision in all matters of major policy after they give *me* their facts and recommendations."[162]

Truman's knee jerk decision-making stood in sharp contrast to Roosevelt's thoughtful and often tediously long decision-making process. Upon assuming the presidency, Truman was quoted saying that "I am here to make decisions, and whether they prove right or wrong I am going to make them."[163] On the other hand, Roosevelt was notorious for brooding over an important decision for days in order to make the "right one," much to the irritation of his cabinet. At first, Stimson welcomed the change with Truman, noting "it was a wonderful relief to preceding conferences with our former Chief to see the promptness and snappiness with which Truman took up each matter and decided it."[164] However, Truman's tendency to make quick decisions, based on "knee jerk" reactions was inherently damaging to a coherent and rational decision-making process. Rapid-fire decision-making processes can lead to many errors, such as making "inappropriate generalizations or analogies, premature cognitive closure and incomplete, causal analysis."[165] As a

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[161] Burke and Greenstein, 23.

[162] Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 145; author added italics

[163] Deborah Welch Larson, 146.

[164] Ibid

[165] Ibid

result, many of the aforementioned cognitive errors are visible in Truman's decision-making process leading up to the drop of the first bomb.

In essence, Truman's propensity to make quick decisions, coupled with his reliance on his advisers contributed extensively to his negation of feasible alternatives to direct military use of the bomb. For instance, when Truman was given access to assessments that conflicted with those of his closest adviser, Byrnes, he failed to absorb and process the information. Specifically, when Under Secretary of the Navy Ralph Bard, Under Secretary of State Joseph Grew, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy and even Stimson suggested that Roosevelt's unconditional surrender terms be altered, Truman, instead of thinking critically about the option, stubbornly adhered to Roosevelt's legacy and the opinions of his most trusted adviser, Byrnes.[166] Thus, in every case, when presented with dissenting opinions Truman would strive to seem decisive, while concurrently adhering to the counsel of his closest adviser. In contrast, Roosevelt's decision-making process, though arduous, was not as prone to these errors because he gave himself ample time to define the problem, collect information, and analyze feasible alternatives.

Truman's lack of education and knee jerk decision-making weren't the only factors impeding rational decision-making. In fact, Truman's extensive knowledge of and belief in the cyclical nature of history, coupled with his

[166] Harold F. Gosnell, 254.

experiences as a artillery captain during WWI negatively impacted his decision-making process[167] Truman may not have had a college education, but he was an avid reader of history. For Truman history was cyclical and could be used to inform future decisions. Lacking a formal education and training, Truman "often used historical analogies to understand world events and chose among policy alternatives."[168]

It is not unusual for foreign policy makers, in the absence of complete intelligence, to rely on historical analogies to define a problem and formulate feasible alternatives.[169] However, relying on analogies can be detrimental to the decision maker's process for various reasons. The danger of reasoning by analogy lies in the fact that the situations being compared may not actually be congruent, often causing the "introduction of biases and distortion into the analysis of a set of political events."[170] Thus, procedures followed and policies implemented for the first situation may not be applicable to the current situation.

In Truman's case, his analogies enabled him speed up an already hastily executed decision-making process, thus making him more prone to error. During the months leading up to the drop of the bomb Truman used various

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[167]Deborah Welch Larson, 129.

[168] Ibid

[169] Hybel and Matthew Kaufman, 123.

[170] Hybel and Kaufman, 123; See also Deborah Welch Larson, 53.

historical analogies to guide his decision-making process. One of the first historical analogies Truman used to guide his policy decisions was his knowledge of Japan's behavior prior to the 1941 attacks on Pearl Harbor. During the December peace talks in 1941, the US had responded to and believed Japan's assurances of peace. Obviously, the assurances had been false, and the result was the attacks on Pearl Harbor. As a result of this earlier betrayal, Truman and his advisers blatantly disregarded a Japanese message on July 12th, which indicated a willingness to engage in peaceful negotiations if the terms of the surrender were altered.

Records indicate that Truman and Byrnes had access at to intelligence reports indicating Japan's desire to open up diplomatic channels with the US through the Soviets. Yet, Truman and Byrnes were not interested in the reports, and barely even read them.[171] Essentially, Truman and the analysts were convinced that the Japanese were merely attempting to use "peaceful overtures" to cause dissension between the "Big Three" during the meeting at Potsdam. As a result of this reasoning, which equated the current situation with events prior to Pearl Harbor, the message was never taken seriously and discarded without further investigation.[172]

The second analogy utilized by President Truman, an analogy that helped rule out a US land invasion, involved Truman's perceptions of the

[171] Barton J. Bernstein, 58.

Japanese as ferocious in battle, and unrelenting, even in the face of massive casualties. For Truman, history indicated that it was the "basic policy of the present Japanese government to fight as long and as desperately as possible."[173] The US's experiences in Iwo Jima and in Okinawa were indicative of the types and amounts of casualties that would be sustained by American forces in a conventional invasion of Japan. Already, 12,000 American's had been killed in Okinawa, and 36,000 had been injured. The Japanese had faired much worse than the Americans, losing about 110,000 men, which was roughly equivalent to 1/3 of the population of the entire island.[174] Yet still, the Japanese persevered.

In reality, Truman's concerns were not unfounded. Statistically, things were grim. American casualties in the Pacific in the three months since Truman had assumed office were roughly equivalent to half of the total casualties in the Pacific for the past three years. Moreover, the ferocity of attacks against the American soldiers was also intensifying. Violent attacks, including the use of Kamikaze suicide warriors, the Palawan Massacre, which left 140 American soldiers dead, as well as the infamous Bataan death March were becoming more frequent.[175]

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[172] David McCullough, 413.

[173] David McCullough, 438.

[174] David McCullough, 395.

[175] David McCullough, 437-438.

Likewise, casualty estimates for a land invasion of Japan were grim. It is difficult to say with confidence how many different casualty estimates for an invasion of the Japanese homeland were thrown around by Truman's advisers. Declassified Department of Defense papers indicate that General Marshall predicted a mere 31,000 casualties during the first stage of the Japan invasion. However, later records, which include speeches, memos and manuscripts, indicate that casualty estimates ranged from a quarter of a million to a million American lives.[176] A May 15th memo to Stimson from Herbert Hoover indicated that "a clarification of terms (surrender terms) might save 500,000 to 1 million American lives."[177] Even Stimson was quoted as saying that "I was informed that such operations might be expected to cost over a million casualties to American forces alone."[178]

Ultimately, however, Truman's military service would be the fundamental analogy shaping his final decision to utilize the atomic bomb on the Japanese. As a former artillery captain during World War I, Truman was

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[176] Gar Alperovitz 518. Various sources give different numbers for this estimate. There has been much debate over what the casualty estimates were for a conventional land invasion. The only truly reliable source is the Department of Defenses records, as cited by Alperovitz. After the fact, numerous estimations were thrown around by members of the administration. A week after the atomic bomb was dropped Churchill stated in front of the House of Commons that a million American lives were saved by the bomb by avoiding a land invasion. Likewise, Byrnes in *Speaking Frankly* claimed that the military experts estimated a land invasion would cost at least a million casualties, an estimate that he relayed to Truman in the Interim Committee Report. Harvey Bundy, on September 25th 1945 also claimed that the bomb was used because it saved "thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of American soldiers." Conant in an Atlantic Monthly Article (Dec. 1946) would also claim that the use of the atomic bomb saved hundreds of thousands if not a million lives. Stimson, in *The Decision* (pp 104, 106) would also claim that that a land invasion would cost over a million casualties to the American forces alone.

[177] Gar Alperovitz, 520.

[178] Gar Alperovitz, 466.

sympathetic to the thousands of soldiers and ground-troops fighting abroad. From the beginning, Truman emphasized the need to extract the troops from the war as soon as possible, in attempt to save the lives of the many "American boys" who were fighting. Admiral William Leahy recognized Truman's ranking of the lives of American boys above all other factors early on noting that "It is his [Truman's] intention to make his decision on the campaign with the purpose of economizing to the maximum extent possible in the loss of American lives. Economy in the use of time and in money costs is comparable unimportant."[179]

Truman's ranking of American lives above all other factors was the result of having witnessed firsthand the devastation caused by war. His experience as an artillery captain caused him to view the atomic bomb as "just the same as artillery on our side."[180] This equation of the bomb to artillery, though obviously overly simplistic, created a tangible connection to the soldiers, while simultaneously equating the bomb to something he understood. In essence, Truman understood war, "knew its nature, its importance, and its limitations. He knew that its primary effectiveness was in overcoming opposing military powers or deterring another's use of it, or in over awing an opponent and gaining acceptance of one's own will."[181] Truman, unlike the other president's during the modern era was a man who had experienced war first

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[179] David McCullough, 400.

[180] David McCullough, 440.

[181] Deborah Welch Larson, 140.

hand, not just from behind a desk in Washington. Thus, Truman was extremely sympathetic to the nations own soldiers.

Truman's obsession with extracting his "American Boys" from an increasingly deadly war that was, in his eyes, only going to grow more deadly, becomes readily apparent in his conversations and letters with his advisers and family members. Truman's letters to his wife Bess shed light on his thought process prior to dropping the bombs. His first reaction to the news that Stalin planned to join the war in August was that "we'll end the war sooner now and think of all the kids that won't be killed…that's the important thing" [182] For Truman, the soldiers deployed abroad were not just his responsibility; they became like veritable members of his family, almost equivalent to thousands of sons placed right in harms way. His language, specifically his use of the word "kids" implied his inherent sense of responsibility for these young men.

Truman further emphasized his connection to the nation's soldiers when he questioned how the American president would explain to the American people that their soldiers, brothers, dads, boyfriends and husbands were being slaughter when we could end the war with one single weapon.[183] Thus, at every point during the decision-making process, Truman was painfully cognizant of the amount of American blood that would be on his hands if he did not use the atomic bomb to end the war. Truman, when faced with the

[182] David McCullough 440.

statistical recommendations of his advisers, most of who agreed that dropping the bomb would save American lives, also chose to believe that it would save lives. In the end, Truman, given his connection to the American soldier could not fathom sending more "boys" off to war, when he could end their misery by just dropping a single bomb.

[183] David McCullough, 430

Chapter IV

The Path to the Truman Doctrine

Introduction

When analyzing the development of a foreign policy it is essential to pinpoint the key events that determined the final policy. The case of the Truman Doctrine, which established an aid program for Greece and Turkey and some say the United State's first policy of containment, is no different. In fact, the Truman Doctrine, though delivered on March 12th, 1947, began to germinate during the last months of 1946 and would continue to develop throughout the next year. Though a seemingly clear statement of policy, it was, as we will see, the result of numerous actions and reactions to world events and conditions in the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the US.

The Strategic importance of Turkey

By September of 1945 World War II, which had spanned three continents and caused countless casualties had finally come to an end. Yet, the end of World War II did not mean that Truman and his administration could breathe a sigh of relief. In fact, tensions were still high, as disagreements and differences amongst the Allied powers, particularly between the Soviets and the US began to emerge. During this delicate period of transition Truman recognized that "It was natural for people everywhere, when the fighting ended,

to hope that peace and harmony would come at once…" However, this state of peace and harmony was not fully realized, as "many differences among the Allies had been subordinated during the war, but now that the common enemy was defeated, the problems of peace had brought these differences to the surface."[184] In particular, Truman was referring to the increasingly strained relations between the US and the Soviets Union regarding Greece and Turkey. According to Truman "we had already discovered how difficult the Soviets could be, but in the months that immediately followed the war this was revealed even further."[185]

Throughout 1945-1947 the Soviets and the US would disagree on a myriad of issues, including the control of atomic energy, the post-war status of the Balkan states, the control of vital resources and territory in Iran and even the composition of the newly organized United Nations. The gravity of these aforementioned issues, while of the utmost importance to the Truman administration, would be surmounted by concerns surrounding Soviet infiltration and subjugation of Turkey and Greece. US concern for these two nations was not unfounded. As we will later discern, even in the absence of the Soviet threat, both Greece and Turkey were of significant strategic and psychological importance to the US.

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[184] Harry S. Truman, *Volume One: Years of Decisions*, (New York: Doubleday, 1955), 16.

[185] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Decisions*, 516.

The US's concern about Turkey and subsequently, the rest of the Mediterranean falling into the Soviet sphere of influence was legitimate. Since the end of World War II the Soviets had been applying pressure in a strategic 'war of nerves' in hopes of sweeping Turkey behind its "iron curtain" and forming another satellite nation. The situation began to intensify during the early fall of 1946 when the Soviet Union began to project "unmistakable signs that the Soviet Government plan(ed) to add Turkey to its group of satellites." The signs included an anti-Turkish radio campaign by the Soviet press, Soviet claims to portions of eastern Turkey and the non-renewal of the Turko-Soviet treaty of friendship, which had existed since 1925. Yet, for the US government the most significant signs of forthcoming Soviet aggression were the Soviet notes to Turkey, on August 7th and September 24th, 1946."[186]

As long as anyone could remember, the Dardanelles had been of great strategic importance to whoever controlled them. The Straits provided the Soviets with unlimited control of the Black Sea and an outlet to the Mediterranean. Thus, it was not a surprise when on August 7th, 1946 Turkey and Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson received a proposal from the Soviets to alter the Montreux Convention, the set of laws that governed the control and passage of vessels in the Straits. The Soviet document proposed that, "Turkey and the Soviet Union, as the powers most interested and capable

[186]21 October 1945, Memorandum on Turkey Prepared in the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 894.

of guaranteeing freedom to commercial navigation and security of the Straits, shall organize joint means of defense of the Straits…"[187] Though not explicitly stated the US, Britain and Turkey took this to mean that the Soviets wanted to establish bases on the Dardanelles. This was unacceptable, especially to the Turkish government, who viewed the establishment of Soviet bases as an outright infringement on their sovereignty and a threat to their national security.

In response to the Soviet's demand the Turkish government stated, on August 9th, that "from national viewpoint Soviet proposal is incompatible with inalienable sovereign rights of Turkey and with its security which cannot be made subject to restriction." [188] Likewise, the US could not tolerate an arrangement of this sort by the Soviets because it obviously sought to bypass the United Nations by establishing a bilateral defense contract in the Dardanelles. Thus, the US, acting in concert with Britain and Turkey would inform the Soviets on August 19th, 1946 that "It is the firm opinion of this government that Turkey should continue to be primarily responsible or the defense of the Straits." Furthermore, Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson would emphasize the primacy of the UN, noting "should the Straits become the object of attack or threat of attack by an aggressor the resulting situation would

[187] 7 August 1946, The Soviet Charge (Orekhov) to the Acting Secretary of State, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 827.

[188] 9 August 1946, The Ambassador in Turkey to the Secretary of State, FRUS, 1946, Vol. VII, 833.

constitute a threat to international security and would clearly be a matter for action on the part of the Security Council of the United Nations."[189]

Though the reactions were varied, most members of the Truman administration viewed Soviet actions as a clear attempt to utilize Turkey as "a defense against possible outside attack from the Mediterranean," and most importantly, as a "springboard" for political and military expansion by the Soviet Union into the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East."[190] This prospect was daunting because in 1946 Turkey was one of the only nations in the region still capable of resisting Soviet expansionism. Already, the US had seen the Soviet Union expand its sphere of influence throughout Eastern Europe. The US Joint Chiefs predicted that the if the Soviets were able to further extend their influence into Turkey, something that they had been attempting to do since April 1945, then the Soviet Union would be in the position to control the rest of the Mediterranean, including the Middle East, Greece and Italy.[191]

The Joint Chiefs emphasized that the consequences of Soviet control in these regions would be dire. If the Soviets achieved their ends, then all western and US influence in the region would be eradicated and the Soviets would

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[189] 19 August 1946, The Acting Secretary of State to the Soviet Charge(Orekhov), FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 847-848.

[190] 21 October 1945, Memorandum on Turkey Prepared in the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 894.

[191] 28 August 1946, The Secretary of War and the Acting Secretary of the Navy to the Acting Secretary of State, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII.

possess vital resources, such as the rights to strategically important oil fields and communications networks. Concern was even expressed that control of Turkey might mean the spread of Soviet influence to China and India. [192] In essence, the administration viewed Turkey as a vital strategic asset because of its geographical position. Fundamentally, "Turkey constitute(d) the stopper in the neck of the bottle through which Soviet political and military influence could most effectively flow into the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. A Russian-dominated Turkey would open the floodgates for Soviet advance…" That is, Turkey's subjugation to Soviet influence would encumber other nations in the region and perhaps "fatally expose," the surrounding areas to Soviet domination.[193]

During an August 15th meeting Truman and his advisers decided that the deterring Soviet aggression was their utmost priority, even if it risked inciting conflict with the Soviets. Acheson indicated that "in our opinion the time has come when we must decide that we shall resist with all means at our disposal any Soviet aggression....in particular…against Turkey." Yet, Acheson, Truman, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and the other secretaries were wary of relying on brute force to elicit concessions from the Soviets. Instead they

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[192] 15 August 1946, The Acting Secretary o f State to the Secretary of State at Paris, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 840-842.

[193] 21 October 1945, Memorandum on Turkey Prepared in the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 894.

hoped that the UN would function as the body through which this dispute could be resolved."[194]

In light of the Soviets increasingly aggressive stance, and under pressure from the Turkish Government to take a clear position, the Truman administration, on October 21st, 1946 decided to delineate a policy clarifying the US's involvement with Turkey. The US vowed to remain firm but reasonable with regards to the Straits and the Soviet's desire to control sections of eastern Turkey. Likewise, the US asserted its commitment to uphold UN principles with regards to Turkey's claims of sovereignty. The US, having already provided Turkey with financial aid, including a $25,000,000 loan through the Export Import Bank, indicated its willingness to offer future assistance. Finally, the US insisted that the British continue to aid Turkey militarily, given their historical treaty relationship. If, however, the British could not continue to furnish aid of this sort, the US*, "in a very exceptional* case might consider furnishing certain supplies direct…"[195]

Trouble Brewing in Greece

Greece, not unlike Turkey, was put on the strategically important, but "endangered" list by the US during 1946. By September 5th, 1946 the US had officially recognized that it was "in the interest of U.S. security that Greece be

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[194] 15 August 1945, The Acting Secretary o f State to the Secretary of State, at Paris, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 840-842.

[195] 21 October 1946, Memorandum on Turkey Prepared in the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 894-895; author added italics.

supported," through "economic assistance in the form of liberal and unfettered credits."[196] During the first half of 1946 economic and political aid was given to Greece by the US Export-Import Bank. In the initial phases the amount of aid Greece received was determined on "the basis of need, capacity to prepay, and general attitude of the recipient country..."[197] Moreover, the US government, despite receiving additional requests for aid, would only consider furnishing more economic assistance if the Greeks demonstrated that they could manage their finances and "help themselves." [198]

The US began to reconsider its policies as evidence materialized that the social and economic conditions in Greece were worsening. By late September 1946 Greece, unlike Turkey, who had been damaged during the war but not crippled, was in dire social and economic shape. On September 24th Byrnes would assert that Greece's situation both politically and economically was more urgent than Turkey's.[199] During the war Greece had borne the brunt of repeated attacks by the German and Italian Armies. Factories had closed, production and agriculture had ceased and starvation and disease decimated the population. Communist resistance groups like the EAM had been established to counter German domination. When the German forces finally withdrew

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[196] 25 September 1946, Memoranda regarding Greece, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 225.

[197] 24 September 1946, Secretary of State to Acting Secretary of State, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 223.

[198] 14 August 1946, The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Greece (MacVeagh), FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 191.

[199] 24 September 1946, Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 223-224.

from Greece in 1944 the country was left in a state of disarray. As a result, British forces moved in to provide support and facilitate the return of the exiled government. Yet, even with the return of the Greek government the country was still wrought by considerable economic and political turmoil.

The most significant challenge to recovery was the presence of the Communist rebel movement, the EAM, which refused to surrender and instead withdrew into the countryside to wreak havoc. The EAM gathered a considerable following, capitalizing on the widespread feeling of discontent and the dire economic situation produced by the war. Soon, the Soviets, seeing their chance to acquire another sphere of influence, intervened and managed to provide the Communist groups with assistance, weapons, equipment and training.[200]

The Soviets were not just aiding the EAM in promoting internal dissent in Greece. Throughout 1946 evidence would accumulate implicating the Soviets in using their satellite states, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania, to pressure and weaken the Greek's resistance to communism. The acting Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs William Clayton would charge that the Soviets were not just providing ideological support, but also providing arms and

[200] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope,* (New York, Doubleday, 1955), *98*.

strengthening the anti-Greek groups in order to "set up in Greece a government which would be subservient to the Soviet Union." [201]

The new challenges posed by Soviet actions in the Mediterranean justified a reconsideration of the US's policy of economic aid toward Greece, and Turkey. Since August 1st, 1946 reports had been coming from the Economic Mission in Greece that the country was in need of more aid. Throughout August the head of the Greek Economic Mission, Sophocles Venizelos, had stressed the "political importance of immediate further credits in order to bring hope to the Greek people," while also noting that "Greek internal social order will collapse if early aid not forthcoming."[202] At this point, the US administration, including the president had been wary of furnishing more aid to the Greeks because of their "Inefficiency in connection to the utilization of the existing $25 million credit." Thus, until the US saw what they perceived to be as sound fiscal policies they would not provide more aid. [203]

In the midst of the Greek "financial crisis" the US government was attempting to assess the status of Britain's 28,500 troops in Greece. As early as September 11th, 1946, the US Ambassador to Greece, Lincoln MacVeagh, informed Byrnes that discussion regarding the British withdrawal of troops

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[201] 12 September 1946, The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Paris, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 209-213.

[202] 14 August 1946, The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Greece, (MacVeagh), FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 190.

[203] 14 August 1946, The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Greece, (MacVeagh), FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 190.

from Greece had commenced. MacVeagh reported that a conversation with the commanding officer of the British Land Forces in Greece, Lt. General Crawford, revealed that it would be politically and socially unwise to withdraw troops. Thus, MacVeagh estimated that it would be at least another year before the British would discontinue their occupation. Both the British and the Americans understood that until the Soviets withdrew their Communist armies in the "Balkan puppet states," the Greek state would not be safe from subjugation, thus necessitating the presence of friendly Anglo or American troops. [204]

Troop distribution was not the only the only pressing issue during this period. In late September, the US government began to take its first "baby-steps" toward bolstering their aid programs to Greece and possibly Turkey. On September 24th Byrnes sent a strongly worded memo declaring that a change in the administration's policy of economic aid based was in order. In response to Soviet infiltration Byrnes proposed that the US "help our friends in every way and refrain from assisting those who either through helplessness or for other reasons are opposing the principles for which we stand."[205] Byrnes would stress that providing Greece with substantive economic aid would be a critical indicator to the Soviets and to the world that the US intended to promote and act in defense of its principles and ideals of freedom and liberty. Clayton,

[204] 11 September 1946, The Ambassador in Greece to the Secretary of State, FRUS, 1946, Vol. VII, 209.

replying in a telegram on the following day, agreed with Byrnes's assessment emphasizing that he and the War Department believed that "the position of Greece closely parallels that of Turkey," and that plans for a reorientation of policy were already underway. [206]

Persistent pressure from Byrnes, Clayton and MacVeagh coupled with the increasing threat posed by anti-Greek communist insurgents resulted in an October 21st memorandum assessing US policy toward Greece. The memo began by noting, "Many signs indicate that Greece is becoming a focal point in the strained international relations," and that its survival might likely determine the status of the Near and Middle East in the future. Internal challenges, such as the armed communist insurgents, a lack of public order and an enfeebled economy were greatly impeding recovery. The analysis highlighted that the Greek insurgents were receiving physical and logistical support from the Soviets. The US could not stand by and watch the infiltration of the Greek Government by communist forces because of "the strategic importance of Greece to U.S. Security," and the fact that Greece was the only country in the Balkans that had not yet slipped behind the iron curtain and into the Soviet's sphere of influence.

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[205] 24 September 1946, Secretary of State to Acting Secretary of State (Clayton), FRUS 1946, Vol. II, 223.

[206] 25 September 1946 The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, at Paris, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 225-226.

In light of these concerns, specific courses of actions were recommended. First, it was urgent that the US government "increase and intensify its political and economic assistance promptly lest it come too late." Economic aid was of the utmost importance, and the Export-Import Bank needed to be consulted for grants. The memo recommended providing extra relief assistance upon the cessation of the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Recovery Agency) programs. Likewise, an American Economic Mission in Greece needed to be established for the purpose of determining where aid would be most effectively utilized. Finally, the authors of the memo even considered providing military equipment to Greece*, "in case of British inability to sell Greece sufficient arms for the maintenance of internal order until such time as military forces of the UN are prepared to undertake guarantees against such aggression."*[207]

The Meeting of the Turkish and Greek Crises

By November of 1946 Byrnes, Acheson, Truman and MacVeagh were cognizant of the threat that the Soviet's posed in Greece and Turkey. The most influential memos on the countries, both produced in late October indicated that the administration was pondering a reorientation of their policy of non-intervention via military aid, while concurrently beefing up their economic support.

[207] 21 October 1946, Memorandum Prepared in the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 240-245; author added italics.

The first test of the administration's policy of professed economic support would be gauged by the US responses to two telegrams from the Ambassador in Turkey, Edwin C. Wilson, on October 28th and November 8th. In his telegrams Wilson emphasized that the Turkish economy was having a difficult time sustaining its massive armed forces, which were serving to protect the borders from Soviet infiltration. To make matters worse, the Turkish gold and exchange reserves were depleting rapidly. In light of these events Turkish government would need substantial loans to maintain her defense capabilities and continue reconstruction. US aid, if it could be spared, would be instrumental in maintaining Turkish security.[208]

The US, though not teeming with financial resources, began to investigate ways to provide Turkey with additional aid. Yet, 'consideration' was the only attention that the US could give Turkey during the final months of 1946 given the stringent caps put on loans from the Export-Import Bank.[209] On a similar note, the US was even more reluctant to positively answer Turkey's request for additional military appropriations. At this point, the US would assert that it could not furnish military supplies to Turkey for fear that "the impression be obtained in the United States and elsewhere that we are carrying on a provocative policy with regard to the Soviet Union and are

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[208] 28 October 1946, The Ambassador in Turkey to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 912; 8 November 1946, The Ambassador in Turkey to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 915-916.

[209] 12 December 1946, The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Turkey, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 923.

fanning the embers of a possible Soviet-Turkish war." Instead, the US would pursue a policy whereby Great Britain would be the sole provider of weapons and military equipment to Turkey, given the legacy of their "treaty" relationship. [210]

Likewise, a reorientation of American thinking with regards to the economic and political situation in Greece (Expressed in the October 21 memo) did not constitute a tangible change in US economic and military aid to Greece. In fact, a November 4th memo to Byrnes from MacVeagh, detailing the "extremely critical foreign exchange position of Greece," did not elicit an immediate change in attitudes.[211] On November 8th, Acheson informed MacVeagh that the US government would not furnish the requested arms and military supplies to Greek. Acheson rationalized that although supplying arms would be beneficial for American ends, the government did not want to risk "provoking" the Soviet Union and its Balkan puppets. Again, Acheson confirmed that the British would continue to shoulder the burden of supplying military equipment in Greece."[212]

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[210] 8 November 1946, The Under Secretary of State (Acheson) to the Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson), FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 916-917.

[211] 4 November 1946, The Ambassador in Greece to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 259-260.

Details of Financial situation according to MacVeagh are as follows: "Dollar assets, extremely acute with only 10 million dollars in free expendable exchange. At the end of September dollar holdings of Bank of Greece totaled $25 million, but outstanding $18 million in confirmed credits and $4million set aside for currency cover account. Sterling position is better, but also very critical. Because of financial situation have had to impose restrictions on vital consumer goods."

[212] 8 November, 1946, The Acting Secretary of State (Acheson) to the Ambassador in Greece (MacVeagh), FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 262-263.

The US, though not able to supply direct aid, created an Economic Mission to assess the situation in Greece. The mission, which would embark in January 1947 for Greece, would be headed by Paul A. Porter, the former head of the Office of Price Administration. Traveling with the mission would be a group of economic, financial and engineering experts charged with examining economic conditions and their effect on the reconstruction and development of Greece. Because of the "urgency of the situation" the evaluation was scheduled for submission by the end of April, 1947.

A Reorientation of Policy

When 1947 arrived, the Truman administration, the US and the rest of the world system were in a state of flux. Domestically, Truman's administration was faced with a myriad of changes, which had both positive and negative effects on the functioning of the government. The first, positive change, according to many of Truman's cabinet members was the resignation of Secretary of State James Byrnes, and the appointment of General George Marshall in his place. Byrnes, who had been planning to retire upon Marshall's return from a diplomatic mission in China, had not been liked in the State Department because of his frequent absences from the country, his lax administrative methods, and his penchant for "secret" policy making.

General Marshall, on the other hand, was orderly, and consulted his subordinates in order to give them more policy-making responsibility. Acheson

and the Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority David E. Lilienthal were among the members of the administration who expressed satisfaction with Byrnes's resignation. For them, Byrnes' administration had been erratic, thoughtless and inept. Even Joseph Jones, the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, noticed the how the change affected the department "from top to bottom and called forth a great surge of ideas and constructive efforts."[213].

A second, less positive change from the point of view of the Democratic Administration came in Congress. The November elections had tipped the Republican-Democrat balance in the Senate and the House, leaving both in the control of the Republicans for the first since 1930. The changes in Congress became effective in January 1947 with the initiation of an extremely fiscally conservative set of senators and representatives.[214] It was in this context that Truman began 1947, well aware that his new programs of providing economic assistance to marginalized and threatened regions would be difficult to pass through a penny-pinching Congress.[215]

In early January, 1947 it became evident that Soviet threat in the Mediterranean and the Middle East had not been neutralized. On January 9th,

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[213] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War: 1941-1947*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 347-348.

[214] For a discussion of the newly elected conservative congress see Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 78-80; Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope,* 103.

Truman received word from the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union Walter Bedell Smith that the Soviets were resuming their efforts to "encroach upon" Turkish sovereignty. Smith relayed that Turkey had little hope of maintaining independence without significant aid from the US and Britain.[216] Turkey, according to Smith, had two alternatives for dealing with the Soviets. The first was to seek support through a regional agreement involving the US, UK, Turkey and USSR. The second involved working within the UN. Smith was inclined to support the UN alternative, estimating that it would not be probable that the "USSR would participate in (a) Turkish agreement with what it regards as its inevitable and greatest enemies—US and UK—."

Byrnes, before officially resigning as secretary of state would agree with Smith's assessment noting that any suggestion of a regional agreement for the Straits would certainly imply a flaw in the Montreux Convention, thus undermining the US, UK, and Turkey's previous positions. Byrnes anticipated that the Soviets would argue that "the Montreux Convention and the United Nations does not provide adequate security for the Straits and insist that the logical remedy is system resting on arrangement among Black Sea powers."[217]

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[215] Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism*, 76; John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 344.

[216] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials*, 98; 9 January 1946, The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Smith) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 2-3.

[217] 20 January 1947, The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Turkey, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 9.

To some, even the UN was not a viable forum through which to address Soviet advances on Turkish and Greek sovereignty. MacVeagh argued that even if the UN was able to provide border security to halt the infiltration of Communist insurgents, it would not address the root of the problem. In MacVeagh's opinion Greece's economic and social crises could not be solved unless the internal problems were rectified. He also estimated that "from our (Ethridge and MacVeagh) observation of Russian tactics Ethridge and I feel that the Soviets themselves see matters in exactly this same way."[218]

The following day, despite Smith's forewarning of Turkey's imminent demise at the hands of the Soviets, Byrnes refused to guarantee economic aid to Turkey. Additionally, Byrnes, in a telegram to the Turkish Embassy, would convey that an economic mission to Turkey could not be sent to assess the financial situation. Byrnes and the administration feared that the Turkish citizens would view an undertaking of this magnitude as a "forerunner for extensive financial assistance, which in light of Eximbank's (Export-Import Bank) present position, we might not be in a position to provide."[219]

Meanwhile, on January 10th Truman addressed Congress in order to request approval of his budget for the fiscal year of 1947. In his address Truman requested $37.7 billion to finance government operations for the fiscal year, $11.2 billion of which would be allotted to national defense. On February

[218] 11 February 1947, The Ambassador in Greece to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 17.

14th, after reviewing Truman's request, the Joint Congressional Committee on Legislative Budget recommended a budget ceiling of $31.5 billion, allotting the Army 1 billion, the Navy 750 million, and the Army overseas relief program only 500 million. The new Secretary of State Marshall, disturbed about the committee's allotments, warned that conditions in occupied countries would become "impossible" if Congress cut the budget by the proposed amount.

Similar reactions to Congress's proposed fiscal program emanated from the Secretary of War Robert Patterson, who worried that the cuts would mean that the US would "travel the same old road, disarming while the other major powers remain armed."[220] Even Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, Truman's Republican ally in Congress, worried that extensive cuts to the budget would signal that America was turning inwards and was no longer willing\able to sustain their international commitments. Vandenberg maintained that a budget cut of this magnitude would indicate to the world that America had "a chip on each shoulder and both arms in a sling."[221] Eventually, Vandenberg was able to convince both the House and the Senate to approve a $34.7 billion budget for the fiscal year.

The administration's reluctance to commit any aid to Turkey was not mirrored in Greece. On the contrary, by January 11th MacVeagh and Byrnes

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[219] 10 January 1947, he Secretary of State to the Embassy in Turkey, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 5-6.

[220] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 345.

[221] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 345.

were actively discussing the creation of a substantive aid program, which would need to be approved by Congress. Judging from his correspondence with Byrnes, MacVeagh perceived that "the American government is proceeding already to the realization of the policy it has laid down concerning Greece." That is, MacVeagh believed that the US government was now actively moving toward executing a policy of financial and logistical support, which had merely been elucidated during 1946.[222]

Just three days later a discussion between Clayton and the Greek Charge, Mr. Paul Econonmou-Gouras further reinforced the US's verbal commitment to provide economic aid to Greece. When Gouras telephoned on January 14th he requested "extraordinary and immediate financial assistance to Greece," to ameliorate Greece's economic woes. Clayton replied that while the government was "genuinely concerned" and in the process of "exploring all possibilities," they were faced with certain legal restraints, thus making the prospect of immediate financial aid grim. Clayton, however, did anticipate that by mid-March the US Government would "present to Congress…a bill providing aid to several nations, including Greece."[223]

February did not bring respite from the deluge of communications and telegrams stressing the gravity of the situations in Greece and Turkey and now,

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[222] 11 January 1947, The Ambassador in Greece to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. 5, 6-7.

[223] Memorandum of Conversation, by William O. Baxter of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 12.

Great Britain. From February 3rd-12th MacVeagh sent a series of cables to the US reporting on rumors that the British were preparing to withdraw their troops from Greece. One of the cables even requested that the US seriously consider providing aid to the Greeks, because "The British were not able to keep up even the little they were doing."[224] Exacerbating fears of a British withdrawal was MacVeagh's insistence that economic deterioration in Greece would soon cause a nationwide revolution, incited by the Soviets sponsored communists. He stressed that "If Greece falls to the Communists the whole Near East, and part of North Africa as well are certain to pass under Soviet influence." [225]

The February 17th report from Paul Porter, the Chief of the American Economic Mission to Greece to Clayton was no less damning. Porter accentuated that the "makings of a financial collapse," in Greece, and that the state was disintegrating. Porter insisted that US economic assistance and continued British military and economic aid would be the best medicine for Greece's economic and political ailments.[226] In the midst of these urgent cables, Mark Ethridge of the US Investigating Commission reported on February 17th that "all signs pointed to an impending move by the communists

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[224] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, 99.

[225] 11 February 1947, The Ambassador in Greece to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 17.

[226] 17 February 1947, The Chief of the American Economic Mission to Greece to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 17-22.

to seize the country."[227] Ethridge added that the other commissioners, namely those from Britain, France, China and Colombia agreed that if Greece collapsed the Near East, Italy and France follow suit. A collapse of this magnitude would not only be detrimental to the free citizens of these countries, but to the UN as well. In response to this threat Ethridge recommended that the US and Britain work in concert to convince the Soviets that "a most serious situation will arise if they permit their satellites and agents to continue to direct and supply guerilla forces and foment anarchy in Greece." [228]

The warnings issued from MacVeagh, Ethridge and Porter did not fall on deaf ears. By February 21st Acheson responded by preparing a proposal form Marshall containing specific recommendations and actions to mitigate the threats in Greece. The most pertinent of these recommendations involved the immediate provision of economic and military aid. Acheson recommended that the US garner support in Congress for a bill to provide relief funds to the Greek Government, lest they fall to communist pressure. Likewise, though Acheson acknowledged that the US must aid in this endeavor because at the present, the "British are unable to meet the scheduled needs" of the Greek forces.[229]

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[227] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial*, 99; 17 February 1947, The United States Representation on the Commission of Investigation to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 23-25.

[228] [228] 17 February 1947, The Chief of the American Economic Mission to Greece to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 17-22

[229] 21 February 1947, Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State to the Secretary of State, Crisis and Imminent Possibility of Collapse in Greece, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 29-31.

Just as Acheson was sending his recommendations to Marshall, Ethridge too, continued to report on the increasingly tumultuous environment in Greece. On February 21st Ethridge would inform Marshall that the political unrest in Greece could not be quelled without the reorganization and recovery of Greece's economy. For Ethridge, Greece's economic and political woes were intertwined, inseparable, and could only be "treated" as a pairing. Because of these circumstances Ethridge would insist that only a "national coalition government and substantial aid could save Greece."[230] To drive his point home he drew analogies between other attempts of Soviet subjugation, noting that "The Department is fully aware that in all Soviet states minorities have seized power by exactly same methods they are trying here." Greece, argued Ethridge, was a unique case however, because if it fell under Soviet influence the Communists could easily expand into Italy, France, the Middle East, Africa and perhaps even to China and the Far East. Thus, given the strategic importance of Greece Ethridge questioned whether such an inchoate organization, the UN, was indeed the best hope for peace in Greece. Answering his own question, Ethridge speculated that "The UN is our best hope at the moment, but a hope that will be greatly impaired if its first intervention (a fact finding mission in Greece to determine the extent of communist infiltration) is not effective."[231]

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[230] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation: My Years in the State Department,* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1969), 217.

[231] 21 February 1947, The United States Representative on the Commission of Investigation to the Secretary of State, FRUS 147, Vol. V, 39.

The crisis finally came to a head on Friday evening, February 21st when the British Ambassador to America reported to the State Department that the British government could no longer sustain its military and economic commitments to Greece after the close of their fiscal year on March 31st, 1947.[232] Though there had been some indicators that the British were having economic problems of their own, Dean Acheson would insist that the documents were "shockers."[233] The British Government, though cognizant of the impending financial and military collapse in Greece, "had already strained their resources to the utmost to help Greece," and now, "His Majesty's Government…finds it impossible to grant further financial assistance to Greece." In lieu of British assistance, they strongly suggested that the US Government step into the fray and bear the remaining financial burden, as the collapse of Greece was imminent if "the financial-economic situation is allowed to deteriorate." [234]

Just as the State Department was absorbing the gravity of the Greek situation, they also received word that the British were cutting off their economic and military aid to Turkey as well. The British, though fully mindful of Turkey's strategic importance and the inability of Turkish forces to further prevent communist encroachment upon their sovereignty, would no longer be

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[232] Richard M.Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine*, 82; Harry *S. Truman, Years of Trial and Hope*, 99.

[233] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 217.

able to provide vital assistance. As was the case with Greece, the British suggested that the US provide funds and military assistance in order to prevent such a strategically important state from falling into the Soviet sphere of influence. [235]

Upon receiving word of the impending crisis Acheson telephoned the president and Marshall, who were out of town, in order to inform them of what had happened. When Truman received word of the impending crisis he immediately requested that Acheson work on a study of the situation in conjunction with the State-Navy-War Coordinating Committee (SWNCC).

Three days later, on February 24th, Marshall presented Truman with the full text of Acheson's memo for review. Acheson stressed that the decision whether or not to pick up British slack in Greece and Turkey would be the "most major decision with which we have been faced since the war." This view was affirmed by the frequent reports from US Ambassadors and observers such as Porter, Ethridge, MacVeagh, who separately relayed that Greece was nearly collapsed, and that Turkey would follow close behind. Regarding estimations for aid, Acheson pointed out that for the fiscal year 1947 Greece would require about $250 million and that Turkey's requirements were as of yet, unknown.

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[234] 21 February 1947, The United States Representative on the Commission of Investigation to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 37-39.

[235] 21 February 1947, The British Embassy to the Department of State, Aide Memoire, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 35-37.

Also present at the review were Secretaries Forrestal and Patterson, all of whom provided the perspectives of the State, Navy and War departments. During the meeting Marshall reported that the British were "planning to take their troops out of Greece as soon as this could be conveniently done." He also presented dispatches from Smith in Moscow and MacVeagh in Greece. Both ambassadors, though miles away from each other, agreed that the entire arrangement in Greece was in jeopardy. Smith believed that "only the presence of British troops had so far saved Greece from being swallowed into the Soviet orbit." In turn, MacVeagh: "sent a picture of deep depression and even resignation among Greek leaders; their feeling seemed to be that only aid given at once would be of use."[236] Both men were adamant that there was little time to think; action had to be taken and a comprehensive aid program had to be "presented to Congress in such a fashion as to electrify the American people."[237]

Additional memos were also circulating around the State Department, including the February 26th memo from Jones, a member of the State Department's public affairs office. Jones' memo emphasized that the "Congress and the people of this country are not sufficiently aware of the character and dimensions of the crisis that impends, and of the measure that

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[236] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hopes*, 100.

[237] 24 February 1947, Minutes of the First meeting of the Special Committee to Study Assistance to Greece and Turkey, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 47.

must be taken in terms of relief, loans, gifts…if disaster is to be avoided." As a result, Jones expressed his desire to create a program to "inform the people and convince the Congress adequately with respect to today's crisis…the danger should be described in full and the cost of both inaction and action estimated."[238] Essentially, Jones reasoned that such a program would mobilize support among American citizens to pressure the Congress to act.

That same day, the SWNCC met and managed to agree on a policy recommendation, which they hoped would stabilize the situation in Greece and Turkey upon British withdrawal. At three pm Acheson and Marshall met with Truman to present the results of the morning's committee meeting as well as the contents of a memo that General Dwight D. Eisenhower had created, outlining the Joint Chief's perspectives on the dilemma. Essentially, the secretaries established that the British were not in any condition to provide more aid; that the situation in Greece was desperate; that the collapse of Greece threatened the security of the US and the Western World; and finally, that US aid to Greece and Turkey should be provided immediately.[239] After being presented with the contents of the studies Truman indicated that the military and diplomatic experts had views that were similar to his own and that:

> Greece needed aid, and it needed it quickly, and in substantial amounts. The alternative was the loss of Greece and the extension of the iron curtain across the eastern Mediterranean. If Greece was lost, Turkey

[238] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 346.

[239] 26 February 1947, Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Truman, FRUS: 1947, Vol. V, 58.

> would become an untenable outpost in a sea of Communism. Similarly, if Turkey yielded to Soviet demands, the position of Greece would be extremely endangered. [240]

Throughout the meeting Truman insisted that he was still ready to commit to a program of economic and military assistance. He claimed that he had been pondering the implications of Soviet imperialism for some time now, and had been working on establishing a Policy Planning staff in the State Department, which would be presided over by George Kennan. Truman believed that decisive action was the only possible route, because the alternative, inaction, would be "disastrous to our security and to the security of free nations everywhere."[241] The meeting closed with a discussion of how to procure a substantial amount of economic aid for the Greek program from a fiscally conservative Republican Congress. It was eventually decided that in order to convince Congress of the necessity of supporting Greece and Turkey economically Truman would need to make a special effort to "advise the congressional leadership as soon as possible of the gravity of the situation and of the nature of the decision which I had to make."[242]

The next morning, on February 27th, Truman convened a 10 am meeting with Marshall, Acheson, and Senators Styles Bridges, Arthur Vandenberg, Alben Barkley, Thomas Connally, Speaker Joseph Martin,

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[240]Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 100.

[241] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 101.

[242] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 103.

Representatives Charles Eaton, Sol Bloom and Sam Rayburn. Truman's primary goal during this meeting was to speak directly to the representatives and describe the problems created by the imminent withdrawal of British aid and troops from Greece and Turkey. Truman insisted that it was imperative that Turkey and Greece receive significant amounts of aid and that he "had decided to extend aid to Greece and Turkey and…hoped Congress would provide the means to make this aid timely and sufficient."

General Marshall also made a speech, noting that the US had to "act or loose by default"[243] Marshall coherently described the reasons that the British had to withdraw aid, while detailing how Greece and Turkey were at immeasurable risk of falling into the communist sphere of influence. Marshall's speech, though informative, apparently did not visibly rouse the congressmen. Even Acheson admitted that the speech was "most unusually and unhappily flubbed" by Marshall.

At this point, Acheson stepped in and gave what many would later describe as the most pivotal speech in procuring congressional interest in the affair. In a sense, Acheson believed himself to be the best prepared in the administration to make such a speech because "this was my crisis. For a week I had nurtured it. These congressmen had no conception of what challenged

[243] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 103; 27 February 1947, Statement by the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 60-62.

them; it was my task to bring it home."[244] Essentially, Acheson depicted a world divided into two discrete spheres of influence, a situation unparalleled "Since the days of Rome and Carthage."[245]Acheson elucidated what would later be known as the "domino effect." He related that a victory for the communists in Greece would mean inevitable victory for the Soviet communists throughout Europe. Using vivid imagery, Acheson depicted how "like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all of the east...and carry infection to Africa…and to Europe through Italy and France."[246] This prospect, claimed Acheson, would pose a direct threat to the existence of the US because the US's values of democracy and freedom could not exist in a world where two thirds of the surface was dominated by communism.[247]

After Acheson's speech Truman gauged that the members of Congress seemed "deeply impressed" by the presentation," and that there "was no voice of dissent when I stated the position which I was convinced our country had to take."[248] Further, Senator Vandenberg, a long standing Republican ally of the Truman administration announced that the US was obviously facing a crisis.

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[244] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 219.

[245] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 349; Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 219.

[246] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 219.

[247] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 349; Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 219.

[248] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 104.

Vandenburg then exclaimed: "Mr. President, if you say that to the Congress and the country, I will support you and I believe that most of its members will do the same."[249]

From February 28th onward various departments would be charged with determining the proper course of action with regards to the aid program to Greece and Turkey. Dean Acheson, who was delegated many of the responsibilities for the drafting of the aid program because of Marshall's absence in Moscow, was mindful of the gravity of the US's actions. Acheson acknowledged that "we were moving with incredible speed for so vast a country to assume a novel burden far from our shore."[250] Marshall too, despite his absence at the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow, felt strongly about the aid program. Marshall insisted that in his absence Acheson had free reign to do "everything necessary" to hold our position in the Near East, "regardless of its effect upon the Conference," in Moscow. Like Acheson, Marshall saw the world as having arrived at an unparalleled point in history. Thus, given the gravity of the situation both Acheson and Marshall agreed that "the matter must be put over forcefully; the US position must be made strong and clear."[251]

On the 28th Chief Officers from the State, War and Navy departments met to discuss how to effectively present the need for an aid program in Greece

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[249] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 219.

[250] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 220-221.

and Turkey to Congress and the American public. The officers eventually decided that the speech should make information available to the American public so they can form "intelligent" opinions about the crisis in Greece and Turkey, while also ascertaining the US's current strategic situation. Concurrently, it would portray the conflict in Greece and elsewhere as a conflict between free and totalitarian governments.[252] One officer at the meeting insisted that "the only way we can sell the public on our new policy is by emphasizing the necessity of holding the line: communism v. democracy should be a major theme."[253]

The beginning of March brought a formal request by the Greek government for US aid. In a series of meetings the administration continued to address the situation, and respond to advances from the governments and American representatives in Greece and Turkey. By the time that the US received a formal request for aid from Greece on March 3rd, Acheson had perceived that "Greece was in the position of a semiconscious patient on the critical list whose relatives and physicians had been discussing whether his life could be saved."[254] Still, at this point the US and British governments had not yet revealed to Greece and Turkey, let alone the world, that the British were

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[251] 28 February 1947, Report on the Meeting of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 66-68.

[252] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 350.

[253] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 351; Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 151-155.

planning on pulling out their troops and aid, and that the US was preparing to step in, filling Britain's place.

On March 7th, Truman held a Cabinet meeting devoted to discussing the "Greek situation." At the meeting, Truman, in conjunction with Acheson explained to the cabinet members why the decision had been made to send aid to Greece and Turkey, and delineated the role that the British had played, and what their withdrawal meant for the stability of the Greek nation, and neighboring Turkey.[255] Truman explained that he would request $150 million in aid for Turkey and $250 million for Greece. He further emphasized that these figures were just preliminary, and that the administration would have to be prepared to contribute more aid at a later date. Acheson, reflecting on this experience would insist that Truman perceived no other "alternative but to go ahead…realizing that this was only a beginning."[256]

When Truman was done speaking, the Secretary of Labor Lewis Schwellenbach pointed out that "Anti-British elements at home might charge that we were again pulling British chestnuts out of the fire."[257] In response to Schwellenbach's point, the members of the meeting began to discuss how to best inform the American people about the impending crisis, and the necessity

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[254] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation,* 221.

[255] 7 March 1947, Memorandum by the Secretary of War (Patterson) on the Meeting of the Cabinet, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 96-98; Dean Acheson, Present at Creation, 221.

[256] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation,* 221.

[257] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 105.

of their solution. By the culmination of the meeting Truman had appointed Secretary of the Treasury John Snyder as the head of a committee to recommend how to inform the American public of the issues surrounding the aid program. Other members of the committee included: Acheson, Forrestal, Harriman, Patterson and Clinton Anderson.

On March 8th, Snyder's Committee met to discuss how the president should present the situation to the public. The Committee members agreed that "in order to emphasize the gravity of the situation, I [Truman] appear in person before a joint session of Congress."[258] Though Truman's appearance before Congress was generally deemed necessary, objections began to surface against the sweeping generalities in the text of Truman's speech. The administrative assistant in the White House, George Elsey objected to the speech as a whole, insisting that "there has been no overt action in the immediate past by the USSR which serves as an adequate pretext for an all out speech. The situation in Greece is relatively abstract…" Yet Elsey, despite his criticism contradicted himself by pointing out that "there have been other instances—Iran for example—where the occasion more adequately justified the speech"[259]

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[258] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 105.

[259] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 350; The Iran incident Elsey referenced pertains to the USSR's refusal to withdraw its occupying forces from Iran by the pre-scheduled date as well as allegations of a Soviet sponsored communist movement in Northern Iran.

Protests to the speeches language were also heard from George Kennan, who objected to the "sweeping nature of the comments."[260] Bernard Baruch would later be critical of the address as well, calling it "tantamount to a declaration of…ideological and religious war."[261] The former secretary of State, Byrnes, would also complain that the speech was entirely too general in tone with regards to future commitments.[262] Even Marshall, who was in Moscow when the speech was delivered, was "somewhat startled to see the extent to which the anti-Communist element was stressed."[263] Still, there were members of the administration such as Clark Clifford who continued to support the speech, labeling it "the opening gun in a campaign to bring people up to the realization that the war isn't over by any means."[264]

In an effort to gauge Congressional opinion on the progress of the Greek policy, Truman invited members of his Congress, with the addition of Acheson, back to his office on the 10th of March. After discussing the Greek situation, Truman ascertained that Congressional opinion was still largely in favor of the policy of economic aid. Evidently, Truman was further reinforced because "Vandenberg expressed his complete agreement with me…There was

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[260] Samuel Kernell, "The Truman Doctrine Speech: A case Study of the Dynamics of Presidential Opinion Leadership," *Social Science History*, Vol. 1, No. 1. (Autumn, 1976); Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 221.

[261] Samuel Kernell, 23.

[262] Samuel Kernell, 23

[263] Samuel Kernell, 23.

[264] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 350-351.

no opposition to what had to be done."[265] Yet Acheson's opinions were somewhat different, as he perceived that "despite Arthur Vandenberg's earlier assurances, a cool and silent reception," from members of Congress. According to Acheson's account of the meeting, the congressmen were skeptical of Britain's continued commitment, Truman's policies, and the prospect of making any large fiscal commitments. For Acheson, the meeting was neither an overwhelming success, nor a failure, as very little was said by the congressmen, and no commitments of any kind were made.[266]

In the days prior to his appearance in front of Congress and the American public, Truman and his advisers would work tirelessly to prepare an influential speech. The initial versions of Truman's speech, which were prepared by the State Department, were not to Truman's liking. According to Truman, the speeches were too centered on statistical data and background information making "the whole thing sound like an investment prospectus."[267] Truman was also critical of the second draft, which he claimed contained only a half-hearted policy statement."[268]

On March 12th, 1947 at 1pm President Truman delivered his speech, which would later be named "the Truman Doctrine" over national radio, and

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[265] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 105.

[266] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 222.

[267] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 105.

[268] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 105.

directly in front of a joint session of Congress. Truman's speech, which called for Congress's approval of immediate aid to Greece and Turkey, was intended to be "shock therapy" for Congress.[269] For Truman, the speech was an essential aspect of a program to inform the nation and the entire world how the US would respond to "totalitarian" advances upon weak, but sovereign nations. Essentially, the address to Congress and the nation would be a "turning point in America's foreign policy, which now declared that wherever aggression, direct or indirect, threatened peace, the security of the United States was involved."[270]

Certain aspects of Truman's speech are worth mentioning, as they indicate the desired trajectory of the administration's new policy. Truman began the speech by asserting that "it *must* be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure." [271] Here, Truman clearly delineated the American commitment to protect the free peoples of the world, while not specifically mentioning the identities of the "armed minorities" who were subjugating them. Also, Truman proclaimed that the means to achieve the end of security and liberty would be economic, stating, "I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to

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[269] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 351.

[270] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 106.

[271] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 106, Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 222-223.

economic stability and orderly political processes."[272] The address became more provocative as Truman began to draw a sharp line between two ways of life: democracy and totalitarianism. Truman orated:

> One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, and guarantees of individual liberty…the second way of life is based upon the will of the minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression…and the suppression of personal freedoms.[273]

Finally, Truman concluded by accentuating that the US was responsible for helping oppressed nations mobilize for freedom. The preservation of freedom, according to Truman, would be beneficial for both domestic and international security. He warned that "If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation."[274] Truman, though cognizant that other alternatives existed, such as going through the UN, emphasized the need for immediate action, which could only be made possible via US aid. Truman insisted that "we have considered how the United Nations might assist in this crisis. But the situation is an urgent one requiring immediate action, and the United Nations and its

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[272] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 106.

[273] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 106.

[274] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 105.

related organizations are not in a position to extend help of the kind that is required."[275]

The standing ovation that Truman received from Congress signaled, quite clearly that Truman had achieved what he set out to accomplish. The following day the Congress began work on legislation for an aid program to Turkey and Greece. The program for aid would not be approved until April, but in the meantime Truman did everything in his power to dispatch as much aid as possible without direct Congressional approval. Public opinion, too, rallied in support of Truman's proposed program of economic aid. In the weeks following the speech Truman would assert that "All over the world voices of approval made themselves heard, while Communists…struck out at me savagely. The line had been drawn sharply."[276]

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[275] Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman, "Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine," March 12, 1947, pp 177.

[276] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope*, 106-107.

Chapter V

Adopting a Coherent World Vision: An Analysis of the Truman Doctrine

On March 12, 1947, a mere three weeks after the British informed the US that they could no longer sustain key aid commitments, President Harry S. Truman stood before a joint session of Congress and requested approval for an aid program to Greece and Turkey. Truman broadcasted to the congressmen and the American public that "it must be the policy of the US to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures," and that Greece and Turkey would be the first targets of this new policy.[277] By all accounts the policy delineated in the address, though fundamentally in line with the maintenance of US ideals of freedom and liberty, departed radically from the administrations previous policies by publicly indicating the US's intention to provide material aid to countries threatened by 'totalitarianism."

Prior to the March 12th statement, the Truman administration had routinely rejected Turkey and Greece's requests for aid. This would all change on February 21st, 1947, when Great Britain notified the US that it would no longer be able to sustain its economic and military aid programs to Greece and

[277] The Public Papers of the President: Harry S. Truman, 1947, (Washington, D.C., 1963), 176.

Turkey. In essence, "Great Britain had within the hour handed the job of world leadership, with all its burdens and all its glory, to the United States."[278]

All things considered, the US did not have to accept Britain's move to hand off the "torch" of global responsibility to the American government. Indeed, Truman could have "washed his hands" of the Greece's and Turkey's financial problems, leading the US into economic and political isolation yet again.[279] Given the trajectory of the Truman administration's policies toward the Soviets in 1946 and early 1947 many question why Truman and his advisers, Secretary of State James Byrnes and Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, in lieu of other alternatives, publicly reversed a long-standing policy of conciliation and cooperation with the Soviets.

Truman and Byrnes' Bipolar Policies of 1945-1947

From the cessation of World War II and up until Truman's speech in March of 1947, there were numerous members in the State, War and Navy departments that exerted influence on the aid program to Greece and Turkey. Yet, of all the decision-makers none were as influential on the Doctrine's construction as Byrnes, Acheson and Truman.

Originally, Truman and Byrnes' policies toward the Soviets were a product of former President Franklin D. Roosevelt's legacy. Truman and

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[278] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks.* (New York: Viking, 1955), pp. 7.

[279] Charles Bohlen, The *Transformation of American Foreign Policy*, (New York: W Norton and Company, 1969), 84-88.

Byrnes held onto Roosevelt's conception that "at the end of the war there would be three great powers…all the wartime conferences had been based on the existence of three great powers."[280] Essentially, Roosevelt's strategy had been to build a relationship based on trust with the Soviet Union, in order to engender US-Soviet cooperation after WWII. To build this trust and mutual cooperation Roosevelt had planned to give the Soviet Union unconditional aid.[281] In essence, Roosevelt, and subsequently Truman and Byrnes believed that the key to maintaining peace with the Soviets was through negotiation and the extension of "unquestioned" economic assistance.

After World War II ended Truman and Byrnes would reluctantly ascertain that Roosevelt's policy of conciliation with the Soviets was not a pragmatic one. Still, from late 1945 to early 1947 Truman and Byrnes did not have "any definite, consistent and thought out policy," with which to handle the Soviets.[282] In point of fact, both Truman and Byrnes did not want to abandon the possibility of negotiating and maintaining an alliance with the Soviets. At the same time they found it increasingly difficult to ascertain whether the Soviet's belligerent actions were the result of insecurity or a new expansionist ideology. As a result of this uncertainty Byrnes and Truman's policies toward the Soviets, for much of the period prior to the declaration of the Truman

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[280] Charles Bohlen, *The Transformation of American Foreign Policy*, 84-8.

[281] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War: 1941-1947*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 14

Doctrine, were bipolar. That is, they had a tendency to "flip-flop" between policies that confronted and then in the same breath sought to appease the Soviets.

Appeasing the Soviets

The bipolarity of Truman and Byrnes' Soviet policy is evident in the series of convoluted policy decisions that they made in the years immediately after WWII. In many instances Truman and Byrnes would go out of the way to appease the Soviets. For example, in 1945 and 1946 they would attempt to pacify the Soviets by working to establish a system of international controls on atomic weapons, in order to mitigate Soviet fears of an Anglo-American monopoly on atomic power. Likewise, when the Soviets refused to pull their troops out of Iran by the set date in March of 1946, Truman and Byrnes opted to negotiate, sending Byrnes on a diplomatic mission to Moscow to confer directly with Stalin. When the Moscow mission failed, Byrnes proposed that the US pull their troops out of Iran first, in order to "set a good example" for the Soviets. At one point in 1946 Byrnes even granted recognition to the Soviet satellites of Bulgaria and Rumania, rationalizing that a security barrier of friendly states might make the Soviet's less insecure, and thus, easier to deal with.[283]

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[282] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War,* 284

[283] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 280-281

Similarly, when it came to publicly addressing Soviet advances in the Mediterranean, both Byrnes and Truman were conciliatory in their response to the invasions of these vital sovereign nations. Behind closed doors, however, Truman, Byrnes, and the rest of their administration spoke frequently, and with ardent fervor and dismay, about the Soviet's attempts to dominate Turkey, Greece and other vital areas of the Mediterranean. As early as October 1945, Truman expressed his frustration about Soviet advances. In a January 5th, 1946, exchange between Byrnes and Truman, the president asserted that he was "sick of babying the Russians," and that the only language that they understood was that of "divisions and troops, not diplomacy."[284] Still, Truman, though perplexed by the Soviet's aggressive behavior, strove to remain conciliatory, noting that "we were not going to let the public know the extent to which the Russians had tried our patience but that we were going to find some way to get along with the Russians."[285] Thus, the apprehensions, threats and assertions put forth during these private conversations, though indicative of the administrations irritation with the Soviets, were never tangibly acted upon prior to the Truman Doctrine Speech.

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[284] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Decisions*, 522.

[285] Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 245.

Minimally Engaging the Soviets

However, a few isolated incidents indicate that Truman and Byrnes attempted to outwardly confront the Soviets, though only minimally, using organizations such as the UN to indirectly alleviate Soviet pressure. In early 1946, Truman privately urged the Iranians to go to the Security Council and file a formal complaint against the Soviets for impeding on Iranian territory. With the US tacitly backing them, the Iranians brought the Soviets before the UN Security Council, eventually eliciting key territorial concessions. The US's strategy of using the Iranians (and later the British) as a pawn through which US policy could be enacted reoccurred until the declaration of the Truman Doctrine.

Similarly, Truman attempted to incite some reaction from the Soviets via inflammatory speeches. Truman's tacit endorsement of England's former Prime Minister Winston Churchill's infamous "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri on March 5th, 1946 is a principal example of the passive aggressive measures, which Truman used to gauge Soviet intentions.[286] In the Fulton speech, whose contents was privately approved by Truman, Churchill orated:

> From Stettin in the Baltic to Triest in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and Eastern Europe…all these famous cities and populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and all are

[286] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 307-308.

> subject in on form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow.[287]

Churchill went on to explain that the Soviet Union did not want war but wanted "the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines." The fallout from the speech was enormous and many, including *Time Magazine*, saw the speech as "a magnificent trial balloon designed to test the American public's response to the Administration's new "get tough with Russia policy."[288] Indeed, many believed that the speech implied that the US and Britain would be willing to form a formidable Anglo-American alliance if the Soviets did not "behave."

In retrospect, however, Truman and Byrnes preferred less confrontational measures, establishing working groups, economic missions and UN commissions to report on Soviet advances. Thus, throughout late 1945 up until early 1947 there was no coherent declaration of policy that identified the Soviets as a threat. The closest the administration came during those years to a logical policy were a series of top-secret memos in the fall and winter of 1946, which discussed providing both Greece and Turkey with economic and military assistance to counter Soviet advances. In fact, by September 1946, it had become clear to the most influential members of the administration that "the

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[287] John Lewis Gaddis, The *United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 308; Vital Speeches, XII (March 15, 1946), 329-332.

[288] Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 309

time has come when we must decide that we shall resist with all our means at our disposal any Soviet aggression."[289]

Great Britain: The US's Political Puppet

Prior to the declaration of the Truman Doctrine, Truman and Byrnes chose not to take overt action and ameliorate the deteriorating situations in countries threatened by Soviet advances. Instead, as one memo details, they chose to rely on the British to supply the bulk of the military and economic assistance, citing the "treaty" relationship between the Greeks and Britain as their fundamental rationale. In reality, the US was using Britain, just as they had used Iran, to stifle the expansionism of the Soviets without explicitly implicating themselves.

Essentially, Truman could justify relying on the British, because he believed that Soviet aggression was only temporary. Specifically, Truman believed, as Roosevelt had, that the Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin was trustworthy. In fact, even after the Iranian troop crisis Truman continued to adhere to his conception that Stalin could be relied on, noting "I had always held him to be a man of his word..."[290] Likewise, Truman believed that much of the Soviet's "aggression" was the byproduct of post-war domestic turmoil, much like the US was facing. For Truman, the presence of domestic conflict

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[289] 15 August 1946, Acheson to Byrnes, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 840-842.

[290] Deborah Welch Larson , "Problems of Content Analysis in Foreign Policy Research: Notes from the Study of the Origins of Cold War Belief Systems," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Jun., 1988), 246

"might explain some of the things that they had been doing."[291] Similarly, Truman articulated that differences between the Soviets and the US were bound to arise at the end of the war, but "that we could work them out amicably if we gave ourselves time."[292] In essence, Truman was still striving to remain consistent with the beliefs and values of his predecessor, Roosevelt. Thus, in early 1947 Truman and Byrnes, though cognizant of the importance of Greece and Turkey to regional and US security, continued to rely on Britain to maintain the economic and military integrity of Greece and Turkey.

Dean Acheson: Master Manipulator and Creator of the Truman Doctrine

Ultimately, Truman and Byrnes, though obviously steadfast in maintaining the thrust of Roosevelt's conciliatory policies toward the Soviet's, were forced by international events and the conceptions of their closest advisers to reorient their policies. Specifically, it was the coupling of Great Britain's economic collapse and withdrawal from Greece and Turkey in late February with Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson's world vision that warranted a drastic shift in US foreign policy.

The Truman Doctrine, though delivered by President Truman, was the brainchild of one very influential man: Dean Acheson. Acheson, unlike Truman and Byrnes, had a coherent belief system guiding his perceptions of world

[291] Gaddis, *The United States and the Cold War*, 275.

affairs, a system that did not rely on Roosevelt's policy legacy. Thus, early on Acheson had consolidated his perceptions regarding Britain's waning power and the Soviet's devious intentions in Greece and Turkey, thus allowing him to present a formidable argument to Truman, Byrnes and Congress in support of an aid program.

In many ways, Acheson was a realist when it came to international affairs. Fundamentally, Acheson believed that a nation's power lay in its political, economic and military capabilities. For Acheson, US foreign policy was a "grand strategy with which the United States proposes to deal with the main facts—the thrusts and problems they present---of the outside world."[293] Not surprisingly Acheson was convinced that US foreign policy would have to be altered in the post World War II era in order to effectively deal with one particular event in the world system. This event was the "decline and in some cases the disappearance of the great empires of Western Europe and of Japan; and the emergence of the pre-eminent power of the United States and the Soviet Union." Acheson believed that the world order as we once knew it had collapsed after World War I and II. Specifically, the British Empire, whose power had once controlled the political and economic institutions in both Western Europe and her colonies, was now exhausted economically and militarily.

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[292] Gaddis, *The United States and the Cold War*, 275.

Acheson's New World Vision

In lieu of Britain, Acheson was determined to see the US assume the role of world leader. In essence, this new policy would involve the US stepping into the limelight, accepting its place as a world leader and creating "a workable system of free states, which can be defended with military power, incite economic revival and bring about political cohesion." Acheson had first broadcast his beliefs on June 4th, 1946 in his Harvard Club Speech, where he emphasized the urgent need for the US to step up as the world leader.

However, Acheson predicted that several obstacles would prevent the US from accepting its new role as a responsible and benevolent world leader. The first obstacle, and perhaps easiest to remedy was that the US, though materially capable of assuming the role as a world leader, lacked the "experience and discipline," to do so.[294] The second obstacle for Acheson was the isolationist sentiment of the American people. Divided by an ocean from the conflicts of Europe, the US was historically "interested in their own absorbing and immensely profitable affairs, and only secondarily interested in the doings and business of distant peoples."[295]

The US's history of isolationism would prove to be most salient obstacle in the way of Acheson's ideal world vision. In January of 1947,

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[293] Dean Acheson, *Power and Diplomacy*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), 2.

[294] Dean Acheson, *Power and Diplomacy*, 6.

[295] Dean Acheson, *Power and Diplomacy*, 7.

Acheson's worst fears of isolationism were confirmed with the induction of a Republican dominated House (245 Republicans-118 Democrats) and Senate (51 Republicans, 45 Democrats).[296] Elected during November of 1946, the "class of 1947" consisted of a variety of prominent, fiscally responsible and isolationist senators, such as Robert Taft. Essentially, they had been elected on a platform that countered many of Truman's policies, including cuts in government spending, a return to pre-war price levels, and rapid demobilization of the armed forces. Members of Truman's inner circle feared that the new Congress would "carry us back to the political isolation of the 1920s and the economic isolation of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff."[297] George Kennan, the former charge d'affaires in Moscow, and a lecturer at the Naval War College saw these legislators and many of the American's that elected them as a result of an era in which the US had "grown, sheltered by two oceans and prospering in untroubled isolation behind doctrine of no entangling alliances."[298]

British Withdrawal: Final Catalyst for the Truman Doctrine

In the end, it was the tangible withdrawal of British aid, aid that the US had been using as a mechanism to resist the spread of Soviet communism in nations like Greece and Turkey, which necessitated that Truman rework his conceptions and strategies to preserve Western hegemony in the Near and

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[296] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 90-91.

[297] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 91.

[298] George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1967), 169.

Middle East. Ultimately, Truman in lieu of his previous conciliatory policies, latched on to the conceptions and strategies set forth by the man with the most coherent perception of world events: Dean Acheson.

From the day that British withdrawal of aid was announced it was assumed by Dean Acheson and members in the highest levels of the Truman administration that the US would step into the fray and take Britain's place, in order to halt the "Iron Curtain" from descending across Europe. The Director for Near Eastern and African Affairs Loy Henderson perceived that members of the State Department, especially Acheson, had immediately decided on a course of action; that the US would provide economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey. Specifically, when Henderson asked Acheson "whether we were still working on papers bearing on the making of a decision or the execution of one," Acheson replied that it was the latter, and that "under the circumstances there could only be one decision."[299] The only variables that remained, in the eyes of Acheson and his counterparts, were to outline the course of action and how to justify the program to Congress and the American people.[300] Ultimately, the emergent threat of Soviet subjugation in vital regions, the financial collapse of a historical superpower, the burgeoning threat of isolationism in the US, and the strength and coherence of Acheson's world

[299] Dean Acheson, *Present at Creation*, 218.

[300] George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 314-315.

vision, convinced Truman and the entire administration of the necessity of a policy statement like the Truman Doctrine.

Chapter VI

The Origins of the Marshall Plan

Introduction

The winter of 1946-1947 was particularly difficult for the European nations, especially France and England. Colder than normal temperatures and severe droughts coupled with industrial exhaustion from almost five years of war had produced dire economic, social and political conditions. These conditions were so grave that Churchill would characterize Europe as a "rubble-heap, a charnel house, a breeding ground for pestilence, disease and hate."[301] Exacerbating the situation was the emergent balance of payments problem in the nations most ravaged by the war. Specifically, Great Britain's supply of dollars, critical for purchasing American commodities was dwindling, thus endangering not only its capacity to provide basic necessities for Britain's people, but one of America's primary markets for such commodities.

During the post-war era, the US had attempted to help the Europeans circumvent the aforementioned difficulties by providing billions of dollars of piecemeal aid to afflicted countries. From 1945-1947 the US had given 15 billion dollars of aid in order to support foreign countries.[302] In the short-term

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[301] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, Vol. 2, (New York: Doubleday, 1955-56), 110.

[302] The Presidents Economic Mission to Germany and Austria. The Truman Museum and Library, Available Online.

this aid was instrumental in "averting stark tragedy" in Europe. Yet, by 1947 the administration was cognizant that short-term, piecemeal assistance would not be enough to fully rehabilitate Europe's most devastated nations. President Harry S. Truman and his cast of advisers would soon conclude that a "more comprehensive program was needed to achieve the rebuilding of the economy of Europe." [303]

The administration's answer to Europe's economic ills was the European Recovery Plan (ERP), popularly known as the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan, much like earlier aid programs such as the Truman Doctrine, was designed to provide economic assistance to ailing countries in order to safeguard the economic and political environment abroad. However, the similarities stopped there. Unlike former aid programs, the Marshall Plan was comprehensive and would be designed, implemented and overseen by a concert of European nations over a period of four years.

What makes the Marshall Plan an appropriate subject for a study in presidential decision-making is not just how, when or why the administration decided to announce the program to aid Europe. These factors are important and will be discussed, but they are not paramount to our study. Indeed, it is the early emphasis on balancing the European initiative for designing the plan with

[303] Harry S Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, 111.

American control that makes the study of the administration's decision-making process during the formulation of the Marshall Plan program so remarkable.

Phase I: Discussion and Delivery

One of the first official mentions of a program of aid to the European nations came on March 5th in a memo by Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson to the Secretary of War Robert Patterson. Acheson argued that the program of aid to Greece and Turkey, which was on the verge of being presented to Congress, was just the tip of the iceberg when it came to extensive foreign aid programs. According to Acheson, the problems in Greece and Turkey were merely symptoms of a larger economic crisis occurring throughout Europe, especially in Great Britain.[304] In light of this crisis, Acheson had sent instructions to the State-War-Navy Coordination Committee (SWNCC) and the Treasury Department to initiate a study investigating the feasibility and benefits of providing financial, technical and military aid to economically struggling nations.

With Acheson serving as the impetus, the SWNCC met for the first time on March 11th and agreed to create an Ad-Hoc Special Committee to study and report back in three weeks on the problems and benefits of an extensive aid program.[305] Primarily, they were responsible for writing a preliminary report on

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[304] The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of War (Patterson). FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 197.

[305] The Ad-Hoc Committee was composed of three members of rather low rank: William Eddy, Special assistant to the Secretary of State for Research Intelligence; Brigadier General George A. Lincoln of the War Department and Rear Admiral E.T. Woolridge of the Navy Department.

the countries that might require aid from the US in the upcoming months. The report would include information pertaining to the external threats faced by each country, the relevance of those threats to US national security, and the types of aid that the countries would require. Further, the report would have to account for the countries' willingness and ability to help themselves as well as the foreseeable consequences if the US failed to aid them.[306]

Acheson was not the only member of the Truman administration who expressed alarm about Europe's perilous economic situation. In his March 18th and 23rd reports to the President, Herbert Hoover, who had recently returned from an economic mission to Germany and Austria, observed that the world is "currently involved in the most dangerous economic crisis in all history," and that a lack of economic stability was not only damaging from a humanitarian standpoint, but from the standpoint of peace and stability as well.[307]

At the same time, members of government not directly in Truman's inner circle were less accommodating to any plans of additional aid. This line of thought was expressed clearly by John J. McCloy, the president of the International Bank, in his address of April 18th, 1947. McCloy, having heard

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[306] 17 March 1947, Memorandum by the State Department Member, State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee(Hilldring), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 198; Initially, the Committee's work was "peripheral rather than central to the mainstream of policy operations." However, as Joseph Jones later attests, the report produced by this Committee on April 21st would have a major impact on the shape and form of American foreign policy in the months to come, Quoted in Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, (New York: Viking Press, 1955), 200-2.

[307] "The President's Economic Mission to Germany and Austria." The Truman Museum and Library, Available Online.

rumors about a new program of aid wanted to make it clear that the International Bank would not get involved. He stated clearly that the bank "can't and we won't grant loans in order to accomplish political objectives. We can and we will refuse loans where the political uncertainties are so great as to make a loan economically unsound."[308] While the first part of McCloy's statement was tacitly understood by the administration, the second portion was damaging, in that it implied an aversion to providing further aid to protect and bolster marginalized areas. Thus, by early spring 1947, the administration had ascertained that any aid would have to come in the form of grants or "as a national investment in peace and prosperity."[309]

Meanwhile, on April 21st, just three weeks after its first meeting, the Special Committee of the SWNCC produced a report on their assessment of the feasibility of an additional aid program to foreign nations.[310] The report elucidated in clear terms the "balance of payments problem" that would soon emerge in Europe and threaten the continent's economy, with effects that by early 1948 would spread to the US as well. The authors of the study pointed out that in 1947 the US would export at least 16.2 billion dollars of goods and services to the world, while only importing 8.7 billion dollars of goods and

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[308] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 230.

[309] "A letter from Joseph M. Jones to Mr. Acheson suggestion that foreign financial aid should come in the form of grants." The Truman Museum and Library, Available online.

[310] This document attempted to survey the economic, financial and political situations of 12 "critical" countries in Europe by accounting for their gold reserves, their ability to provide for themselves with their

services. Essentially, the US would export at least 7.5 billion dollars more in goods and services than it imported. This excessive exporting on the part of the US, coupled with the lack of exports from Europe would mean that "world-wide misdistribution and shortages will exist in the year ending June 30, 1948."[311]

In light of this threat, the committee emphasized that it was in the US's best interest to promote the revival of production and trade in Europe. This would allow Europe to increase its volume of exports, thus providing it with more dollars to spend in the US market. The committee agreed that economic recovery and expansion in Europe was contingent on an increase in European, especially German, production capabilities. Also they agreed that recovery would be feasible only if the effort was coordinated amongst the European with the common goal of creating and sustaining a healthy and integrated economic system.[312] The committee warned that these steps, though financially costly for the US in the short-term, would assure that long-term security and would accord with the US national interest.

While Acheson and the SWNCC had been hurriedly preparing their assessments of the necessity of foreign aid, Secretary of State Marshall was

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own resources, the state of political tensions and how they will develop, and finally, how much money the US and had already spent in each country.

[311] 21 April 1947, Report of the Special Ad Hoc Committee of the State-War-Navy-Coordinating Committee, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 204-208.

[312] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 204-6.

abroad in Moscow at the Council of Foreign Ministers. While at the conference Marshall and his aides had encountered opposition from the Soviets to any proposals that would strengthen the Western European economy. After almost six weeks and 44 sessions, the Soviets and the Americans had not agreed on a single point.

By the close of the conference Marshall and his advisers believed that the Soviets were purposely trying to block any initiatives that might strengthen the political and economic unity of Europe. Specifically, the Soviets were reluctant to increase unity across Germany's four separate occupied zones in order to facilitate a revival of German production and trade with the rest of Europe.[313] Marshall calculated that the Soviets were attempting to stall European recovery to a point where the economic, and later, political conditions would disintegrate far enough for the Soviets to step in and dominate Germany and other enfeebled European nations.[314] Thus, Marshall determined that the US had little choice but to aid the vulnerable nations of Europe.

In response to the Soviets, Marshall, still in Moscow, cabled George Kennan, then a lecturer at the Naval War College, and instructed him to leave for Washington, DC and set up a Policy Planning Staff to begin studying the

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[313] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 221.

[314] Robert H. Ferrell, *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy: Marshall*, (New York: Cooper Square, 1966), 67-70.

problems of an extensive European aid program.[315] Regarding this moment in history, Truman recalls that Marshall's reports from Moscow "confirmed my conviction that there was no time to lose in finding a method for the revival of Europe."[316] Marshall didn't stop there, and immediately upon his return to the United States on April 28th, he delivered a radio address proclaiming:

> The recovery of Europe has been far slower than had been expected. Disintegrating forces are becoming evident. *The patient is sinking while the doctors deliberate…whatever action is possible to meet these pressing problems must be taken without delay.*[317]

Marshall was not the only member of the State Department trying to rally Congressional, public and administrative support for an extensive aid program to "save" what was left of Europe. In Acheson's May 8th speech in Cleveland, Mississippi, a speech that some have called the "Prologue to the Marshall Plan," he pointed out that economic reconstruction and recovery in Europe, though necessary, could not be accomplished on a nation by nation or piecemeal basis. European recovery, insisted Acheson, would have to be dealt with holistically. He further emphasized that there were numerous reasons the US should support such aid, including preserving national security by preventing "totalitarian regimes" from taking root; the balance of payments problem and the emergent humanitarian crisis in Europe. Acheson pointed out that the US

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[315] George Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), 328.

[316] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, 112

[317] Editorial Note, FRUS 1947 Vol. III, 219; Department of State Bulletin, May 11 1947; Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 223; author added italics

would not be "bailing out" the European nations. Indeed, the aid would be ensuring the stability of the American economy. Specifically, he noted that "if our foreign markets were to be cut off sharply as a result of the foreign inability to buy the result might be extremely serious to the domestic economy and employment."[318] Put simply, the United States was the only county that had the capabilities to execute and oversee such a program because America's industries, infrastructure and financial institutions were the only ones that did not take a direct hit during the war.

Acheson's speech, though positively received by his immediate audience was not given much attention in the US by the media and the public. However, the speech received a lot of positive attention in Europe, probably due to the fact that Acheson had informed three of his friends, who happened to be reporters in Britain, of the importance of his speech.[319] Back in Washington DC Joseph Jones**,** Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, would note that the speech, acted "within the State Department and other government agencies…as a powerful stimulus, and instruction to staff work and discussions already in progress."[320]

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[318] Draft Outline Notes for Mr. Acheson's speech before Delta Council, May 8, Drafted April 23, 1947. Available://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/marshall/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-04-23&documentid=1&studycollectionid=mp&pagenumber=1

[319] Draft Outline of Notes for Mr. Acheson's speech before the Delta Council, May 8, Drafted April 23 1947, Available: http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/marshall/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1947-04-23&documentid=1&studycollectionid=mp&pagenumber=1; Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 211-213.

[320] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks,* 212-213.

The staff work that Jones was probably referring to would have been the effort by George Kennan's newly established Policy Planning Staff (PPS) to produce a coherent study of the types and quantity of aid that the European nations would need for both short term survival and long-term rehabilitation. This task, given its broad scope, was a formidable one for a staff which had not been formally established until May 2nd, consisted only of six members, and met only three times before it issued its preliminary report on May 23rd.[321] According to accounts by both Kennan and Jones, the initial PPS report was based on studies and suggestions made by the Ad-Hoc Committee of the SWNCC, suggestions from the State Department's Economic Office and judgments the staff had made after examining Acheson's May 8th speech.[322] The report strove to create a set of principles, which would be used when "Framing the master plan for US assistance in Europe."[323] In essence, Kennan and his staff were merely drawing up a "plan for a plan." [324]

The preliminary report of May 23rd began by clarifying that the PPS did not believe that Europe's social, economic and political problems were the result of communism, but instead the result of almost a decade of war. In light

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[321] George Kennan , *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, 328; Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 240-241; A second, more thoroughly researched report would be released in July of 1947.

[322] The members of the PPS included George Kennan, Joseph E. Johnson, Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel III, Jacques Reinstein, Ware Adams and Carleton Savage

[323]16 May 1947, Memo by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 220; Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks,* 241; George Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, 329.

[324]Joseph Jones, The *Fifteen Weeks,* 241.

of this realization, Kennan and his staff recommended that "The American effort to aid Europe should be directed not to the combating of communism as such but to the restoration of the economic health and vigor of European society."[325] Kennan's staff calculated that if the US was able to address and solve the economic problems afflicting Europe, the continent would be less susceptible to communist and totalitarian influences.

In order to "root out" the economic problems of Europe the US would have to approach the problem from both short and long term perspectives. In the short term Europe would have to initiate a "crash program" to improve European coal production and eliminate other "bottlenecks" in the production of steel, agricultural and other commodities. The short term program would have to be initialized as soon as feasibly possible in order to have a positive psychological effect on the demoralized countries of Europe, while concurrently revealing to America the depth of Europe's difficulties. Moreover, without some sort of short term solution to boost morale, Europe might "disintegrate" thus making the long term problem irrelevant.

Due to the complexity of Europe's economic woes, the PPS's plan for the long term was far more elaborate. Kennan's group suggested that the long term program would have to be supported by the US but initiated, planned and

[325] 23 May 1947, Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan) to the Undersecretary of State (Acheson), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 225.

executed by *a concert* of European nations. The staff clarified that such a program would be proposed by the US, but in the end it would be the:

> Business of the Europeans. The formal initiative must come from Europe; the program must be evolved in Europe…the role of this country should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of the later support of such a program by financial and other means at European request.[326]

In particular, Kennan's group emphasized that the European effort must be a *joint* effort, not a series of isolated and nationally interested appeals from individual nations for large sums of aid. This approach was preferred by Kennan's staff for numerous reasons. For one thing, a joint effort would promote economic integration, multilateral trade and cooperation in Europe: all conditions that had been lacking since before the war. Also, the US Congress would not accept another program of interim and piecemeal aid that "failed to get at the heart of the problem."[327] In the end, as Kennan recalled, the PPS's first memo was instrumental in introducing three principles that would become integral to the final Marshall Plan; first, the necessity of European initiative, second, the extension of an offer to all of Europe, including the Soviets, and third, the notion that a revival in Germany's production capabilities was essential to promote European recovery.

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[326] 23 May 1947, Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan) to the Undersecretary of State (Acheson), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 225.

[327] George Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, 340.

The May 23rd PPS Memo was not the only important document produced that month by a key State Department member. On May 27th William Clayton, the Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs, delivered a memo to Acheson outlining his analysis of the European economic situation. Clayton had penned the memo on his return trip from Europe, where he had been in close contact with the leaders of many of the Western European nations. He warned that:

> We grossly underestimated the destruction to the European economy by the war…Europe is steadily deteriorating. The political crisis reflects the economic…without further prompt and substantial aid from the United States, economic, social and political disintegration will overwhelm Europe.

Unlike his peers, Clayton didn't hone in on the ramifications of Europe's disintegration for world peace and US security. Instead, Clayton emphasized the disastrous effect European "disintegration" would have on the US economy, with regards to unemployment, economic depression, and the accumulation of a "heavily unbalanced budget on the background of a mountainous war debt."[328]

Clayton felt that in order to rectify Europe's' economic problems the United States would have to organize a policy that would guarantee the provision of US aid to Europe. He argued that there was no need for a commission to study national assets and liabilities in order to determine if the

[328] 27 May 1947, Memorandum by the Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs(Clayton) FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 230-32.

US was capable of providing such aid. Instead, he insisted that the US had enough resources and the production capability to supply sufficient aid and that the American people merely had to "draw in their own belts just a little" and organize a fiscal policy that would efficiently distribute US goods and surpluses in Europe. The aid, which would come mostly in grant form, would consist primarily of commodities that were already in surplus in the US such as food, coal, cotton and tobacco. Not unlike Kennan, Clayton suggested that the grant should be based on a European wide plan, worked out by the European nations in order to facilitate cooperation, multilateral trade and mutual assistance with regards to commodities shortfalls. Clayton emphasized that "Europe cannot recover from this war and again become independent if her economy continues to be divided into many small watertight compartments as it is today." Yet, unlike Kennan, Clayton was wary of leaving the intricacies and initiative for such a vital program solely in the European's hands, given their less than impressive track record for cooperation. In fact, the final line of his memo read "the United States must run this show."[329]

Just a day later on May 28th, the heads of offices in the State Department assembled in order to talk about the PPS and Clayton Memos. During this meeting there was an extensive discussion about whether the US or the Europeans should assume the bulk of the responsibility for drafting the

[329] 27 May 1947, Memorandum by the Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs(Clayton) FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 230-32.

recovery program. Kennan argued, as he had in the PPS memo, that this was a European problem and thus warranted European generated initiatives and solutions. Alternately Clayton and the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Willard Thorp both argued that the US would need to play an extensive role in the drafting of such a program because the complexity of the economic situation coupled with the historical inability of the European nations to agree with each other. It was determined that the US would need to find a way of "balancing the dangers of appearing to force the American way on Europe with the ultimate danger of failure and economic collapse." At the end of the meeting, Marshall's assistant, Charles Bohlen stepped in and suggested that the US inform Europe that the US would only be willing to furnish aid provided there was concrete evidence that the Europeans were producing a plan adhering to the principles of cooperation, multilateral aid and joint programming originally set forth by the United States. Still, despite the various views of the situation set forth in this meeting, no coherent statement of policy was agreed upon.[330]

A clear and public statement of the State Department's preliminary policy on an aid program to Europe would not be articulated until George Marshall's June 5th commencement speech at Harvard University. The speech, which was similar in character to Acheson's speech at the Delta Council in May,

[330] 29 May 1947, Meeting of the Heads of Office in the Department of State, "Summary of Discussion and Problems of relief and rehabilitation and reconstruction of Europe, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 234-236.

emphasized the failing European economy and America's overwhelming responsibility to lend assistance toward rebuilding Europe. Thus far, US aid to Europe had been inadequate because of its piecemeal nature. What Europe needed was a comprehensive and preventative recovery program that would address the economic problems of Europe not on national basis, but as a systemic and supra-national problem. The US government, given the healthy state of the nation's economy, would have to be at the forefront of such an effort. Yet, Marshall insisted that it would have to be Europe, not the US that would take the initiative to formulate the plan. Marshall stated:

> It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative, I think must come from Europe. The role of this country should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of later support of such program so far as it is practical to do so.[331]

In essence, Marshall was stating that the US would support a recovery program, if and only if it was based upon a cooperative plan derived by the afflicted European nations. The US would play an advisory role during the drafting phase and in the end, provide what aid it could, as long as the plan abided by the principles that the US had set forth. There would be no more "individual shots in the arm" of aid to Europe. These shots had been

[331] Press Release Issued by the Department of State, June 4, 1947. FRUS 1947 Vol. III, 237-39.

ineffective and Congress would no longer approve them.[332] In summary, the principles as they were set forth in the Marshall Plan and other supporting documents involved stressing the importance of European collaboration in terms of resource sharing, joint programming, multilateralism, maximum self help, and the revival of German production.[333]

Part II: Minimal US Intervention and the European Initiative

Marshall's declaration at Harvard set off a chain of events that had, as Truman would call it, the effect of immediately "electrifying the free world."[334] Prior to Marshall's appearance at Harvard, Acheson had again contacted three of his friends in the British press, informing them that a groundbreaking speech was going to be made by Marshall and that it would be in Britain's (as well as Europe's) best interest to forward the contents of the message to the British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin immediately after its release.[335] Bevin, along with Frances' Foreign Minister, George Bidault responded almost immediately to Marshall's address, and expressed interest in a joint European Recovery Plan (ERP).

By June 17th the UK and France had already taken "initiative," holding "exploratory talks" in Paris regarding the organization of a European

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[332] 12 June 1947, Secretary of State to the French Embassy, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 249-250.

[333] Michael J. Hogan, "Paths to Plenty: Marshall Planners and the Debate over European Integration, 1947-1948," *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3. (Aug., 1984), 339-341.

[334] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, 112.

conference to discuss European wide recovery. Both Britain and France thought it would be unwise to organize the program within the ECE, given the likelihood that the Soviets would not cooperate. However, both did express interest in using the ECE at a later date if the Soviets agreed to cooperate with the general guidelines of the program. Marshall concurred with their assessment, noting that:

> While the use of a UN body whose terms of reference directly cover this type of problem would be desirable and in accord with our long range objectives toward the UN, we share the fear that effective and prompt action might be very difficult there, whether because of the inefficiency of a new and untried body or because of a continuance of the obstructive tactics pursued by eastern countries… [336]

Ultimately, Bevin and Bidault extended an invitation to the Soviet Union's Foreign Minister Molotov to come to Paris and discuss the prospective program. Still, both the British and French delegates were hoping that the Soviets would refuse to participate all-together.[337] Yet, in spite of their hopes, the Soviets did accept the invitation, and Molotov scheduled a visit to Paris for June 27.

Meanwhile, members of the State Department were determining the type and quantity of support that the US could provide Europe**.** Kennan insisted that an extensive background study on European Recovery had to be

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[335] Reporters were Leonard Miall of the BBC; Malcolm Muggeridge; Stewart McCall; Names from Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 212-213.

[336] 20 June 1947, Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 263-264.

[337] 18 June 1947, The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 258.

conducted. The study would include an analysis of the availability of essential commodities and services in Europe such as coal, electrical power, steel, food, inland transport, shipping and shipbuilding.[338] On June 24th the White House issued a statement calling for a careful study and report on the effects of the provision of foreign aid on the US's domestic interests and economy. Three committees were formed to carry out this task. The first, the Krug Committee, which was established under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior Julius Albert Krug, would assess the state of the US's natural resources. The Nourse Committee, which would be composed of members from the Council of Economic Advisers, would study the impact of further aid on the US economy. Finally, a non-partisan Committee would be responsible for ascertaining the amount and quantity of US resources that could be reasonably provided currently for assistance overseas. They would also play and advisory role to the President.[339]

Perhaps America's largest effort to "lend a helping hand" to the Europeans began on July 25th with the establishment of the State Department's Committee on the European Recovery Program.[340] The Committee, chaired by Thorp and composed of representatives from every office of the department

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[338] 24 June 1947, Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff(Kennan) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs(Thorp), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 267-268.

[339] 22 June 1947, Statement issued to the Press by the White House, FRUS 1947, Vol.III, 264-266.

[340] Hogan 340; The Committee was also referred to as the Recovery Commission, Board of Directors and the Tuesday\Thursday Group.

concerned with recovery, met every Tuesday and Thursday in order to consider Marshall's proposal. Their meetings, which lasted well into July and August, produced consensus on a variety of issues, like the need to revive European production and integrate economies; that the US should maintain a "veto" over the distribution of aid and the direction of the program; that the US should make bilateral agreements with each country professing adherence to principles of joint programming, mutual aid and self help; that the US should focus in the short term on commodity assistance to avoid burdening US taxpayers and to jumpstart recovery; and finally, that the World Bank would be responsible for making long term loans to facilitate modernization.[341]

In spite of the early consensus among members of the Committee, differences did emerge between two groups. The first group, known as the "Traders," felt strongly that the key to European recovery laid in increasing intra-European trade as quickly as possible. Trade, they said, could increase as soon as the European economies were integrated, and non-convertible currencies and bilateral agreements were replaced with a "currency clearing scheme" and a customs unit. On the other hand, the "Producers" argued that the Traders were thinking too far ahead, and that intra-European trade could not be increased without first reviving and restoring the production capabilities of Europe's pre-existing industries. This could be accomplished by increasing

[341] Michael J. Hogan , "Paths to Plenty," 340.

production in bottlenecked areas of the economy, like coal, transportation, agriculture and power. In the end, a compromise favoring the Producers was reached after significant discussion during the Meetings of June 25th, and July 1, 3, 8, 10 and 15th. In the long run, the Committee decided that it would indeed be beneficial to adopt a higher level of intra-European, multilateral trade. However, in the immediate short run, three things had to happen: first, the creation of a supranational organization, whose purpose would be to allocate scarce resources, increase production, set production targets, and coordinate national recovery plans; second, faster integration in coal, transport and power; and finally, the provision of grants by the US for essential commodities and capital equipment, which could be used to restore previously existing industries and reduce bottlenecks.[342]

From June 27th to July 3rd, while the US was continuing work in their Committees, the French, British and Soviets were meeting in Paris. From the beginning of the Paris sessions it was readily apparent to all present that the Soviets were not going to be easy to bargain with. Immediately, the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov illustrated his "obstructionist and delaying tendencies" by proposing a set of unreasonable demands to the US.[343] Molotov told the delegates to demand that the US provide the Europeans with an exact

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[342] Michael J. Hogan , "Paths to Plenty," 341-44.

[343] 4 July 1947, The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Douglas) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 310-312.

monetary figure that they were willing to contribute to European recovery. Both the British and French delegates were strongly against this proposal, insisting that this would be the equivalent of asking the US for a blank check.[344]

By July 3rd if was apparent to the American Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Lewis W. Douglas, as well as to Bevin and Bidault that the Soviets, because of their inability to compromise, would not be participating in the joint conference on European recovery. In fact, just two days prior on July 1st the Soviets threatened the British and the French, stating that if the Soviet plan was not adopted, and an alternate plan was issued by the French and British in its place then there would be "Grave consequences." Yet despite this threat the British and French replied that they would carry on as planned, and by the end of July 3rd invitations had been sent to 22 European countries, inviting them to Paris to formulate a European Recovery Plan.

On July 12th 16 European nations gathered in Paris for the opening of the Conference on European recovery.[345] The Soviet satellites, Poland and Czechoslovakia, had originally stated their willingness to be involved, but the Soviet Union had insisted that their satellites not participate.[346] At the first meeting Bevin was elected President and Sir Oliver Franks was appointed as the

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[344] 29 June 1947, The Ambassador in France(Caffery) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 299-301; and 1 July 1947, The Ambassador in France(Caffery) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 303-4; Robert H. Ferrell, *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy: Marshall*, 119.

[345] The nations included Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom

Chair. One of the conferences' first actions was to organize a Committee on European Economic Cooperation (CEEC), which would be a forum integral to the formulation of the recovery plan. By the end of the first week an Executive Steering Committee composed of the UK, France, the Netherlands, Norway and Italy had been established to direct the conferences work. Four technical committees were also established to study key economic sectors such as food, agriculture, power, steel, coal and transportation. A plan of work, outlining objectives and types of statistics required to justify an aid program was also composed, along with a set of technical questionnaires prepared by each group. These questionnaires would then be distributed to each country, filled out and returned for analysis.[347]

The first week of work in the CEEC produced positive and acceptable results. The countries appeared to be working together and taking the type of initiative Marshall had outlined in his speech. However, the honey-moon period ended quickly. Soon, reports were flowing into the State Department that relations at the conference were turning sour. In particular, the French and the British were attempting to dominate the Plan's form, thus impeding the drafting of the program.[348] The first problem emerged with the French and their

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[346] 11 July, 1947, The Ambassador in the Soviet Union(Smith) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 327.

[347] 20 July 1947, Ambassador Caffery to Marshall, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 333-335; Michael J. Hogan, "Paths to Plenty," 345-46.

[348] Michael J. Hogan, "Paths to Plenty," 346; July 1947 The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 333-335.

preexisting Monnet Plan for industrial re-equipment and industrialization.[349] The French wanted very much to incorporate their plan into the ERP, but modifications made by the Committee to the plan were unacceptable to them. They argued that the modifications would "revive Germany" at the monetary expense of the French. In the end, the French would not "abandon their support for a recovery scheme that emphasized industrial reconstruction and modernization, or modify the Monnet Plan."[350]

To exacerbate the situation, in late July members of the Benelux delegations and the Swiss, Swedes and Italians turned against the Monnet Plan, claiming that it did little to help the smaller countries and promote the type of European Unity that Marshall had delineated in his speech.[351] Moreover, it would allow the larger countries, like England and France, to monopolize on American assistance, and later, to dominate the European economy after recovery was completed.[352] In lieu of the Monnet Plan, the Benelux delegates proposed a plan that would use Europe's existing production capacity, including Germany's industries, to stimulate recovery. This would involve reviving pre-war markets in Germany, balancing budgets in various European countries, establishing realistic exchange rates and removing trade barriers.[353]

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[349] John Gimbel, *The Origins of the Marshall Plan*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1976), 225.

[350] Michael J. Hogan, "Paths to Plenty," 346.

[351] Benelux refers to Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg

[352] 20 and 27 July, Caffery to Marshall, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 333-335, 338-339.

[353]Michael J. Hogan, "Paths to Plenty," 347-348.

During this same period, July 20-25th, the British, like the French, were being equally implacable. The British were unwavering in their refusal to support any initiatives that might possibly compromise their already enfeebled trade and payments position. By late July and early August, the British were in severe financial trouble, with their dollar reserves nearing rock bottom and decreasing by at least $176 million a week. Put simply, the British would not and could not support any moves to liberalize trade and payments when they were already in desperate need of bilateral arrangements to stunt their trade deficit and stop their reserves from shrinking to nothing. Thus, all of the initiatives proposed by the Benelux group, initiatives that at the time seemed to fuse the lines of thought of the American Producers and Traders, were vetoed by either the French or the British delegates, leaving the conference at a stalemate on most issues.[354]

The US, though well aware of the deadlock in the CEEC, did not intervene. That is not to say, however, that the State Department was dormant. Studies were still being conducted and compiled, especially by Kennan's PPS. On July 23rd Kennan's PPS issued a report to Marshall entitled "Aspects of the European Recovery Program from the US standpoint." The 62 page study was an extension of the PPS's previous study that had been submitted in May and was prefaced by a note from Kennan stating:

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[354] Michael J. Hogan, "Paths to Plenty," 349.

> This report constitutes a preliminary estimate…these considerations are set forth tentatively, and they should be accepted with caution; for the factual material on which they are based is still far from complete.

The crux of the problem, according to the report was to "to make available to lead countries those imports necessary to reestablish their economies on a pay-as-you go basis."[355] This new study examined further the US's interests in European recovery, what type of program would be successful, considerations regarding American relations to the program, the demands of the individual countries, and the prospects for private American investment in such a program.[356]

In principle, the report prescribed that US aid would be directed toward reviving industries, such as coal, that will help more than one country at a time, while simultaneously lessening European reliance on American aid. In the final analysis, the PPS determined that the program would only be costly for the US and its taxpayers in the short-term. The benefits, however, would be long-term, affecting issues such as the maintenance of the UN and the maintenance of a balanced world order. As the report pointed out in the final lines:

> The older cultural centers of Europe are the meteorological centers in which much of the climate of international life is produced and from which it precedes. Until hope has been restored in Europe, there can be no real revival of confidence and security in the affairs of the world at large.[357]

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[355]Certain Aspects of the European Recovery Problem. The Truman Museum and Library.

[356] George Kennan, *Memoirs:1925-1950*, 352; May 23rd preliminary report found in FRUS 1947 III pp 223.

Part III: US Intervention and the Birth of the Marshall Plan

By the beginning of August a dark cloud of American doubt had descended over the conference in Paris. In general, the US observers in Paris were disappointed with what they saw. The Benelux Proposal, which had coherently fused the visions of the Traders and the Producers, had been thrown out because of British and French inflexibility. Cooperation and joint programming had all but broken down as individual countries were now, in lieu of a coherent plan, beginning to compile exactly what Marshall and Kennan had warned against: individual and uncoordinated lists of separate national requirements for recovery. Clayton, in an attempt to halt the compilation of individual lists, clearly elucidated for the Belgian Prime Minister what US requirements for aid would be. They included four principles that had been repeated to the delegates numerous times: a joint survey of requirements; measures of self help; an increase in trade; anything else they can think of that will garner American public and Congressional support. [358]

On August 6th, increasingly discouraged by the Conference's progress, Clayton and the Ambassadors Douglas and Caffery sent a memo to Marshall and the new Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett expressing their concerns. In the memo the men articulated that it was time for the US to offer the European's a degree of "friendly assistance" in drafting the ERP. The men

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[357] Certain Aspects of the European Recovery Problem. The Truman Museum and Library.

suggested that, for now, the aid be confined to an "informal" and "appropriate" presentation to the Paris Conference of "our views covering a few basic undertakings by each country."[359] In short, they felt that the output of food and coal should be maximized, that currencies should be stabilized and proper rates of exchange fixed. The US representatives in Europe also felt that the need for Europe to increase production, distribution and exchange of goods between countries was a principal condition for US aid, and should therefore be repeatedly communicated to the conference.

Marshall replied on August 11th, that a degree of friendly aid would be beneficial but that he and others Washington worried that aid in drafting would look like the US was pre-approving the aid program before it even got to Congress. Marshall was hesitant to convey this impression given the "feeling in Congress…that they must not be presented on a crisis basis with a virtual commitment to any precise course of action as they claim was done in the case of Greece and Turkey."[360] In essence, the US could not offer a great deal of assistance, for fear that they would look like they were dictating and pre-approving the Europeans plan.

Shortly thereafter, John D. Hickerson, the Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs, sent a memo to Marshall, which reiterated the need

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[358] 31 July 1947, The Ambassador in France to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 341-342.

[359] 6 August 1947, The Ambassador in France to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 343-345.

[360] 11 August 1947, Secretary of State to the Embassy in France, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 350-351.

for the US government to extend a helping hand to European countries in drafting the program. He emphasized that any assistance would be helpful, because in its current form the ERP would not be approved by Congress. Hickerson, cognizant of Marshall's concerns, offered a feasible alternative to direct US intervention. Hickerson believed that the US should offer to provide assistance by informally reading the first draft of the plan for the purposes of "clarification" and to make sure that it is in a form that Congress will be able to "digest" and understand. When doing this, however, the US must emphasize that they are not endorsing the plan, just facilitating a smoother presentation to the US Congress.[361] The Europeans had to bear in mind that the "US and the President are in no sense committed until the completed plan is reviewed, carefully examined, approved and presented by them to Congress." Moreover, Hickerson emphasized that the risks involved with helping the Europeans with the plan were minor in comparison to the failure of the plan to pass through Congress.[362]

As the month of August drew on it became increasingly apparent that a coherent and effective program of aid was a necessity if Europe was to survive the upcoming months. An August 14th Policy Planning Memo cautioned that without a workable European Recovery Program (ERP) before the end of the

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[361] 11 August, 1947 Secretary of State to the Embassy in France, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 350-35.

[362] 11 August 1947, Memorandum by the Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs to Marshall, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 351-356.

year, Europe would disintegrate. The PPS warned that in a worst case scenario a series of financial collapses might actually trigger the economic isolation of key European nations. Specifically, the PPS estimated that Britain would face financial crisis by mid-October, and the French, Italians and Austrians would meet a similar fate in early 1948. [363]

The alarm bells being sounded by the delegates in Europe and by Kennan's PPS did not fall on deaf ears in Washington. By mid-August Lovett and Marshall were both aware that something would have to be done to ensure that Congress would accept the ERP. [364] In particular, Marshall and Lovett were worried that they were going to receive from the Europeans exactly what they did not want: "A European Shopping List" or an "itemized bill summing up perspective deficits." [365] A note from Lovett to Marshall conveys the depths of Lovett's, and the State Department's concerns over the prospective plan. Lovett wrote that the European plan was scheduled for submission in 7 days, yet the only thing that had been produced was 16 separate shopping lists that Congress would not approve. In order to avoid a potential disaster Lovett suggested two avenues of action. First, that Lt. Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of State and Kennan be sent to Europe

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[363] 14 August 1947, Memorandum Prepared by the Policy Planning Staff, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 360-363.

[364] Dean Acheson had retired

[365] 14 August 1947, The Acting Secretary of State (Lovett) to the Embassy in France (Caffery and Clayton), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 357-359.

to "update" Clayton and Caffery on the Department's position, and second, that the submission deadline for the ERP be extended by at least two weeks.[366]

Policy makers and administrators in Washington, DC, cognizant of the need for urgency with regards to an ERP, met on August 22nd to discuss the State Department's overall position on the Paris Conference.[367] Regarding providing more "friendly aid" to the CEEC, the members decided that the Europeans would need to decrease projected aid requirements and show more effort at cooperation before the US stepped in. The US would be willing to "screen" the reports prior to their submission, and even, if need be, push the deadline back from September 1st to mid-September. From the Department's point of view a delayed submission of the ERP was preferable to a total rejection due to time constraints.

By the end of August and the beginning of September it was clear to members of the State Department that they would have to make a renewed and unified effort to bring the European CEEC nations' wishes in line with US expectations. During the final week of August the State Departments team of economists, known as the "Friendly Aid Boys," arrived in Paris to review the CEEC's technical reports.[368] What they found was discouraging. The reports

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[366] 24 August 1947, The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State at Petropolis Brazil, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 373-374.

[367] 22 August 1947, Memorandum by Lt. Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel, III, Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of State (Lovett), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 369-372; Present at the meeting were Bonesteel, Bohlen, Kennan, Jackson Kindleberger, Hickerson, Swihart.

[368] Information from Michael J. Hogan, "Paths to Plenty," 354.

were unacceptable to these expert economists and a rejection by Congress seemed all but inevitable.

On August 30th the American representatives met with the CEEC's Executive Committee for almost three hours. During the meeting, Clayton and Caffery did not sugarcoat their disappointment with the progress of the CEEC's plan thus far. For one thing, the plan's preliminary estimate of 29.9 billion dollars in aid was far too large for Congress or America to digest. The presentation of such a figure was, in the eyes of the American delegates, more evidence that the plan was based on individual nations' assessments, not on a cooperative effort to pool resources, maximize productivity and increase trade. Clayton and Caffery remonstrated to the CEEC that for the plan to be accepted the program would have to be the result of a cooperative effort aimed at reducing the amount of foreign assistance necessary until Europe's economy could be self-sufficient. Without evidence of the prior, it would be impossible for the US Congress to approve funding for the ERP.

Come September little changed in the Europeans' attitudes toward the ERP, in spite of the firm warnings issued by the American delegates and Friendly Aid Boys. The British were still adamantly opposed to any plan that might subject their financial and trade policies, or their standard of living to supra-national control. Likewise, the French would not acquiesce and accept any changes to their Monnet Plan. Even the Scandinavians were causing

problems by refusing to engage in any plan that might "circumvent" the UN. As a whole, the individual members of the conference were still reluctant to coordinate their planning in order to increase productivity and make a joint assessment of additional needs.

On September 4th Kennan produced a pivotal memo describing what he saw during his visit to Paris and how he thought the conference's failures could be rectified. For Kennan, the European conference reflected "all the weaknesses, escapism, and paralysis of a region caught by war in the midst of serious problems of long term adjustment and sadly torn by hardship, confusion and outside pressures." Each individual country had some "illness," that according to Kennan was infecting the conference like a virus and adding to its failure. The British were "truly sick" and "incapable of viewing her own situation realistically," especially with regards to standards of living. Britain's ills, however, were not just confined to the island; they were "endemic among all governments in one degree or another." For example, even the Scandinavian's were "pathologically nervous about the Soviets."

According to Kennan's analysis, the US would have to step in and decide what was best for Europe. The US would have to decrease and edit the aid estimates, as well as edit the document itself because "Europe is only partially capable of making, on her own behalf…and within the time which the circumstances allow, the effort which the Harvard speech envisioned." Timing,

to Kennan, was also of the utmost importance. Waiting for the next session of Congress to approve the edited aid program would be impossible, as many of the European countries would succumb to financial collapse in that time frame. As a result, the US would have to develop and implement a short-term aid program, without European solicitation, which would "buy the US time," to determine the needs and form of a long-term aid program.[369]

Kennan's memo had a powerful effect on the State Department members in the US. The Department took its first steps to take control of the plan on September 7th by pleading with the home governments of the 16 European nations to edit the reports. Specifically, they wanted the reports to include the American "essentials," which had been stressed time after time by the representatives in Europe.[370] The State Department also urged the participating governments to postpone the reports release (originally scheduled for September 15th) so that the general and technical reports could be edited. Finally, the State Department urged that the report, when released, be deemed

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[369] 4 September 1947, Director of Policy Planning Staff, FRUS 1947 Vol. III, 397-405; See also Michael J. Hogan, "Paths of Plenty," 356.

[370] 7 September 1947, The Acting Secretary of State to Diplomatic Representatives Accredited to the Countries Participating in the Conference of European Economic Cooperation and to the United States Political Advisor to Germany, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 412-413; the seven essentials included an independent and working European economy in four years without outside aid; continued reduction of outside aid until elimination; Demonstrated progress toward achieving production goals; Reactivation of pre-existing facilities for production; Stabilization of currencies, maintenance of proper exchange rates; Facilitation of multilateral trade and decrease of tariffs and trade barriers; and the establishment of a multilateral organization that will review and assess the progress of governments participating in the program.

"preliminary," in order to clarify to Congress that it could be amended by American economic experts.

Just two days later, on September 9th, in a meeting of its newly established Advisory Steering Committee (ASC) the State Department formally adopted the position that the US would have to openly intervene in the CEEC's planning body.[371] The ASC rationalized that the CEEC's plan could not and would not be supported by the US Congress, thus necessitating US action to create a viable plan. To do so, the ASC established a series of subcommittees that would be dispatched to Paris in order to bring the CEEC's plan in line with the US essentials.[372] Moreover, the US representatives decided to officially extend the submission deadline through September and insist that the report produced be called "preliminary." When the reports were done, the conference would adjourn and the reports would be reviewed by officials in Washington. If the reviewers deemed it necessary, the European representatives would reconvene during late October in Washington to discuss further alterations.[373]

In the final days of the Conference the US representatives, including the "Friendly Aid Boys," worked closely with the Europeans to correct the individual and joint reports. Caffery, Clayton and Douglas held discussion on

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[371] The ASC was established, after Lovett's August 29th letter (FRUS 440) in order to facilitate the coordination of recovery policies among the different departments and the executive branch.

[372] Michael J. Hogan, "Paths of Plenty," 356.

[373] 20 September 1947, The Ambassador in The United Kingdom(Douglas) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 441-442.

policy issues with the heads of the European delegations while the Friendly Aid Boys worked closely with the technical committees to realistically reappraise and revise their reports. Even the preamble to the ERP was revised to make it more "digestible" to the US Congress.

By September 17th it seemed, at least to Caffery, that America's friendly aid had come to fruition. Caffery reported to Marshall that the:

> New provisions are satisfactory and in some case exceed, from the standpoint of the firmness of our commitments, our expectations…in their work the representatives of the 16 European nations have blazed a new path in the history of Europe, if not the history of the world. [374]

On September 22nd the report was signed by the 16 European nations and sent to the State Department for review. The Conference for European Recovery went on recess while the report was analyzed in the United States.

The European delegates reconvened in Washington, DC during the week of October 22nd to consult with the US representatives on the report. The Europeans wanted constant reassurance that the aid program would not infringe upon their individual sovereignties, that the US would not control local currency from sales of American commodities, and that the amount of aid provided would be sufficient to cover all their deficits.[375] The US, however, refused to reassure the Europeans of anything. Instead, they 'got tough' with the Europeans, noting that most of the assistance would come, if it came, in the

[374] 17 September 1947, the Ambassador in France to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 334-347.

form of commodities and that purchases outside of the US with US dollars would be limited. Furthermore, they emphasized that the level of aid had been drastically reduced from the proposed figure and the Europeans would have to decrease the consumption and standards of living for a short period.[376]

The end result of the DC conference when it adjourned in early November was that the "Marshall Planners had simply lectured the Europeans on American requirements for aid."[377] A few last minute changes were made to the report, especially with regards to sections about increasing production in Europe. As one CEEC official later recalled, the Marshall Planners just made the report as "attractive as possible for presentation to Congress." The final approval for the European Recovery Program, or Marshall Plan, occurred in the Senate on March 13th, and then later in the House on March 31st.[378] On April 3rd, 1948 Truman would announce the passage of the Marshall Plan, or the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948.[379]

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[375] 22 October 1947, The Chairman of the CEEC Washington Delegation (Franks) to the Under Secretary of State (Lovett), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 446-450.

[376] 3 November 1947, The Under Secretary of State (Lovett) to the Chairman of the CEEC Washington Delegation (Franks), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 461-463.

[377] Michael J. Hogan, "Paths of Plenty," 363.

[378] Robert H. Ferrell, *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy: Marshall*, 132.

[379] Public Law 472, 80th Congress, 2d Session, Approved April 3, 1948. Title I of this law was called the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, and dealt with the proposed ERP; Information from Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and its Meaning*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1955), 5.

Chapter VII

Approximating Rationality: The Marshall Plan Decision

Introduction

In their capacity as decision makers, foreign policy analysts are confronted with varying degrees of uncertainty and risk. Arguably, the decisions involved in the presentation and implementation of the Marshall Plan, or the plan for European Recovery (ERP), were among the most precarious and uncertain decisions that members of the Truman administration would have to make. They were decisions that involved a great deal of risk, as they would impact the economic and political well-being of the United States, and most of Western Europe as well. Indeed, they were also decisions that entailed a cognizance of and tolerance for uncertainty, especially given the tide of public and Congressional opinion regarding foreign aid programs, and the historical inability of the individual European nations to cooperate.

In spite of these hurdles, members of the Truman administration intimately involved in the ERP exceeded expectations, making strategically wise decisions while under the scrutiny of domestic and international actors. What follows is an analysis of the Marshall Planner's decision-making process during 1947-1948. Throughout the analysis it will become obvious that President Truman participated only marginally, if at all in the discussions surrounding the

Marshall Plan decision. In effect, Truman was merely a "rubber-stamp," agreeing in principle about the need for aid, but leaving the details to his advisers. Indeed, it was Truman's Secretary of State George Marshall who took responsibility for the bulk of the planning. In a sense, by juxtaposing the processes of these two decision makers, Truman and Marshall, one can comprehend how differently the two approached foreign policy making. As we discovered earlier, Truman relied on his "gut reactions," historical analogies and the belief systems of his predecessor to make decisions. Alternately, Marshall's decision-making process stands up to the examination of the most discerning eye with regards to approximating the ideal rational choice model of decision-making.

Secretary of State George Marshall and his Team of Advisers

Secretary of State George Marshall, though only in office for three months when planning for the ERP commenced, provided substantial direction and had a sizeable influence on all aspects of the program. Marshall's positive effect on the plan was due to the changes he made in the State Department. Marshall's State Department, unlike his predecessor's, James Byrnes, was an organized one. This was partially a result of Marshall's experience in the military, as well his open decision-making style. Regardless of its source,

Marshall's presence gave the State Department an unprecedented sense of unity, direction, and efficiency.[380]

From the beginning, members of the State Department like Marshall's assistant Charles Bohlen and the Head of the Policy Planning Staff (PPS) George Kennan, would notice that Marshall sought out the advice and opinions of his subordinates when making a decision. This was unusual to them, because it was something that former Secretary of State James Byrnes had never done. Bohlen in particular would note that "I quickly discovered that the new Secretary wanted a lot more information and advice than Byrnes had." [381]

Marshall was a careful listener by nature, and even more so when making an important policy decision. When making a decision Marshall would call in the individual members of the Department to get their opinions. Similarly, in group-decision-making settings Marshall would use an analogous process, ascertaining all-sides of the problem and then making up his mind. Bohlen observed that:

> Marshall had a power of command that I have never seen equaled. He would listen carefully to all sides of a question or problem, make sure he had all the facts, and then make up his mind. Once the decision was made, there was no turning back, a characteristic that apparently developed during his military training.[382]

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[380] Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History: 1929-1969*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 259.

[381] Charles E. Bohlen, 259.

[382] Charles E Bohlen, 268.

However, his ability to listen to all sides of the argument did not paralyze the decision-making process, drawing it out indefinitely. Indeed, Marshall would "listen for a long time without comment, but when the debates between members of his staff seemed destined to go on indeterminably and he could stand it no longer, he would say, 'Gentlemen, don't fight the problem; decide it'" [383]

Though a decisive decision maker, Marshall, unlike Truman, was not a knee-jerk decision maker and could tolerate dissent. His subordinates and even the president were comfortable voicing contrary opinions, because early on Marshall had established that he wanted the facts, and the "complete blunt truth."[384] Kennan observed that with Marshall "There were times when I had to disagree with him and give him unwelcome advice. But he had never held himself out as a political pundit."[385]

Unlike Byrnes, Marshall's relationship with the individual decision makers was also open and orderly. In particular, Marshall treated Truman with respect, and "never forgot, as Byrnes did, that Truman was President."[386] The respect was mutual, as Truman considered Marshall to be one of the most "profound and astute men I have ever known."[387] According to Bohlen's

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[383] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, Vol. 2, (New York: Doubleday, 1955-56), 112.

[384] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trials and Hope, 112*

[385] George Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), 346.

[386] Charles E. Bohlen, 269.

[387] Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, 112-13.

observations Marshall was not afraid to voice his opinion to Truman and tell him when he was about to make a foreign policy blunder. For example, in 1948, when Truman asked Marshall if he should lift the arms embargo on Palestine, Marshall responded bluntly, stating "I'm not going to vote anyway, but if I were I would vote against you if you so demeaned the office of the President of the United States."[388] This open and mutually respectful relationship greatly facilitated the formulation and execution of a coherent and workable foreign policy.

Marshall was not the only actor to produce a sizeable influence on the decision-making environment during the formulation of the ERP. Indeed, other important administrators like Secretary of War Robert Patterson, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, former Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Great Britain William Averell Harriman, Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson and Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs William Clayton, were intimately involved with the ERP decisions. Patterson, Forrestal and Harriman would be instrumental in encouraging some of the more isolationist members of Congress of America's responsibility to use its power in order to positively rebuild a new world order. Forrestal described it best, elucidating America's challenge as "—to achieve accommodation between the power we now possess, our reluctance to use it positively, the realistic necessity for such

[388] Charles E. Bohlen, 270-71.

use, and our national ideals."[389] These men were also among the first to recognize that the Soviets would be impossible to negotiate with and that they would become a menace to European security. Joseph Jones, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, would later recall that they consistently supported the ERP and that there was "never any question where they stood."[390]

Clayton held similar views to his colleagues regarding the US's responsibilities to the world and the Soviet threat. It was Clayton's belief that "democracy, and freedom and the security of the US were at stake in the restoration of the world economy."[391] However, Clayton's take on the specifics of the ERP varied, because of his firsthand experiences dealing with Europe's economic problems. These variances were correlated to his attendance at the Geneva Trade Conferences from April to May of 1947. In Geneva Clayton had the opportunity to travel throughout Europe, speak to the leaders of Western European nations, and literally experience the tangible economic effects of the war. It was after this trip that Clayton realized that salvaging Europe's economy and similarly, US interests in Europe, would be contingent upon massive amount of US aid and support, and European economic federation.[392]

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[389] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, (New York: Viking Press, 1955), 118.

[390] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 119.

[391] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 121.

[392]Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 120-121.

A Rational Response to an International Dilemma

Marshall's Harvard speech, which elucidated America's terms for a comprehensive aid program in Europe, and his later decision to wrest some of the "initiative" for the programs planning from the European's can be viewed as a rational response to a series of international dilemmas. Rationality in foreign policy making is a rather nebulous subject in that it is more a less an ideal, rather than an actual phenomena. However, given the appropriate set of decision-making circumstances, such as the nature of the decision-making body and the interactions between its disparate members, something that approximates rationality can be attained.

To determine if Marshall's decisions stand up to scrutiny one must do a piecemeal analysis of his decision to offer aid contingent on European "initiative", and then revoke some of the initiative. The first question is, did Marshall, prior to the Harvard speech, have a clear definition of the problem before him? Moreover, did Marshall view the problem as political, economic, or both? Evidence shows that Marshall and his advisers viewed the problem as both political and economic. Politically, the problem was how to get Congress and the American public to authorize another aid program in Europe when already so much money had been spent on recovery. In Marshall's words, the problem was simply "how to put it [the aid proposal] across" to American

people so that they would want to help.[393] After the failure of the UNRRA to provide long-term relief, and then the appropriations to Greece and Turkey, Marshall understood that:

> Any new proposal for more funds to be appropriated would be ruthlessly repulsed. Therefore, the manner of statement, the first approach, and similar factors had to be most seriously considered. It is easy to propose a great plan, but exceedingly difficult to manage t the form and procedures so that it has a fair chance of political survival.[394]

Economically, Marshall viewed the problem as how to remedy the balance of payments problem. Marshall and his advisers calculated that if the balance of payments problem in Europe was not rectified through a stabilization and aid program, then the US would face severe domestic economic consequences. Moreover, the European nations, without access to dollars with which they could purchase necessities, would fall into disarray, becoming vulnerable to communist subjugation.

Next, one must ascertain if the Marshall Planners had a clear perception of the goals they were trying to achieve when they announced a program of aid dependent on European initiative. In point of fact, Marshall and his key advisers had elucidated a series of goals that they hoped to accomplish with the Marshall Plan. The first and second goals were intimately related, and involved

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[393]Quoted in Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and its Meaning*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1955), 21; Information from Interviews, Marshall, Washington, October 30, 1952, and February 18, 1953.

[394] Quoted in Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and its Meaning*, 25; Information from Interview, October 12, 1954.

preserving the economic integrity of the US, while decreasing the political influence of the Soviet Communists in Europe. Since 1946 reports had been flowing into the US that the economic situation in Europe was rapidly deteriorating, and that the US's piecemeal aid program had not been effective in the long-term. Things really heated up with Herbert Hoover's March analysis of the economic situation in Europe. Hoover wrote that Europe was currently involved in an exceedingly dangerous economic crisis, one that would affect the US's domestic economy, because of balance of payments, and also the US's national security as well. Similarly, in his May 8th speech Acheson insisted that without European recovery the US economy would suffer and unemployment would sky rocket.[395]

Again, Kennan's May 23rd PPS memo set forth similar concerns, linking economic aid to the reduction of communist influences in Europe. Kennan's memo was clear in emphasizing that economic deterioration was not the direct result of Soviet communism. However, it did point out that the economic situation was fostering an environment where communism could take advantage of the disorder and gain a strong foothold throughout Western Europe. According to Kennan the US would have to stop the spread of communism throughout an area that was traditionally pro-western and embraced the values of freedom and democracy. To do this, the US would

[395] "The President's Economic Mission to Germany and Austria,"; "Draft Outline of Notes for Mr. Acheson's speech before the Delta Council." Truman Museum and Library, Available Online.

have to be instrumental in promoting a recovery program, which would be planned and executed by the Europeans.[396]

The final goal was to propose a plan of aid that had the possibility of being approved by Congress and the American public. Given the tide of American opinion regarding aid, and the isolationist sway of the Republican dominated Congress, Marshall and his advisers understood that the plan would have to be ground-breaking in order to be accepted. [397] Thus, the Marshall Planners attempted to make the plan more attractive to Congress and the public by giving the initiative for planning to the European's. Further they tried to make it more palatable by emphasizing that aid would be conditional on the principles European economic cooperation, joint planning, and increases in production. Marshall thought that in order for the plan to be well received in the US:

> It was imperative that the European countries 'come clean'—that is, that they come up with a workable plan based on actual requirements beyond the existing resources at their command, not on what they thought the United States would give."[398]

Essentially, the Marshall Planners marketed an approach which didn't just emphasize the revival of individual countries. Instead it aimed to revive the

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[396] 23 May 1947, Director of the Policy Planning Staff to the Under Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 223-230.

[397] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 116.

[398] Harry B. Price, The *Marshall Plan and its Meaning*, 25.

entirety of Western Europe's economy at once, in order to promote sustainable economic recovery.

After agreeing upon a definition of the problem, and isolating their goals, the question remains: did the administration consider alternatives to an aid program based on European initiative, and then systematically select the alternative with the highest chance of successfully maximizing their goals? Moreover, did they consider the risks associated with a program emphasizing European imitative? The answer to these questions is overwhelmingly, yes.

During early 1947 there was only one alternative to a program of aid based upon the European initiative. As previously mentioned, Congress was resistant to approving another aid program based on piece-meal assistance to individual countries. Senator Arthur Vandenberg had made this abundantly clear to the Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson when he announced that Congress would refuse any program of aid if they were again approached with a "fait accompli" like in the case of the Truman Doctrine.[399]

Economic institutions, such as the International Bank were also ruled out as feasible providers of assistance. These institutions had neither the revenue nor the legal ability to provide such aid. The President of the International Bank, John McCloy made this abundantly clear in mid-April.[400]

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[399] Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Acheson) to the Secretary of State (Marshall), FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 232-33.

[400] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 230.

According to the New York Times columnist, Martin Lippman, "The deficit of the western European countries cannot be met…by the World Bank, or the American banking community. The sums are too large…the transactions are abnormal."[401]

The only other viable alternative was to provide no aid at all. Yet, according to the assessments of Marshall's top advisers the risks associated with ignoring the European's need for aid were enormous. They included, just to name a few, the loss of Western Europe to the communists, the breakdown of the European economic order, the disappearance of the western ideals of democracy and freedom in Europe, and economic turmoil in the US.

The administration, though not faced with many alternatives, did take the time to systematically assess the risks inherent in giving the Europeans the "initiative" or responsibility for drafting an aid program. The first risk of assigning the Europeans initiative in the publicly broadcasted Harvard Speech was that the Europeans might not respond. This outcome was not likely given Europe's desperation for even a plausible solution. Also, top policy makers assessed that making an offer would not hurt America's prestige. Merely a rejection or lack of response on the part of the European's would indicate that "rigor mortis has already set in on the body politic of Europe as we have known it and that it may be already too late for us the change decisively the

[401] "A letter from Joseph M. Jones to Mr. Acheson suggesting that foreign financial aids should come in the forms of grants." Truman Museum and Library, Available Online.

course of events."[402] Still, Acheson worked hard to keep this from happening by making sure that copies of the speech were forwarded by British journalists to both Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and Foreign Minister George Bidault as soon as Marshall made his speech.

The second risk was that the Europeans would fail to devise a coherent plan, abiding by the US principles of self-help, cooperation and joint programming. In point of fact, Marshall and his advisers were cognizant that historically, separate European nations could not cooperate, especially when it came to economic matters.[403] For example, Europe was replete with trade barriers and non-interchangeable currencies, thus exacerbating its traditional economic isolationism.

After conferring with his advisers, Marshall was willing to risk the conference's failure in order to maintain the European initiative. Marshall and his advisers were able to tolerate this risk for a few reasons. First and foremost, the US had run out of options. This was literally our last hope to salvage Western Europe. Second, Marshall and his advisers knew that at any point the US could step in and give a degree of "friendly aid" if they saw the conference going downhill. Though not an ideal situation, as it might alienate the European planners and enrage Congress, it was still a feasible contingency plan.

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[402] 23 May 1947, Director of the Policy Planning Staff to the Under Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 223-230.

[403] 29 May 1947, Meeting of heads of Offices in the Department of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 235-236.

At the same time, there were marked benefits associated with allowing the Europeans to have initiative for the planning of the program. With the planning in the hands of the Europeans the Soviets could not accuse the US of "dictating" a program based on "imperialist" intentions. Similarly, the US Congress and public could not charge the administration with "confronting them with another fait accompli." Thus, European initiative would give the impression of more public and Congressional control over the European's destiny, as opposed to the dictation of just another aid program.

Likewise, the economic and political disintegration, as reported by Marshall's top economic analysts was enough to warrant a risk of this magnitude. In particular, Marshall and his advisers, who had been in Moscow for a meeting with the Soviets earlier in the year, were completely convinced that the Soviets were attempting to take advantage of Europe's downward spiral to expand their communist sphere of influence. Marshall explained that:

> It was my feeling that the Soviets were doing everything possible to achieve a complete breakdown in Europe. That is, they were doing anything they could think of to create greater turbulence. The major problem was how to counter this negative Soviet policy and restore the European Economy.[404]

Thus, the risk of European failure at generating an acceptable plan, though substantial, was worth the possible benefits of success.

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[404] Quoted in Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and its Meaning*, 395; See also Interview, Washington, February 18, 1953.

During the initial planning stages Marshall was confronted with a single voice of dissent. That voice was William Claytons, the Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs. Clayton, in his May 27th memo accentuated that an aid program emphasizing European economic cooperation was essential to the re-establishment of an economic order. However, he also insisted that "the US must run this show," implying that the US would have total control over the planning and execution of the program.[405] His rationale was that a concert of European nations could not possibly agree on a single joint program, and that nationalistic differences would hinder the planning. Moreover, he did no think the separate nations would be able to overcome their individual interests in order to effectively pool their resources for a continent wide aid program.[406]

One could argue that Clayton's suggestions, which were based on the thoughtful analysis of an economic expert, were set aside because of a phenomenon called groupthink. Groupthink occurs in decision-making bodies when "the members striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action."[407] Yet, given Marshall's orderly decision-making process, one that emphasized analyzing various viewpoints, often-times in isolated settings so that they would not influence

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[405] 27 May 1947, Memorandum by the Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs(Clayton) FRUS 1947 Vol. III, 230-32.

[406] Charles P Kindleberger (Chief of the Division of German and Austrian Economic Affairs, Department of State) Memo on the Origins of the Marshall Plan, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 241-247.

[407] Alex Roberto Hybel and Justin M. Kaufman, *Bush and Saddam Hussein: Deciding on Conflict* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 12.

each other, it is unlikely that groupthink impeded the decision-making process. Such an analysis is supported fully by the observations of Marshall's advisers. Regarding Marshall's decision-making process, Kennan observed that:

> Mr. Marshall's way of handling that meeting made a great impression on me. After summarizing the main issues, he went around the table, asking each on in turn to express his views. A number of problems and some objections were raised. When all had spoken, the Secretary only asked: 'Are we safe in directing such a proposal to all of Europe? What will be the effect if the Soviets decide to come in?[408]

Moreover, scholars of presidential decision-making assert that groupthink is less likely to occur in a "multiple advocacy" decision-making environment, which closely resembles Marshall's. In the end, multiple advocacy, an "advisory arrangement designed to ensure that many viewpoints and options are enunciated on policies," facilitated a decision-making environment less likely to be affected by groupthink.[409]

In reality, Marshall had fully ascertained the risks of relying on the European initiative. Thus, Marshall was able to accept the risks as reasonable, given the overwhelmingly large benefits associated with his chosen course of action. Moreover, at the time, Clayton was the only top administrator pushing for total American control over the planning stages. The rest, including Kennan, his entire Policy Planning Staff, Acheson and the majority of the State

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[408] Quoted in Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and its Meaning*, 23-25; See also, Interview, Kennan, Washington, February 19, 1953.

[409] John P. Burke and Fred I. Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991), 6.

Department were fully convinced that the initiative for the planning of the program must be incumbent upon the Europeans, in order for the program to be even considered by the US Congress.

Perhaps the most interesting facet of this study is the shift in the planning "initiative" from heavily incumbent on the Europeans to largely under the control of the Americans in late August and early September. The question here remains, why did Marshall suddenly approved a shift in control over the programs planning from the Europeans to the Americans, especially since he had rejected the proposal in late May? An examination of relevant memorandum reveals that Marshall only approved the shift after receiving a series of analyses from the US representatives in Europe and in DC stating that such a shift would be imperative if a "workable" program was going to be produced from the conference. Now, Clayton was not the lone voice emphasizing the need for more American control over the planning station.

By early September 1947 it was clear to the Ambassador to the UK Lewis Douglas, the Ambassador to France Jefferson Caffery, the United States Political Adviser for Germany Robert D. Murphy, and to Kennan, just by looking at the European's preliminary drafts, which were "mere shopping lists," that a change was in order if an acceptable plan was to be produced. Initially Marshall was hesitant to approve such a change in initiative, because he did not want to give Congress or the Europeans the impression that he was "pre-

approving" a plan. At that point the "feeling in Congress was very strong that they must not again be presented on a crisis basis with a virtual commitment to any precise course of action as they claim was done in the case of Greece and Turkey."[410]

Eventually, Marshall changed his views on this matter. In particular, it was Kennan's visit to Europe, and his strongly worded memo of September 4th, which tipped the scale for Marshall. Earlier in the year Kennan had been an important advocate for the European initiative, so his insight weighed heavily on Marshall's decision.[411] Similarly, the risks involved with not switching to the European initiative were far greater than the benefits of positive Congressional and public opinion. As Caffery pointed out, it would be much easier to reassure Congress that the "US and the president are in no sense committed until a completed plan is reviewed, carefully examined, approved and presented to them" than to get them to approve a "European shopping list."[412] Marshall, after receiving the separate, but also concurring advice of his top advisers chose to adopt Clayton's plan and approve an increase in US involvement and advising. In the end, Marshall demonstrated his rational decision-making process by being able to revisit his previous decision, recognize that

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[410] 11 August, Secretary of State to the Embassy in France, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 350-351.

[411] 4 September 1947, Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan), FRUS 1947 Vol. III, 397-405.

[412] 14 August 1947, Memorandum by the Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs to Marshall, FRUS 1947, Vol. III, 351-356.

circumstances had changed, and adjust his policies to properly address and mitigate the problems that arose from those new circumstances.

Chapter VIII

The Evolution of Decision-Making in the Truman Administration

Introduction

When analyzing decision-making in foreign policy one must take into account where and how "hurdles to rationality," might appear and impede the decision-making process. Initially, this study focused on identifying those hurdles, then isolating and tracing their presence throughout three disparate case studies. Thus, the following three summaries attempt to methodically encapsulate how these "hurdles to rationality" manifested in the decision to drop the atomic bomb, deliver the Truman Doctrine, and formulate the Marshall Plan. As the study progressed, I also became interested in tracing if, and exactly how the decision-makers altered their decision-making processes given the passage of time and the acquisition of decision-making experience. Thus, the final section of this chapter derives a fundamental link between the acquisition of decision-making experience and the ideal rational process.

A First Wrap Up: The Atomic Bomb Case

A careful analysis of the atomic bomb case illustrates that rational decision-making was hindered in the individual and group settings. Initially, the Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes was able to dominate the decision-making process by creating a decision-making body, the Interim Committee, which was pervaded by groupthink. Groupthink is defined as "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are

deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action."[413] Essentially, Byrnes used his Machiavellian attitude to manipulate the functioning of the group and block the most formidable voices of dissent. As a result, the group had a tendency to come to conclusions that were similar to his. Specifically, Byrnes continually intimidated and subordinated even the highest ranking officials in the political and military fields, such as General Marshall. Marshall, though opposed to Byrnes' path, never formally dissented in the decision-making group. For Marshall, being the "good soldier" entailed maintaining military professionalism.[414] The subordination of the military realm to the Byrnes' political objectives was of utmost importance to Marshall.

Moreover, Byrnes exercised clear control over the lead decision-maker, President Harry S. Truman, especially when they interacted in private and informal settings. Byrnes' influence is particularly evident in the manner in which he manipulated Truman's thinking, often reworking the president's initial instincts to coincide with Byrnes' personal objectives. Byrnes capitalized on the fact that Truman, because of his insecurity and lack of experience in foreign policy, was easily swayed.

Likewise, Byrnes made every effort to keep his advisory system as informal and private as possible, thereby diminishing the flow of ideas and dissent that Truman was

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[413] Alex Roberto Hybel and Justin Matthew Kaufman, *The Bush Administrations and Saddam Hussein: Deciding on Conflict*, (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 14.

[414] Gar Alperovitz, The *Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of an American Myth*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 172.

exposed to. Thus, Truman was constantly "manipulated by the shrewd politician he made his personal representative for atomic bomb matters—the man he privately called his "conniving" secretary of state, James F. Byrnes."[415] So, when Byrnes told Truman that the use of the bomb would be vital instrument with which to "manage" the Soviets after the war, Truman was inclined to agree. And again, when Byrnes insisted, against the advice of every other one of Truman's military and political advisers, that the conditions of the surrender not be altered, Truman again complied.

Still, it is impossible to blame one man for the entire trajectory of Truman's thinking. The fact remains that less than rational policy decisions are often the product of the lead decision-makers own cognitive short-comings. In this case, Truman's decision-making process was guided by history, especially his own personal history as an American soldier. In essence, Truman's internal train of thought relied on historical analogies relating to his experiences as an artillery captain during World War I. Truman's use of his own personal experiences to form a coherent vision of the plight of American soldiers in Japan can be explained using Schema Theory.

At its core, Schema Theory purports that each decision maker has only a limited amount of time and energy to devote to the decision-making process. Accordingly, the decision maker utilizes cognitive short-cuts, such as analogies, to simplify their decision-making process. In many instances this method of reasoning saves time, which is often necessary during a crisis situation. Yet, reasoning by using historical

[415] Gar Alperovitz, 12.

analogies, or schemas to simplify the problem and make it more familiar can easily disrupt the rational process, especially if the decision-maker utilizes incongruent analogies.

Using history as his guide, especially his own personal history, Truman reasoned that the alternatives to direct atomic use were "politically unwise," and would have meant more American casualties. For Truman it became obvious that the lives of his American boys, his nation of sons fighting abroad, were markedly more important than the lives of the enemy. For Truman "a quarter of a million of the flower of our young manhood were worth a couple of Japanese cities."[416] The death and casualty statistics for the alternatives to direct atomic use, in light of Truman's emotional and historical connection to the American soldiers, were not acceptable. While there may have been many different numbers floating around as estimates for the number of lives that would be lost in a Pacific land battle, none of them mattered to Truman. Already the blood of too many American boys had been spilled on foreign soil.

The analogy Truman utilized in this situation was inherently fallacious. One cannot begin to compare the casualties caused by atomic weapons to those caused by the conventional weapons that Truman would have had access to during WWI. The fact remains that Truman, though warned consistently about the bomb's dangers by the atomic scientists, could not ascertain, (because of his own cognitive shortcomings and

[416] David McCullough. *Truman.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 439.

reliance on Byrnes and individual sets of priorities), the effect that these weapons would have on Japan and the future of international relations.

Byrnes' behavior, and to an extent, Truman's contingent decision, can be explicated utilizing the non-compensatory theory of decision-making. Essentially, non-compensatory theorists postulate that "foreign policymakers, instead of comparing both the positive and negative aspects of a number of viable options, stress the positive factor of its favored policy and the negative elements of other alternatives."[417] In essence, decision-makers systematically negate viable alternatives while simultaneously supporting their preferred courses of action. For example, Byrnes negated plausible alternatives, such as altering surrender terms, by stressing the negative aspects of that policy. That is, he convinced Truman that such a move would not only betray for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's legacy, but it would indicate US weakness as well. Evidence indicates that prior to Potsdam Byrnes had convinced Truman that if the Japanese surrendered, then the US would have no opportunity to demonstrate the bomb's power to the Soviets. Thus, the atomic bomb, the United States' "master-card" would not be a useful tool with which to control the Soviets.

Furthermore, scholars of non-compensatory theory also assert that "political leaders review alternatives in light of a political dimension and reject all alternatives that may damage them politically…"[418] In essence, the dimension that political leaders

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[417] Hybel and Kaufman, 7.

[418] Alex Mintz, "The Decision to Attack Iraq: A Noncompensatory Theory of Decision-making." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 37, No. 4. (Dec., 1993), 599.

often prioritize when eliminating alternatives is political favorability or expedience (the extent to which a policy decision will alienate constituents and Congress). Interestingly enough, Byrnes, and by default, Truman, continually highlighted the positive political aspects of direct atomic use, noting that it would allow the US to "control" the Soviets while concurrently saving American lives, and placating a war-weary American public. Alternately, they ignored the negative facets of the alternative, facets which would not immediately affect their political standing. These facets included the fact that the bomb would kill thousands of Japanese civilians; endanger the future of the entire human civilization; and provoke a nuclear arms race, which would subsequently foster a chaotic international environment. .

A Second Wrap Up: The Truman Doctrine Case

A systematic analysis of the decision to deliver the Truman Doctrine indicates that both irrational and rational decision-making processes were present during different phases of the Doctrine's formulation. Initially, rational decision-making was bypassed because of particular hurdles to rationality. Specifically, the absence of a rational process becomes evident in the way alternatives to the Truman Doctrine were only briefly and unsystematically considered *prior to* the withdrawal of British assistance. This lack of consideration stemmed from Truman and Byrnes' reluctance to abandon Franklin D. Roosevelt's legacy. However, rationality was evident in later phases of the decision, specifically during 1947, given the strength and coherence of Undersecretary

of State Dean Acheson's historically based world vision, and the absence of viable alternatives to the Doctrine.

At first, the Truman administration, though cognizant of the Soviet threat, would only discuss reorienting their policies toward Greece and Turkey. On October 21st, 1946 a policy anticipating the Truman Doctrine, and endorsing material and monetary aid to Greece and Turkey had already been delineated. Moreover, vaguely antagonistic actions, such as supporting Iran's complaints against the Soviets in the UN, and providing tacit support for Churchill's inflammatory Fulton speech, indicated willingness by the administration to take a tougher stance with the Soviets. Yet, tangible action indicating the US's explicit disapproval of Soviet policies was not taken until a much later date, and even then it was initiated more so by Acheson, than by Truman and Byrnes.

Cognitive Consistency, a theory which purports that decision makers utilize a set of core beliefs and values to organize the random stimuli, such as world events, into a simplified ideological construct, explains Truman and Byrnes' inaction. Specifically, it explains why Truman and Byrnes did not formulate a plan prior to Britain's financial collapse, in order to mitigate the Soviet threats to Greece and Turkey. In point of fact, Truman and Byrnes could not abandon the Rooseveltian conception that the Soviets could be placated through negotiation. This is evident in Byrnes' reluctance to use the atomic bomb to bully the Soviets at the Council of Foreign Ministers in fall 1945, as

well as his repeated attempts to negotiate with Stalin in December 1945.[419] Even Truman had a penchant for blaming Soviet resistance on post-war "domestic turmoil," rather than sheer Soviet insolence. As a result, even after the confrontation in Iran, Truman still believed that the Soviet Union could be negotiated with, and that the Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin was a "man of his word.[420]"

The question remains, then, why did Truman and Byrnes reorient their views, accept the necessity of the aid program and then verbally proclaim their change of policy to a world-wide audience? A thorough analysis reveals that Dean Acheson's keen perceptions of world events provided the rationale for such a drastic declaration of policy. For Acheson, the world situation in early 1947 was analogous to the situation the US faced after World War I, and up until the beginning of the Second World War. According to Acheson, the US had receded into isolation post World War I and could not risk isolating itself again, especially in the shadow of a *dual threat*: British financial collapse and expansionist Soviet communism. The result of isolationism the first time around had been World War II. Apparently, however, the US and its citizens had not learned from the past. As Acheson and others perceived, the US was once again setting out on a similar path by electing a Congress that applauded isolationism, was fiscally conservative, and pushed for the demobilization of the US troops. Ultimately,

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[419] Fraser Harbutt. "American Challenge, Soviet Response: The Beginning of the Cold War." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.96. No. 4 (Winter, 1981-1982), 625; See Also, John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War: 1941-1947*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 264 and 280-81.

[420] John Lewis Gaddis, 275.

Acheson feared that a resurgence of isolationism in the US would be a catalyst for the Third World War.[421]

Moreover, Acheson's perception of this *dual threat* of British financial collapse and Soviet communist expansionism was not unfounded. In fact, the US had ascertained that the British were in a precarious financial position as early as October, 1946, and that US aid might be necessary to cover Britain's commitments. Likewise, Acheson had ample proof, in the form of reports, letters and memos from Ambassadors in Greece and Turkey that Soviet subjugation was slowly, but surely inundating the Near and Middle East. Additionally, these reports emphasized that without further aid these countries would collapse, leaving Western Europe vulnerable to Soviet subjugation as well.[422]

The lack of viable alternatives to the Truman Doctrine also buttresses the argument that Acheson's final decision to draft and support the Doctrine approximated rationality. Essentially, there were only two alternatives considered in place of providing direct aid to Greece and Turkey. The first option was to do nothing, and leave both Greece and Turkey to fend for themselves, while the second was to work through the United Nations. In reality, leaving Greece and Turkey to fend for themselves was never considered. To leave either state without any source of aid would have been equivalent to handing over vital strategic regions to the Soviets. Literally every analysis of the

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[421] Dean Acheson, *Power and Diplomacy*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958).

[422] 21 October 1946, Memorandum Prepared in the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, 240-245

situation, be it from the Joint Chiefs, the White House assistants Clark Clifford and George Elsey , or the US Ambassador to Greece Lincoln MacVeagh, predicted that the collapse of Greece or Turkey would cause a domino effect, endangering the sovereignty of pro-American countries in Western Europe. As Acheson so aptly pointed out, the US's way of life could not survive in a world where 2/3 of its nations were communist.

Likewise, solving the dispute through the UN was not a viable option. In 1947 the UN was a nascent organization, and thus ill equipped to support a full scale operation involving military, economic, and social aid. MacVeagh argued that even if the UN were able to provide border security to halt the infiltration of Communist insurgents, it would not be able to address the social and political roots of Greece's problems. MacVeagh contested that "even should the UN succeed in establishing border security its success can mean nothing as regards to the objectives and principal interests of the US."[423] Further, MacVeagh stressed that UN action, though a tangible gesture of disapproval to Soviet policies, would not be viewed by the Soviets as a formidable threat.

Similarly, operating through the UN would be too slow, given the composition of the Security Council and the veto power of the Soviet Union. Even if the Soviet's didn't veto aid to Greece and Turkey, the aid that the UN could provide would be too little and too late. As Truman related, the situation in Greece and Turkey was "an

urgent one requiring immediate action, and the United Nations and its related organizations are not in a position to extend help of the kind that is required."[424]

An important facet of rational decision-making entails being cognizant of and attempting to mitigate the risks associated with your final policy decision. In this case, critics of the Truman Doctrine assert that such a public and "inflammatory" reversal of policy indicates the absence of rationality in Acheson's decision-making process. Particularly, critics of the Truman Doctrine often assert that it was too confrontational and "universal," and ultimately led the US to the Cold War by pitting Soviet communism and ideology against American democracy. What these analysts fail to realize is that the Doctrine only mentions communism once, in reference to the Communist guerillas in Greece. In fact, Acheson, when giving the speech writers instructions, emphasized that the speech would not pit communism against democracy, but instead, would stress the dangers posed to democracy by all totalitarian regimes. Joseph Jones recalls that Acheson's directions were that "the theme of our new approach should be that the security of the United States depends upon our going to the aid of any and all democratic governments…our line should be that war with the Soviet Union is not inevitable…this should be presented as a way to avoid war."[425] Though never explicitly confirmed by Acheson, this tactic seems to suggest that

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[423] 11 February 19467, The Ambassador in Greece to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1947, Vol. V, 17.

[424] From Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman, Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine, March 12, 1947, pp 177.

[425] Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks.* (New York: Viking, 1955), 145-151.

Acheson was attempting to minimize the risks associated with delivering the doctrine by not directly antagonizing the Soviets.

Likewise, a content analysis of the speech also confirms Acheson's, as well as the rest of the administration's reluctance to directly threaten the Soviets. For instance, the Doctrine proposes that assistance to nations threatened by totalitarianism should be "predominantly economic and financial," and not military. This suggests that the US, though interested in maintaining the economic and political integrity of the region, was not ready to infiltrate aggressively with troops.

In the end, the Truman Doctrine was not a subversive scheme, thought up by an administration which sought to implicitly combat the spread of communism. Indeed, it was calculated and sound statement of policy formulated via a rational process. In essence, it was Acheson's way of preventing the US from receding into isolation once again and instead, emerging from the Second World War as a new world power. Similarly, it was a rational reaction two threatening world events: imminent financial collapse in Britain, and increasingly subversive behavior by the Soviet Communism throughout the Near and Middle East and Europe. Thus, the Truman Doctrine sought to minimize the risk of antagonizing the Soviets while simultaneously coercing a conservative and isolationist Congress to assert America's economic and political strength, in hopes of mitigating the chances of future conflict.

A Third Wrap Up: The Marshall Plan Case

The formulation of the Marshall Plan is a particularly intriguing case as it was based on a series of decisions that were made primarily by Truman's closest advisers, with little input from Truman himself. In this case, the primary decision-maker, Secretary of State George Marshall, was cognizant of the need to balance the risks associated with a plan dictated by European initiative with Congressional opinion and the imminent threat of European economic collapse. Thus, the decision-making process utilized by Marshall to formulate and then reorient the structure of the Marshall Plan deviates markedly from the earlier processes we have studied, in that it very closely approaches a rational process.

As previously illustrated Marshall had a very clear-cut definition of the problem, an orderly advisory system, and the unusual ability to perform a relatively unbiased cost-benefit analysis of his various options. Reflecting on Marshall's orderly decision-making process, the Director of the Policy Planning Staff George Kennan would assert that the Marshall Plan decision was so well thought out because of Marshall's insistence on "seeking out what he considered the best advice he could get, in enlisting that advice in the manner most calculated to assure its orderly preparation and presentation, and in exposing it to the most qualified criticism he could find.[426]

Essentially, Marshall's decision-making body was so successful in part, because it was not pervaded by groupthink. Instead it emphasized a system of multiple

[426] George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1967), 344.

advocacy. A decision-making environment governed by multiple advocacy allows the "advisers to discuss different and, sometimes, opposing perspectives in front of him (the lead decision maker) without fear of repercussion."[427] For example, both Kennan and Jones recorded that they were not fearful of providing Marshall with their dissenting opinions. Similarly, Clayton was not hesitant to go against the grain and insist that the responsibility for formulating the plan should lie with the US, not the Europeans. In the end, Marshall, though he didn't take Clayton's advice right away, was willing to at least listen, consider it, and then implement it when the time was right.

Marshall, given his propensity to seek a wide array of thorough advice, was able to do a fairly rational cost-benefit analysis when it came to devising a plan to implement the Marshall Plan. For instance, when deciding to give the European's the initiative Marshall rightly perceived that costs (e.g. level of uncertainty\ production of a European shopping list) were worth the benefits that would accrue (positive public and congressional opinion, higher willingness to support.)

Most importantly, however, Marshall was able to do what few foreign policy decision makers can do. Marshall was able to continually reassess the decision-making environment, and adjust his policies to match any fluctuations in that environment. That is, Marshall was able to reorient his original decision to rely on the European's planning initiative when it became apparent that the policy had failed. After receiving various reports, like Kennan's in early September, Marshall was able to reassess the

[427] Hybel and Kaufman, 109.

situation and ascertain that US assistance was inevitable if a workable plan was to be produced. Ultimately, Marshall's ability to constantly reassess and adjust his perceptions to the changing environment, an ability that is rare for most foreign policy decision makers, is what led to the eventual acceptance by Congress of the Marshall Plan for European Recovery.

The closest theoretical construct to explain Marshall's process in formulating the Marshall Plan is the compensatory theory of decision-making. According to this model decision makers rank their alternative policies by evaluating their individual dimensions (e.g. political, economic, and military). In the end, the decision maker will choose the alternative that has the highest total cumulative score for all the dimensions. As a result of a this process "a particular alternative—for example, the use of force—may score low on the political dimension, such an alternative could still be adopted if it scored high on the military dimension."[428]

Using the compensatory process Marshall was able to perform a "rational calculus" in order to decide both when and to whom the planning initiative would go to. In the beginning, Marshall calculated that the planning initiative had to go to the European's, so that Congress and the Public had some chance of supporting the facilitation of the European Recovery Conference. Thus, Marshall would have prioritized the dimension of "political acceptability" (would Congress and the Public consider appropriations to another major aid program and support the Conference),

[428] Hybel and Kaufman, 15.

over the dimension of initial "political feasibility" (would the plan the European's made actually work). In the end, the alternative which had the highest score for political acceptability would have been the one that allowed the European's to have the bulk of the planning initiative. Essentially, European initiative indicated to the US that this was not just another "piece meal" or "interim" aid program, designed to give individual and non-sustainable "shots in the arm" to ailing countries. Indeed, the European initiative indicated that the plan would be a holistic and "European" solution to a problem whose roots were not just economic, but systemic, given the history of economic isolationism in Europe. .

Yet, by early September, Marshall had to reassess his first set of calculations, because of the dynamic nature of the US political environment, as well as the poor progress of the European Conference. That is, Marshall now ranked political feasibility over political acceptability. This switch occurred, because by early September, the US had already invested itself in supporting the Conference. Now, the acceptance of the plan was entirely contingent on whether the Congress thought it was a "feasible" and fair plan. After viewing the preliminary draft of the plan, which resembled "European shopping lists" and absorbing the advice of his advisers in Europe Marshall calculated that handing over some initiative to the Americans would be the alternative that maximized the plan's political feasibility.

The Evolution of Decision-Making in the Truman Administration

One may ask, why study three seemingly disparate decision-making cases for a single president? The answer is that over the years scholars have published scores of articles and books that have sought to explicate a president's decision-making process by piecing together and then analyzing a single case study. However, few if any of these studies have engaged in a comparative analysis of a single president's decision-making process in multiple case studies and over a relatively long span of time. That is, no one has answered a question that should be integral to the study of presidential decision-making: Are individual decision makers' processes static? Specifically, does experience change how presidents choose their advisers, and interact with their core decision-making body? In the case of Harry S. Truman, the answers to these questions are varied.

The case of the atomic bomb is intriguing because it was the first and probably most significant decision that Truman would have to make during his presidential career. However, during the first process Truman was "flying by the seat of his pants." A few trends, regarding Truman's decision-making process can be established from this initial study. The most important is that Truman, because of his lack of experience and education, relied fully on the conceptions of his Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and Truman's predecessor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in order to define the problem and rank alternatives. Thus, Truman's beliefs remained consistent with Byrnes' and Roosevelt's,

both of whom saw the bomb as a quick way to end a war that had already cost too many lives.

In the atomic case it became evident that Truman's personal experiences as an artillery captain in World War I influenced how he defined the problem. Specifically, the problem for Truman was how to win the war with Japan while simultaneously sacrificing as few of the "American Boys" as possible. Likewise, Truman's closed off and "informal" advisory system, one which was dominated by Byrnes, allowed him to accept the notion that changing the terms of surrender was not a feasible alternative, despite a resounding chorus of dissenters.

The Truman Doctrine case provides an interesting perspective on decision-making because of the presence of both rational and irrational decision-making processes. During the early stages (1946) of the Truman Doctrine case there were few, if any changes to Truman's decision-making process as many of Truman's former decision-making patterns had not yet been abandoned. That is, Truman was still reliant on Byrnes's advice, while concurrently nurturing Roosevelt's conception that the Soviet's could be placated. However, come 1947, a few changes to Truman's process can be observed. Specifically, the quality of the adviser that Truman relied on (Acheson as opposed to Byrnes) did improve, as Acheson had the ability to assess the risks associated with his policy choice, as well as a coherent and accurate world vision to guide his policy formulation. Thus, the irrationally that characterized the first stages of the decision-making process were virtually eliminated by 1947, when Truman made

the formulation and justification of the doctrine incumbent upon a more rational and capable adviser, Dean Acheson.

In the final case, the Marshall Plan, Truman disappeared from the decision-making apparatus, virtually handing over a blank check for action to Marshall. Truman had appointed Marshall as his new Secretary of State in January of 1947, but Marshall's absence in Moscow at the Council of Foreign Ministers until April inhibited his ability to play a primary role in the decision-making apparatus until the Marshall Plan. In many respects, replacing Byrnes with Marshall was a strategically wise decision on Truman's part. Byrnes had become increasingly belligerent as Secretary of State, oftentimes setting his own agenda, (as he had in Moscow during December 1945) and excluding Truman entirely from the decision-making process. Truman indicated his frustration with Byrnes' behavior, noting that "I came to feel that in his role as Secretary of State, Byrnes was beginning to think of himself as an Assistant President in full charge of foreign policy."[429].Marshall, on the other hand, respected Truman, and consulted him about major policy decisions.[430] So, to an extent, Truman realized that if he was going to rely heavily on his advisers, they should at least be respectful and open with the rest of the administration.

Handing over the bulk of the responsibility to Marshall, though seemingly dangerous was indeed Truman's wisest decision of all. Essentially, Marshall's respect for Truman, as well as his open and orderly decision-making process (a process that

[429] Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Volume One, Year of Decisions*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), 546.

was the polar opposite of Byrnes') ensured that the Marshall Plan was not compromised. As George Kennan so aptly pointed out, Truman should be applauded for delegating responsibility, responsibility that he did not have the experience to handle, to the most competent people he knew. In fact, Kennan recorded that:

> President Truman deserves credit… for his perception and political courage in selection as Secretary of State one of the most experienced, selfless, and most honorable of America's professional public servants, in giving to that man his confidence and wide latitude of action, and then supporting him in an individual initiative which, had it been misfired, could have brought embarrassment and misfortune to the administration.[431]

Fundamentally, this study illustrates that Truman himself did not change significantly as a decision-maker from 1945-1947. In fact, even during the Marshall Plan case Truman is still compensating for his lack of knowledge in international affairs by relying fully on advisers. Yet, Truman's process was not entirely static. By the culmination of 1946 Truman had ascertained that it would be the quality of his advisers, their respect for him, as well as the openness of their decision-making circles, which would make or break the foreign policies in his administration. In the end, Truman's realization, which correlated the quality of his advisers to the strength of their decisions, facilitated the transition from a haphazard and non-compensatory style of decision-making under Byrnes to an efficient and orderly compensatory style under Marshall.

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[430] Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History: 1929-1969*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 269.

[431] George F. Kennan, 344.

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