

A STUDY OF THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

—BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR AND
PIVOTAL AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY—

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INTRODUCTION

On March 12, 1947, at the Joint Senate-House Conference, President Truman announced the Greece-Turkey Aid Bill, which was to become perhaps the most important policy proposal for postwar U.S. strategy—the Truman Doctrine. Its content may be summarized as “the United States contributed \$341,000,000,000 toward winning World War II. This is an investment in world freedom and world peace. The assistance that I am recommending for Greece and Turkey amounts to little more than one tenth of one percent of this investment. It is only common sense that we should safeguard this investment and make sure that it was not in vain. The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive. The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation. Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events. I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.”¹

Requesting aid to Greece and Turkey, Truman’s announcement expressed two themes of new American foreign policy. “The first of these, anti-communist and anti-Soviet, was expressed in the references to “several thousand armed men, led by Communists” who were challenging the authority of the Greek government, to the difficulties being encountered by Turkey for the maintenance of its national integrity, in the broad statement that a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will, and in the specific references to violations of the Yalta agreement in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. The second theme referred to America’s world economic responsibilities, particularly those concerning the problem of postwar reconstruction.”²

The announcement of the Truman Doctrine was indeed a turning point for the U.S. postwar strategy, and marked the beginning of the U.S.’s global commitment. In 1972, Senator William Fulbright, then chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, reflected on the past 25-year history of the U.S. diplomacy: more by far than any other factor the anti-communism of the Truman Doctrine has been the guiding spirit of American foreign policy since World War II.³

By contrast, John Lewis Gaddis of Ohio University in his *Foreign Affairs* (January, 1974) article, entitled, “Was the Truman Doctrine a real Turning Point?,” raised the following point “I propose to argue the Truman Doctrine, far from representing a revolution in American foreign policy, was very

much in line with previously established precedents for dealing with shifts in the European balance of power; that despite its sweeping language the Truman administration, between 1947 and 1950, had neither the intention nor the capability of policing the rest of the world; and that the real commitment to contain communism everywhere originated in the events surrounding the Korean War, not the crisis in Greece and Turkey.”⁴

Furthermore, a noted Sovietologist, Issac Deutcher remarked in his “Stalin · A Political Biography with a New Preface (1969)” that “this was the formal American declaration of the Cold War.”⁵

With these characterizations in mind, it is the purpose of this paper to examine the background of “reasons still not wholly known and understood, the grand alliance of World War II broke up almost as soon as victory was won, and the powers which had called themselves the United Nations fell into the pattern of hostility, periodic crisis and limited war that has characterized world politics for the last twenty-five years”⁶ on the basis of diplomatic and government archival materials.

1. The Administration of Eastern Europe Liberation

a. Polish Question

As the American pointed out, at the end of the war, the Polish question had become a symbol of Soviet-Western cooperation. It was, said Harry Hopkins, an issue that “was not important in itself.” Hopkins recognized a moral commitment of the West to the Poles and its relation to American domestic politics, but concern for Poland was largely abstract and symbolic. The Soviets claims in Poland had an entirely different justification. As Stalin noted:

it may seem strange although it appeared to be recognized in United States circles and Churchill in his speeches also recognized it, that the Soviet Government should wish for a friendly Poland. In the course of twenty-five years the Germans had twice invaded Russia via Poland. Neither the British nor American peoples had experienced such German invasions which were a horrible thing to endure and the results of which were not easily forgotten. He said these German invasions were not warfare but were like the incursions of the Huns. He said that Germany had been able to do this because Poland had been regarded as a part of the cordon sanitaire around the Soviet Union and that previous European policy had been that Polish Governments must be hostile to Russia. In these circumstances either Poland had been too weak to oppose Germany or had let the Germans come through. Thus Poland had served as a corridor for the German attacks on Russia. He said Poland’s weakness and hostility had been a great source of weakness to the Soviet Union and

had permitted the Germans to do what they wished in the East and also in the West since the two were mixed together. It is therefore in Russia's vital interest that Poland should be both strong and friendly. He said there was no intention on the part of the Soviet Union to interfere in Poland's internal affairs, that Poland would live under the parliamentary system which is like Czechoslovakia, Belgium and Holland and that any talk of an intention to Sovietize Poland was stupid. He said even the Polish leaders, some of whom were communists, were against the Soviet system since the Polish people did not desire collective farms or other aspects of the Soviet system. In this the Polish leaders were right since the Soviet system was not exportable—it must develop from within on the basis of a set of conditions which were not present in Poland. He said all the Soviet Union wanted was that Poland should not be in a position to open the gates to Germany and in order to prevent this Poland must be strong and democratic. Stalin then said that before he came to his suggestion as to the practical solution of the question he would like to comment on Mr. Hopkins' remarks concerning future the United States interests in the world. He said that whether the United States wished it or not it was a world power and would have to accept world-wide interest. Not only this war but the previous war had shown that without United States intervention Germany could not have been defeated and that all the events and developments of the last thirty years had confirmed this. In fact the United States had more reason to be a world power than any other state. For this reason, he fully recognized the right of the United States as a world power to participate in the Polish question and that the Soviet interest in Poland does not in any way exclude those of England and the United States. Mr. Hopkins had spoken of Russian unilateral action in Poland and United States public opinion concerning it. It was true that Russia had taken such unilateral action but they had been compelled to. He said the Soviet Government had recognized the Warsaw Government and concluded a treaty with it at a time when their Allies did not recognize this government. These were admittedly unilateral acts which would have been much better left undone but the fact was they had not met with any understanding on the part of their Allies. The need for these actions had risen out of the presence of Soviet troops in Poland; it would have been impossible to have waited until such time as the Allies had come to an agreement on Poland. The logic of the war against Germany demanded that the Soviet rear be assured and the Lublin Committee had been of great assistance to the Red Army at all times and it was for this reason that these actions had been taken by the Soviet Government. He said it was contrary to the Soviet policy to set up Soviet administration on foreign soil since this would look like occupation and be resented by

the local inhabitants. It was for this reason that some Polish administration had to be established in Poland and this could be done only with those who had helped the Red Army. He said he wished to emphasize that these steps had not been taken with my desire to eliminate or exclude Russia's Allies. He must point out however that Soviet action in Poland had been more successful than British action in Greece and at no time had they been compelled to undertake the measures which they had done in Greece. Stalin then turned to his suggestion for the solution of the Polish problem.⁷

Thus the postwar political future and territorial configuration of Poland was a central concern of Russian wartime diplomacy. In November 1941, in early communications with Churchill, Stalin suggested that one of the aims of the war should be that Germany forever be prevented from provoking aggression. To this end, he suggested that the West recognize the 1941 Polish frontier with Russia. If this was confirmed, he suggested, Poland would be compensated with a piece of partitioned Prussia.

The early Soviet insistence on a different geography for Poland also strained their delicate, newly formed relationship with London-based Polish government in exile. The London Polish government was recognized by the Soviet Union in July 1941, but the London Poles were in uncertain position. Except for whatever influence they might have with the English or Americans, they were practically powerless. Moreover, the English were less than completely supportive, as the Polish question stood between the Soviets and the British in reaching other understandings and was therefore something of an embarrassment. As Churchill notes rather delicately, "we had the invidious responsibility of recommending General Sikorski to rely on Soviet good faith in the future settlement of Russian-Polish relations, and not to insist at this moment on any written guarantees for the future."⁸ Yet the Poles refused tenaciously to yield to the Russians their eastern territories. They harbored little good will for the Russians, not without some reason in view of the 1939 pact with Germany. About 1.5 million Poles had been deported from the zone the Soviet occupied after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Their fate greatly concerned to be interned in camps and jails. Finally some 15,000 officers and more soldiers had been captured, and their fate was a cause for great distress.

During 1942 the Russians again claimed Polish territory, and the Allied response became visibly more flexible. The West, not able to deliver a second front and watching the rapid advance of the Soviet army, began to back off from the Poles and move toward placation of Stalin. As a result, when Churchill and Harriman "found no time"⁹ to take up certain issues when Churchill visited Stalin in August 1942, the Poles felt abandoned.

The actual break between the London Poles and the Russians occurred in

April 1943, when the Germans discovered the graves of 15,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Forest of Poland. Stalin's fury at this immediate Polish acceptance of the Nazi version of the massacre prompted him to break diplomatic relations with the London Poles.

In Teheran, in late 1943, the Big Three discussed Poland. By now, there were two distinct issues involved. One was the future composition of the Polish government, and the second was the geographic boundaries of Poland. The Soviets argued for an eastern limit of Poland that coincided with the frontier of 1941 resulting from the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. At Teheran, Churchill and Eden initiated a proposal that this line be adopted in the East and Poland be compensated in the West out of former Prussian territory to the River Oder. Thus, they accepted Stalin's suggestions of 1941. Churchill also indicated that he would attempt to convince the London Poles to accept the solution. Roosevelt did not demur in the massive territorial or population adjustments that Stalin was conceded. Encouragingly, he said that he would like to see the eastern border moved further west and the western border moved to the River Oder. But, the president added, "he could not publicly take part in any such arrangement" because he could not prejudice the "six to seven million Americans of Polish extraction in the 1944 election."¹⁰ Roosevelt's concern about his domestic flank was well taken, for the Republicans would build much of their campaign around charges that Roosevelt's labor support tied him to communist influences. To have publicly associated himself with the Polish boundary decision, therefore, might well have been disastrous. But in accepting tacitly with Churchill the inevitability of Soviet dominance, Roosevelt undoubtedly contributed to the domestic difficulties to be experienced by his successor. There was probably no alternative available to Roosevelt and Churchill, but this action they conceded to Stalin both the dominant voice in the future government of Poland and territorial aggrandizement he desired.

The Teheran plan envisaged a population movement involving at least six million people who would have to find homes in Germany. The territory to be taken from Germany stretched 200 miles into Prussia. As for the new regime to be established in postwar Poland, Stalin now demanded that it be comprised primarily of those Poles acceptable to the Soviet Union. As Soviet troops were marching into Poland, Stalin created the Polish Committee of Liberation, a group that evolved out of the Union of Polish Patriots and that was more clearly than even the prototype government of Poland. When Soviet troops entered Lublin, Poland, this group was installed, and Lublin was made the administrative center for all of Poland.

But the meaning and full consequence of Soviet policy became clear as the Soviet military action in Poland revealed a kind of record for cynicism. As the Russians reached the Banks of the Vistula within sight of Warsaw in

August 1944, Moscow radio urged the Polish Underground or Home Army to revolt. The Poles did, yet the Russians did not advance to drive out the Germans, rather, they watched until January 1945 as the Nazis liquidated the vestiges of any potential opposition to Soviet domination of the future government of Poland. A quarter of a million Poles were to die in Warsaw fighting Nazis, and the city was destroyed, blown up block by block.

b. Yalta Conference

At the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt extracted vague and ambiguous assurances from Stalin concerning recognition of the Lublin government and free elections in Poland. Similar commitments were made by Stalin concerning all of Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe. Oversight of these elections was left vague and elastic, and when the Soviets later interpreted matters to their advantage, many in the United States would denounce the Yalta agreements as a "sellout." But Roosevelt's biographer, Burns, has concluded otherwise:

The best he could do... Doubtless Roosevelt knew already that the Polish compromise would be the most criticized part of the Yalta agreement, but he could hardly have sensed that it would be the heart of the later charges of betrayal, "sellout," and near-treason. If he had known, though, he would probably have taken the same basic position. He had reached the limit of his bargaining power at Yalta. His position resulted not from naïveté, ignorance, illness, or perfidy, but from his acceptance of the facts: Russia occupied Poland. Russia distrusted its Western allies. Russia had million of men who could fight Japan. Russia could sabotage the new peace organization. And Russia was absolutely determined about Poland and always had been. If the Big three broke up at Yalta, the President knew, he would lose the great opportunities that lay ahead—for him to win Soviet co-operation by his personal diplomacy and friendliness, and for the United Nations to draw Russia over the years into the comity of nations.¹¹

Moreover, Roosevelt believed—and he may have indulged his vanity to the point of self-deception here—that his personal charm could cut through the ideological differences, accumulated distrust of the preceding decades, as well as the historic Russian interests in Central Europe to capture Stalin's trust and cooperation. If successful, the Wilsonian ideal of an institutionalized world order might yet be fulfilled in the new United Nations in which case the compromises of Yalta would be mere footnotes on the opening pages of a new era.

On the other hand, the presentation of the Yalta accords to the American peoples led most Americans to believe that there would be free democratic

elections in Eastern Europe.

In effect, according to Yalta agreement, that writes as follows:

To foster the conditions in which the liberated peoples may exercise these rights, the three governments will jointly assist the people in any European liberated state or former Axis satellite state in Europe where in their judgement conditions require (a) to establish conditions of internal



Map 1. Europe (Reproduced, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, by John Spanier, New York, 1985, P.38)

peace; (b) to carry out emergency measures for the relief of distressed people; (c) to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people; and (d) to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections.¹²

At the same time, Roosevelt understood enough of the realities of the situation to know that in the “free hand” he had allowed the Soviets since 1943 in Poland the “friendly” governments—no matter how cloaked in elect procedure—he had acknowledged the Soviet their ambitious. Also, he must have known that the military realities of the postwar situation conflicted with what the American had been led to expect in terms of a new liberal order promised to arise out of the ashes of the war.¹³

It was Harry Truman who was to try and resolve the delemma of public and private expectations in favor of America’s aspirations, rather than acknowledge what increasingly seemed inevitable in the face of Soviet guns and tough interpretations of their security interests. Truman and his advisers were to agree the issue as a breach of faith. Harriman later wrote, Stalin went to “extreme lengths in breaking the Yalta agreements if it had been true that they were so much to his advantage. It was agreed that the people in these countries were to decide their own government through a free election.”¹⁴

However, there was never explicit agreement on the procedure or meaning of free elections or international supervisor. These items were kept ambiguous because it was apparent that the declaration of Yalta concerning Poland satisfied different purpose for the West and Stalin. To the West, it helped keep up appearances while Soviets armies needed later in the Pacific were still fighting Germans, and to the Russians, it confirmed the obvious. As Stalin was to remark; “This war is not as in the past, whoever occupies territory also imposes his own social system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise.”¹⁵ How could it be otherwise? Once the Lublin group was agreed to as the basis for future government, it was obvious that control would be communist. The inclusion of the London Poles or others could only be decoration for the Western conscience.

c. Declining of The British Power

The issue of the administration of former enemy and enemy-occupied states in Europe was a consistent element of the growing distrust between Russia and the West. It is commonly held that the cold war was a contest between a Western vision of an open-liberal political order and a narrow Soviet definition of security in terms of spheres of interest. But the West ac-

commodated itself to having its own security spheres when military convenience allowed in Europe or when historical ambition demanded it in Latin America. The first evidence of lack of deep Western commitment to its liberal rhetoric and aspirations was in North Africa, where the United States and British worked out a surrender deal with the anti-Semitic, collaborationist commander of the Vichy French forces. In return for his surrender, Admiral Jean Darlan was allowed to maintain his political position. The upshot is summarized by Stephen Ambrose:

The result was that in its first major foreign-policy venture in World War II, the United States gave its support to a man who stood for everything Roosevelt and Churchill had spoken out against in the Atlantic Charter. As much as Goering or Goebbels, Darlan was the antithesis of the principles the Allies said they were struggling to establish. It was quickly apparent that Darlan would ignore Eisenhower's rather tepid pressure to liberalize the administration of the area; American and British presence in North Africa made no practical difference in day-to-day life. Jews were still persecuted, unable to practice professions, attend schools, or own property; Arabs continued to be beaten and exploited; the French generals who had co-operated with the Nazis and fought the Americans lived in splendor amid the squalor that surrounded them.¹⁶

The squalid arrangement with Darlan was viewed as being an unfortunate expediency. Unhappily, it was repeated in the Western action in Italy of negotiating with the rightist regime of General Badoglio. By dealing with the leader of Italy's brutal Ethiopian campaign and leaving much of Mussolini's governmental structure intact, the West indicated the possibility that the allies would deal with anyone when the time came. But just as importantly, the occupation and administration of Italy was a "test case" of Western-Soviet cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe. In effect, the West, by managing to arrange for a sphere of influence in areas in which Western troops were placed, became poorly positioned to argue against the somewhat harsher but functionally equivalent strategy that the Soviets employed in.

2. Soviet's Precedent in Eastern Europe

In Greece, German withdrawal touched off lighting between communist and leftwing partisans on the one hand and collaborationists and monarchists on the other. The civil war that was raging by the time Britain entered Athens was settled by the British in favor of the royalist and collaborationists; and coalition government was installed under British tutelage. But, in December 1944, civil war again broke out when the British attempted to disarm the left-wing groups. The left feared the British plan of disarmament would have kept arms in the paramilitary force of the right as well as in the

police and military forces. In the midst of this chaos, the British army supported the rightists and royalists and actively attempted to root out the left opposition. British forces attempted to disband the partisan resistance by extreme methods and moved to reinstate the king, reportedly 80 percent of the population was opposed to such a move.

It was a blatant and unpopular in reclamation of the British Empire, which brought protest to the House of Commons and great consternation from some Americans who saw liberal principles desecrated. Nevertheless, Roosevelt acquiesced in Churchill's attempt to impose a British solution on Greece. American aid helped in suppressing the civil war as Roosevelt wired Churchill that "I regard my role in this matter as that of a royal friend and ally whose desire is to be of any help possible in the circumstances. The United States, he confessed, could not take a public stand, but this, he reassured Churchill, was due solely to the "state of public feeling" and did not reflect the official American position."¹⁷

In spite of the fact the British army was aimed at the "communist element in Greece and indications that they plan to seize power by force,"¹⁸ not a word of reproach was uttered by the Soviet press, and Stalin was completely silent on the subject. In this, Stalin was conforming to the agreement worked out between Churchill and himself in October 1944 in which Rumania and Bulgaria were conceded to the Soviet sphere of influence and Greece to the British. Yugoslavia and Hungary were to be divided equally. Churchill said appreciatively, "I am increasingly impressed, up to date, with the loyalty with which, under much temptation and very likely pressure, Stalin has kept off Greece in accordance with our agreement."¹⁹ The Russians did not nothing to help their ideological brethren in Greece and everything possible to discourage them. Stalin ever aided the British occupation by offering the British reconstituted monarchist Greek government in December 1945. The move caused extreme constanation among the left in Greece, but it was impressive evidence that the Soviets understood the language of power and interest. They had, after all, their own fish to fry in this regard Germany and Eastern Europe.

IN Greece, Italy, and North Africa, the Soviet had precedent or their conduct in Eastern Europe. But the West would concede that spheres of interest could cohabit the same planet. If they had, then the Soviets and the West might not have undergone the frightful postwar tension that was rapidly strangling the slim neck of wartime amity. But this was not to be, for the Western powers were unable or unwilling to reciprocated Stalin's behavior regarding Greece. The harsh Soviet interpretation of their security needs and Anglo-American resistance to this interpretation while pursuing a not dissimilar policy where practicable became, therefore, the focus of dissension and distrust from which other issues proliferated.

3. Truman Administration and the Beginning of the Cold War

a. Truman Administration and The Soviet Union

Harry Truman came to power after President Roosevelt's death little versed in foreign affairs and in contrast to Roosevelt heavily dependent on his advisers. Indeed, given Roosevelt's personal diplomacy, Truman had been excluded from major decisions and was relatively ignorant of what happened previously. His closet foreign affairs advisers had along and bitter distrust of Soviet ambitious and chafed at Roosevelt's view that goodwill and yielding to the strongest of Soviet security claims in Eastern Europe could beget a condominium of great powers. The majority of these officials concurred with Kennan's analysis that the Soviets were "Never—neither then nor at any late date—did I consider the Soviet Union a fit ally or associate, actual or potential."²⁰ They had witnessed the purges and the undeniable excesses and dark features of Soviet life and Stalin's character for long years.²¹ Kennan and the group of Soviet foreign policy experts were the people to which Truman turned when sought counsel on the great issues before him. And this counsel was not tainted by the considerable wellsprings of good will that some military officials and the public maintained toward the Soviets for bearing the brunt of the war.

Truman had hardly moved to the White House when the Russians demonstrated to the world that they would brook little interference in excluding "unfriendly" elements from the new Polish government. At Yalta the Soviet pledged to hold "free and unfettered" elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections, all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and forward candidates. But the prospects for free elections dimmed hourly. There was almost civil war, with the Russians and the Lublin group aligned against the supporters of the London Poles and the remnants of the Polish Resistance.

Ambassador Averell Harriman left the Moscow Embassy to George Kennan's care and returned to Washington to advise Truman. Harriman had spent months attempting to resolve the question as to which parties actually constituted "democratic elements" and could take part in a new Polish government. Neither Roosevelt nor Churchill had frankly faced up to the fact that truly free elections might have returned governments manifestly unfriendly to the Soviet Union, and the Soviets were reluctant to provide the barest grains of sand for a structure on which all parties whom the West supported might stand. Harriman was exasperated. He told Truman that Russia confronted Eastern Europe with a "barbarian invasion." They must be responded to firmly; for, he held, they needed reconstruction credit for their decimated industry. The tough approach to Russia was seconded by most of

Truman's foreign affairs advisers, although some broached the fear that too unyielding an attitude over Poland would break Soviet-American relations completely and endanger the entrance of Russia into the Pacific war. But Harriman's arguments prevailed.

Truman responded to Harriman that he understood "the Russians need us more than we need them" and though we cannot expect 100 percent of what he proposed, he did feel "we would be able to get 85 percent."²² The first step in March toward 85 percent of U.S. claims was to be taken with Molotov, who was coming to San Francisco in a gesture of good will to the fledgling United Nations conference and the new American president. In this meeting with the Soviet foreign minister, Truman pointed out in "words of one syllable" the American desire for immediate free elections. Truman stated that Poland become the symbol of U.S. foreign policy. During the second day of meetings with Molotov, the terse but correct conversation turned into a very undiplomatic diatribe. Truman cursed out the Foreign Minister as if he were a simple-minded recruit, demanding that elections be held immediately. Molotov protested, "I have never been talked to like that in my life." Truman snapped, "carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that."²³

Stalin was both puzzled and bitter. In a letter following the April 23, 1945, meeting with Molotov, the Soviet Premier protested that "Poland unlike Great Britain and the United States, had common frontiers with the Soviet Union. I do not know whether a truly representative government in Belgium is truly democratic. The Soviet Union was not consulted and claimed no right to interfere, as it understands the full significance of Belgium and Greece for the security of Great Britain."²⁴

Truman did not see his policy as the reversal of previous agreements. Instead he seemed to fear that the closing of Eastern Europe would prestage its closure economically. And in the view of Truman and his advisers, such a political and economic division of East and West would threaten economic chaos in Europe. Moreover, because the dominant belief arising out of World War I was that peace is "indivisible," Truman's most fervently held belief was that a "breach of peace anywhere in the world, threatens the peace of the entire world."²⁵ The Americans began to define Eastern Europe as but a launching pad to Western Europe and a matter of commitment that stood for all commitments. In contrast, the Russians concluded that the West was involved in a resurrection of the old course of encirclement, because of its concern and claims in Eastern Europe.

The irony for the West is that it is not clear that security meant expansion for the Russians. To the contrary, there were going to be momentous difficulties in holding the areas where their armies stood. The attitude of the Kremlin at the end of the war was one of panic. The "iron curtain" on which

Churchill commented in February 1945 to Truman was a protective shell making Stalin's concern that the relaxation of ideological control Russia experienced in the "great patriotic war" would accelerate. Moreover, it was feared that the extent of the internal devastation, if it were known, would be an invitation for the West to press its claim.

So far as these communist maneuvers inside the new Soviet empire might be the prelude to Soviet advance, Truman stepped up the pressure. Shortly after Truman's decision to search for 85 percent Soviet agreement with the American understanding of the political future of Eastern Europe, lend-lease was abruptly cancelled. Ships already unloading cargo were packed up and others in Mid-Atlantic turned around in the effort to use economic leverage against Soviets. As the Assistant Chief of lend-lease observed, "this decision was taken deliberately and probably was part of a general squeeze now being put on the U.S.S.R."²⁶ Stalin protested, "the American attitude toward the Soviet Union had perceptibly cooled once it became obvious that Germany was defeated. The Americans were saying that the Russians were no longer needed." Stalin continued that if the cancellation of lend-lease was designed as a pressure on the Russians in order to soften them up, then it was a fundamental mistake.²⁷ Although the decision was partially reversed,²⁸ the damage already done was exacerbated by Truman's decision to implement a "more realistic policy": an approach minimizing financial help to the Russians while agreements were yet to be reached on Eastern Europe to Truman's satisfaction—a satisfaction that demanded a great deal from the Soviets.

b. Potsdam Conference

Truman and Churchill arrived in a devastated Berlin for their meeting with Stalin at the villa of Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin, on the 16th of July, 1945. Truman said that his immediate purpose was to get the Russians into the war against Japan as soon as possible. It was contention at the outset that Russia's entry into the war would mean the "saving of hundreds of American casualties."²⁹ But the need to substitute Russian casualties for Americans became less apparent when a message arrived from Alamogordo in New Mexico that the atomic bomb had been tested successfully. The success at testing the bomb signaled to the West, in Churchill's words, that "we should not need the Russians. The end of the Japanese war no longer depended upon the pouring in of their armies for the final and perhaps protracted slaughter. We had no need to ask favors of them."³⁰

Truman became both confident and visible more rigid with Stalin after the news of the New Mexico test arrived. He no longer negotiated with the Russians, rather there occurred a sharply barbed exchange of views. As

Churchill recalled, Truman stood up to the Russians in a most emphatic and decisive manner, telling them as to certain demands that they absolutely could not have and the United States was entirely against them... He told Russians just where they could get off and generally bossed the whole meeting.³¹ In short, the bomb buoyed the West, for as Churchill told the House of Commons, "we possessed powers which were irresistible"³² at Potsdam—or so it seemed.

Truman, his advisers, and Churchill determined that the bomb could have several diplomatic and military purposes. First, if it was used quickly, the shock might prompt an immediate surrender of the Japanese and thus be, in Churchill's words "a merciful abridgement of the slaughter."³³ Second, it could now keep Russian participation in the war and hence postwar claims against Japan to a minimum. As Navy Secretary Forrestal recalled in his diary on July 28, 1945, "Byrnes (the Secretary of State) said he was most anxious to get the Japanese affairs over with before the Russians get in, with particular reference to Darian and Port Arthur. Once in there, he felt, it would not be easy to get them out."³⁴ Third, a significant Russian voice in the internal order of the postwar Japanese government by means of the occupational control agreement might not come into force if Japan could be forced to surrender before Russia managed a significant participation in the war. Truman recalls his determination, on returning from Berlin that "I would not allow the Russians any part in the control of Japan. Our experience with them in Germany and in Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Poland was such that I decided to take no chances in a joint setup with the Russians. As I reflected on the situation during my trip home, I made up my mind that General MacArthur would be given complete command and control after victory in Japan. We were not going to be disturbed by Russian tactics in the Pacific."³⁵

In the meantime, at Potsdam, Truman and Churchill and their advisers proceeded to push claims against Soviets that denied to the Russians the kind of exclusive arrangement the West had pursued in Greece, Italy, and North Africa. The United States pressed the proposition that the governments of Rumania and Bulgaria were not being organized along the democratic lines indicated by the declaration of Yalta. But, Molotov, quoting critical dispatches from the American and British press, claimed that Western occupation of Italy and the British exercise in Greece was indication that the West was applying a double standard to Soviet behavior in Eastern Europe.

4. The Prelude to Strategy of Containment

a. Churchill's Fulton Address

In the United States, the end of the war signaled the end of power politics

and the restoration of normal peacetime harmony among nations. In response to this expectation, the public demanded a speedy demobilization. In May 1945, at the end of the war with Germany, the United States had an army of 3.5 million men organized into 68 divisions in Europe, supported by 149 air groups. By March 1946, only ten months later, the United States had only 400,000 troops left, mainly new recruits, the homeland reserve was 6 battalions. Further reductions in army strength followed. Air force and Navy cuts duplicated this same pattern. This deliberate reduction of military strength, as a symptom of America's psychological demobilization, could not have failed to encourage Soviet intransigence in Europe and attempt to extend Soviet influence. American diplomacy and force retained their traditional separations. America's large and powerful armed forces and its enormous industrial strength, which could have provided the basis for serious negotiations about Eastern Europe—which Stalin satellized only gradually as he saw that his consolidation of Soviet power in the area elicited only protest notes from Washington—were respectively dismantled and converted to the production of consumer goods. American policy, supported by sufficient conventional military power, was impotent.³⁶

Old realist Winston Churchill, at the end of the European war, had counseled against the withdrawal of American troops. He had insisted that they stay, together with British troops, in order to force the Soviet Union to live up to its Yalta obligations regarding free elections in Eastern Europe and the withdrawal of the Red Army from Eastern Germany. But, the United States had rejected Churchill's plea. In early 1946, at Fulton, Missouri, Churchill took directly to the American public. The Soviet Union was "an expansionist state."³⁷ Furthermore, he addressed as follows:

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lies all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone—Greece with its immortal glories—is free to decide its future at an election under British, American and French observation. The Russian-dominated Polish Government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed-of are now taking place. The Communist parties which were very small in all these Eastern States of Europe, have been raised to pre-eminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking every where to obtain totalitarian control. Police government are prevailing in nearly every

case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy.

Turkey and Persia are both profoundly alarmed and disturbed at the claims which are being made upon them and at the pressure being exerted by the Moscow Government. An attempt is being made by the Russians in Berlin to build up a quasi-Communist party in their zone of Occupied Germany by showing special favours to groups of left-wing German leaders. At the end of the fighting last June, the American and British Armies withdrew westwards, in accordance with an earlier agreement, to a depth at some points of 150 miles to occupy this vast expanse of territory which the Western Democracies had conquered.³⁸

But, Churchill did not believe that the Soviets wanted war, this could be prevented only by the opposing power of the British Commonwealth and the United States. In short, Churchill said that the cold war had begun, that America must recognize this fact and give up their dreams of Big Three unity in the United Nations. International organization was no substitute for the balance of power. An alliance of the English-speaking peoples was the pre-requisite for American and British security and world peace.³⁹

In opposition to Churchill's opinion, who was Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace (he was former vice-president of F.D. Roosevelt, 1940-1944). According to his idea, "it was precisely the kind of aggressive attitude expressed by Churchill that was to blame for Soviet hostility. The United States and Britain had no more business in Eastern Europe than had the Soviet Union in Latin America, to each, the respective area was vital for national security. Western interference in nations bordering on the Soviet Union was bound to arouse Soviet suspicion, just as Soviet intervention in countries neighboring on the United States would." However, Wallace did not recognize Soviet's deed in Europe. He said "We may not like what Russia does in Eastern Europe." Her type of land reform, industrial expropriation, and suspension of basic liberties offends the great majority of the people of the United States. But we like or not, the Russians will try to socialize their sphere of influence just as we try to democratize our sphere of influence (including Japan and Western Germany).⁴⁰

Moreover, he said "we are telling the Russians that if they are 'good boys' we may eventually turn over our knowledge atomic energy to them and to other nations."⁴¹ Again, he thought that the tough attitude that Churchill and other conservatives at domestic and overseas demanded was precisely the wrong policy, it would only increase international tension. In short, only mutual trust would allow the United States and Soviet Union to live together peacefully, and such trust could not be created by an unfriendly American attitude and policy.⁴² His conclusion, therefore, was that we should change our policy in order to "allay any reasonable Russian ground for fear, suspicion and distrust."⁴³

b. Kennan's Long Telegram

Churchill's position seems to have been quite close to thinking within the Truman Administration. For example, his view of the world situation and the responsibility of the United States was quite similar to that expressed by Secretary of State Byrnes less than a week earlier. "If we are to be great power we must act as a great power, not only in order to ensure our own security but in order to preserve the peace of the world."⁴⁴ In fact, this toughening posture was a reflection of a fairly widespread but basically private mood of American policy makers, a mood that had been articulated in an 8,000-word telegram from the charge D'affaires of the Moscow Embassy, George F. Kennan, two weeks after Stalin's speech and a week before Churchill's.

The "long telegram" of February 22, 1946, was a response to Department of State's request for some explanation of Soviet behavior. Kennan states that he had been trying for the preceding eighteen months to get Washington to move toward a firmer policy line. "Now suddenly, my opinion was being asked. The occasion, to be sure, was a trivial one, but the implications of the query were not. It was no good trying to brush the question off with a couple of routine sentences describing Soviet views on such things as world banks and international monetary funds. It would not do to give them just a fragment of the truth. Here was a case where nothing but the whole truth would do. They had asked for it. Now, by God, they would have it."⁴⁵ What they got was an extremely frightening picture of a Soviet Union that would expand inexorably unless opposed. Soviet expansion was not merely an extension of Tsarist imperial ambition, but rather a function of Marxist ideology, a weak international structure, a traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity, and Russian rulers who have invariably sensed that their rule was relatively archaic in form, fragile and artificial in its psychological foundation, unable to stand comparison for contact with political systems of Western countries. The communists were pictured as expanding through political parties, front organizations, cultural groups, the Orthodox Church, Pan-Slavic movements, international organizations, and "government or government groups willing to lend themselves to Soviet purpose." This "far-flung apparatus" was to be used: "to undermine the general political and strategic potential of major Western Powers."⁴⁶

Finally Kennan closed with some practical deduction from the standpoint of U.S. policy:

In summary, we have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with U.S. there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure. This political force has complete power of disposition over energies of one of the world's

greatest people and resources of the world's richest national territory, and is borne along by deep and powerful currents of Russian nationalism. In addition, it has an elaborate and far-flung apparatus for exertion of its influence in other countries, an apparatus of amazing flexibility and versatility, managed by people whose experience and skill in underground methods are presumable without parallel in history. Finally, it is seemingly inaccessible to considerations of reality in its basic reactions. For it, the vast fund of objective fact about human society is not, as with us, the measure against which outlook is constantly being tested and reformed, but a grab bag from which individual items are selected arbitrarily and tendentially to bolster an outlook already preconceived. This is admittedly not a pleasant picture. Problem of how to cope with this face is undoubtedly greatest task our diplomacy has ever faced and probably the greatest it will ever have to face. It should be the point of departure from which our political general staff work at the present juncture should proceed. It should be approached with same thoroughness and care as solution of major strategic problem in war, and if necessary, with no smaller outlay in planning effort. I cannot attempt to suggest all the answers here. But I would like to record my conviction that the problem is within our power to solve—and that without recourse to any general military conflict. And in support of this conviction there are certain observations of a more encouraging nature I should like to make:

(One) Soviet power, unlike that of Hitlerite Germany, is neither schematic adventuristic. It does not work by fixed plans. It does not take unnecessary risks. Impervious to logic of reason, and it is highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw—and usually does—when strong resistance is encountered at any point. Thus, if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so. If situations are properly handled there need to be no prestige-engaging showdowns.

(Two) Gauged against Western World as a whole, Soviets are still by far the weaker force. Thus, their success will really depend on degree of cohesion, firmness, and vigor which Western world can muster. And this is factor which it is within our power to influence.

(Three) Success of Soviet system, as form of internal power, is not yet finally proven. It has yet to be demonstrated that it can survive supreme test of successive of power from one individual or group to another. Lenin's death was first such transfer, and its effects wracked Soviet state for fifteen years after. Stalin's death or retirement will be second. But even this will not be final test. Soviet internal system will now be subjected, by virtue of recent territorial expansions, to a series of additional strains which once proved severe tax on Tsardom. We here are convinced

that never since termination of the civil war have the mass of Russian peoples been emotionally farther removed from doctrines of Communist Party than they are today. In Russia, party has now become a great and—for the moment—highly successful apparatus of dictatorial administration, but it has ceased to be a source of emotional inspiration. Thus, internal soundness and permanence of movement need not yet be regarded as assured.

(Four) All Soviet propoganda beyond Soviet security sphere is basically negative and destructive. It should therefore be relatively easy to combat it by any intelligent and really constructive program.

For these reasons I think we may approach calmly and with good heart the problem of how to deal with Russia. As to how this approach should be made, I only wish to advance, by way of conclusion, the following comments:

1. Our first step must be to apprehend, and recognize for what it is, the nature of the movement with which we are dealing. We must study it with the same courage, detachment, objectivity, and the same determination not to be emotionally provoked or unseated by it, with which a doctor studies unruly and unreasonable individuals.

2. We must see that our public is educated to realities of Russian situation. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this. Press cannot do this alone. It must be done mainly by government, which is necessarily more experienced and better informed on practical problems involved. In this we need not be deterred by ugliness of the picture. I am convinced that there would be far less hysterical anti-Sovietism in our country today if the realities of this situation were better understood by our people. There is nothing as dangerous or as terrifying as the unknown. It may also be argued that to reveal more information on our difficulties with Russia would reflect unfavorably on Russian-American relations. I feel that if there is any real risk here involved, it is one which we should have the courage to face, and the sooner the better. But I cannot see what we would be risking. Our stake in this country, even coming on the heels of tremendous demonstrations of our friendship for Russian peoples, is remarkably small. We have here no investments to guard, no actual trade to lose, virtually no citizens to protect, few cultural contacts to reserve. Our only stake lies in what we hope rather than what we have; and I am convinced we have a better chance of realizing those hopes if our public is enlightened and if our dealings with Russians are placed entirely on realistic and matter of fact basis.

3. Much depends on health and vigor of our own society. World communism is like malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue. This is the point at which domestic and foreign policies meet. Every courageous and incisive measure to solve internal problems of our own so-

ciety, to improve self-confidence, discipline, morals, and community spirit of our own people; is a diplomatic victory over Moscow worth a thousand diplomatic notes and joint communiqués. If we cannot abandon fatalism and indifference in face of deficiencies of our own society, Moscow will profit—Moscow cannot help profiting by them in its foreign policies.

4. We must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of the sort of world we would like to see than we have put forward in the past. It is not enough to urge the people to develop political processes similar to our own. Many foreign peoples, in Europe at least, are tired and frightened by experiences of the past, and are less interested in abstract freedom than in security. They are seeking guidance rather than responsibilities. We should be better able than the Russians to give them this. And unless we do, the Russians certainly will.

5. Finally, we must have courage and self-confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. After all, the greatest danger that can befall us in coping with this problem of Soviet communism is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.⁴⁷

Although Kennan's recommendations concerning what American policy should be in the face of this threat were rather vague, his description of the horrors and implied horrors had tremendous impact and formed the intellectual basis for subsequent American foreign policy. The message was read from the president and circulated widely in the department of State and the military. The conclusion seems to have been drawn that the United States was confronted with a multidimensional threat aimed at nothing less than Western civilization. The only apparent remedy to Soviet power was struggle and confrontation because all they understood was force. Negotiations were viewed as being of limited utility if not impossible. Therefore the manipulation of the threat of war had to become the most important facet of diplomacy when dealing with the Soviets. The inference was drawn that force was a primary instrument for dealing with the Russians although Kennan claims, in retrospect, to have been uncomfortable with it. A few other officials within the government openly displayed their opposition to the emerging anti-Soviet consensus of the Truman Administration. As I precedently described, most prominent was Secretary of Commerce and former Vice President (Under Roosevelt administration) Henry Wallace. He represented a diminishing number of liberal Democrats and continued negotiation with the Russians. In March of 1946, Wallace wrote privately to Truman:

I am deeply convinced that General Bedell Smith's task would be made easier and his success more lasting if we could also at the same time discuss with the Russians in a friendly way their long range economic problems and the future of our cooperation in matters of trade. We know that

much of the recent Soviet behavior which has caused us concern has been the result of their dire economic needs and disturbed sense of security. The event of the past few months have thrown the Soviets back to their pre-1939 fears of "capitalist encirclement" and to their erroneous belief that the Western World, including the U.S.A., is invariably and unanimously hostile.

I think we can disabuse the Soviet mind and strengthen the faith of the Soviets in our sincere devotion to the cause of peace by proving to them that we want to trade with them and to cement our economic relations with them. To do this, it is necessary to talk with them in an understanding way, with full realization of their difficulties and yet with emphasis on the lack of realism in many of their assumptions and conclusions which stand in the way of peaceful world cooperation. What I have in mind is an extended discussion of the background needed for future economic collaboration rather than negotiation related to immediate proposals such as a loan. On our part, participants in such a discussion would have to be capable of speaking in terms of the general problems involved, as well as specific economic and commercial matters, and of relating the Russian approach to these problems to current U.S. Government and business policies and practices.⁴⁸

Similarly, in July of 1946, he had written:

How do American actions since V-J Day appear to other nations? I mean by actions the concrete things like thirteen billion dollars for the War and Navy Departments, the Bikini tests of the atomic bomb and continued production of atomic bombs, the plans to arm Latin America with our weapons, production of B-29's and planned production of B-36's and the effort to secure air bases spread over half the globe from which the other half of the globe can be bombed. I cannot but feel that these actions must make it look to the rest of the world as if we were only paying lip service to peace at the conference table.

These facts rather make it appear either (1) that we were preparing ourselves to win the war which we regard as inevitable or (2) that we are trying to build up a predominance of force to intimidate the rest of mankind. How would it look to us if Russia had the atomic bomb and we did not, if Russia had 10,000 mile bombers and air bases within 1,000 miles of our coastlines, and we did not?⁴⁹

Truman's reaction to these memoranda was to ignore them, and when Wallace took a similar position publicly in September 1946 he was fired. The message was clear; the policy of getting tough with the Russians was now official orthodoxy, and those who challenged it did so at their peril. The hard line articulated in Churchill's public warning, Byrnen's Stuttgart address, and Kennan's private letter was matched by the events of 1946.

How could the United States conduct a foreign policy against Soviet Union? This answer was that American policy would have to be "long-term, patient, but firm and vigilant containment." And, containment policy was a test of American democracy to conduct an effective, responsible foreign policy and contribute to change within the Soviet Union that might bring about a moderation of its revolutionary aims.

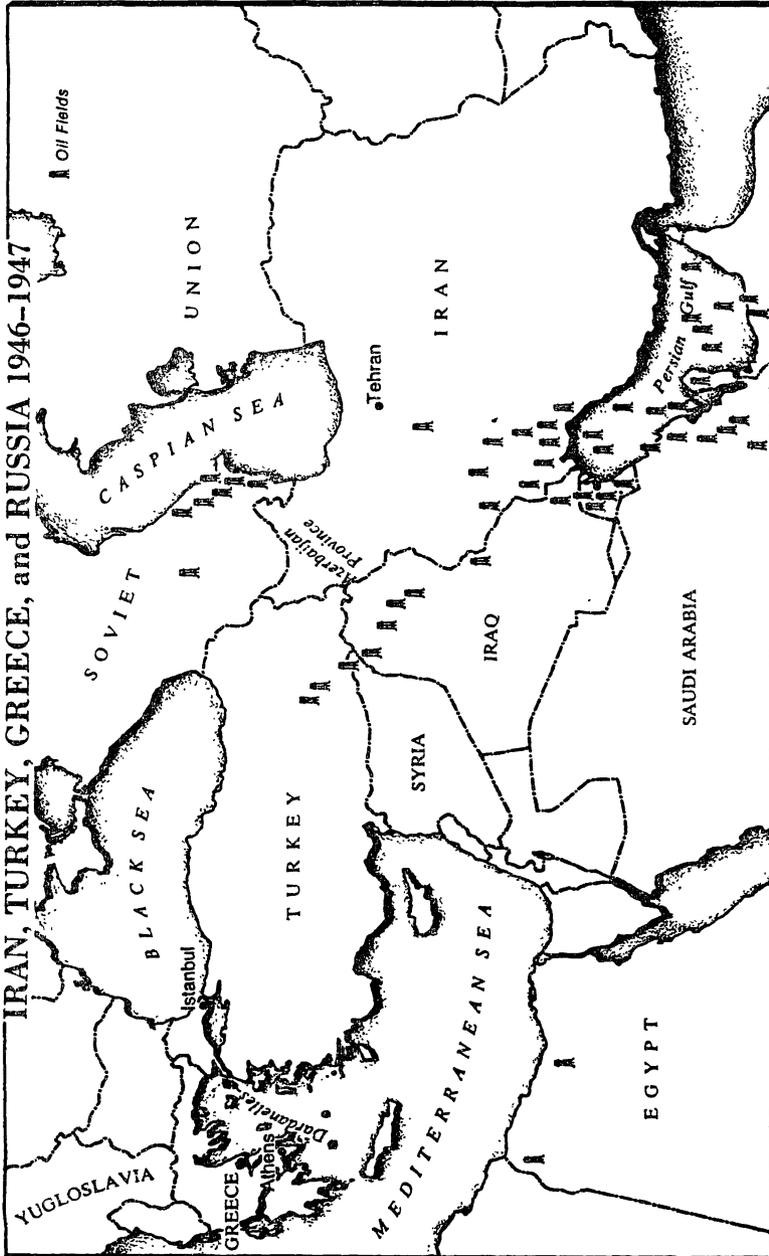
5. The Truman Doctrine

a. Crisis of Iran, Greek and Turkey

On the first day of March 1946, it was reported that Soviet troops were marching on Teheran and war was feared over the disposition of Teheran. According to 1942 occupation treaty, the Soviets were to have withdrawn their forces after the war. In January 1946, pro-Soviet government came to power in Teheran and began to negotiate with the Soviet-supported Azerbaijanian "autonomous region" in Northern Iran, then occupied by Soviet forces. The Soviets were demanding fulfillment of oil concessions promised by Roosevelt, which would have been a threat to Anglo-American commercial interest and would have aided in solidifying the Russian position in the north. Truman sent a stiff note to Stalin demanding that all Soviet troops be withdrawn at once and warning that the American fleet and troops were being prepared to move to Iran within six weeks.⁵⁰ By early April, Stalin had backed away from the confrontation, and under U.S. pressure the internal policy of Iran began to shift, i.e., the oil agreement was never ratified and Soviet trade with Iran virtually disappeared, falling from 25 percent of Iran's foreign trade in 1945-1946 to 1 percent in 1947-1948.

In Turkey the Russians sought throughout 1945 and much of 1946 to fulfill their historic desire to exercise control over the Dardennelles, the link between the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. Soviet pressure on the Turkish government was met by a display of American arms as President Truman dispatched to the area in August the aircraft carrier, Franklin D. Roosevelt, along with a reinforced naval unit including a contingent of marines. Furthermore, in the following month the Secretary of Defense announced that the Navy would maintain a permanent presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Soviet retreats in the face of American pressure seemed to vindicate the nascent principle of containment. For the Soviets were found to be vulnerable to the language of forces in both the Iranian and Turkish confrontations. This conclusion was to prove the most dangerous and the most consistent theme of American-Soviet Relations for the next thirty years.

Well, the combination of one of the worst winters in history and the cumulative economic consequences of World War II had, by February 1947, re-



Map 2. Middle East (Reproduced, American Russia, And The Cold War 1945—1975, by Walter LaFeber, New York: John Wiley And Sons, Inc., 1976, P.38)

duced Great Britain to a state of bankruptcy. Unable to afford even the import of cigarette, the British informed the United States that they could not continue economic and military assistance to either Greece or Turkey beyond March 31, 1947. The situation in Greece was deemed far more important by the Truman Administration in view of the ongoing insurgency, which was purportedly communist-led. A communist victory was feared if the British-led economic relief programs were to break down. On the afternoon of February 21, 1947, the first secretary of the British Embassy in Washington D.C. visited the State Department and handed American officials two notes from his majesty's government. One concerned Greece, the other Turkey. In effect, they both stated the same thing: that Britain could no longer meet its traditional responsibilities in those countries. Since both were on the verge of collapse, the import of the British notes, was clear. A Soviet breakthrough could be prevented only by an all-out American commitment. February 21 was thus a historic day.⁵¹ Joseph M. Jones of the State Department's office of Public Affairs and one of the drafters of Truman's statement has observed that the British "had within the hour handed the job of world leadership, with all its burdens and all its glory, to the United States."⁵² Yet, "rapidly, in an orderly manner, and with virtually no dissent, the executive branch of the government decided to act."⁵³

The lack of dissent is indicative of how well established the predisposition was toward U.S. intervention in the face of perceived Soviet expansion. Indeed, by 1947 those who stood in opposition to such a policy had been eliminated from the government, or sufficiently intimidated by the experience of Henry Wallace; thus, U.S. involvement in Greece and Turkey was never really in question in the Truman Administration. If there was a crisis in the spring of 1947, it concerned whether congress and the American peoples could be convinced to enlist in the crusade that had been taking shape within the Truman Administration for over a year.

The initial step in moving this policy of American activism was convincing Congress, and Truman sought to do this. First, through consultation with the leadership of Congress; and second, through an appearance before a joint session of the House and Senate. The value of a major Presidential speech to Congress emerged during informal discussions with the Congressional leadership. During these discussions, it became apparent that such a presentation could serve as an excellent vehicle for stating publicly administration's thinking in the most forceful language possible and thereby mobilizing the American peoples.

The meeting with Congressional leaders was held on February 27 and assumed dramatic proportions. The newly appointed Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, argued for the Greek-Turkish aid program on abstract and broadly humanitarian grounds. Accounts of the meeting all agree that

the Congressional leadership largely reflected Republican skepticism about the need for U.S. economic assistance and the implication of increasing budgets. The Congressmen stood mute after the distinguished Secretary restrained agreements were presented. Then, Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson spoke out and reframed the proposed U.S. response. Acheson later described the atmosphere of the meeting in terms that convey an image of history breaking open: "I knew we were met at Armageddon,"⁵⁴ he wrote. His response was appropriately apocalyptic:

My distinguished chief, most unusually and unhappily, flubbed his opening statement. In desperation I whispered to him a request to speak. This was my crisis. For a week I had nurtured it. These congressmen had no conception of what challenged them; it was my task to bring it home. Both my superiors equally perturbed, gave me the floor. Never have I spoken under such a pressing sense that the issue was up to me alone. No time was left for measured appraisal. In the past eighteen months, I said, Soviet pressure on the straits, on Iran, and on northern Greece had brought the Balkans to the point where a highly possible Soviet breakthrough might open three continents to Soviet penetration. Like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the east. It would also carry infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt, and to Europe through Italy and France, already threatened by the strongest domestic Communist parties in Western Europe. The Soviet Union was playing one of the greatest gambles in history at minimal cost. It did not need to win all the possibilities. Even one or two offered immense gains. We and we alone were in a position to break up the play. These were the stakes that British withdrawal from the eastern Mediterranean offered to an eager and ruthless opponent.⁵⁵

The members of Congress were stunned by Acheson's presentation, and there seemed to be general agreement that they would support the president if he would go before Congress and the American peoples and state matters in the same forceful manner as the Acheson's presentation.⁵⁶ The Department of State charged with drafting the president's speech, was determined to convince the American peoples of the existence of a mortal danger and the need for a decisive American response.⁵⁷ Thus, from outset, the Truman Doctrine had a dual purpose. First, it was a public statement of the foreign policy assumptions and positions that formed the basis of deep consensus within the Truman Administration. Second, Truman's statement was aimed at the American public. For in it, he attempted to convince the American peoples to view world security as jeopardized and the mobilized Americans in support of the world role for the United States.⁵⁸ Thus Truman thought, and in large measure succeeded in setting forth the idiom of the debate and the central questions of American foreign policy for twenty-five years. It was

to be, in Hans Mogenthau's words, the "intellectual capital" of the Cold War.⁵⁹

b. The Truman Doctrine

President Truman's presentation to the Congress began with a general overview of the crisis in Greece and much shorter reference to the situation in Turkey. He then turned to what he termed the "broader implications" of U.S. assistance to Greece and Turkey. President Truman asserted as follows:

The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and political recovery.

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

The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists, who defy the government's authority at a number of points, particularly along the northern boundaries. A Commission appointed by the United Nations Security Council is at present investigating disturbed conditions in northern Greece and alleged border violations along the frontier between Greece on the one hand and Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia on the other.

Meanwhile, the Greek Government is unable to cope with the situation. The Greek army is small and poorly equipped. It needs supplies and equipment if it is to restore authority to the government throughout Greek territory.

Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.

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

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

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

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

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

It is important to note that the Greek Government has asked for our aid in utilizing effectively the financial and other assistance we may give to Greece, and in improving its public administration. It is of the utmost importance that we supervise the use of any funds made available to Greece, in such a manner that each dollar spent will count toward making Greece self-supporting, and will help to build an economy in which a healthy democracy can flourish.

No government is perfect. One of the chief virtues of a democracy,

however is that its defects are always visible and under democratic processes can be pointed out and corrected. The government of Greece is not perfect. Nevertheless it represents 85 percent of the members of the Greek Parliament who were chosen in an election last year. Foreign observers, including 692 Americans, considered this election to be a fair expression of the views of the Greek peoples.

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

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

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

Nevertheless, Turkey now needs our support.

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

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

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

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

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

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

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and in-

dependence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free people to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed upon free people, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

sion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East.

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

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

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

We must take immediate and resolute action.

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

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

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

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

This is a serious course upon which we embark.

I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious.

The United States contributed \$341,000,000,000 toward winning World War II. This is an investment in world freedom and world peace.

The assistance that I am recommending for Greece and Turkey amounts to little more than 1/10 of 1 percent of this investment. It is only common sense that we should safeguard this investment and make sure

that it was not in vain.

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

We must keep that hope alive.

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

If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nations.

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

I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.⁶⁰

The President emphasized that it had long been “one of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion.”⁶¹ And the President had displayed the assumptions for subsequent American foreign policy. The security of the United States, the most basic of foreign policy values, was found only in “international peace,” i.e., a system of international order. Unless that international order was secure the United States could not be counted secure; thus it followed that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.”⁶²

The specific concern of the President on this day was a request \$400 million in economic and military assistance for Greece and Turkey, but he made it clear that the implications of the act and the broader framework articulated in the speech stretched beyond those troubled communities.

However, the president’s statement implied that U.S. policy involved a great deal more than a simple “internationalism”. The threat to international security was defined in terms of the regimes and domestic systems of other members of the international system. The internal affairs of other states were now an important, component of world order. Whether a country’s political, economic, and social system was “totalitarian,” “democratic,” “communist,” or “capitalist”—whether, in short, its “way of life” conformed to our vision of what was best on the Soviets’ vision—was now central to the question of world order. That is, the internal politics of states were fused with the quality of world order; and intervention in the former was now regarded as legitimate so as to preserve an American vision of the latter.

Although the existence and objectives of the United Nations were fully noted, they were dismissed with the observation that “the situation is an un-

gent 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.”⁶³

Roosevelt’s conception of the nations of the world working through a multilateral structure for the building and preservation of world order (a conception drawn in turn from Wilson) was therefore set aside. A singularly American vision of world order, built and maintained through American instrumentalities, was put in its place. The United Nations itself had been an American idea, and from the outset the central role of the Security Council with its provision of great-power votes ensured a pivotal role for American interests.

6. Conclusion

Thus the United States began the policy of containment against Soviet Union. According to professor of University of Florida John Spanier, he stated that four points about this initial commitment need special emphasis. “The first point, the Soviet threat to the balance of power left the United States no choice but to adopt a countervailing policy. With the war over, the United States would have much preferred to concentrate on domestic affairs; the massive postwar clearly demonstrated this preference.

The second point, to stress is that anti-Communism was not the major ingredient of American policy during and immediately after World War II. During the war, the United States had constantly sought to overcome the Kremlin’s suspicions of the West in order to lay the foundation for postwar harmony and peace.

The third point, the role of anti-Communism in American policy was essentially to mobilize Congressional and public support for the policy once it had been decided upon.

The fourth point, worth nothing is that, despite the universalism of the Truman Doctrine, its application was intended to be specific and limited, not global.”⁶⁴

In conclusion, the Truman Doctrine and the strategy of containment come to a close of the first phase of the post-World War II Soviet-American relationship. The Soviet-American relationship moved, therefore, from the crumbling edge of a friendly wartime alliance into a crevice of distrust, fear, and terror ultimately.

In the United States, the containment policy against Soviet Union could be equated with the defense of democracy and freedom from communism.

Notes

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2. Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism: Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics and Internal Security, 1946-1948* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p.86.
3. J. William Fulbright, *The Crippled Giant: American Foreign Policy and Its Domestic Congress* (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 24.
4. John Lewis Gaddis, *Was the Truman Doctrine a Real Turning Point?: Foreign Affairs* (January 1974), p.386.
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7. Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp. 899-901.
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9. John A. Lukacs, *The Grand Power and Eastern Europe* (New York: American Book Company, 1953), p. 506.
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12. *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic papers, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 972.
13. John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 173.
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18. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 610.
20. George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), p. 57.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

22. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. I, *Year of Decisions* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1955), p. 71.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
24. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, (Bantam ed.), pp. 421-422.
25. Car Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 78.
26. Car Alperovitz, *Cold War Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Shenkman, 1970), p. 98.
27. Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 894.
28. Gaddis, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
29. Truman, *op. cit.*, p. 314.
30. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Bantam ed.), p. 545.
31. William A. Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*; rev. ed (New York: Delta Books, 1962), p. 249.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
33. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Bantam ed.), pp. 546.
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35. Truman, *op. cit.*, p. 412.
36. John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983), p. 23.
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40. *Ibid.*
41. Truman, *op. cit.*, p. 557.
42. Spanier, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
43. Truman, *op. cit.*, p. 557.
44. Byrnes speech delivered to the Overseas Press Club in New York, February 28, 1946, *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 14, No. 349 (March 10, 1946), p. 356.
45. Kennan, *op. cit.*, p. 293.
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53. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
54. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), p. 219.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Eric F. Goldman, *The Crucial Decade—And After: America, 1945-1960* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 59.

57. Jones reports that the interdepartmental committee responsible for an initial draft of the speech indicated that there were three primary objectives of the speech: "1. To make possible the formulation of intelligent opinions by the American people on the problems created by the present situation in Greece through the furnishing of full and frank information by the government. 2. To portray the world conflict between free and totalitarian or imposed forms of government. 3. To bring about an understanding by the American people of the world strategic situation. It became the most significant document used in the drafting of the Truman Doctrine (Jones op. cit., p. 152)."
58. See Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism: Foreign Policy, Domestic Policies and Internal Security, 1946-1948* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974).
59. Hans J. Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Frederick A. Prager Publishers, 1969), p. 1.
60. Truman, *The Truman Doctrine: Special Message to the Congress...*, pp. 176-180.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
64. Spanier, op. cit., pp. 31-32.