5

Security versus Self-Determination: The Problem of Eastern Europe

In contrast to their confusion over Germany, Washington officials knew what they wanted in Eastern Europe: maximum possible self-determination for the people of that region without impairing the unity of the Grand Alliance. Unfortunately these two goals—both fundamental elements in the American program for preventing future wars—conflicted with each other. Stalin had made it clear since the summer of 1941 that he would not tolerate hostile states along his western border, yet in most of Eastern Europe free elections, if held, would produce governments unfriendly to Moscow.[1] The existence of two clear objectives thus did not simplify the task of Roosevelt and his advisers, because both could not be attained. A choice would have to be made, in the light of American interests, between self-determination for Eastern Europe and cooperation with the Soviet Union.

With characteristic optimism, Roosevelt hoped he could avoid making this decision. Throughout the war he worked to convince the East Europeans that they had nothing to fear from Russia and that they could afford to choose governments acceptable to Moscow. Simultaneously he sought to persuade Stalin that the defeat and disarmament of Germany, together with maintenance of big-power unity into the postwar period,

[1] McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia,* p. 535.

would do more to guarantee Soviet security than would territorial gains and spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. If a choice became inevitable, however, Roosevelt knew in which direction he would move. Self-determination he had always regarded as an ideal to be striven for, but not practically attainable in all situations.[2] Cooperation with the Soviet Union, though, was essential both to win the war and to keep the peace after victory. By the end of 1943, the President had cautiously indicated to the Russians that they could count on a free hand in Eastern Europe.

At the same time, however, the President hoped that Stalin would be discreet, for any appearance of abandoning self-determination would cause F.D.R. serious political problems inside the United States. Several million Polish-Americans might defect from the Democratic Party in 1944, endangering Roosevelt's chances for reelection. Even more important, any flagrant violations of the Atlantic Charter might give critics of international organization sufficient ammunition to kill American participation in the United Nations, just as Wilson's departures from the Fourteen Points a quarter-century earlier had contributed to the Senate's rejection of the League of Nations. For these reasons, Roosevelt felt that he could not publicly back away from his promises of a peace settlement which would allow the people of Europe to determine their own future, even though he knew that the likelihood of this happening in countries bordering Russia was small.

But by failing to prepare the American people for Stalin's demands in Eastern Europe, Roosevelt inadvertently undermined the domestic consensus necessary for his postwar policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union. Having been led by the President's own rhetoric to expect self-determination everywhere, Americans reacted angrily when the Soviet Union proceeded to extract territorial concessions from its neighbors, and to impose spheres of influence on them. Interpreting these actions as first steps in a renewed bid for world revolution, Americans, lessons of the past firmly in mind, gradually came to regard Stalin as an aggressor with unlimited ambitions who, like Hitler, would have to be resisted and contained.

[2] Range, *Roosevelt's World Order*, pp. 33–34; Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, p. 22.

I

When the second front did not materialize as promised in 1942, Stalin felt free to reassert his territorial claims, not only to the Baltic States and portions of Finland and Rumania, but to eastern Poland as well. Even more ominously, the Russians broke diplomatic relations with the Polish government-in-exile in London in April, 1943, after the Poles had asked the International Red Cross to investigate German charges that the Russians had massacred several thousand Polish officers at Katyn Woods in 1940.[3] The Red Army's massive victory at Stalingrad early in 1943 had drastically shifted the military balance on the eastern front in favor of the Russians, making it apparent that Stalin soon would be in a position to impose his will on Eastern Europe. Roosevelt gradually came to realize, as the British had before him, that he would have to work out some kind of accommodation with the Russians on this matter while the war was still on.

When Anthony Eden came to Washington in March of 1943, he found the President far more willing to accept Soviet territorial demands than he had been a year earlier. Roosevelt still thought that Russian absorption of the Baltic States would "meet with a good deal of resistance" in the United States, and hoped the Kremlin might make its action more palatable by holding plebiscites. But, "realistically, the Russian armies would be in the Baltic States at the time of the downfall of Germany and none of us can force them to get out." The President took a similar position on Poland:

> The big powers would have to decide what Poland should have and . . . he, the President, did not intend to go to the Peace Conference and bargain with Poland or the other small states; as far as Poland is concerned, the important thing is to set it up in a way that will help maintain the peace of the world.

Both Eden and Roosevelt agreed, in addition, that Stalin would want, and should get, boundary concessions from Finland and Rumania.[4]

[3] On this matter, see *FR: 1943,* III, 323–27, 374–93.

[4] Harry Hopkins memorandum of Roosevelt-Eden conversation, March 15, 1943, *FR: 1943,* III, 13–18. See also *ibid.,* pp. 34–36; and Eden, *The Reckoning,* pp.

The President's position on Eastern Europe changed little in the months between Eden's visit and Roosevelt's first meeting with Stalin at Teheran. In a magazine interview published in April, F.D.R. expressed the hope that Stalin's territorial claims could be satisfied "through a combination of plebiscite and trusteeship techniques" without violating the Atlantic Charter. Three months later, he frankly warned Polish ambassador Jan Ciechanowski that the United States would not fight Stalin to prevent him from taking eastern Poland and the Baltic States. In September, the President told Archbishop Francis Spellman that there would be no point in opposing Stalin's territorial demands because the Russian leader had the power to take these areas, regardless of what Britain and the United States did. It would be better to yield to Stalin's requests gracefully. At about the same time, Roosevelt repeated this conclusion to W. Averell Harriman, his new ambassador in Moscow, but added that he would try to keep Stalin from going too far by stressing the unfavorable world reaction this would provoke, by agreeing to dismember Germany in hopes of making the Russians feel more secure, and by offering American economic assistance in repairing Soviet war damage. Shortly after this, the President informed Secretary of State Hull that he intended to appeal to Stalin "on the grounds of high morality." Neither England nor the United States would fight to save the Baltic States, he would tell Stalin, but Russia would improve its standing in the eyes of the world if it would hold plebiscites in the territories it planned to take over.[5]

Roosevelt's advisers generally agreed that the United States could do little to prevent Stalin from taking the territory he wanted. Joseph E. Davies reported after a trip to Moscow in the summer of 1943 that the Russians "are going to take back what they consider was wrongfully taken from them." John D. Hickerson, assistant chief of the State Department's Division of European Affairs, warned that any attempt to reestablish the boundaries of September 1, 1939, in Eastern Europe would be "sheer military fantasy." Professor Isaiah Bowman of Johns

431–32. Eden says that Roosevelt mentioned favorably the Curzon line as the eastern boundary of Poland, but there is no indication of this in the American records.

[5] Forrest Davis, "Roosevelt's World Blueprint," pp. 20 ff.; Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory,* p. 186; Gannon, *The Cardinal Spellman Story,* p. 223; Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin,* pp. 174–75; Hull, *Memoirs,* II, 1266. On the authenticity of the Davis article as an expression of Roosevelt's views, see Divine, *Second Chance,* pp. 114–15.

Hopkins University, once a member of Woodrow Wilson's "Inquiry" and now on the State Department's Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy, favored making the Poles return some of the land they had taken when they "had Russia down" after World War I. Soviet incorporation of the Baltic States would shock American opinion, Bowman felt, but there was little the United States could do about it short of going to war with Russia. Admiral William D. Leahy, as Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief Roosevelt's most influential military adviser, thought it "inconceivable" that Stalin would allow Poland and the Baltic States to regain their independent status after the war. By employing its superior military power and by threatening to make a separate peace with Germany, Russia could, Leahy thought, keep the United States and Britain from interfering.[6]

Early in November, Ambassador Harriman sent Roosevelt an informed estimate of Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe, based on information he had picked up during the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in October. The Russians would insist strongly on their 1941 frontiers, Harriman wrote. They believed that the British had already agreed to these boundaries, and that American failure to discuss the issue up to this point indicated that Washington had no serious objections. "The problem of Poland is even tougher than we believed." The Russians would not content themselves simply with territorial gains at the expense of Poland, but would insist on having a "friendly" government installed in Warsaw. They regarded the Polish government-in-exile in London as "hostile, and therefore completely unacceptable to them." Above all, the Soviets were determined to have nothing resembling the old "cordon sanitaire" in Eastern Europe.[7]

There was no real ambiguity about Stalin's objectives in Eastern Europe, therefore, when Roosevelt embarked for Teheran late in November, 1943. Nor was there much doubt as to what the American response would be. The President had worried over this matter for almost two years, and had for some time realized that the United States and Great

[6] Davies to Roosevelt, May 29, 1943, Roosevelt MSS, PSF 18: "Russia"; Hickerson to Hull, August 10, 1943, Department of State records, 840.50/2521; Bowman to Hull, September 27, 1943, Hull MSS, Box 52, Folder 159; Leahy, *I Was There,* p. 185.

[7] Harriman to Roosevelt, November 4, 1943, *FR: Tehran,* p. 154.

Britain lacked the power to deny Stalin what he wanted. Roosevelt would use his influence to persuade Stalin to be magnanimous, while at the same time working to convince the East Europeans that their own best interests lay in cooperation with the Soviet Union. But under no circumstances would the United States fight for self-determination in Eastern Europe. The one question still unsettled was how to present this policy in the United States as anything other than a violation of the Atlantic Charter. Charles E. Bohlen saw the dilemma clearly. The basic underlying difficulty in Soviet-American relations, he wrote in the fall of 1943, would be convincing the American people to abandon their traditional aversion to power politics in order to secure cooperation with the Soviet Union in the postwar world.[8]

With similar considerations in mind F.D.R., after the Teheran Conference had been under way for several days, invited Stalin to his quarters for a private discussion relating to American politics. An election was coming up in 1944, Roosevelt said, and while he did not want to run again, he might have to if the war was still on. The President reminded Stalin that there were six or seven million Polish-Americans in the United States, and that "as a practical man he did not wish to lose their vote." He, personally, agreed with Stalin that the Russo-Polish border should be moved to the west and that the Poles should obtain territorial compensation at the expense of Germany. He hoped, however, Stalin would understand that he could not, for political reasons, "publicly take part in any such arrangement at the present time." Stalin replied, reassuringly, that "now [that] the President [had] explained, he had understood."

Roosevelt went on to say that there were also a number of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians in the United States. While he himself realized that these states had once been part of Russia, and while the American government certainly did not intend to go to war to prevent the Russians from reoccupying them, "the big issue in the United States, insofar as public opinion went, would be the question of referendum and the right of self-determination." Roosevelt expressed his personal confidence that inhabitants of the Baltic States would, in any future plebiscite, cheerfully ratify their own incorporation into the Soviet Union. Stalin pointed out that the Baltic States had enjoyed little autonomy

[8] Bohlen to James C. Dunn, September 7, 1943, Hull MSS, Box 52, Folder 159.

under Nicholas II, "who had been an ally of Great Britain and the United States," and that no one had brought up public opinion at that time. The Soviet leader could not quite understand why the question was being raised now. Roosevelt replied that "the truth of the matter was that the public neither knew nor understood." To which Stalin responded: "They should be informed and some propaganda work should be done." Roosevelt now became more direct, telling Stalin that "it would be helpful for him [Roosevelt] personally if some public declaration in regard to the future elections . . . could be made." Stalin answered that there would be "plenty of opportunities for such an expression of the will of the people." [9]

It is impossible to know precisely what Stalin made of this peculiar conversation, which represented Roosevelt's only significant statement on the problem of Eastern Europe at Teheran. The President did make it clear that the United States would not oppose the territorial changes Stalin wanted, but that the Russian leader must not expect public acknowledgment of this until after the 1944 campaign. Any promise of elections or plebiscites which Stalin might give to make these changes more acceptable to the American people would be appreciated. Roosevelt said nothing about guaranteeing self-determination in the rest of Eastern Europe, but it seems likely that Stalin emerged from this talk convinced that the President's main concern would be to present Russian policy to the American public in the most favorable light, not to secure literal compliance with the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

II

Polish-American concern over the fate of Eastern Europe was real enough. Congressmen with Polish-American constituencies had begun to worry over this issue long before the Teheran Conference. Representative John Dingell of Michigan had warned Roosevelt in August, 1943, that "we Americans are not sacrificing, fighting, and dying to make permanent and more powerful the Communistic Government of Russia and to make Joseph Stalin a dictator over the liberated countries of Europe."

[9] Bohlen notes, Roosevelt-Stalin conversation, December 1, 1943, *FR: Tehran,* pp. 594–95.

When Secretary of State Hull returned from the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference in November with no territorial guarantees for Eastern Europe, expressions of alarm intensified. Senator John A. Danaher of Connecticut reminded his colleagues that "there are literally thousands upon thousands of boys of Polish extraction who . . . are fighting all over the world in the firm belief that they are going to help restore the pre-war borders of the homeland of their parents." Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan wrote the editor of a Detroit Polish-language newspaper that

> if the Atlantic Charter means *anything,* it *must* mean a new Poland when it says that there are to be "no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned"; and when it promises to "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live"; and when it asserts that "sovereign rights and self-Government are to be restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."

On November 16, ten members of the House of Representatives asked Hull to reassure Polish-Americans that the United States would continue to assist Poland and all other "freedom-loving nations." [10]

Polish diplomats in Washington viewed the Moscow declaration's silence on territorial questions with foreboding. Ambassador Jan Ciechanowski noted a strong atmosphere of private pessimism beneath the official optimism in government circles: "I actually met with expressions of sympathy and condolence on the part of numerous political friends." Another Polish official compared the Moscow declaration to a doughnut, with the hole representing the question of territory: "What can you do with the central question unsolved? It should have been a cookie." Such expressions of anxiety took on more ominous overtones when the Office of Strategic Services warned on November 10 that the Polish government-in-exile planned "to mobilize political feeling in the United States to back Polish claims against Soviet Russia." The report said that the Poles hoped to work among Polish-Americans, Catholics, and Middle Westerners, that they anticipated making use of anti-British sentiment

[10] Dingell to Roosevelt, August 19, 1943, Department of State records, 760C.61/2093; *Congressional Record,* November 1, 1943, p. 8929; Vandenberg to Frank Januszewski, November 6, 1943, Vandenberg MSS; congressmen to Hull, November 16, 1943, Department of State records, 740.0011 MOSCOW/278. See also Representative B. J. Monkiewicz to Roosevelt, August 18, 1943, *ibid.,* 760C.61/2096.

in the United States, and that they would not hesitate to seek help from "friendly" congressmen. The apparent objective of this campaign was to make it impossible for Roosevelt to "move in any serious way against the Polish interest." [11]

These developments alarmed Hull, who had always resented efforts by minority groups to influence foreign policy.[12] He warned Ciechanowski that Polish criticism of American diplomacy was assuming a "thoroughly unfriendly nature" and cabled Roosevelt, then on his way to Teheran, that the Poles were desperate and might engage in "unfortunate public outbursts." The Secretary of State assured the President that "we are making every effort here . . . to convince the Poles, official and unofficial, that they must take a calmer outlook and not prejudice their case by undue public agitation regarding our policies." [13]

Early in January, 1944, the Red Army crossed Russia's prewar border into what had been Poland. Several days later, the Soviet government issued a public statement calling for a "strong and friendly Poland," but insisting that "Ukrainian and White Russian" lands which had been part of Poland now become part of the Soviet Union. The Poles would receive compensation through the return "of the ancient Polish lands taken from Poland by the Germans." The proclamation further warned that the Polish government-in-exile in London had demonstrated an unwillingness to carry on friendly relations with the USSR, and implied that Moscow might sponsor a new and more sympathetic government in Warsaw.[14]

The State Department noted shortly thereafter that its mail on the

[11] Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory,* p. 228; *Newsweek,* XXII (November 15, 1943), 17; DeWitt C. Poole, Foreign Nationalities Branch, Office of Strategic Services, to Adolf A. Berle, November 10, 1943, Department of State records, 760C.61/2119.

[12] Hull, *Memoirs,* II, 1315. Hull complained bitterly against "interfering minorities" who, "aided by the improvement of methods for diffusing information and propaganda, have raised a voice and exerted a pressure in foreign affairs far out of proportion to their numbers. . . . On many occasions, when the international relations of our Government require the most delicate and careful handling . . . , some of these groups scatter poison or otherwise play havoc with them." (*Ibid.,* II, 1738.)

[13] Hull memorandum of conversation with Ciechanowski, November 19, 1943, *FR: 1943,* III, 484–85; Hull to Roosevelt, November 23, 1943, *FR: Tehran,* p. 384. Ciechanowski, in his account of the November 19 meeting, does not mention the Secretary of State's warnings against domestic Polish agitation. (*Defeat in Victory,* pp. 234–43.)

[14] Harriman to Hull, January 11, 1944, *FR: 1944,* III, 1218–20.

Polish question had increased sharply, as had petitions on the subject addressed to Congress. Most of this material came from individuals of Polish descent or from Polish-American organizations. On January 6, the chairman of the National Council of Americans of Polish Descent wrote to Roosevelt that American acquiescence in Russia's decision "to keep her share of the loot grabbed with Hitler" could only be interpreted as "a sign of approval and coresponsibility." Representative Joseph Mruk of New York warned Roosevelt one week later that if Russia absorbed eastern Poland the war would be "lost idealistically and morally—even before we have been able finally to win it militarily." Congressman John Lesinski of Michigan told a meeting of Polish-Americans in Detroit that if Stalin was allowed "to gobble up Poland" he would take all of Europe as well.[15]

In March, 1944, a group of Polish-American leaders decided to form a nationwide movement embracing every major Polish organization in the United States. Coordinating committees were established in Detroit, Chicago, New York, and other centers of Polish-American strength for the purpose of electing 4,000 delegates to a Polish-American congress, to be held in Buffalo at the end of May. Each delegate was to contribute $25.00 to support the congress' work. White House assistant David K. Niles, who wrote a lengthy report on the affair for Roosevelt, noted with professional admiration that the congress would "go down in history as the most colossal piece of organizational work. There is really something to learn from the Poles in the manner this congress was created."

The principal aim of the ostensibly nonpartisan congress was to marshal Polish-American opinion in opposition to any new partition of Poland. But Niles noted that the main organizers of the congress, Charles Rozmarek of Chicago, Frank Januszewski, publisher of the Detroit *Polish Daily News,* and Michael F. Wegrzynek, chairman of the National Council of Americans of Polish Descent, were all Republicans. Leaders of the congress received advice and support, though apparently not financial assistance, from the Polish government-in-exile, the American Cath-

[15] "Public Attitudes on Foreign Policy," report no. 13, February 29, 1944, Department of State records, 711.00 PUBLIC ATTITUDES/7A; M. F. Wegrzynek to Roosevelt, January 6, 1944, printed in *Congressional Record,* 1944 appendix, p. A158; Mruk to Roosevelt, January 14, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, OF 463-A, Box 4; Lesinski speech of January 30, 1944, copy, *ibid.*

olic hierarchy, and several isolationist members of the United States Congress. At the congress' first meeting in Buffalo moderate groups prevented the passage of resolutions directly critical of the Roosevelt Administration. But Niles warned that there was "terrific resentment against the Administration" among leading Polish-Americans "which will eventually crystalize in some unfriendly form." [16]

The possible impact of Polish-American disaffection on the forthcoming election clearly worried Administration officials. As early as February, Oscar Cox had advised Harry Hopkins that Polish-Americans might desert the Democratic Party, and in the process "start enough of a rumpus to swing over other groups before November of 1944." During the spring the White House received thousands of printed postcards, all of them urging Roosevelt to oppose "the fourth partition of Poland." On May 3, Polish Constitution Day, some 140 congressmen inserted into the *Congressional Record* material on Poland, much of it furnished by Polish-American groups, calling for application of the Atlantic Charter to the Russo-Polish controversy. Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long noted later that month that it would be difficult to solve the boundary dispute between Russia and Poland in such a way as to satisfy the Polish-Americans, who might well hold the balance of political power in states like Illinois, Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania.[17]

Because of the sensitive political situation, propaganda activities of the Polish government-in-exile caused special anxiety in Washington. Joseph E. Davies complained that the London Poles were constantly distributing expensive propaganda booklets in the United States and that they "would readily pay thousands of dollars to throw a monkey-wrench into American public opinion against Russia." Isador Lubin, an aide to Harry Hopkins, noted with concern the appearance of several articles in the Detroit Polish-language press calling on Polish-Americans not to

[16] Memorandum by Niles, May 26, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, PSF: "Poland." See also Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 5, June 21, 1944; and Joseph A. Wytrwal, *America's Polish Heritage: A Social History of the Poles in America*, pp. 262–63. Niles later wrote to Grace Tully: "I think we sort of handled the Buffalo conference so that we pulled some of the fangs out of it." (Niles to Tully, June 6, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, PSF: "Poland.")

[17] Cox to Hopkins, February 7, 1944, Hopkins MSS, Box 324; postcards in Roosevelt MSS, OF 463, Box 1; Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 3, May 19, 1944; Long Diary, June 13, 1944, Israel, ed., *Long Diary*, p. 354.

contribute their "sweat" to lend-lease production for Russia. At Roosevelt's request Lubin submitted to him several pamphlets critical of American and British policy put out by the Polish Information Center which had, Lubin observed indignantly, received financial assistance from the American government. Concern over this matter was great enough to cause both Roosevelt and the State Department to warn Polish Prime Minister Stanislaw Mikolajczyk against holding public meetings with Polish-American groups when he visited the United States in June of 1944.[18]

During his conversations with Mikolajczyk, President Roosevelt repeatedly stressed the need for the London Poles to work out a reconciliation with the Soviet Union. There were five times as many Russians as Poles, the President said, "and let me tell you now, the British and the Americans have no intention of fighting Russia." Roosevelt observed that if he were in the position of the Poles, he would agree to territorial concessions and changes in the make-up of the Polish government. Stalin, he assured Mikolajczyk, had no intention of extinguishing Polish liberty, if for no other reason than that this would alienate American public opinion. The President urged the Polish prime minister to meet with Stalin personally, because "in this political year I cannot approach Stalin with a new initiative about Poland." [19]

The President's assurances to Mikolajczyk represented no change from his previous position. The Poles would have to accept territorial changes, but Roosevelt hoped the pressure of world opinion would moderate Soviet demands. Shortly before Mikolajczyk arrived in Washington, Roosevelt instructed Harriman to tell Stalin that the Polish problem "will be kept out of 'politics' " and to express the hope "that the Soviets would give the Poles 'a break.' " When Harriman conveyed this information to Molotov, the Russian foreign minister interrupted to ask whether Roose-

[18] Davies Journal, April 25, 1944, Davies MSS, Box 14; Lubin to Dean Acheson, April 3, 1944, Department of State records, 760C.61/2287; Lubin to Roosevelt, June 5, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, PSF: "Poland"; James C. Dunn to Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., May 24, 1944, *FR: 1944,* IV, 874; Bohlen memorandum of conversation with Ciechanowski, May 24, 1944, *ibid.,* III, 1272.

[19] The fullest account of the Roosevelt-Mikolajczyk conversations is in Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory,* but see also Mikolajczyk's record of the talks, in Edward J. Rozek, *Allied Wartime Diplomacy: The Pattern in Poland,* pp. 220–21; Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, *The Rape of Poland,* pp. 59–60; and Stettinius calendar notes, June 7, 1944, Stettinius MSS, Box 240.

velt's attitude was still the same as that expressed at Teheran. Harriman replied, "of course," and Molotov said that Stalin would be gratified to hear this news.[20]

The Russian leader made his own abortive effort to improve relations with Polish-Americans in the spring of 1944 when he personally invited the Reverend Stanislaus Orlemanski, an obscure parish priest from Springfield, Massachusetts, to visit the Soviet Union. Orlemanski's efforts in helping to organize the pro-Soviet Kosciusko Polish Patriotic League in the United States had apparently led Stalin to believe, with wild inaccuracy, that Orlemanski represented Polish-American opinion. The Massachusetts priest received a cordial welcome in Moscow, and enjoyed a two-hour talk with Stalin and Molotov. The Russian dictator promised Orlemanski that he would not interfere in Polish internal affairs after the war, that he would allow freedom of religion in the Soviet Union, and that it might even be possible for the Kremlin to cooperate with the Vatican. Both the American chargé d'affaires in Moscow and an Office of Strategic Services representative who interviewed Orlemanski upon his return felt that Stalin's comments represented a sincere bid to improve relations with Poland, Polish-Americans, and the Catholic Church.[21]

Whatever Stalin's intentions were with regard to the Orlemanski visit, they backfired. The priest's trip provoked violent objections from the Polish government-in-exile, the Polish-American community, and American Catholics. Ambassador Ciechanowski informed the State Department that his government viewed the affair with "the greatest concern and disappointment." Michael J. Ready, general secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, charged that Orlemanski's trip was "like other missions to Moscow, . . . a political burlesque, staged and directed by capable Soviet agents." Congressman Dingell told the

[20] Stettinius memorandum of conversation with Harriman, May 23, 1944, *FR: 1944,* IV, 873–74; Harriman to Roosevelt, June 7, 1944, *ibid.,* III, 1276–77.

[21] On Orlemanski's visit to Moscow, see *FR: 1944,* III, 1398–99, 1402–11, IV, 868–69; Hull, *Memoirs,* II, 1442–44; and Werth, *Russia at War,* pp. 844–47. The estimates of Stalin's intentions are in Maxwell M. Hamilton to Hull, May 9, 1944, *FR: 1944,* IV, 869; and a memorandum by DeWitt C. Poole of conversations with Orlemanski on May 15–16, 1944, Department of State records, 760C.61/2334. Stalin also invited Professor Oscar Lange of the University of Chicago, a native of Poland, to come to Moscow at this time. Lange later became the postwar Polish government's first ambassador to the United States.

House of Representatives that Orlemanski had "soiled his sacerdotal robes of priesthood to kowtow to Stalin and to others who betrayed the Polish people and the Roman Catholic Church into the hands of their enemies." The crowning blow came when Orlemanski's bishop reprimanded him for making the trip without permission.[22] President Roosevelt found Orlemanski's account of his talk with Stalin "extremely interesting" and expressed a desire to talk with the priest "off the record," but Secretary of State Hull, still smarting under a barrage of criticism, cast cold water on the idea. So ended one of the more curious episodes in wartime Soviet-American relations.[23]

Meanwhile, Republicans were preparing to capitalize on the discontent of ethnic minorities with the Administration's foreign policy. Senator Vandenberg saw the potentialities of the issue clearly. He proposed to Thomas E. Dewey late in March, 1944, that the Republican platform's foreign policy plank incorporate the language of the Atlantic Charter "because *this is the point* at which the Roosevelt Administration is deserting the hopes and prayers of all our American nationals from Poland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, etc." Vandenberg opposed making definite promises to the Poles "because our current defaults to Mr. Stalin are rapidly putting him in 'the driver's seat.' " It would be difficult to make any specific pledge on Poland "which would actually be worth the paper it is written on." But the senator added: "There is no doubt in my mind . . . that Polish voters will be more responsive to us this Fall than in many years." [24]

[22] James C. Dunn memorandum of conversation with Ciechanowski, May 2, 1944, *FR: 1944,* III, 1407; *New York Times,* May 1, 1944; *Congressional Record,* May 3, 1944, p. 3931; Poole memorandum of conversation with Orlemanski, May 27, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, PSF: "Poland." Orlemanski told Poole that he had not talked with his bishop since his return from Moscow, but "the parish had just bought a fine new bell. Maybe the bishop would come and bless it and then everything would be fine again." (*Ibid.*)

[23] Roosevelt to Hull, May 31, 1944, Department of State records, 760C.61/2334; Hull to Roosevelt, June 2, 1944, *ibid.* When Mikolajczyk was in Washington Roosevelt mentioned Orlemanski's report to him, suggesting the rather breathtaking possibility that, since Stalin obviously had no desire to assume the tsars' old position as head of the Russian Orthodox Church, he might favor a reunion of the Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches under the leadership of the Pope. (Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory,* pp. 308–9.)

[24] Vandenberg to Dewey, March 30, 1944, and Milton Carmichael, April 29, 1944, Vandenberg MSS. See also *Newsweek,* XXIII (May 1, 1944), 29–30.

Dewey himself avoided dealing with the Polish issue explicitly during the campaign, confining his remarks instead to the need to be "fair and upright in our dealings with the smaller nations." He did criticize the "dim secrecy" surrounding Roosevelt's negotiations on Poland, but admitted that "Poland has had differences with Russia that go deep into history and for which there's no simple solution." In a series of discreet conversations with Republican leaders in October, however, Ambassador Ciechanowski did obtain private expressions of sympathy for the Polish position. Herbert Hoover told Ciechanowski that Roosevelt had double-crossed the Poles at Teheran, and that their only hope was to appeal to American public opinion. John Foster Dulles promised the Polish ambassador that he would try to win Dewey's support for the Polish cause, and Dewey himself informed Ciechanowski that he disliked Roosevelt's acquiescent Polish policy and would, if elected, take a firmer position against Soviet demands.[25]

Democratic political leaders, already concerned about the outcome of the election, found Republican activity among Polish-Americans increasingly alarming. Representative George C. Sadowski of Michigan observed that "the Republicans are wringing their hands and shedding crocodile tears for poor Poland." Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney of Wyoming sent word to Samuel Rosenman that many Polish-Americans in Illinois and Ohio were "emotionally disturbed." The secretary of the Polish-American Businessmen's Association of Chicago wrote plaintively to Roosevelt that

> it is really hard to talk to some of our people. And elections are coming soon. Will you kindly talk to your friends, Messrs. Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin, and really do something substantial, and soon, for those poor suffering Polish souls in Poland? We have here at least 300,000 Polish votes. There are millions of Polish votes all over [the] USA, and it is hard to talk to them. . . . Will you kindly take this trouble under your consideration?

[25] *New York Times,* September 9, October 9 and 18, 1944; Ciechanowski reports to Mikolajczyk of conversations with Hoover on October 6 and 20, Dulles on October 20, and Dewey on October 8, 1944, cited in Rozek, *Allied Wartime Diplomacy,* pp. 300–1. Ciechanowski later wrote: "I was frequently asked by various campaign managers, and especially by election agents of the New Deal, what I thought would be the most appropriate way to obtain the support of what they called 'the Polish vote' for the Democratic machine. Of course I steadily refused to discuss these matters." (*Defeat in Victory,* p. 347.)

Convinced that Roosevelt would have to do something to neutralize Polish-American criticism, Attorney General Frances Biddle suggested that the President meet briefly with a delegation from the Polish-American Congress and "say something that would hearten the Poles." Other Democratic leaders enthusiastically seconded the proposal. Senator Joseph Guffey asked Roosevelt to receive the delegation because "it will help us greatly in Pennsylvania." Mayor Edward J. Kelly of Chicago told Democratic National Committee chairman Robert Hannegan that while the general situation in Illinois was good, he was worried about the Poles and considered it "absolutely imperative that the President arrange immediately to see the group of Polish leaders." [26]

Roosevelt yielded to the importunings of his advisers and received the Poles at the White House on Pulaski Day, October 11, 1944. Charles Rozmarek, president of the Polish-American Congress, asked the President for assurance that he would prevent imposition of a puppet regime on Poland and would oppose forced transfers of populations there. Roosevelt replied blandly that "you and I are agreed that Poland must be reconstituted as a great nation" and assured the Polish-Americans that "world opinion" would back up that objective. While this interview produced little information that could encourage the Polish-Americans, it did at least relieve the anxieties of Democratic politicians. Roosevelt saw Rozmarek again in Chicago on October 28. Following this interview Rozmarek endorsed the President for reelection, because "he assured me that . . . he will see to it that Poland is treated justly at the peace conference." [27]

Election results showed Democratic anxieties about the Polish vote to have been highly exaggerated. One report, prepared for the Democratic National Committee, estimated that 90 percent of Polish-American voters remained within the Roosevelt coalition. Rozmarek's last-minute endorsement of Roosevelt appeared in retrospect as an effort to save face

[26] Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* pp. 819–20; *Congressional Record,* May 3, 1944, p. 3940; record of telephone conversation with O'Mahoney, October, 1944, Rosenman MSS, Ms. 62–4, Box 2, Roosevelt Library; Frank Nurczyk to Roosevelt, September 13, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, OF 463-A, Box 4; Biddle to Roosevelt, September 28 and October 7, 1944, *ibid.,* OF 463-A, Box 1; Guffey to Roosevelt, October 7, 1944, *ibid.;* Hannegan to Edwin M. Watson, October 7, 1944, *ibid.*

[27] White House press release, October 11, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, OF 463-A, Box 1; *New York Times,* October 29, 1944.

once leaders of the Polish-American Congress realized they could not swing the Polish vote to Dewey. In a post-mortem on the election Frank Januszewski, vice-president of the congress, complained to Senator Vandenberg that the Republican Party had directed its attack against the New Deal, which had been good to Polish-Americans, not against the diplomacy of the Roosevelt Administration. Vandenberg himself perceived an even greater difficulty. The tragedy of the situation, he wrote to Januszewski, was "that we cannot prove that they [the Poles] have been 'sold down the river' (if they have) and we cannot conscientiously promise them that they can rely upon us for a better deal when we collide with Stalin at the Peace Table." [28]

Attempts to employ ethnic voting to influence the 1944 election probably harmed more than they helped Poland's interests. Promises to withhold or deliver the Polish-American vote distracted the Roosevelt Administration's attention from the question of Poland itself to the problem of appeasing Polish-American leaders.[29] They also contributed to the obsessive cautiousness which paralyzed Roosevelt's East European policy in 1944, preventing badly needed efforts to tell the American people what kind of peace settlement they could expect in that part of the world.

III

But Roosevelt's concern over political retaliation from Polish-Americans was not the only reason why he felt unable to prepare the American people for postwar developments in Eastern Europe. Key senators, many of them former isolationists, had made it clear that they would support American membership in the new world organization only if the peace settlement reflected the principles of the Atlantic Charter. Any indications that the big powers were preparing to divide Europe up into spheres of influence might be as damaging to the United Nations as the

[28] Report by Press Research, Inc., on the Polish lobby, June 4, 1945, copy in Democratic National Committee records, Box 155, Truman Library; Januszewski to Vandenberg, November 22, 1944, Vandenberg MSS; Vandenberg to Januszewski, October 31, 1944, *ibid.*

[29] Louis L. Gerson, *The Hyphenate in Recent American Politics and Diplomacy*, p. 140.

Allies' World War I secret agreements had been to the League of Nations. Full disclosure of Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe could well wreck the domestic consensus which Roosevelt regarded as necessary for successful prosecution of the war, and provoke a return to isolationism once peace had come.

The Senate had already passed a resolution early in November, 1943, calling for "the United States, acting through its constitutional processes, [to] join with free and sovereign nations in the establishment and maintenance of international authority with power to prevent aggression and to preserve the peace of the world." Approval of this innocuous statement, proposed by Chairman Tom Connally of the Foreign Relations Committee after prodding from internationalists, was never in doubt. In the course of the debate, however, several former isolationists expressed concern over Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe. Senators Robert R. Reynolds and Edwin C. Johnson proposed amending the Connally resolution to guarantee the postwar independence and territorial integrity of that area. "If the Atlantic Charter means what it says," Johnson intoned, "and if our ideals of justice and freedom . . . are not pure flimflam, then my resolution is in order and timely." [30]

The views of Reynolds and Johnson hardly represented a majority position in the Senate, as the 85-to-5 vote in favor of the unamended Connally resolution showed.[31] But their action reflected a growing tendency on the part of old isolationists to make incorporation of the Atlantic Charter into the peace settlement their price for supporting American membership in the new international organization. Since the opposition of only 33 senators could keep the United States out of the United Nations, Roosevelt Administration officials could not afford to ignore this development.

Secretary of State Hull, whose department had assumed chief responsibility for planning the United Nations, understood the danger clearly enough. Early in 1944 he cabled Ambassador Harriman that he was "much disturbed" by the Soviet government's approach to the Polish problem. The Russians should understand that American support for an international organization would depend upon Moscow's willingness "to

[30] *Congressional Record,* November 1 and 2, 1943, pp. 8939–40, 9006.

[31] For the debate over the Connally resolution, see Divine, *Second Chance,* pp. 147–54.

abandon unilateralism and to seek its ends by free and frank discussion with a Polish Government that is not hand-picked." If the Soviet Union insisted on imposing a puppet government in Poland, Americans would interpret this as a regression to power politics. Such action would seriously affect the Senate's attitude toward the new collective security organization. If "some authorized person or official in Russia [could] reiterate fairly often Russia's interest in . . . the movement of international cooperation," Hull later told Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko, this would "help to clear the air." Time and time again during the first half of 1944 Hull urged upon the patient but noncommittal Gromyko the need for the Soviet Union to seek its objectives through cooperation and consultation with its allies, not through unilateral action.[32]

Hull's admonitions had little apparent effect on the Russians, but his concern over public opinion did appear to be well founded. At the time of the Moscow Conference in November, 1943, surveys indicated that 54 percent of Americans thought that Russia could be trusted to cooperate with the United States after the war. But by the end of January, 1944, this figure had declined to 42 percent. Even allowing for the usual margin of error, this poll demonstrated, as a State Department analyst noted, "a significant decline in public confidence in Russian cooperation after the war." Even more ominously, a National Opinion Research Center poll, released in December, 1943, showed that while "a majority of the American public believes that following the war Russia will not be content with her pre-war boundaries, . . . a majority also believes that Russia should *not* extend them." Considerable doubt existed as to how the United States should respond to this situation—39 percent of the sample thought Washington should try to stop the Soviet Union from taking territory which belonged to Poland before the war, while 38 percent opposed this—but the evidence was clear that Americans would not look favorably upon Soviet violations of self-determination in Eastern Europe.[33]

[32] Hull to Harriman, January 25, 1944, *FR: 1944,* III, 1234–35; Hull memoranda of conversations with Gromyko on March 11, 19, 29, April 13, 20, May 7, and June 1, 1944, Hull MSS, Box 61, Folder 250, *FR: 1944,* IV, 854, Department of State records, 760C.61/2298. See also Hull to Harriman, December 23, 1943, *FR: 1943,* III, 611–12; *idem,* January 15 and February 9, 1944, *FR: 1944,* III, 1228–29, IV, 824–26.

[33] "Public Attitudes on Foreign Policy," reports No. 6, December 21, 1943, and

Criticism of Russian "unilateralism" in the Senate reflected the growing public concern. Styles Bridges of New Hampshire questioned whether the United States was trying to restrain those of its allies "who might have territorial or power ambitions." "I have seemed to sense," Bridges warned, "a gradual drifting away from the principles of the Atlantic Charter." Harlan Bushfield of South Dakota observed that for a thousand years Russian rulers had dreamed of acquiring a warm-water outlet to the sea. "Today is Russia's opportunity. Does anyone doubt that she will make the most of it?" Burton K. Wheeler of Montana told his colleagues that, despite the fact that sympathy for the Soviet Union had "grown tremendously" in recent years, if Russia overran Poland, Finland, the Baltic and Balkan States, public sentiment would change very rapidly.[34]

Secretary of State Hull was, at this time, quietly trying to get Senate leaders to approve the State Department's plans for an international organization. Fears that the Big Three had already settled the main features of the peace in secret led Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, a key Republican member of the Foreign Relations Committee, to inform Hull that the Senate could not endorse the department's program without knowing what the terms of the peace settlement would be. Otherwise, senators would be signing "the most colossal 'blank check' in history." Vandenberg wrote in his diary:

> Over all these negotiations . . . hung the shadow of a doubt as to whether we (or even Hull himself) was in possession of *full* information as to what peace terms may have *already* been agreed upon between Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill. . . . We all believe in Hull. But none of us is *sure* that Hull *knows* the whole story.

Allen Drury, a congressional correspondent for the United Press, observed that "the fatal cleavage in government" which had ruined Woodrow Wilson's plans for the League of Nations was developing again.

No. 12, February 21, 1944, Department of State records, 711.00 PUBLIC ATTITUDES/6, 7A. See also Cantril and Strunk, eds., *Public Opinion,* p. 1169; and Bruner, *Mandate from the People,* pp. 121–22. Samuel Rosenman submitted the results of the January, 1944, poll to Roosevelt on February 17, 1944. (Roosevelt MSS, OF 857, Box 3.)

[34] *Congressional Record,* January 14, March 7, April 21, May 3, 1944, pp. 186, 2302, 3623–24, 3888.

"Congress just doesn't like to be hoodwinked, bypassed, patronized, lied to, or affronted in the field of foreign policy." [35]

Publication in May of a two-part *Saturday Evening Post* article by Forrest Davis giving Roosevelt's account of the Teheran Conference further increased tension in the Senate. The article abounded in careless phrases sure to arouse senatorial ire. Davis pictured Roosevelt as "gambling" that the Soviet Union would be willing to collaborate with the West, a policy "bordering at times on what has been termed appeasement." The account stressed F.D.R.'s repeated and patient attempts to make friends with Stalin, and revealed for the first time publicly the concept of the Four Policemen. All of this served to confirm the suspicions of senators who believed that the Big Three had already drawn the major outlines of the peace settlement. Robert A. Taft of Ohio accused the President of basing his policy "on the delightful theory that Mr. Stalin in the end will turn out to have an angelic nature." Vandenberg wrote that "if the Post articles are right, . . . all the ideology of the 'Atlantic Charter' is already 'out the window.' " [36]

Hull eventually secured cautious oral approval of the State Department's plans for international organization from Senate leaders, but he failed to get the written commitment he had hoped to use to dispel doubts about congressional willingness to join the new organization. Senatorial suspicion of Roosevelt's secret diplomacy at Teheran, particularly with regard to Eastern Europe, was primarily responsible for the tentative nature of this commitment. Representatives of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China, meeting at Dumbarton Oaks from August through October, 1944, also endorsed the key features of the department's plans, leaving unresolved only the questions of voting procedure in the Security Council and the Soviet Union's demand

[35] Vandenberg to Hull, May 3, 1944, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 97–98; Vandenberg Diary, May 23, 1944, *ibid.,* pp. 101–2; Drury Diary, May 8, 1944, Allen Drury, *A Senate Journal: 1943–1945,* p. 162.

[36] Forrest Davis, "What Really Happened at Teheran," *Saturday Evening Post,* CCXVI (May 13 and 20, 1944), 13 ff., 22 ff.; Taft radio address of June 8, 1944, *Congressional Record,* 1944 appendix, p. A2901; Vandenberg Diary, May 26, 1944, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 103–4. See also Israel, ed., *Long Diary,* pp. 348, 356. Edgar Snow asked Roosevelt on May 26, 1944, whether Davis' articles had accurately reflected his views. Roosevelt replied: "Yes, Forrest did a good job." (Snow, "Fragments from F.D.R.," p. 400.)

for multiple votes in the General Assembly. But agreement on the organizational structure of the future United Nations did not necessarily ensure Senate approval. Vandenberg wrote early in the fall of 1944: "The *nature* of the peace—whether it is calculated to be just and equitable —has an important bearing upon the nature and extent of our commitment to forever underwrite its terms." [37]

Cordell Hull finally retired as secretary of state at the end of November, 1944, after heading the Department of State for twice as long as any other man. Sick, tired, and bitter over long years of being bypassed by the President, the Secretary could take comfort in the flood of praise he received from colleagues in government, the press, and the public. One editorial in *Life,* however, struck a discordant note. It recalled Hull's "big moment" when he had stood before Congress in 1943 promising that "there will no longer be need for spheres of influence, for alliances, for balance of power, or any other of the special arrangements . . . of the unhappy past." "But who believes that?" *Life* asked: "Not the heads of the governments of Russia, Britain, France, or even the U.S. Things aren't working out that way. The old chasm between words and events, which characterized so much of the Hull era, still yawns." [38] *Life*'s bluntness reflected a growing awareness in the United States toward the end of 1944 that the gap between the realities of the peace settlement and the principles of the Atlantic Charter was indeed going to be large.

Unilateral British and Russian actions in Eastern Europe intensified this sense of uneasiness. Churchill's hostility to the emergence of left-wing governments in liberated countries became painfully obvious with his forcible suppression of the Greek uprising in December, 1944. At the same time, the Russians were moving toward establishment of a puppet government in Poland, a process completed with Soviet recognition of the Lublin regime early in 1945. Ironically British actions in Greece aroused the greater amount of concern in the United States. The confrontation there was sharper than in Poland, and, according to opinion

[37] Divine, *Second Chance,* pp. 200–3, 220–28; Vandenberg to Mrs. John K. Ormond, September 30, 1944, Vandenberg MSS.

[38] "Mr. Hull," *Life,* XVII (December 11, 1944), 26. See also Pratt, *Cordell Hull,* II, 765–66; and Israel, ed., *Long Diary,* p. 388.

polls, Americans distrusted Britain more than they did Russia.[39] But both cases demonstrated a disturbing Anglo-Russian tendency to divide postwar Europe into spheres of influence—a tendency which the United States was doing nothing to stop.

President Roosevelt accidentally aggravated the situation by casually revealing at a press conference on December 19, 1944, that he and Churchill had never actually signed the Atlantic Charter. F.D.R. immediately realized his mistake and at his next press conference stressed that the ideals of the Charter were more important than whether a signed document existed. But the damage had already been done. News that the Charter had not been signed came as a shock to a nation accustomed to placing great faith in written documents. Senator Vandenberg, a good judge of such matters, proclaimed that Roosevelt's statement had "jarred America to its very hearthstones." [40]

Much of the criticism Roosevelt received now came from his own supporters. The President's new secretary of state, Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., had already angered liberals by filling high State Department positions with such establishment figures as Joseph C. Grew, William L. Clayton, James C. Dunn, and Nelson A. Rockefeller. Roosevelt's cavalier dismissal of the Atlantic Charter, together with British and Russian actions in Eastern Europe, convinced many liberals that the ideals of the war had been abandoned. Edgar Ansel Mowrer, columnist for the *New York Post,* accused Roosevelt of compromises, postponements, and evasions: "Yet still unrepentantly he wisecracks, he postures, he ducks, he does everything but come clean and tell the country what he is up to." Former Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles criticized the apparent lack of unity among the Allies, and called upon Roosevelt to assert bold leadership. Allen Drury charged Roosevelt with "four years of sloppy diplomacy, personal intrigue and tin-horn politicking on a world-wide scale." [41]

[39] Stettinius to Roosevelt, "American Opinion on Recent European Developments," December 30, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, PSF 30: "Stettinius." This survey of public opinion indicated that of the one-third of the public dissatisfied with the extent of Big Three cooperation, 54 percent blamed Britain while only 18 percent blamed Russia.

[40] *New York Times,* December 20, 22, 1944; *Congressional Record,* January 10, 1945, p. 166.

[41] *Time,* XLV (January 8, 1945), 13; Drury Diary, December 17, 1944, Drury,

In the Senate, isolationists like Burton K. Wheeler no longer found themselves alone when they warned that the United States would not join the world organization unless Russia and Britain changed their policies. Even such a dedicated internationalist as Senator Joseph Ball of Minnesota was worried: "If the present trend of unilateral decisions by the Allied nations in the liberated areas of Europe continues, it may do irreparable damage to the principles of international collaboration set forth in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals." With Senators Harold Burton, Carl Hatch, and Lister Hill, Ball proposed that the Senate set standards in advance for the kind of peace settlement it would accept. Perfectionism, Joseph E. Davies observed in his diary, was proving to be just as dangerous to international cooperation as isolationism: "The altruistic impulse among some of our ablest public men [which] insists upon a perfect structure of World Peace" failed to take into account such obvious "facts of life" as Russian insistence on friendly governments in Eastern Europe, British requirements for control of important sea-lanes, and even American demands for postwar strategic bases in the Pacific.[42]

The President had hoped to get the Senate to approve membership in the United Nations before explosive situations like Poland and Greece could come up, the *New Republic*'s knowledgeable "TRB" wrote early in 1945, but now "the fat is in the fire." For whatever reason, whether intimidation by Polish-Americans, concern over the Senate, or declining health,[43] Roosevelt had not prepared the American people for the kind of peace settlement which he knew would be necessary in Eastern Europe. George F. Kennan, then counselor at the American Embassy in Moscow, saw the problem clearly. The Soviets, he wrote to Ambassador

Senate Journal, p. 313. On Stettinius' State Department appointments, see Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* pp. 837–38; and Divine, *Second Chance,* pp. 253–55. The appointment of a poet, Archibald MacLeish, as assistant secretary of state for public and cultural relations failed to placate outraged liberals.

[42] Drury, *Senate Journal,* p. 318; *New York Times,* December 26, 1944; Davies Journal, December 9, 1944, Davies MSS, Box 15.

[43] On this matter, see Herman E. Bateman, "Observations on President Roosevelt's Health During World War II," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XLIII (June, 1956), 82–102; and the important new information in Howard G. Bruenn, "Clinical Notes on the Illness and Death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Annals of Internal Medicine,* LXXII (April, 1970), 579–91. See also the *New Republic,* CXII (January 8, 1945), 51. Since 1943 "TRB" has been Richard L. Strout.

Harriman, had never stopped thinking in terms of spheres of influence. The American people,

> for reasons which we do not need to go into, have not been aware of this quality of Soviet thought, and have been allowed to hope that the Soviet government would be prepared to enter into an international security organization with truly universal power to prevent aggression. We are now faced with the prospect of having our people disabused of this illusion.[44]

Such were the unhappy circumstances in which the Roosevelt Administration began planning for the next meeting of the Big Three, at which there would have to take place a settlement of East European questions which both the Soviet Union and the American public could accept.

IV

The President's advisers had public opinion much on their minds as they prepared for Yalta. A summary of opinion polls sent to Roosevelt early in January, 1945, concluded that recent events "have increased public skepticism concerning the ability of the major powers to live up to the ideals of the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations." Another analysis prepared for the President by Secretary of State Stettinius called attention to "a significant *decline* in public confidence in the conduct of our foreign policy in the past six months." [45] Concern over this matter affected Administration planning on the two critical East European issues with which the Big Three would have to deal: the question of boundaries, and the problem of who was to govern the countries of this area.

F.D.R.'s tacit approval of Stalin's territorial claims at Teheran had, for all practical purposes, settled the boundary problem in advance. The President's counselors continued to support the wisdom of this decision. Bernard Baruch, never one to withhold advice, wrote Roosevelt that Stalin's demand for Polish territory was understandable because the Russians feared Germany. It would be useless "to demand of Russia what

[44] Kennan to Harriman, December 19, 1944, quoted in Kennan, *Memoirs,* p. 222. See also Brooks Emeny to John Foster Dulles, December 22, 1944, Dulles MSS; and Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks,* pp. 102–3.

[45] Hadley Cantril to Grace Tully, January 11, 1945, Roosevelt MSS, OF 857, Box 3; Stettinius to Roosevelt, December 30, 1944, *ibid.,* PSF 30: "Stettinius."

she thinks she needs and most of which she now possesses." Secretary of War Stimson thought Russian insistence on the Curzon Line reasonable in the light of history—"it certainly does not seem to be worth a quarrel with Russia." State Department briefing-book papers prepared for Roosevelt's use at Yalta recommended the Curzon Line as a basis for the Polish-Russian boundary but, reflecting a promise the President had made to Polish Prime Minister Mikolajczyk the previous summer, suggested trying to get Stalin to leave the province of Lvov inside Poland. Stalin's claims at the expense of Finland, Rumania, and the Baltic States were not mentioned.[46]

State Department officials did worry, however, about how disclosure of these agreements would affect public opinion. Stettinius wrote Roosevelt that while Americans would not categorically oppose Stalin's territorial demands, they would object to Russian acquisition of Polish territory without Polish consent. Americans would accept any boundary settlement which the Russians, the London Poles, and the Lublin Poles reached together, but any Russian agreement with the Lublin Poles alone would probably not be regarded by American opinion as expressing the will of the Polish people.[47]

John D. Hickerson, now deputy director of the State Department's Office of European Affairs, explained the boundary problem clearly in a memorandum to Stettinius: Everyone knew that the Soviet Union intended to reabsorb the Baltic States, Bessarabia, and parts of East Prussia and pre-1939 Poland. "I personally don't like it although I realize that the Soviet Government has arguments on its side. The point is [that] it has been done and nothing which it is in the power of the United States Government to do can undo it." Under the circumstances, Hickerson favored accepting Moscow's territorial claims, using whatever bargaining power the United States had left to persuade the Russians to cooperate in the postwar international organization. The United States would also need Soviet support to defeat Germany and Japan—"the importance

[46] Baruch to Roosevelt, January 4, 1945, Baruch MSS, "Memoranda—President Roosevelt, 1945"; Stimson memorandum for conversation with Stettinius, January 22, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 418; Yalta briefing book paper, "Suggested United States Policy Regarding Poland," *FR: Yalta,* pp. 230–34. For Roosevelt's promise regarding Lvov, see Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory,* p. 305; and Mikolajczyk, *The Rape of Poland,* pp. 59–60.

[47] Stettinius to Roosevelt, December 30, 1944, Roosevelt MSS, PSF 30: "Stettinius."

of these two things can be reckoned in terms of American lives." Hickerson felt, however, that concessions of this kind could not be made without repercussions inside the United States. Accordingly, he recommended an immediate program involving off-the-record discussions with congressmen, newspapermen, and radio commentators to prepare the public for these developments.[48]

The complexion of governments in the newly liberated nations of Eastern Europe concerned the State Department more than did boundaries. Stettinius warned Roosevelt early in January of a widespread public belief that both Britain and Russia were actively supporting factions of their choice in liberated countries. "The public disapproves of such unilateral action." The Secretary of State felt that a positive statement clarifying the American position on liberated Europe "would tend to find support and furnish a frame of reference, which the public clearly desires." On January 18, Stettinius recommended to the President establishment of an Emergency High Commission for Liberated Europe, composed of the governments of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and France, which would "assist in establishing popular governments and in facilitating the solution of emergency economic problems in the former occupied and satellite states of Europe." Announcement of such a commission at the Big Three meeting "would reassure public opinion in the United States and elsewhere." [49]

Archibald MacLeish, assistant secretary of state for public and cultural relations, worried that "the wave of disillusionment which has distressed us in the last several weeks" would increase if Americans got the impression that "potentially totalitarian provisional governments" were being set up in liberated countries. "It would be a blessing to the world if we could walk straight up to this question." The Big Three should agree first, that the peoples of the liberated areas are to have an opportunity, when conditions permit them to express their will, to decide for themselves what

[48] Hickerson to Stettinius, January 8, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* pp. 94–96.

[49] Stettinius to Roosevelt, January 6, 1945, Roosevelt MSS, PSF 29: "State Department"; Stettinius to Roosevelt, January 18, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* pp. 97–98. A Yalta briefing book paper on spheres of influence commented: "It would be unfortunate . . . if any temporary arrangement should . . . appear to be a departure from the principle adopted by the three Governments at Moscow [in 1943], in definite rejection of the spheres of influence idea. . . . Any arrangement suggestive of spheres of influence cannot but militate against the establishment and effective functioning of a broader system of general security in which all countries will have a part." (*Ibid.,* p. 105.)

kind of government they want; second, that they can have any kind of government they want, so long as it is not a government, the existence of which would endanger the peace of the world—and a fascist government, in our opinion, does endanger the peace of the world by its mere existence.

Leo Pasvolsky, special assistant to the secretary of state in charge of planning for the United Nations, wrote Stettinius that creation of the proposed Emergency High Commission for Liberated Europe "would be the most powerful antidote that we can devise for the rapidly crystallizing opposition in this country to the whole Dumbarton Oaks idea on the score that the future organization would merely underwrite a system of unilateral grabbing." [50]

Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met for the second time during the war at Yalta on the coast of the Black Sea in February, 1945. F.D.R.'s choice of advisers to accompany him reflected his preoccupation with how the public would react to this meeting. To interpret the Yalta agreements to the Congress, he took along James F. Byrnes, director of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, popularly known as the "Assistant President" in charge of the home front. Byrnes, having had no experience in foreign affairs, was genuinely surprised at being asked to go. As a conservative South Carolina Democrat whom Roosevelt had pointedly passed over for the vice-presidential nomination in 1944, however, Byrnes had little reason to follow the President blindly, and was therefore a good choice for this assignment. Less clear were Roosevelt's reasons for asking Edward J. Flynn, Democratic "boss" of the Bronx, to join the Yalta entourage. Apparently Roosevelt's extreme sensitivity to Catholic opinion made him feel the necessity of including a prominent Catholic like Flynn, who later made a special report to the Pope on religious conditions in Russia. The President also broke sharply with his previous custom by, for the first time, taking the Secretary of State to a major wartime conference with the Russians.[51]

[50] MacLeish to Joseph C. Grew, January 24, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* pp. 101–2; MacLeish to James C. Dunn, January 19, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 427–28; Pasvolsky to Stettinius, January 23, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 101. At a preliminary meeting on the island of Malta, Stettinius told Anthony Eden that public sentiment made it extremely important for the Big Three to find a solution to the Polish problem. Otherwise the American people, especially Catholics, would be "greatly disturbed," and the prospect of American membership in the international organization might be endangered. (Minutes of Eden-Stettinius meeting, February 1, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 499–500.)

[51] James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime,* pp. 252–53; Ernest K. Lindley, "Byrnes,

Little was said at Yalta about Russia's boundaries with its East European neighbors. Roosevelt told Stalin that, as he had noted at Teheran, he was "in general" in favor of the Curzon Line as the eastern boundary of Poland. Reminding the Russian leader again of the six or seven million Poles in the United States, however, the President observed that "most Poles, like the Chinese, want to save face. . . . It would make it easier for me at home if the Soviet Government could give something to Poland." Roosevelt suggested, merely as a "gesture," that the Russians leave the predominantly Polish city of Lvov and the surrounding oil fields within the new Poland, even though they were on the Russian side of the Curzon Line. Stalin refused. The Curzon Line, he pointed out with malicious accuracy, had originally been drawn by the Allies after World War I. How could he return to Moscow and have it said of him that he was less Russian than Curzon and Clemenceau? [52] This ended discussion of the Russo-Polish boundary.

Far more difficult to resolve was the problem of who was to govern Poland—the Lublin Poles, the London Poles, or a combination of both. Roosevelt told Stalin that the American public opposed recognition of the Lublin government on the grounds that it represented a minority of the Polish people. In the same breath, however, the President also said that he wanted a government in Poland "that will be thoroughly friendly to the Soviet [Union] for years to come. That is essential." It seems unlikely that Roosevelt realized the contradiction implicit in this statement—the fact that a government in Warsaw representative of the will of the Polish people would almost inevitably have been hostile to the Soviet Union.[53]

The Russians insisted that the Lublin Poles form the nucleus of any

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the Persuasive Reporter," *Newsweek,* XXV (March 12, 1945), 42; Edward J. Flynn, *You're the Boss,* pp. 185–206; *Time,* XLV (April 2, 1945), 22; Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians,* p. 3.

[52] H. Freeman Matthews notes, 3d plenary meeting, February 6, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* pp. 677–78. The final communiqué reflected the Russian position on boundaries: "The three Heads of Government consider that the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon Line with digressions from it in some regions of five to eight kilometers in favor of Poland. They recognize that Poland must receive substantial accessions of territory in the north and west. . . . The final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should await the Peace Conference." (*Ibid.,* pp. 973–74.)

[53] Matthews notes, 3d plenary meeting, February 6, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* pp. 677–78; McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia,* p. 535.

new Polish provisional government. The British argued that a wholly new Polish government should be constituted, composed of representatives from both the London and Lublin regimes. On February 9, the American delegation suggested as a compromise that "the present Polish Provisional Government be reorganized into a fully representative government based on all democratic forces in Poland and including democratic leaders from Poland abroad." The American proposal became the basis for the final agreement: "The Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should . . . be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity." This accord left intact the essence of the Russian position that the Lublin regime should serve as the basis for the new Polish provisional government, a fact which did not escape Roosevelt. Two weeks before his death he reminded Churchill that "we placed, as clearly shown in the agreement, somewhat more emphasis on the Lublin Poles than on the other two groups from which the new Government is to be drawn." [54]

Roosevelt agreed to this compromise because he believed the reorganized Polish provisional government would remain in power only until it could hold elections to determine the will of the Polish people. Stalin encouraged this belief, telling the President that "unless there is a catastrophe on the front and the Germans defeat us" it might be possible to hold elections in Poland within a month. Roosevelt placed great importance on these elections:

He [Roosevelt] felt that the elections was [*sic*] the crux of the whole matter, and since it was true, as Marshal Stalin had said, that the Poles were quarrelsome people not only at home but also abroad, he would like to have

[54] Bohlen notes, 5th plenary meeting, February 8, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* pp. 776–79; American delegation draft, "Suggestions in Regard to the Polish Governmental Question," February 9, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 815–16; Yalta Conference communiqué, February 12, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 973–74; Roosevelt to Churchill, March 29, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 189. According to Joseph E. Davies, Byrnes admitted to him on June 6, 1945, that "there was no intent [at Yalta] that a new government was to be created independent of the Lublin Government. . . . There was no justification under the spirit or letter of the agreement for insistence by Harriman and the British Ambassador that an entirely new Government should be created. . . ." (Davies Journal, June 6, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 17.) For a clear discussion of the Yalta negotiations on Poland, see Martin F. Herz, *Beginnings of the Cold War,* pp. 80–85.

some assurance for the six million Poles in the United States that these elections would be freely held, and he said he was sure if such assurance were present that elections would be held by the Poles there would be no doubt as to the sincerity of the agreement reached here.

Roosevelt emphasized that the first Polish election should be "beyond question": "It should be like Caesar's wife. I did not know her but they said she was pure." Stalin replied: "They said that about her but in fact she had her sins." [55]

The final communiqué reflected Roosevelt's wishes by pledging the new provisional government "to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot." Anglo-American efforts to have the communiqué specify Big Three supervision of the elections failed, however, because Molotov thought this would be "offensive to the Poles." After negotiations had ended, Admiral Leahy warned Roosevelt that the agreement on Poland was "so elastic that the Russians can stretch it all the way from Yalta to Washington without ever technically breaking it." The President replied wearily: "I know, Bill—I know it. But it's the best I can do for Poland at this time." [56]

Roosevelt never tried to implement Stettinius' suggestion for an Emergency High Commission on Liberated Europe. He did persuade Churchill and Stalin to sign a "Declaration on Liberated Europe" which reaffirmed the principles of the Atlantic Charter and called for the formation of provisional governments in Eastern Europe "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." The declaration lacked enforcement machinery, however, providing only that when necessary the Big Three would "consult together on the measures necessary to discharge the joint responsibilities set forth in this declaration." James F. Byrnes later admitted candidly that the President had proposed the Declaration on Liberated Europe because of concern inside the United States about the for-

[55] Matthews notes, 5th plenary meeting, February 8, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* p. 790; Bohlen notes, 6th plenary meeting, February 9, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 854.

[56] Yalta Conference communiqué, February 12, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* p. 973; Bohlen notes, 6th plenary meeting, February 9, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 842–43; Leahy, *I Was There,* pp. 315–16.

mation of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. Roosevelt's reluctance to apply the declaration less than two weeks after Yalta when the Russians imposed a puppet government on Rumania doubtless indicated to Moscow that the President did not expect literal compliance with the terms of the agreement.[57]

President Roosevelt was pleased with what he had accomplished at Yalta. The commitment from the Russians to allow free elections in Eastern Europe promised to allay American fears of a Russian sphere of influence. While the agreement on organizing a Polish provisional government was a compromise, Roosevelt regarded it as only a temporary one. Resolution of the dispute over voting in the United Nations Security Council, together with the agreement to meet in San Francisco in April to draw up a charter for the world organization, indicated that the Russians sincerely wanted the new collective security effort to succeed. Secretary of State Stettinius described Yalta as a "most successful meeting," giving every evidence that the Russians wanted to cooperate with the United States. Harry Hopkins thought that at Yalta "the Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine." [58]

On March 1, 1945, Roosevelt, looking tired, reported in person to a joint session of Congress on the Yalta Conference. He delivered his speech sitting down, in an unusual public acknowledgment of his infirmity. His hands shook as he read the text. Yalta, he said, provided the foundation for a lasting peace settlement which would bring order and security to the world. It would not be a perfect settlement at first. "But it can be a peace—and it will be a peace—based on the sound and just principles of the Atlantic Charter." The Declaration on Liberated Europe had halted a trend toward the development of spheres of influ-

[57] Yalta Conference communiqué, February 12, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* pp. 977–78; *New York Times,* February 14, 1945. On the Rumanian situation, see Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin,* pp. 564–67; and Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly,* p. 53. William H. McNeill has argued that Stalin must have viewed the Declaration on Liberated Europe as "a harmless piece of rhetoric, soothing to the Americans." (*America, Britain, and Russia,* p. 559.)

[58] James V. Forrestal Diary, March 13, 1945, Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* p. 35; Stimson Diary, March 13, 1945, Stimson MSS; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* p. 870.

ence which, "if allowed to go unchecked, . . . might have had tragic results." The compromise on Poland, "under the circumstances, is the most hopeful agreement possible for a free, independent, and prosperous Polish state." But, in the final analysis, success or failure of the Yalta agreements would depend on the United States Congress. "Unless you here in the halls of the American Congress—with the support of the American people—concur in the decisions reached at Yalta, and give them your active support, the meeting will not have produced lasting results." [59]

V

President Roosevelt achieved considerable success in making palatable to the American people the Yalta decisions on Eastern Europe. Taking the Big Three's pledge to hold free elections in Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe as an assurance that these countries would not suffer the imposition of unrepresentative regimes, most Americans at the time viewed the agreements as the best possible solution to the problem. While some observers regarded the Polish arrangements as imperfect, they were seen as necessary compromises. The *New York Times* commented that although the agreements might disappoint some people, they still surpassed most expectations. *Time* said of Yalta that "no citizen of the U.S., the U.S.S.R., or Great Britain could complain that his country had been sold down the river." A public opinion poll taken shortly after the conference ended revealed that only 9 percent of those questioned saw the results of the Yalta Conference as unfavorable to the United States.[60]

But, as the President had said, the ultimate outcome of Yalta would depend upon the attitude of the United States Congress. Roosevelt, Wilson's unfortunate precedent firmly in mind, did his best to ensure that the compromises he had made would not endanger prospects for American membership in the new world organization. Even before his per-

[59] *FDR: Public Papers,* XIII, 570–86; *Time,* XLV (March 12, 1945), 17; Drury, *Senate Journal,* pp. 371–73.

[60] Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 21, February 20, 1945; *New York Times,* February 13, 1945; *Time,* XLV (February 19, 1945), 15–16; American Institute of Public Opinion poll, February 20, 1945, cited in Cantril and Strunk, eds., *Public Opinion,* p. 1084.

sonal appearance on Capitol Hill, the President had begun working to present the Yalta agreements to Congress in the most favorable light. For this purpose, Byrnes flew back to Washington as soon as the conference ended and immediately set to work. In private conversations with congressional leaders and in a public press conference, he emphasized as major achievements of the conference the Declaration on Liberated Europe and the Big Three's agreement to meet at San Francisco in April to organize the United Nations. Byrnes performed his job well. "The Crimean communiqué was favorably received by the public and by the Congress," he wrote Roosevelt; "with few unimportant exceptions, the . . . press was very favorable." Although reluctant to discuss specific details, congressional leaders of both parties expressed general satisfaction with the results of the conference. Senate majority leader Alben Barkley cabled Roosevelt that the Yalta communiqué had made "a profound impression" when read on the floor of the Senate. The *New Republic*'s "TRB" detected some notes of caution in Washington's reaction, but pointed out that Roosevelt had already achieved more than Wilson in winning congressional approval of the peace settlement.[61]

Public criticism of the Yalta agreements was limited to Polish-American groups, chronic Roosevelt critics like David Lawrence, who saw Yalta as "a confirmation of lynch law in international affairs," and old isolationists like Senator Burton K. Wheeler, who warned that the Declaration on Liberated Europe was a rhetorical gesture which would in no way prevent Russian control of Eastern Europe. The isolated nature of these complaints became clear when the House Foreign Affairs Committee refused even to report out New York Representative William Barry's resolution condemning the agreement on Poland.[62]

But the most important potential critic of the Yalta Polish agreement, though publicly silent, rumbled ominously in private. Senator Arthur H.

[61] Byrnes to Roosevelt, February 17, 1945, Roosevelt MSS, OF 4675: "Crimea Conf."; Lindley, "Byrnes, the Persuasive Reporter," p. 42; *Time,* XLV (February 26, 1945), 15–16; *New York Times,* February 13, 1945; Barkley to Roosevelt, February 12, 1945, quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* p. 870; *New Republic,* CXII (February 26, 1945), 294.

[62] Athan G. Theoharis, *The Yalta Myths,* pp. 27–29; David Lawrence, "The Tragedy of Yalta," *U.S. News,* XVIII (March 2, 1945), 26–27; *New York Times,* February 14, 1945; *Congressional Record,* February 26, 1945, p. 1470. See also Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," Nos. 21, 22, and 23, February 20, March 7 and 20, 1945.

Vandenberg, acutely sensitive to East European problems because of his large Polish-American constituency in Michigan, had warned Secretary of State Hull in 1944 that he would not support American membership in a postwar international organization unless a "just" peace settlement was obtained. As the Republican Party's most influential congressional spokesman on foreign affairs, Vandenberg could well generate sufficient votes in the Senate to kill the United Nations Charter. The Michigan senator considered the Big Three's handling of the Polish question to have been definitely unjust. "I think the Polish settlement was *awful,*" he wrote Bernard Baruch. The Yalta compromise was not only unfair, Vandenberg complained to the State Department, but might cause an unfortunate psychological reaction among the American people. The senator took an even blunter position in an off-the-record conversation with Washington reporters: "If a Dumbarton Oaks treaty is ever killed here in the Senate, over its body will stand the shadow of Poland." [63]

The unforeseen repercussions of a dramatic speech Vandenberg had made on the floor of the Senate one month earlier, however, severely limited his freedom to criticize the Yalta Polish agreement. Vandenberg had intended in this address, delivered on January 10, 1945, to propose a method of halting Soviet expansion without endangering the wartime alliance or the final peace settlement. Much to the senator's surprise, the speech had a vastly different effect.

Vandenberg had begun with a characteristically florid jab at President Roosevelt's "jocular, and even cynical, dismissal of the Atlantic Charter as a mere collection of fragmentary notes":

> These basic pledges cannot now be dismissed as a mere nautical nimbus. They march with our armies. They sail with our fleets. They fly with our eagles. They sleep with our martyred dead. The first requisite of honest candor, Mr. President, I respectfully suggest, is to relight this torch.

[63] Vandenberg to Baruch, February 15, 1945, Baruch MSS; Vandenberg to Joseph C. Grew, February 19, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 150; Frank McNaughton to *Time* home office, February 16, 1945, McNaughton MSS. See also Byrnes to Roosevelt, February 17, 1945, Roosevelt MSS, OF 4675: "Crimea Conf." I. F. Stone feared that Vandenberg's hostility to the Polish settlement might impair Russian cooperation in the war against Japan: "To insist on perfectionism along the Pripet Marshes might mean payment in American lives on Pacific Islands. That would be a high price to pay for Polish megalomania and American domestic politics." ("This Is What We Voted For," *Nation,* CLX [February 17, 1945], 175.)

He then called his colleagues' attention to the Soviet Union's apparent determination to create a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe "contrary to our conception of what we thought we were fighting for." Rather surprisingly, Vandenberg found Russia's actions "perfectly understandable": it was "her insistent purpose never again to be at the mercy of another German tyranny." The USSR had legitimate reasons for doubting the ability of the future world organization to keep Germany disarmed, especially since there was still no assurance that the United States would join it. But why could not the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain immediately sign a treaty which would "permanently, conclusively, and effectively" disarm Germany and Japan? Such a treaty, Vandenberg hoped, "would make postwar Soviet expansion as illogical as it would be unnecessary." [64]

The senator's hopeless addiction to purple prose obscured the point of his speech, however, while another remark, made almost as an aside, captured most of the attention:

> I do not believe that any nation hereafter can immunize itself by its own exclusive action. . . . Our oceans have ceased to be moats which automatically protect our ramparts. Flesh and blood now compete unequally with winged steel. War has become an all-consuming juggernaut. . . . I want maximum American cooperation, consistent with legitimate American self-interest, with constitutional process and with collateral events which warrant it, to make the basic idea of Dumbarton Oaks succeed.

Coming from the Senate's most influential former isolationist this statement, befogged in rhetoric and shrouded in reservations though it was, caused advocates of international organization to stir attentively. Vandenberg had in fact been moving toward a repudiation of isolationism for some time, but this was his first public pronouncement on the subject. Internationalists jumped to applaud the address, which *Time* extravagantly called "the most important speech made by an American in World War II." Vandenberg himself later confessed that he had been "completely surprised by the nationwide attention which the speech precipitated." [65]

[64] *Congressional Record,* January 10, 1945, pp. 164–67. Vandenberg also proposed that when military necessity required unilateral decisions, these would be subject to later review by the world organization.

[65] *Congressional Record,* January 10, 1945, p. 166; *Time,* XLV (January 22, 1945),

The political significance of the speech did not escape Roosevelt. The following day he called members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including Vandenberg, to the White House to inform them of his plans for the Big Three meeting. At a cabinet meeting later that day both Stimson and Byrnes praised the address, commenting that it offered great possibilities for the President. Roosevelt himself asked for fifty copies of the speech before leaving for Yalta. On his return, he announced the appointment of Arthur H. Vandenberg to the American delegation to the San Francisco Conference.[66]

Roosevelt's action placed Vandenberg in a dilemma. He could not accept this appointment without seeming to endorse the Yalta decision on Poland. He could not decline without endangering Senate approval of the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, Vandenberg feared that his refusal to serve might hurt the Republican Party by reviving old charges of isolationism: "It would have been just about equivalent to committing suicide in public." Senator Wheeler saw Vandenberg's predicament clearly: "He's got a lot of Poles in his state, and they certainly didn't make a good settlement for Poland. . . . He climbed way out on a limb in that security speech of his, and now he can't get back. He is sweating plenty. . . . He doesn't like it, but he'll have to go along now." Vandenberg finally decided to go to San Francisco, reserving the right, as he wrote the President, to suggest amendments to the proposed charter and to judge for himself whether he could support the final result. But as one of the senator's fellow delegates noticed, Vandenberg "seemed a little grouchy and suspicious of the whole business." [67]

15–16; Vandenberg to Fred S. Robie, July 8, 1948, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 139–40. For summaries of the public reaction to Vandenberg's speech, see *ibid.,* pp. 138–44; and Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 19, January 19, 1945. Vandenberg's prose style, though often obscure, was not without its usefulness, as Richard Rovere later noted: "Vandenberg can make a retreat sound like a call to arms, an evasion like a declaration of lofty principle." ("The Unassailable Vandenberg," *Harper's,* CXCVI [May, 1948], 395–96.)

[66] *Newsweek,* XXV (January 22, 1945), 38; Stimson notes of cabinet meeting, January 11, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 418; Vandenberg to Robie, July 8, 1948, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 140.

[67] Vandenberg to John Foster Dulles, February 17, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 152; Vandenberg to H. G. Hogan, March 26, 1945, Vandenberg MSS; Frank McNaughton to *Time* home office, February 16, 1945, McNaughton MSS; Vandenberg to Roosevelt, February 15 and March 1, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 149, 153; Virginia Gildersleeve, *Many a Good Crusade,* p. 318. See also

Vandenberg explained his decision in a letter to Detroit Polish-American leader Frank Januszewski: "I could get no greater satisfaction out of anything more than from joining—aye, in leading—a public denunciation of Yalta and all its works as respects Poland." But Vandenberg doubted whether this would really help: "It would be a relatively simple matter to dynamite the new Peace League. . . . What would *that* do for Poland? It would simply leave Russia in complete possession of everything she wants. . . . There would be no hope left for justice except through World War Number Three immediately." Vandenberg believed he could accomplish more for Poland by seeking justice through the United Nations and by holding the Roosevelt Administration to "strict accountability for the kind of a Provisional Polish Government which we shall be parties to imposing on Poland." [68]

By making Vandenberg a delegate to the San Francisco Conference Roosevelt skillfully restrained the most dangerous potential critic of the Yalta agreements on Eastern Europe. This ensured that these distasteful but necessary concessions to the Soviet Union would not endanger American membership in the future United Nations. It is a measure of Roosevelt's achievement that the strongest criticism of the Yalta accords came, not over their tacit acquiescence in Soviet control of Eastern Europe, but over Roosevelt's secret commitment to give the Russians three votes in the United Nations General Assembly.[69] The President's clumsy handling of this matter overshadowed the adept way in which he "sugar-coated" the far more significant Yalta decisions on Eastern Europe.

Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1945, made Senate approval of the United Nations Charter certain. The *New Republic* wrote that "Franklin Roosevelt at rest at Hyde Park is a more powerful force for America's participation in a world organization than was President Roosevelt in the White House." Tributes to the dead President and speculation about the new one quickly replaced the atmosphere of distrust which had poisoned relations between the White House and Capitol Hill.

Vandenberg's comments on how his refusal to serve would hurt the Republican Party in letters to Howard C. Lawrence, February 20, 1945, and Frank Januszewski, May 15, 1945, Vandenberg MSS.

[68] Vandenberg to Januszewski, March 7, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers*, pp. 155–56.

[69] *Time*, XLV (April 9 and 16, 1945), 23–24, 19–20. See also Divine, *Second Chance*, pp. 272–76.

With the martyrdom of Roosevelt the cause of international organization became sacrosanct for all but the most unregenerate isolationists.[70]

VI

But just as this overwhelming domestic consensus in favor of world organization was forming, the international consensus necessary for its success seemed to be dissipating. Soviet actions in Eastern Europe during the latter part of February showed that Moscow's interpretation of the "democratic" guarantees written into the Yalta agreements differed drastically from the meaning assigned them by Western observers. Andrei Vishinsky, Soviet deputy commissar for foreign affairs, arrived in Bucharest demanding immediate installation of a new Rumanian government which would be more sympathetic to Moscow than the existing regime. When the king of Rumania hesitated, Vishinsky gave him two hours to comply and then stalked out, banging the door so hard that it cracked the plaster in the king's study. Simultaneously, in the Soviet capital, tripartite negotiations on implementing the Yalta Polish agreement were getting nowhere. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov insisted repeatedly that members of the Lublin regime should form the basis of the new Polish provisional government, and refused to consider the inclusion of representatives from the London government-in-exile. Ambassador Harriman, his patience wearing thin, reported that Molotov was obviously under instructions "to give as little ground as possible in the direction of bringing in elements not under Soviet control and to fight every inch of the way." [71]

During March other disturbing events took place. The Anglo-American effort to negotiate at Berne for the surrender of German armies in Italy brought a reaction from Stalin bordering on hysteria. American military officials were receiving reports of harsh treatment from United States prisoners-of-war who had been liberated by the Russians. The So-

[70] *New Republic,* CXII (April 23, 1945), 539–40. See also Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 25, April 24, 1945; and I. F. Stone, "Farewell to F.D.R.," *Nation,* CLX (April 21, 1945), 437.

[71] Burton Y. Berry to Stettinius, February 28 and March 7, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 487–88, 502; Harriman to Stettinius, March 2, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 136. For the full documentation on the Polish and Rumanian situations, see *ibid.,* pp. 123–217, 470–524.

viet Union demanded that the Lublin Poles be invited to send delegates to the San Francisco Conference, despite the fact that their government had not yet been broadened in accord with the Yalta decisions. Late in March, Moscow announced that Molotov would not be attending the San Francisco meeting, a development which seemed to indicate waning Russian enthusiasm for an international organization. By April 2, Secretary of State Stettinius was warning his colleagues in the cabinet that a serious deterioration in relations with the Soviet Union had taken place.[72]

It is not clear to what extent President Roosevelt expected literal compliance with the Yalta agreements. When asked at a press conference whether Russian actions in Rumania were consistent with the Declaration on Liberated Europe, he brushed the question off: "O my God! Ask the State Department." But he later wrote Stalin that he could not understand why Rumanian developments should not come under the terms of that declaration. On March 11, Roosevelt cabled Churchill that "neither the Government nor the people of this country will support participation in a fraud or mere whitewash of the Lublin Government." Three weeks later he wired Stalin:

> While it is true that the Lublin Government is to be reorganized and its members play a prominent role it is to be done in such a fashion as to bring into being a new Government. This point is clearly brought out in several places in the text of the agreement. I must make it quite plain to you that any such solution which would result in a thinly disguised continuance of the present Warsaw regime would be unacceptable and would cause the people of the United States to regard the Yalta agreement as having failed.

On the day before he died, however, Roosevelt was in a more conciliatory mood. He wrote Churchill: "I would minimize the general Soviet problem as much as possible, because these problems, in one form or another, seem to arise every day, and most of them straighten out." [73]

[72] Stimson Diary, March 16, 17, April 2, 4, 1945, Stimson MSS; Leahy, *I Was There,* pp. 385–94; Grew memorandum of a conversation with Soviet ambassador Gromyko, March 23, 1945, *FR: 1945,* I, 148; Grew to Roosevelt, March 23, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 151–52; Roosevelt to Stalin, March 24, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 156; Forrestal Diary, April 2, 1945, Millis, ed., *Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 38–39. See also *Time,* XLV (April 9, 1945), 23; and *Newsweek,* XXV (April 16, 1945), 24.

[73] Roosevelt press conference, March 13, 1945, Roosevelt MSS, PPF 1-P, Vol. XXV; Roosevelt to Stalin, April 1, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 194–96; Roosevelt to Churchill, March 11, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 157, and April 11, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 210.

Roosevelt may well have expected the Russians to allow free elections in Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe. The habit of wartime collaboration was still alive, and the readiness of the Russians at Yalta to promise these elections had been encouraging. When it began to look as though Moscow was stalling, the President became concerned. He never wavered, however, in his insistence that governments installed in power along Russia's borders be "friendly" to the Soviet Union. F.D.R.'s superficial knowledge of Eastern Europe kept him from fully realizing the contradiction between freely elected and pro-Russian governments in that turbulent part of the world. It was like a labor-management conflict in the United States, he once told Polish Prime Minister Mikolajczyk: all that was necessary was an impartial mediator to prod the negotiations along.[74] But whatever his expectations, the President by his actions had led the American people to expect free elections in Eastern Europe, while at the same time leading the Russians to expect a free hand. The peculiar mixture of naïveté and realism which characterized Roosevelt's East European policy had created a painful dilemma, which it would now be up to Harry S. Truman to resolve.

[74] Ciechanowski, *Defeat in Victory*, pp. 299–300.