7

Victory and Transition: Harry S. Truman and the Russians

When Harry S. Truman became President of the United States on April 12, 1945, he had no intention of reversing Franklin D. Roosevelt's strategy of cooperation with the Soviet Union. It is true that as a senator from Missouri in June, 1941, he had delivered the snap judgment that Russia and Germany should be allowed to fight each other to the death, with the United States helping whichever side was losing. After Pearl Harbor, however, Truman loyally supported the Roosevelt Administration's foreign policy, a fact which made him an attractive candidate when F.D.R. began looking for a running-mate to replace Henry A. Wallace in 1944. The President failed to keep his new subordinate informed regarding diplomatic developments, but this characteristic negligence in no way lessened the new Chief Executive's determination, upon entering the White House, to work toward the goals his predecessor had set.[1]

The objectives of policy would remain the same, but Truman quickly made it clear that the manner of execution would not. Inexperienced in foreign affairs, yet determined to assert his authority,

[1] Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 12; Truman to Eleanor Roosevelt, May 31, 1947, and March 16, 1948, printed in William Hillman, *Mr. President,* pp. 51–52. See also Alfred Steinberg, *The Man from Missouri,* p. 186; and Jonathan Daniels, *The Man of Independence,* pp. 229, 258–59.

the new President sought to convey an impression of efficiency and decisiveness far removed from the lax and dilatory habits of F.D.R. Secretary of War Stimson immediately noticed the change:

> It was a wonderful relief to preceding conferences with our former Chief to see the promptness and snappiness with which Truman took up each matter and decided it. There were no long drawn-out "soliloquies" from the President, and the whole conference was thoroughly businesslike so that we actually covered two or three more matters than we had expected to discuss.

Acting Secretary of State Grew wrote after a meeting with Truman early in May: "When I saw him today I had fourteen problems to take up with him and got through them in less than fifteen minutes with a clear directive on every one of them. You can imagine what a joy it is to deal with a man like that." But Truman's forthright approach to the problems of the presidency led him, during his first months in office, to make several hasty decisions on the basis of inadequate information.[2] These at times made it seem as if the new Chief Executive had decided to repudiate Roosevelt's "grand design."

By the time of Roosevelt's death Prime Minister Churchill and certain key American advisers—notably Harriman, Deane, Leahy, and James V. Forrestal, the new secretary of the navy—had developed strong doubts about the Soviet Union's willingness to cooperate with the United States after the war. Impressed, Truman at first accepted their recommendation that the only way to deal with the Russians was to take an unyielding stand, even if this meant straining the Grand Alliance. But strong countervailing forces kept the President from implementing this policy consistently during his first year in office. No warmonger, the new Chief Executive shrank from precipitating a third world conflict until all avenues of compromise had been explored. Knowledge that the American people still regarded the Russians as allies further inhibited Truman. Moreover, the President had promised to

[2] Stimson Diary, April 18, 1945, Stimson MSS; Grew to Cecil B. Lyon, May 2, 1945, Grew MSS, Box 122; Acheson, *Present at the Creation,* p. 731. Other early impressions of Truman's decisiveness appear in Albertson, *Roosevelt's Farmer,* p. 396; and Blum, *Morgenthau Diaries: Years of War,* p. 423. See also Herbert Feis, *Between War and Peace: The Potsdam Conference,* p. 160. In his memoirs, Truman listed Roosevelt's poor administrative methods as the one aspect of New Deal policy about which he had reservations. (*Year of Decisions,* pp. 12–13.) For an illuminating discussion of decision-making by Truman himself, see his *Mr. Citizen,* pp. 261–66.

carry out all the agreements Roosevelt had made with the Soviet Union, even though he doubted the wisdom of some of them. Former Roosevelt advisers like Hopkins, Davies, and Stimson, all opposed to any hasty confrontation with Moscow, remained influential during the early days of the Truman Administration. Finally, the new President himself came to view the leaders of the Soviet Union much as F.D.R. had seen them: as fellow "politicians" with whom "arrangements" could be made through personal diplomacy.[3]

The transfer of power at the White House, therefore, caused no overnight reversal of United States policy toward the Soviet Union, although Truman's abrasive personality may well have led the Russians to conclude, prematurely, that Roosevelt's goals had been abandoned. F.D.R. himself had expressed concern over Soviet behavior during the brief period between the Yalta Conference and his death, and had indicated, at least in his growing reluctance to aid Russian reconstruction, that he might be moving toward the tougher position several of his advisers had advocated. Truman relied more heavily on these counselors than did Roosevelt, and in his effort to appear decisive, probably accelerated the shift toward a firmer stance. But at the time he died Roosevelt had by no means given up hope of establishing friendly postwar relations with the Soviet Union, nor would Truman for some time to come.[4]

I

On the day after Roosevelt's death, Ambassador Harriman persuaded Stalin to reverse his earlier decision not to send Molotov to the San

[3] Truman, *Year of Decisions*, pp. 37, 70–72, 77–79; Truman to Stimson, July 7, 1950, printed in Hillman, *Mr. President*, p. 55; Daniels, *Man of Independence*, pp. 269–70, 285–86. See also Neumann, *After Victory*, pp. 163–65.

[4] The question of whether Truman reversed Roosevelt's Russian policy immediately after becoming President has caused much debate among historians. Works which stress the continuity of policy include Truman's own *Memoirs;* McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia*, pp. 579–80; Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin*, pp. 596–600; and Kolko, *The Politics of War*, pp. 380–81. Accounts which argue that Truman reversed Roosevelt's policy include Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, pp. xii–xiv; D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917–1960*, I, 265–69; Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*, pp. 12–13; Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–1967*, pp. 2, 21–22; Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta*, pp. 268–74; and Barton J. Bernstein, "American Foreign Policy and the Origins of the Cold War," in Bernstein, ed., *Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration*, p. 23.

Francisco Conference. The Soviet foreign minister agreed to stop in Washington to meet the new President of the United States before the conference opened on April 25.[5] This gave Truman less than two weeks to decide how he would deal with Russia, particularly on the crucial Polish issue. In line with his desire to continue Roosevelt's policies, Truman spent much of this time consulting with the late President's major advisers on Soviet affairs.

No one did more to shape Truman's views than Harriman himself. After spending more than a month in fruitless efforts to implement the Yalta agreement on Poland, the American ambassador to Moscow had grown deeply concerned regarding Soviet ambitions in Eastern Europe and, one week before Roosevelt's death, had summarized his conclusions in a lengthy cable to the State Department. The USSR had three basic objectives, Harriman wrote: cooperation with the United States and Great Britain in a world security organization; creation of a "unilateral security ring" through domination of the countries along Russia's western borders; and "penetration of other countries [by] Communist controlled parties . . . to create [a] political atmosphere favorable to Soviet policies." Washington had hoped that the success of the United Nations would convince Moscow that it did not need a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, but it now appeared that the Russians intended to go ahead with their plans regardless of what the world organization did. Harriman believed that Stalin had interpreted acquiescent American attitudes on Eastern Europe as a sign of weakness, and had concluded that he could with impunity work his will there. Soviet-American relations would improve only when the British and Americans took a firmer and franker stand. The time had come when "we must by our actions in each individual case make it plain to the Soviet Government that they cannot expect our cooperation on terms laid down by them." [6]

Harriman had asked to come home for consultation before Roosevelt's death, and reached Washington in time to advise Truman at length prior to Molotov's arrival. In private conversations with the new President, he took an even blunter position than in his cables: Russian occupation of any country would resemble a "barbarian invasion"—one could expect not only Moscow's control of that nation's foreign policy

[5] Harriman to Stettinius, April 13, 1945, *FR: 1945,* I, 289–90; memorandum by Harry Hopkins, printed in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* pp. 883–84.

[6] Harriman to Stettinius, April 6, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 821–24.

but the institution of secret police rule and the extinction of freedom of speech as well. Under these circumstances, the United States should reconsider its policy toward the Soviet Union. American acquiescence in Russian activities would have to stop; both sides would now have to make concessions. The Russians would not react violently to a firmer American policy, Harriman argued, because they still needed assistance from the United States to rebuild their war-shattered economy.[7]

Other presidential counselors echoed Harriman's call for a harder line with the Russians. Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, who had been reading Harriman's cables, warned Truman that Soviet actions in Poland were part of an over-all plan to take over Eastern Europe. The sooner the United States called a halt to this, the better. Bernard Baruch advised the President that he should observe American obligations strictly, but demand strongly that the Russians do the same. General Deane, who had returned to Washington shortly before Harriman, told Truman that timidity with the Soviet Union would achieve nothing; if the United States was right, it should be firm. Admiral Leahy admitted that the Yalta agreements on Poland might be open to variant interpretations, but thought that the United States should make its position clear. While it might not be possible to prevent Russian domination of Poland, the United States could at least try "to give to the reorganized Polish Government an external appearance of independence." [8]

Significant opposition to a toughening of policy toward the Soviet Union came only from the Secretary of War. Stimson had been shocked early in April to learn how far relations with Russia had deteriorated. Favoring firmness but opposing any show of temper, the Secretary resolved to use his influence to restrain those within the Administration who had expressed irritation with the Russians. Stimson sympathized with the Soviet desire to erect a protective ring of friendly states in Eastern Europe. The East European countries had never known democracy, he explained to Truman, and it seemed more important to continue cooperation with Russia than to break up the alliance over this issue.

[7] Bohlen memorandum of Truman-Harriman conversation, April 20, 1945, *FR: 1945*, V, 231–34.

[8] Forrestal Diary, April 23, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, p. 49; Baruch to Truman, April 20, 1945, Baruch MSS, "Selected Correspondence"; Bohlen memorandum of Truman meeting with advisers, April 23, 1945, *FR: 1945*, V, 255; Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 413.

The vehemence of anti-Russian feeling among Truman's advisers worried the Secretary of War. The bitterness of Harriman and Deane was to be expected because they had personally suffered discourtesies from the Russians for some time. But Forrestal's support for their views alarmed Stimson, and he noted regretfully that Truman himself "was evidently disappointed at my caution and advice." Only General Marshall, who still hoped to secure Russian assistance in the war against Japan, backed the Secretary of War. Stimson blamed the State Department for confronting Truman with such a crucial issue so early in his administration. The department should not have called the San Francisco Conference without first settling outstanding issues with the Russians. Now the disputes would become public. Opinion in the United States was "all churned up" and the department would probably feel compelled to force the American position through, a prospect which aroused in Stimson a feeling of "very great anxiety." [9]

Truman sided with the majority of his advisers who called for a stern response to Soviet actions in Eastern Europe. On April 17, after learning that the Russians intended to sign a treaty of mutual assistance with the Lublin Polish government, he resolved to "lay it on the line with Molotov." Admiral Leahy predicted on the 19th that "Molotov would be in for some blunt talking from the American side." Truman told Harriman on the 20th that he was not afraid of the Russians and that he intended to make no concessions to win their favor. He would not expect to get Moscow to accept 100 percent of what the United States proposed, but "we should be able to get 85 percent." Truman planned to tell Molotov "in words of one syllable" that unless the Russians observed the Yalta agreement on Poland, the Senate would never approve American membership in the United Nations.[10]

The new President's forthrightness came as a pleasant surprise to Harriman:

I had talked with Mr. Truman for only a few minutes when I began to realize that the man had a real grasp of the situation. What a surprise and relief this was! . . . I wanted . . . Molotov . . . to learn from the very highest source that we would not stand for any pushing around on the Polish ques-

[9] Stimson Diary, April 3, 23, 1945, Stimson MSS. See also Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service,* pp. 605–11.

[10] Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 49–50; Leahy, *I Was There,* p. 409; Bohlen memorandum, Truman-Harriman conversation, April 20, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 231–34.

tion. And I hoped the President would back me up. When I left that first conference with him that day, I knew that the President's mind didn't need any making up from me on that point.

Both Truman and Molotov went into their meeting on April 23 expecting the worst. The Soviet foreign minister told Joseph E. Davies a few hours before going to the White House that he feared Truman's unfamiliarity with the background of Big Three decisions might cause the new President to reverse Roosevelt's policy. At about the same time, Truman was telling a group of advisers that agreements with the Russians so far had been a one-way street. This could not continue. The United States was going to proceed with its plans for the San Francisco Conference, and if the Russians disapproved, "they could go to hell." [11]

At their meeting later that afternoon, Truman sharply reprimanded Molotov for Moscow's failure to carry out the Yalta decisions on Poland. An agreement had been made, and all that remained was for Stalin to keep his word. When Molotov tried to explain that the Soviet government was following what it considered to be the correct interpretation of the Yalta agreement, Truman cut him off. The United States wanted cooperation with the Soviet Union, he said, but not as a one-way proposition. "I have never been talked to like that in my life," Molotov huffed. Truman replied angrily: "Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that." [12]

Truman's undiplomatic lecture to Molotov impressed Admiral Leahy, who thought that the Soviets would know after this meeting that the United States intended "to insist upon the declared right of all people to choose their own form of government." Senator Vandenberg, who heard of the encounter from Stettinius, considered it the best news in months: "F.D.R.'s appeasement of Russia is over." Truman himself was obviously pleased with his performance. He later told Davies:

I said [to Molotov] . . . that what we wanted was that you live up to your Yalta Agreement as to Poland. We will live up strictly to ours, and that is

[11] Cabell Phillips interview with Harriman, quoted in Phillips, *The Truman Presidency: History of a Triumphant Succession,* pp. 78–79; Davies Journal, April 23, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 16; Bohlen memorandum of Truman meeting with advisers, April 23, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 252–55.

[12] Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 79–82. Bohlen's account of this meeting, in *FR: 1945,* V, 256–58, omits this last angry exchange.

exactly [what] I say to you now and there is no use discussing that further. I gave it to him straight "one-two to the jaw." I let him have it straight.

This tactic, Truman explained, was "the tough method. . . . Did I do right?" Davies, "gravely alarmed" by what he had heard, tried to tell the President "as tactfully as I could that 'he did wrong' as I saw the facts." [13]

There is little doubt that the Russians interpreted Truman's stormy interview with Molotov as evidence that the new administration had abandoned Roosevelt's policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union. The Soviets knew Roosevelt, Stalin had told Harriman in 1944, and could communicate with him. With Roosevelt alive, Molotov explained to Davies, the Soviet government had always had "full confidence" that differences could be worked out. Truman's belligerent attitude probably shocked the Russian foreign minister, convincing him that if only F.D.R. had lived, no confrontation over Eastern Europe would have taken place.[14] Such a view ignores the fact that Roosevelt himself had been deeply concerned before his death over what he regarded as Russian violations of the Yalta agreement. Moreover, Truman's tough rhetoric of April, 1945, was just that—rhetoric—and did not signify an end to American efforts to reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union.

The new Chief Executive probably thought he was carrying on Roosevelt's policies when he lectured Molotov on Moscow's failure to keep the

[13] Leahy, *I Was There,* p. 413; Vandenberg Diary, April 24, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 176; Davies memorandum of conversation with Truman, April 30, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 16. After this discussion Davies wrote a personal letter to Molotov assuring him that "as you and the great Marshal Stalin come to know our frank President Truman better . . . a concert of action and purpose will be assured." (Davies to Molotov, May 2, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 16.) Jonathan Daniels, who interviewed Truman extensively about his early days in office, writes: "Perhaps not much was accomplished by that conference. . . . Afterwards he [Truman] realized that in some cases he had tried to learn too much too fast. There was very little time. . . ." (*Man of Independence,* pp. 269–70.) See also Harriman, *America and Russia,* p. 40.

[14] Harriman to Hull, June 30, 1944, *FR: 1944,* IV, 974; Davies Journal, April 23, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 16. One day after Truman's meeting with Molotov, Stalin cabled the new President: "Such conditions must be recognized unusual when two governments—those of the United States and Great Britain—beforehand settle with the Polish question in which the Soviet Union is first of all and most of all interested and put the government of the USSR in an unbearable position trying to dictate to it their demands." (Stalin to Truman, April 24, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 264.)

Yalta agreements. Anyone who had just succeeded to the presidency with as little advance preparation as Truman had would not likely have overruled such "experts" from the previous administration as Harriman, Deane, Forrestal, and Leahy. Determined to assert his authority by conveying the appearance of decisiveness, Truman assumed without hesitation the firm attitude they recommended. To a man of Truman's blunt, contentious personality, this tough policy must have seemed particularly congenial. But to view the new President's confrontation with Molotov as the opening move in a well-planned, long-range strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union is to presume a degree of foresight and consistency which simply was not present during the early days of the Truman Administration.[15]

"Getting tough with Russia" involved more than mere rhetoric. The American people would have to abandon certain recently acquired but strongly held assumptions: that there was no fundamental conflict of interest between the United States and the Soviet Union; that both nations could rely on the United Nations to guarantee their postwar security. "Getting tough with Russia" would also require Americans to depart from certain traditions which had always influenced their diplomacy: nonentanglement in the political affairs of Europe, and fear of a large-scale peacetime military establishment. Under the pressures of the Cold War Americans eventually did give up these assumptions and traditions, but this took time. Even in the unlikely event that in April, 1945, Truman was clear in his own mind on the need to reverse American policy toward the Soviet Union, public opinion would have significantly limited any moves in that direction for some time to come.

II

Truman also followed his predecessor's policy in the area of military strategy, but here the effect was to avoid conflict with the Soviet Union. Throughout the war, Roosevelt and his generals had employed the armed forces for the sole purpose of defeating the Axis, without regard to the political make-up of the postwar world. As the battle against Germany entered its last month, however, Prime Minister Churchill

[15] For a contrary view, see Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy, passim.*

launched a vigorous challenge to this procedure, arguing that Eisenhower's troops should deploy themselves in such a way as to improve the West's bargaining position with the Russians. Simultaneously, Washington officials were beginning to question whether Soviet entry into the war against Japan was still worth the political price Roosevelt had promised to pay at Yalta. After consulting with his military advisers, Truman rejected both of these attempts to revise strategy in the light of political considerations, thus continuing another of the precedents Roosevelt had set.

Churchill's initiative originated shortly before F.D.R.'s death, when Eisenhower announced his intention not to try to take Berlin, but instead to halt his troops at the Elbe River. The General had several reasons for doing this. He wanted to reach agreement with Moscow on a clear line of demarcation which would prevent inadvertent clashes between the Red Army and Anglo-American forces as they drove toward each other across Germany. Moreover, a single thrust in the direction of Berlin might have exposed Eisenhower's flanks to attacks from the German army, or at least have allowed remnants of that force to escape to the "National Redoubt" which SHAEF intelligence believed Hitler was preparing in the Alps. Either situation would prolong the war, delaying the badly needed redeployment of American troops to the Pacific. Finally, Eisenhower's decision reflected the principle which American strategists had followed throughout the war: that military plans should aim at the destruction of enemy forces wherever they were, not at the capture of fixed geographical objectives.[16]

The British Prime Minister had objected to Eisenhower's decision, both on military and on political grounds. Berlin still retained a "high strategic importance," he wrote Roosevelt on April 1, 1945, if for no other reason than that the fall of Berlin would signal defeat to the German people. But even more significantly, if the Russians took Berlin "will not their impression that they have been the overwhelming contributor to our common victory be unduly imprinted in their minds, and may this not lead them into a mood which will raise grave and formidable difficulties in the future?" Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff re-

[16] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945: The Decision to Halt at the Elbe,* chapters 3 and 4; Forrest C. Pogue, "The Decision to Halt at the Elbe," in Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions,* pp. 479–92.

jected Churchill's argument. "Such psychological and political advantages as would result from the possible capture of Berlin ahead of the Russians," the Joint Chiefs noted on April 6, "should not override the imperative military consideration, which in our opinion is the destruction and dismemberment of the German armed forces." [17]

But even the decision to stop at the Elbe would leave Anglo-American forces deep within the occupation zone which the Big Three had previously assigned to the Soviet Union. On April 18, Churchill suggested to President Truman that Eisenhower's troops not withdraw from their advanced positions until certain concessions had been obtained from the Russians. The Prime Minister mentioned the need to secure Moscow's cooperation in establishing the four-power Allied Control Commission in Berlin, the fact that the British and American zones would need food from the primarily agricultural Soviet zone, and the apparent reluctance of the Russians to agree on occupation zones for Austria. After V-E Day, Churchill escalated his argument. Premature British and American withdrawal, he told Truman on May 11, would mean "the tide of Russian domination sweeping forward 120 miles on a front of 300 or 400 miles, . . . an event which, if it occurred, would be one of the most melancholy in history." The Anglo-Americans should not move their forces "until satisfied about Russian policies in Poland, Germany, and the Danube basin." One day later the Prime Minister used the phrase "iron curtain" for the first time to describe the division of Europe between the Russians and the West. By the end of May, the British were insisting that no withdrawals take place until "the whole question of the future relations of the two Governments with the Soviet Government in Europe" had been resolved. "Nothing really important has been settled

[17] Churchill to Roosevelt, April 1, 1945, printed in Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy,* pp. 398–99; Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum of April 6, 1945, quoted in Pogue, *The Supreme Command,* pp. 444–45. Roosevelt's reply to Churchill, drafted by Marshall, is summarized in Pogue, "The Decision to Halt at the Elbe," p. 485. Eisenhower wrote to Marshall on April 7: "I am the first to admit that a war is waged in pursuance of political aims, and if the Combined Chiefs of Staff should decide that the Allied effort to take Berlin outweighs purely military considerations in this theater, I would cheerfully readjust my plans and my thinking so as to carry out such an operation." (Eisenhower to Marshall, April 7, 1945, *Eisenhower Papers,* IV, 2592.) The tone of Eisenhower's dispatch, however, makes it clear that he did not expect such a drastic reversal of policy.

yet," Churchill warned Truman on June 4, "and you and I will have to bear great responsibility for the future." [18]

These increasingly importunate messages from London failed to impress American officials. The State Department opposed using the laboriously agreed-upon zonal boundaries as bargaining devices, arguing that this would retard rather than promote Russian cooperation in the occupation of Germany. General Eisenhower wrote with some asperity on April 23:

> I do not quite understand why the Prime Minister has been so determined to intermingle political and military considerations in attempting to establish a procedure for the conduct of our own and Russian troops when a meeting takes place. My original recommendation . . . was a simple one and I thought provided a very sensible arrangement.

General Marshall agreed. Responding to a suggestion from Churchill that Eisenhower try to beat the Russians to Prague, Marshall wrote: "Personally and aside from all logistic, tactical, or strategic implications, I would be loath to hazard American lives for purely political purposes." Secretary of War Stimson warned in mid-May that the Russians would interpret any attempt to reverse the decision on zones as evidence that London and Washington had formed an alliance against them. This would make it impossible to work out any agreement on the quadripartite administration of Germany.[19]

When Russian, American, British, and French military commanders met in Berlin on June 5, 1945, to organize the four-power occupation of Germany, Marshal Zhukov made it clear that the Soviet Union would not allow the quadripartite control machinery to go into operation until all troops had been removed to their respective zones. Robert Murphy, political adviser to Eisenhower, informed the State Department that the Supreme Commander did not consider retention of American forces in the Soviet zone wise: "It is pretty obvious to all concerned that we really

[18] Churchill to Truman, April 18, 24, June 4, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 231–32, 240–41, 326; Churchill to Truman, May 11, 12, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* I, 6–7, 9; British *aide-mémoire,* May 28, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 313.

[19] Stettinius to Leahy, April 21, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 235–36; Eisenhower to Marshall, April 23, 1945, quoted in Pogue, *The Supreme Command,* p. 486; memorandum by John J. McCloy of telephone conversation with Stimson, May 19, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 421.

are desirous of removing our forces and that it is only a question of time when we will inevitably do so." Harry Hopkins warned Truman on June 8 that failure to withdraw Anglo-American troops into their assigned occupation zones "is certain to be misunderstood by Russia as well as at home." Accordingly, Truman informed Churchill on June 11 that in view of these considerations, "I am unable to delay the withdrawal of American troops from the Soviet zone in order to use pressure in the settlement of other problems." Churchill replied bitterly on the 14th: "Obviously we are obliged to conform to your decision. . . . I sincerely hope that your action will in the long run make for a lasting peace in Europe." [20]

Truman later explained that although "politically we would have been pleased to see our lines extend as far to the east as possible," there were two reasons why he could not accept Churchill's proposal. Logistical considerations made it necessary to shift American troops from Europe to the Far East as quickly as possible, thus restricting opportunities for challenging Russian policy in Europe. Moreover, Truman believed that the best way to handle the Soviet Union was "to stick carefully to our agreements and to try our best to make the Russians carry out their agreements." The United States could hardly disregard the commitments on occupation zones which Roosevelt had made, while at the same time insisting that Moscow carry out to the letter the Yalta agreements on Poland. Churchill, in retrospect, understood Truman's position well:

> The case as presented to him so soon after his accession to power was whether or not to depart from and in a sense repudiate the policy of the American and British Governments agreed under his illustrious predecessor. . . . His responsibility at this point was limited to deciding whether circumstances had changed so fundamentally that an entirely different procedure should be adopted, with the likelihood of having to face accusations of

[20] Eisenhower to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 6, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 328–29; Murphy to Stettinius, June 6, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 331; Hopkins to Truman, June 8, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 333; Truman to Churchill, June 11, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 133–34; Churchill to Truman, June 14, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 134–35. Ironically, Stalin later requested a delay in the redeployment of troops because the American and British zones in Berlin had not yet been cleared of mines, and because Zhukov and other Soviet commanders had to go to Moscow on June 24 to participate in a parade. (Stalin to Truman, June 16, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 137.) The actual withdrawal into occupation zones took place on July 1.

breach of faith. Those who are only wise after the event should hold their peace.[21]

The new President demonstrated a similar reluctance to revise Roosevelt's military policies in the Far East. Shortly after entering the White House, Truman had advised both Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov and General Patrick J. Hurley, United States ambassador to China, that he would carry out the agreement Roosevelt had made at Yalta regarding Soviet entry into the war against Japan. For reasons of security, however, Chiang Kai-shek still had not been told of this arrangement, made largely at the expense of his country. This delay gave the State Department the opportunity to review the Yalta accord in the light of recent difficulties with the Russians in Eastern Europe. Hurley warned Truman on May 10 that Chiang would have to be informed of the Yalta agreement before long, since Russian military preparations in the Far East were becoming increasingly obvious. But the President, aware of the review his diplomatic advisers were undertaking, asked Hurley to delay telling Chiang for a while longer.[22]

Ambassador Harriman and Navy Secretary Forrestal had raised the need for a reevaluation of American political objectives in the Far East early in May. The time had arrived, Harriman told Forrestal on the 11th, "to come to a conclusion about the necessity for the early entrance of Russia into the Japanese war." The next day Harriman, Forrestal, Acting Secretary of State Grew, and Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy met to discuss, as Grew told Stettinius, "whether we were going to support what had been done at Yalta." As a result of this meeting, the State Department sent an official inquiry to the War and Navy departments asking: (1) whether military authorities considered Soviet entry into the Japanese war vital enough to preclude seeking Moscow's

[21] Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 211, 214, 217; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy,* p. 487.

[22] Bohlen memorandum, Truman-Molotov conversation, April 22, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 236; Herbert Feis, *The China Tangle,* p. 283; Hurley to Truman, May 10, 1945, *FR: 1945,* VII, 865–68; Truman to Hurley, May 12, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 868. Hurley later maintained that Roosevelt had authorized him to seek a revision of the Yalta Far Eastern agreement, but the available evidence does not support this assertion. See, on this matter, Russell D. Buhite, "Patrick J. Hurley and the Yalta Far Eastern Agreement," *Pacific Historical Review,* XXXVII (August, 1968), 343–53.

agreement "to certain desirable political objectives in the Far East prior to such entry"; (2) whether "the Yalta decision in regard to Soviet political desires in the Far East [should] be reconsidered or carried into effect in whole or in part"; and (3) whether the Russians, provided they entered the war, should be given a role in the occupation of Japan. The additional political commitments which the department hoped to obtain from the Russians included a pledge to encourage Chinese Communist cooperation with Chiang Kai-shek, "unequivocal adherence of the Soviet Government to the Cairo Declaration regarding the return of Manchuria to Chinese sovereignty," establishment of a four-power trusteeship over Korea, and emergency landing rights for American commercial airplanes in the Kurile Islands.[23]

Military officials still considered Soviet participation in the Pacific War highly desirable, though not absolutely necessary for final victory over Japan. General Douglas MacArthur had told Forrestal in February, 1945, that Russian entry into the war would greatly facilitate an American invasion of the Japanese home islands by tying down the large Kwantung Army in Manchuria. Upon the recommendation of General Deane, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided early in April that the United States would not need air bases in Siberia, but they still agreed with MacArthur that a Soviet declaration of war would reduce American losses and help shorten the war. General Marshall noted later that month that the Russians had the capacity "to delay their entry into the Far Eastern war until we had done all the dirty work." The Army Chief of Staff hoped for Moscow's assistance "at a time when it would be helpful to us." Truman later recalled estimates from military experts that an invasion of Japan might cost half a million American casualties, hence "Russian entry into the war against Japan was highly important to us." [24]

The unknown factor which made it difficult to evaluate the need for

[23] Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 52, 55–56; Grew memorandum of telephone conversation with Stettinius, May 12, 1945, Grew MSS; Grew to Forrestal and Stettinius, May 12, 1945, *FR: 1945,* VII, 869–70.

[24] Forrestal memorandum, conversation with MacArthur, February 28, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* p. 31; Deane, *The Strange Alliance,* pp. 262–68; Bohlen notes, Marshall meeting with Truman and other advisers, April 23, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 254; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 265. See also Louis Morton, "Soviet Intervention in the War with Japan," *Foreign Affairs,* XL (July, 1962), 658.

Soviet military assistance in the Pacific, however, was the atomic bomb, upon which the United States and Great Britain had been working secretly since the beginning of the war. "These are vital questions and I am very glad the State Department has brought them up," Secretary of War Stimson noted on May 13; "the questions cut very deep and in my opinion are powerfully connected with our success with S-1 [the bomb]." Stimson at first wanted to take no position, suggesting that the United States simply stay out of arguments with the Russians until the bomb was ready. But the State Department pointed out that Truman had already agreed to meet Churchill and Stalin in Germany in July, and that the question of Russia's role in the Far East would have to be settled by then. "Over any such tangled wave of problems the S-1 secret would be dominant," the Secretary of War mused in his diary, "and yet we will not know until after that time probably, until after that meeting, whether this is a weapon in our hands or not. We think it will be shortly afterwards, but it seems a terrible thing to gamble with such big stakes in diplomacy without having your master card in your hand." The War Department therefore replied to the State Department's inquiry by noting that "Russian entry will have a profound military effect in that almost certainly it will materially shorten the war and thus save American lives." However, military officials continued to believe that the Russians would go to war with Japan when they got ready, regardless of what the United States did in the political field, and so expressed no objections to State Department efforts to seek additional clarification of the conditions for Soviet entry.[25]

Stalin gave the assurances the State Department wanted in a conversation with Harry Hopkins and Averell Harriman in Moscow on May 28, 1945. The Soviet Union would be ready to enter the war against Japan on August 8, he said, although the actual date would depend "on the execution of the agreement made at Yalta concerning Soviet desires." It would be necessary to have the Chinese accept Russia's political demands "in order to justify entry into the Pacific War in the eyes of the Soviet people." But at the same time, Stalin assured Hopkins and Harriman that the Soviet Union had no desire to challenge the American

[25] Stimson Diary, May 13, 14, 15, 1945, Stimson MSS; Stimson to Grew, May 21, 1945, *FR: 1945,* VII, 876–78. Forrestal associated the Navy Department with Stimson's conclusions. (Forrestal to Grew, May 21, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 878.)

"open door" policy in China, that Chiang Kai-shek's representatives, not the Chinese Communists, would be allowed to set up civil administration in parts of Manchuria liberated by the Red Army, and that while he, Stalin, knew little of the various Chinese leaders, he thought "Chiang Kai-shek was the best of the lot and would be the one to undertake the unification of China." The Russian leader also endorsed a four-power trusteeship for Korea.[26]

Reassured by these developments, Truman on June 9 instructed Hurley to tell Chiang Kai-shek about the Yalta Far Eastern agreement. On the same day he met with Dr. T. V. Soong, the foreign minister of China, and informed him that the United States was "definitely committed to the agreements reached by President Roosevelt." One week later, Truman reviewed plans for the invasion of Japan with his military advisers. General Marshall, speaking for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stressed the advantages of Soviet participation as a means of containing Japanese troops in Manchuria and possibly shortening the war. "The impact of Russian entry on the already hopeless Japanese," he pointed out, "may well be the decisive action levering them into capitulation." Stimson agreed with Marshall but, having the atomic bomb firmly in mind, expressed hope "for some fruitful accomplishment by other means." Forrestal observed that there would still be time to reconsider the proposed military operations "in the light of subsequent events." Truman then approved the Joint Chiefs' strategy for the invasion of Japan, and announced that one of his major objectives at the forthcoming Big Three meeting would be "to get from Russia all the assistance in the war that was possible." [27]

Several years later, Truman summarized his attitude toward the Yalta Far Eastern agreement in a letter to Henry Stimson:

Some agreements were made early in 1943 [*sic*] to keep Russia in the war. Naturally if those agreements had been made after the surrender of Ger-

[26] Bohlen memorandum, Hopkins-Stalin conversation, May 28, 1945, *FR: 1945,* VII, 887–91. See also Hopkins' report to Truman of this conference, printed in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* pp. 902–3.

[27] Truman to Hurley, June 9, 1945, *FR: 1945,* VII, 897–98; Grew memorandum, Truman-Soong conversation, June 9, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 896; Joint Chiefs of Staff minutes, meeting with Truman, Forrestal, McCloy, and Stimson, June 18, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* I, 903–9. See also Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 265.

many and Japan they no doubt would have been arranged in a different manner. I made it my business to try to carry out agreements as they were made when the war was on—maybe that should not have been done but I would still follow that procedure because I believe when agreements are made they should be kept. That is not the policy of the Russian government.[28]

Truman's conduct of the war during the brief period of time between his accession to the presidency and the achievement of victory over Germany and Japan thus offers little evidence that the new Chief Executive had reversed his predecessor's policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union. As under Roosevelt, victory, not postwar political advantage, remained the primary goal of the American military effort right up to the moment of its attainment.

III

In the field of economic policy, the Roosevelt Administration in the months before F.D.R.'s death had toughened its position toward the Soviet Union. Prior to the Yalta Conference, the President had endorsed the State Department's decision to move slowly on extension of a postwar loan to the USSR. Roosevelt had taken a firm stand on reparations at the Big Three conference, indicating that the United States would not support the indiscriminate removal of German industrial equipment to rebuild the Soviet economy, and accepting only with the greatest reluctance the Russian figure of $20 billion "as a basis of negotiations" in the tripartite Reparations Commission. In March, the Administration had decided to terminate negotiations with Moscow on the use of lend-lease for reconstruction. Domestic considerations influenced the President's attitude in each of these cases: Congress had made it clear that it would not support reconstruction of foreign economies at the expense of the American taxpayer. But the Administration's political interests at home also fit in with a diplomatic tactic of increasing importance—the use of economic pressure to secure Soviet compliance with American plans for the postwar world.

[28] Truman to Stimson, July 7, 1950, quoted in Hillman, *Mr. President,* p. 55.

Ambassador Harriman demonstrated the relationship between reparations, lend-lease, and the postwar reconstruction loan in a series of telegrams sent to Washington during the week immediately preceding Roosevelt's death. "We now have ample proof," he noted on April 4, 1945, "that the Soviet Government views all matters from the standpoint of their own selfish interests":

> The Soviet Government will end this war with the largest gold reserve of any country except the United States, will have large quantities of Lend-Lease material and equipment not used or worn out in the war with which to assist their reconstruction, will ruthlessly strip the enemy countries they have occupied of everything they can move, will control the foreign trade of countries under their domination as far as practicable to the benefit of the Soviet Union, will use political and economic pressure on other countries including South America to force trade arrangements to their own advantage and at the same time they will demand from us every form of aid and assistance which they think they can get.

If the United States was to protect its vital interests, Harriman concluded, it would have to adopt "a more positive policy of using our economic influence to further our broad political ideals." Washington should continue to seek friendly relations with the Soviet Union, but on a strictly *quid pro quo* basis. "This means tying our economic assistance directly into our political problems with the Soviet Union." [29]

Harriman still favored extending a loan to Russia, but now regarded it chiefly as a device for extracting political concessions. He believed that the Russians, using their own resources, could regain their prewar level of capital investment by 1948. They could not, however, carry out their ambitious program of additional economic expansion without purchasing American industrial equipment. The Soviet Union was weaker internally than many people thought, he argued, therefore Washington could safely attach political conditions to any Russian loan. The United States should work first to meet the economic needs of its Western European allies, and then allocate to the Russians whatever might be left. Moscow deserved no special treatment in the matter, and Congress should not be asked to authorize a special loan. The Administration should begin negotiations on the extension of credits through the Export-Import Bank. "It would be inadvisable to give the Soviets the idea that we were cool-

[29] Harriman to Stettinius, April 4, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 817–20.

ing off on our desire to help." But at the same time "it would be quite satisfactory to have negotiations on the question of postwar credits drag along." [30]

The Soviet Union would also depend heavily on German reparations to achieve its program of postwar economic expansion. The United States should show sympathy for Moscow's position, Harriman wrote on April 3, but since the Russians had demonstrated little willingness to implement the Yalta decisions, "I . . . see no reason why we should show eagerness in expediting decisions on reparations, which is one subject to which the Soviet Government is most anxious to get us committed." The Red Army was already removing vast quantities of goods from Germany as it advanced toward Berlin, and there was no evidence that a reparations agreement would cause the Russians to show restraint in this regard. Delaying an agreement, however, might encourage them to cooperate in shipping food from their agricultural zone to the industrial areas which the Americans and British would occupy.[31]

On the matter of lend-lease, Harriman fully supported the Roosevelt Administration's decision not to allow the Russians to obtain reconstruction materials under the Fourth Protocol. There should be no Fifth Protocol, he argued. "Russian requests should be dealt with on a supply basis, and we should supply the absolute minimum requirements." The United States should continue to fill legitimate Russian military orders, especially for material to be used against Japan, but after V-E Day "the Soviet Union should have ample production to meet essential needs in many fields, and our shipments should be reduced accordingly." [32]

After becoming President, Truman read Harriman's cables carefully, and quickly indicated his support for the general policy which the am-

[30] Harriman to Stettinius, April 11, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 994–96; minutes of the Secretary of State's Staff Committee meeting, April 21, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 818; Bohlen memorandum, Harriman conversation with Truman, April 20, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 232; and Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles,* p. 256. Harriman's conclusion that the Soviet Union could regain its prewar level of capital investment by 1948 was based on a State Department estimate, forwarded to him on January 26, 1945. (*FR: 1945,* V, 939, 967.)

[31] Harriman to Stettinius, April 3, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 1186. See also Harriman to Stettinius, March 14, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 1176–77; Harriman to Stettinius, April 4, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 817–18; and Harriman to Stettinius, April 6, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 1190–92.

[32] Harriman to Stettinius, March 20, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 988–89; minutes of the Secretary of State's Staff Committee meeting, April 21, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 844–45.

bassador to Moscow had recommended. He intended to be "firm but fair," the new Chief Executive told Harriman on April 20; "the Soviet Union needed us more than we needed them." During his confrontation with Molotov three days later, Truman reminded the Soviet foreign minister that Congress would have to approve "any economic measures in the foreign field," and that it would not act without public support. He hoped "that the Soviet Government would keep these factors in mind." [33]

The Truman Administration bungled its first attempt to apply the policy which Harriman recommended, however. The ambassador suggested on May 9, 1945, that in view of Germany's surrender, the United States should begin curtailing lend-lease shipments to the Soviet Union. Supplies for possible use against Japan should continue to be sent, but the Administration should carefully scrutinize, "with a view to our own interests and policies," requests for other shipments. The American attitude should be one of firmness, Harriman stressed, "while avoiding any implication of a threat or any indication of political bargaining." Two days later Secretary of War Stimson found Truman "vigorously enthusiastic" about implementing "a more realistic policy" on Russian lend-lease, a position which the President said was "right down his alley." [34]

Undersecretary of State Grew and Foreign Economic Administrator Crowley, after consulting with the War and Navy departments and Ambassador Harriman, recommended to Truman on May 11 that he (1) continue lend-lease shipments destined for use against the Japanese as long as Soviet entry into the Far Eastern war was anticipated; (2) continue to ship supplies needed to complete work on industrial plants already under construction; (3) cut off all other lend-lease shipments to the Soviet Union as soon as physically practicable. No new lend-lease

[33] Bohlen memorandum, Truman-Harriman conversation, April 20, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 232; Bohlen memorandum, Truman-Molotov conversation, April 23, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 256–57. Harriman later recalled: "Although he had only been in office for less than a week, he [Truman] had read all the papers regarding Yalta, the telegrams that I had sent; and the messages that President Roosevelt had sent to Stalin, and the replies. He was thoroughly briefed." (Remarks by Harriman at a ceremony commemorating the 25th anniversary of Truman's accession to the presidency, April 11, 1970, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.) See also Phillips, *The Truman Presidency,* p. 79; and Harriman, *America and Russia,* p. 40.

[34] Stettinius to Grew, May 9, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 998; Stimson Diary, May 11, 1945, Stimson MSS.

protocol should be negotiated to replace the one which would expire on June 30. Instead the Administration should consider Soviet requests for aid "on the basis of reasonably accurate information regarding the essentiality of Soviet military supply requirements and in the light of all competing demands for supplies in the changing military situation." After listening to the explanations of Grew and Crowley, Truman approved their proposal.[35]

But Crowley interpreted the lend-lease curtailment directive far more literally than Truman or Harriman had intended. Acting on the assumption that the new policy was "when in doubt hold," instead of "when in doubt give," Foreign Economic Administration representatives on the Soviet Protocol Committee insisted that ships containing Russian lend-lease material not destined for use in the Far East should turn around and return to port. Harriman later described himself as having been "taken aback" by this development. Truman, who had never intended to cut off supplies already on the way to the Soviet Union, quickly countermanded the turn-around order. But the diplomatic damage had been done. Through a bureaucratic blunder the Truman Administration did precisely what Harriman had sought to avoid: it gave Moscow the impression that it was trying to extract political concessions through a crude form of economic pressure.[36]

[35] Grew and Crowley to Truman, May 11, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 999–1000; Truman to Grew and Crowley, May 11, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 1000. Before delivering this recommendation to the White House, Crowley emphasized to Grew the necessity of making sure that Truman thoroughly understood what he was signing and "that he will back us up and keep everyone else out of it." Crowley expected trouble from the Russians, and "he did not want them to be running all over town looking for help." (Grew memorandum of conversation with Crowley, May 11, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 999*n.*) In his memoirs, Truman maintains erroneously that Grew and Crowley got him to sign the lend-lease termination order on May 8, without informing him of its contents. (*Year of Decisions,* pp. 227–29.)

[36] Herring, "Lend-Lease to Russia and the Origins of the Cold War," pp. 106–8; Leighton and Coakley, *Global Logistics, 1943–45,* pp. 695–96; Feis, *Between War and Peace,* p. 27. Herring notes that "the hard line on Soviet lend-lease taken by Crowley and the Foreign Economic Administration seems to have stemmed more from a rigid legalism than from Russophobia. During the congressional hearings on the extension of lend-lease, Crowley had made unequivocal commitments that lend-lease was to be used only to prosecute the war. Imbued with an extremely narrow concept of executive authority and not concerned with the diplomatic impact of his actions, he waged an unrelenting battle to honor these commitments." ("Lend-Lease to Russia," p. 108.)

Stalin told Harry Hopkins at the end of May that the United States had every right to terminate the flow of lend-lease to the Soviet Union, but that the abrupt manner in which aid had been cut off was "unfortunate and even brutal." If Washington's reluctance to continue lend-lease shipments was intended to pressure the Russians, Stalin said, it was a mistake. Accommodations could be arranged if the Americans approached the Russians on a friendly basis, but reprisals would only have the opposite effect. Hopkins tried to assure Stalin that the order to unload ships bound for Russia had been an error, that the United States had no intention of using lend-lease to force concessions from the Russians. Stalin's bitterness, however, remained unassuaged.[37]

Meanwhile the Truman Administration, in line with Harriman's suggestions, was taking its time about beginning talks with the Russians on reparations. Molotov discussed the issue at San Francisco on May 7 with Harriman and Edwin W. Pauley, Truman's newly appointed representative to the Allied Reparations Commission. The Russians wanted to know, Molotov said, when Pauley and his delegation planned to leave for Moscow, since the Soviet government "attached the greatest importance to the work of the Reparations Commission and hoped it would soon get started." Harriman pointed out that the United States and Great Britain wanted France to have a place on the commission, since that country had been given an occupation zone in Germany, but that the Russians had refused to agree to this without admitting Poland and Yugoslavia as well. Molotov suggested that it might expedite matters to return to the original Yalta formula of a strictly tripartite organization. Pauley expressed a desire to begin negotiations as soon as possible, but noted reports that the Russians were already removing from their zone German industrial equipment which might fall under the category of reparations. The British and Americans, he insisted, had carefully avoided this practice. Molotov asserted that the Red Army had taken only what it needed for prosecution of the war, and that he assumed American commanders were doing the same thing in the parts of Germany they occupied.[38]

[37] Bohlen notes, Hopkins-Stalin conversation, May 27, 1945, quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* pp. 894–97.

[38] Bohlen memorandum, Molotov-Pauley-Harriman conversation, May 7, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 1208–10. Roosevelt had originally named Isador Lubin to represent the

Shortly after this conversation, the State Department announced that Pauley and a thirty-man delegation would arrive in Moscow to begin negotiations early in June, after first surveying conditions in Germany. This news alarmed George F. Kennan, who was in charge of the American Embassy in Moscow during Harriman's absence in the United States. If Pauley and his delegation expected to work out a rational agreement with the Russians after careful study, Kennan warned Harriman, they were in for a disappointment:

> [Russian] demands will be formulated among themselves, on the basis of considerations which will never be revealed to us, but which will certainly be political rather than economic. Any efforts on the part of foreign delegations to pull discussion down to a basis of economic equalities will be met with repetitious orations about what the Germans did to Russia. In the end, it will come down to a simple horse trade. How much are we going to make available to the Russians from our zones, and what price are we going to demand for it?

The United States, Kennan argued, would not need thirty experts to drive a bargain of this sort. But Harriman, who had seen Pauley's orders, was able to reassure his anxious subordinate: "We have nothing to worry about in regard to the size of the reparations delegation . . . Mr. Pauley's instructions are very firm and while we may not reach any agreement I have no fears about us giving in." [39]

Harriman was right. Pauley's directive, as approved by Truman on May 18, placed primary emphasis on the need to maintain the German economy intact, even if this meant restricting reparations shipments to Russia. While removals from existing facilities would inevitably lower the German standard of living, they "should be held within such limits as to leave the German people with sufficient means to provide a minimum subsistence . . . without sustained outside relief." Remaining in-

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United States on the Reparations Commission, but Truman replaced him with Pauley, treasurer of the Democratic National Committee and a personal friend, because "I felt that the position required a tough bargainer, someone who could be as tough as Molotov." Lubin had been replaced, Truman told Henry Morgenthau, Jr., because "I don't think he is a big enough man." Lubin did agree to remain on the commission as Pauley's associate, however. (Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 308; Blum, *Morgenthau Diaries: Years of War,* p. 453.) For negotiations regarding composition of the Reparations Commission, see *FR: 1945,* III, 1177–97.

[39] Grew to Kennan, May 13, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 1211; Kennan to Harriman, May 14, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 1211–13; Harriman to Kennan, May 20, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 1213*n.*

dustrial production would be used first to provide for the basic needs of the German people and to pay for essential imports, and only then as reparations. No plan could be approved which would "put the United States in a position where it will have to assume responsibility for sustained relief to the German people." [40]

"Germany would have to be fed," Truman later explained, "and I was determined to see that it would not once again be charity . . . from us that fed her." In maintaining this position, the President had no intention of denying reparations to the Soviet Union. Like Roosevelt, however, he sought some means of limiting excessive removals, so that the United States would not once more find itself obliged to prop up Germany's economy while the Germans produced reparations for Washington's former allies. He also hoped to make it clear to the Russians that they could not expect massive shipments of equipment from the industrialized Western zones without committing themselves to help feed the people of that area.[41]

Harriman's suggestions also helped to clarify Washington's thinking with regard to a postwar loan to the Soviet Union. Emilio G. Collado, director of the State Department's Office of Financial and Development Policy, recommended in April that after conclusion of the San Francisco Conference the Administration should begin making legislative arrangements to permit an Export-Import Bank loan to Russia "if political conditions are favorable." The loan would be not $6 billion, as the Russians had proposed, but $1 billion. The interest rate would be in accord with the bank's regular rates, roughly double the Soviet proposal of 2¼ percent. On June 2, 1945, Grew informed Harriman that the Administration would soon ask Congress to expand the Export-Import Bank's lending authority, setting aside $1 billion for the Soviet Union "if events so warrant." [42]

In mid-July, Foreign Economic Administrator Crowley asked Congress to raise the bank's loan ceiling from $700 million to $3.5 billion, and to repeal the Johnson Act's prohibition on loans to defaulting gov-

[40] "Instructions for the United States Representative on the Allied Commission on Reparations," May 18, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 1222–27.

[41] Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 308.

[42] Collado to Stettinius and Clayton, April 19, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 997–98; Grew to Harriman, June 2, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 1011–12.

ernments. In answer to a question from Senator Robert A. Taft, Crowley acknowledged that between $700 million and $1 billion of the new lending authority would be tentatively allocated for a loan to the Soviet Union. Taft criticized the Administration request as an attempt to circumvent congressional prohibitions on the use of lend-lease for reconstruction, while Representative Everett M. Dirksen tried unsuccessfully to amend the bill to deny credits to any nation which refused to follow the principles of the Atlantic Charter. "I do not want a single American dollar to undo the work of a single American GI who is sleeping in a little cemetery in some far-off country," Dirksen proclaimed. The bill easily passed Congress after only brief debate, however, and Truman signed it into law on July 31, 1945.[43]

The Truman Administration could now lend up to $1 billion to the Soviet Union through the Export-Import Bank, without precipitating an embarrassing debate in Congress. Whether the Administration would actually use this authority, however, depended upon the course of Soviet-American relations. The loan to Russia, originally conceived of as a device to ensure economic prosperity at home, had now become a weapon in the growing political rivalry with Moscow. Things had changed, *Fortune* magazine observed, since Eric Johnston's trip to the Soviet Union in 1944. American economists now worried less about providing full employment after the war. The West European market for American products had greatly exceeded expectations. But most important were changes in the political climate: Moscow's actions in Eastern Europe had "frittered away Russia's enormous store of goodwill in this country." Until these "profound political difficulties" were resolved, the loan to Russia should remain in abeyance.[44]

Truman's foreign economic policy reflected the unique position in which Americans found themselves at the end of World War II. The United States had emerged from the war with a greatly expanded industrial plant at a time when all of the world's other major powers had

[43] *New York Times,* July 18, 1945; *Congressional Record,* July 13 and 20, 1945, pp. 7535–48, 7827–41; Export-Import Bank, *Semiannual Report to Congress for the Period July-December, 1945,* p. 9.

[44] *Fortune,* XXXII (July, 1945), 110. See also Herbert Feis, "Political Aspects of Foreign Loans," *Foreign Affairs,* XXIII (July, 1945), 609–19; and William Henry Chamberlin, "Can We Do Business with Stalin?" *American Mercury,* LXI (August, 1945), 194–201.

suffered serious economic losses. Many influential Americans believed that Washington could take advantage of this situation by using reconstruction assistance to shape political developments in the postwar world to its liking. "Let us not forget," Bernard Baruch reminded Truman in June, 1945, "that it is on the productive capacity of America that all countries must rely for the comforts—even the necessities—that a modern world will demand. We have the mass production and the know-how. Without us the rest of the world cannot recuperate; it cannot rebuild, feed, house or clothe itself." [45] Although Roosevelt might have handled matters like lend-lease termination more gracefully, it seems unlikely that he could have resisted the opportunity presented by this unusual situation any more than Truman did.

But Washington's effort to employ economic power for political purposes rested on two shaky assumptions: first, that other countries needed reconstruction aid so badly that they would accept whatever political conditions the United States imposed; and second, that Congress and the American taxpayer, both yearning for a return to fiscal normalcy, would appropriate the large sums of money required to finance such assistance. Events of late 1945 and early 1946 would make it clear that, in the case of the Soviet Union, neither of these assumptions could be taken for granted.

IV

The United Nations Conference on International Organization opened in a blare of publicity at San Francisco on April 25, 1945. This meeting, for which so many Americans held such high hopes, had the ironic effect of aggravating rather than alleviating international tensions, for it revealed to the public the full extent of the differences between Russia and the West. Yet at the same time it stimulated a reconsideration of policy toward the Soviet Union within the Truman Administration which led to a renewed effort to settle problems with Moscow through personal diplomacy.

Acrimony rather than harmony seemed the keynote during the early

[45] Baruch to Truman, June 8, 1945, Baruch MSS, "Memoranda—President Truman."

sessions at San Francisco. Molotov refused to accept the custom that the head of the host nation's delegation serve as chairman, and had to be put off with a compromise. Two days after the conference opened the Russian foreign minister asked for the admission of representatives from the Lublin Polish government, arguing that they deserved a place at San Francisco because under the Yalta agreement their group was to form the basis of the new provisional government in Warsaw. Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, the leading Republican on the American delegation, virtually ordered Secretary of State Stettinius to reject Molotov's proposal at once and in public. Stettinius instantly complied. Vandenberg wrote in his diary that had the Lublin Poles been admitted, "it would have wrecked *any* chance of American approval of the work of the Conference." Tensions increased further on May 4, 1945, when the Soviet government acknowledged that it had arrested sixteen Polish underground leaders after having promised them safe conduct to come to Moscow to discuss broadening the Lublin regime. "This is bad business," Vandenberg noted. "If it should develop that the 16 are dead—?????" [46]

These developments caused genuine concern among Americans who had up to this time generally sympathized with the Russian point of view. In a series of editorial comments from April through June the *New Republic,* for example, criticized Moscow's refusal to reorganize the Lublin Polish government, arguing that the Yalta agreement itself had been a compromise and that no further compromises should be necessary. The Soviet Union seemed to be acting more to safeguard its own interests than from a desire to make the United Nations work. While this was to be expected in view of recent Russian history, it could have a most unfortunate effect upon public opinion in the United States. Senate ratification of the United Nations Charter might well depend on what the Russians did in Poland. Soviet diplomats would have to play "a slightly more subtle game than in the past few months if the immense store of good will which they have won . . . is not to be frittered away." Incidents such as the arrest of the sixteen underground leaders, the *New Republic* thought, demonstrated either ignorance of, or contempt for, the role of public opinion in the West. "TRB" commented that "at times it

[46] Vandenberg Diary, April 25, 27, May 4, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 177–78, 181, 185–86.

has seemed that the Soviet leaders were trying to throw away Washington's good will." [47]

But not all observers blamed the Russians for the disagreements at San Francisco. Many felt the United States to be just as reluctant to entrust its security to the new world organization. In order to maintain inter-American unity, Stettinius felt he had to invite Argentina to the conference. Molotov objected to admitting a state which had been sympathetic to the Nazis while Poland was still excluded from the world organization, but the Secretary of State insisted on marshaling the votes of the Latin American countries to push through the United States position. This led *Time* to comment that Washington was playing "a straight power game" in Latin America "as amoral as Russia's game in Eastern Europe," a judgment which seemed confirmed later in May when Senator Vandenberg successfully demanded that the Monroe Doctrine be exempted from the jurisdiction of the Security Council. "I think that it's not asking too much to have our little region over here," Secretary of War Stimson commented, "if she [Russia] is going to take these steps . . . of building up friendly protectorates around her." [48]

More alarming than these actions, however, were indications that the United States was using the San Francisco Conference as a platform from which to denounce the Russians. I.F. Stone brooded in the *Nation* that "too many members of the American delegation conceive this as a conference for the organization of an anti-Soviet bloc under our leadership." Writing in the *New Republic,* Thomas F. Reynolds asserted that the American delegation had missed no opportunity "to throw rocks in private at the Soviet hobgoblin." The editors of the *New Republic* feared that a "bitter anti-Soviet bloc in the State Department" was influencing Stettinius, and called for Truman to remove these officials from their posts. The most disturbing development to come out of San Francisco, Vera Micheles Dean observed, "was the tendency to believe that a conflict between the United States and Russia is becoming inevitable." In a private conversation with State Department officials, Raymond

[47] *New Republic,* CXII (April 9, 1945), 463; (April 30, 1945), 573, 612–14; (May 7, 1945), 630–31; (May 21, 1945), 708; (June 4, 1945), 771–72.

[48] *Time,* XLV (May 14, 1945), 38; Vandenberg to Stettinius, May 5, 1945, Vandenberg MSS; transcript of telephone conversation between Stimson and John J. McCloy, May 8, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 420.

Gram Swing, a prominent liberal newscaster, charged that the United States representatives at San Francisco were "engaged in building up a logical record which would give us a clear and unarguable *casus belli* in a war which never ought to occur and which clearly could be avoided." [49]

There did seem to be some basis for these charges. Ambassador Harriman had flown to San Francisco immediately after Truman's interview with Molotov for the specific purpose "of making everyone understand that the Soviets . . . were not going to live up to their post-war agreements." Harriman met with members of the American delegation on the day the conference opened. Calling attention to Russian attempts "to chisel, by bluff, pressure, and other unscrupulous methods to get what they wish," he charged that Moscow wanted "as much domination over Eastern Europe as possible." While the United States could not go to war with the Soviet Union, it should do everything it could to impede Russian moves in Eastern Europe. During his stay in San Francisco, Harriman held several off-the-record press conferences in which he warned darkly of Soviet intentions. His blunt statements caused several reporters, among them Swing, to walk out, accusing the ambassador to the Soviet Union of being a "warmonger." [50]

Senator Vandenberg, the most influential member of the American delegation, had come to San Francisco determined to halt what he considered to be appeasement of the Russians. The Yalta agreements on Poland had been hard for the Michigan senator to swallow, but he knew the American people would not go to war with Russia to change them. The only other alternative was to use the San Francisco Conference to

[49] I. F. Stone, "Anti-Russian Undertow," *Nation,* CLX (May 12, 1945), 534–35; Thomas F. Reynolds, "The U.S.A. at San Francisco," *New Republic,* CXII (June 11, 1945), 810; *New Republic,* CXII (June 4, 1945), 771–72; *Time,* XLV (June 11, 1945), 24; Archibald MacLeish memorandum of conversation with Swing, May 21, 1945, Department of State records, 711.61/5-2245.

[50] Interview with Harriman, July 16, 1966, John Foster Dulles Oral History Collection; record of the 16th meeting of the American delegation to the San Francisco Conference, April 25, 1945, *FR: 1945,* I, 389–90; Charles J. V. Murphy, "W. Averell Harriman," *Life,* XXI (December 30, 1946), 64; Harriman, *America and Russia,* p. 42; MacLeish memorandum of conversation with Swing, May 21, 1945, Department of State records, 711.61/5-2245. See also MacLeish to Joseph C. Grew, May 26, 1945, *ibid.,* 711.61/5-2645 CS/A; Cox Diary, April 26, 1945, Cox MSS; and Curtis D. MacDougall, *Gideon's Army,* I, 23.

turn world opinion against the Soviet Union: "I have great hope that we can here mobilize the conscience of mankind against the aggressor of tomorrow. It may not prevent World War No. 3 someday. But if it fails it will at least unite civilization against the new aggressor. That achievement seems to me to be of priceless value." Vandenberg liberally laced the diary he kept during the conference with belligerent expressions of hostility toward the Russians ("we should stand our ground against these Russian demands and *quit appeasing Stalin and Molotov*"), and left San Francisco convinced that the only way to deal with the Russians was to make no concessions. The lesson of San Francisco was that "we can get along with Russia *if and when* we can convince Russia that *we mean what we say.*" Vandenberg told a group of Republican senators after returning to Washington that the main requirement for dealing with Russia was "having a mind of our own and sticking to it." He wrote his wife shortly after the Senate ratified the United Nations Charter that, in the final analysis, the success of the world organization would depend "on Russia and whether we have *guts* enough to make her behave." [51]

John Foster Dulles, who acted as an adviser to the American delegation, shared many of Vandenberg's suspicions. Dulles doubted the ability of the world organization to keep the peace, and believed that the Russians had ulterior motives for joining it. They might, he felt, be planning to use the international body as an instrument for exercising power outside their sphere of influence. Worried that the United Nations could someday become a Russian tool, Dulles told Vandenberg that the United States should not join it without first securing the right of withdrawal.[52]

Officials in Washington, preoccupied with worry over Eastern Europe, lend-lease, reparations, and the use of the atomic bomb, found the proceedings in San Francisco increasingly irrelevant. To Secretary of

[51] Vandenberg to Frank Januszewski, May 15, 1945, Vandenberg MSS; Vandenberg Diary, April 27, June 7, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 182, 208; Harold H. Burton Diary, July 10, 1945, Burton MSS, Box 138; Vandenberg to Mrs. Vandenberg, undated, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 218–19.

[52] Forrestal Diary, April 9, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 41–42; record of the 33d meeting of the American delegation to the San Francisco Conference, May 8, 1945, *FR: 1945,* I, 644; Vandenberg Diary, May 19, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 194–95. On Dulles' reservations about the United Nations see also the interviews with Robert D. Murphy, May 19, 1965, and Andrew Cordier, February 1, 1967, Dulles Oral History Collection; and Dulles to Vandenberg, July 10, 1945, Vandenberg MSS.

War Stimson, the situation seemed "unreal," with the delegates "babbling on as if there were no . . . great issues pending." Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew felt that the United Nations "will be incapable of preserving peace and security" because the right of veto in the Security Council would prevent collective action against "the one certain future enemy, Soviet Russia." Russian actions in Eastern Europe had already demonstrated the kind of "world pattern" Moscow sought to create. The Russians would soon attempt to expand their influence through the rest of Europe, the Near East, and the Far East. "A future war with Soviet Russia," Grew concluded bleakly, "is as certain as anything in this world." [53]

Joseph E. Davies wrote to James F. Byrnes on May 10 that "the Russian situation . . . is deteriorating so rapidly that it is frightening." Justice Felix Frankfurter expressed concern about growing anti-Russian sentiment within the government in two conversations with Davies later that month. Deputy Foreign Economic Administrator Oscar Cox was so worried over the disturbing diplomatic situation that he set to work on an elaborate analysis of Soviet-American relations designed to show that no reason for conflict between the two nations existed. Assistant Secretary of State Archibald MacLeish warned on May 22 that "explicit reference to the possibility of a war with Russia is becoming more common in the American press from day to day." On the same day, former Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles charged publicly that "in five short weeks since the death of President Roosevelt the policy which he so painstakingly carried out has been changed. Our Government now appears to the Russians as the spearhead of an apparent bloc of the western nations opposed to the Soviet Union." [54]

Fears that the Truman Administration had reversed Roosevelt's policy toward the Soviet Union turned out to be premature, as Harry Hopkins' trip to Moscow soon showed. But the public Russian-American confron-

[53] Stimson Diary, May 15, 1945, Stimson MSS; Grew memorandum of May 19, 1945, quoted in Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904–1945,* II, 1445–46.

[54] Davies to Byrnes, May 10, 1945, Davies Diary, May 13 and 18, 1945, Davies MSS, Boxes 16 and 17; Cox Diary, May 12–29, 1945, Cox MSS; MacLeish memorandum of conversation with Swing, May 22, 1945, Department of State records, 711.61/5-2245; Welles radio broadcast, May 22, 1945, reprinted in the *Congressional Record,* 1945 appendix, pp. A2507–A2508.

tation at San Francisco had two effects which were significant for the future: It exposed prominent Republicans like Dulles and Vandenberg to the frustrations of dealing with the Russians. Both men came away from the experience convinced that the only way to negotiate with Moscow was to take a firm position and avoid compromise. It also made clear to the American people the depth and extent of the divisions which separated the Soviet Union and the United States. Opinion polls showed that by the middle of May, 1945, the number of Americans who doubted Russia's willingness to cooperate with the United States after the war had risen to 38 percent of those questioned, the highest figure since March of 1942. Even more significantly, Americans for the first time attributed the difficulties in inter-Allied relations more to the Soviet Union than to Great Britain. As late as February, 1945, a majority of those dissatisfied with the extent of Big Three cooperation had held Britain responsible. But San Francisco shifted the blame to Russia, where it would stay for the rest of the Cold War.[55]

V

The striking deterioration in relations with Russia which took place in the month following Roosevelt's death left the new President deeply worried. Truman still used belligerent rhetoric in discussing the USSR. Early in May he told Elmer Benson, acting chairman of the National Citizens' Political Action Committee, that the Russians were "like bulls in a china shop. . . . We've got to teach them how to behave." But when Benson protested that there would be no peace unless Americans learned to get along with the Soviet Union, Truman admitted: "That is right." On May 13, Joseph E. Davies found the President "much disturbed" over the Russian problem. Molotov had apparently gone to San Francisco "to make trouble," Truman charged, and the newspapers—"these damn sheets"—were making it worse. But when Davies attributed much of the tension at San Francisco to the anti-Soviet bias of

[55] American Institute of Public Opinion poll of May 15, 1945, cited in Cantril and Strunk, eds., *Public Opinion,* pp. 370–71; Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 28, June 9, 1945; Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy,* p. 96. For the February, 1945, survey, see Grew to Roosevelt, February 24, 1945, Roosevelt MSS, PSF 29: "State Department."

American officials, Truman agreed that such hostility existed and promised to change the situation. Davies left a memorandum with the President which argued that "it is . . . wrong to assume that 'tough' language is the only language they [the Russians] can understand." [56]

Truman at this time thought highly enough of Davies to entrust him later that month with a delicate mission to London to explain American policy to Winston Churchill, whose anti-Russian fulminations had become increasingly strident in recent weeks. Davies told the British Prime Minister that the President was "gravely concerned" over growing differences with the Soviet Union, many of which had sprung, Truman believed, from conflicting interpretations of the Yalta agreements:

> The President's position was that every agreement made by President Roosevelt would be scrupulously supported by him. If there were differences of opinion as to what these agreements were, he wanted them cleared up. If new decisions were required for continued unity, he wanted clear understandings as to the terms. The U.S. would then fulfill these obligations, and he would confidently expect the same from associated governments.

Like Roosevelt, Truman believed that only continued Big Three unity could guarantee lasting peace. The President later acknowledged that Davies had represented his position with "accuracy" and "exceptional skill." [57]

By now Truman had accepted a proposal from Churchill for another Big Three meeting, but insisted that he could not leave the United States until July because of pressing domestic problems.[58] Ambassador

[56] MacDougall, *Gideon's Army,* I, 23; Davies memorandum of conversation with Truman, May 13, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 16; Davies to Truman, May 12, 1945, *ibid.*

[57] Davies report to Truman on conversations with Churchill, June 12, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* I, 64–65; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 261. Some confusion did arise over the plans for the Big Three meeting. Davies gave Churchill the impression that Truman wanted to meet Stalin first at a separate location, in order to avoid the impression of "ganging up" on the Russians. Churchill took violent exception to this. Truman later argued that he had only intended to suggest individual personal contacts at the proposed Big Three meeting, not a separate bilateral conference. On this matter, see *ibid.,* pp. 260–62; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy,* pp. 492–96; and Feis, *Between War and Peace,* pp. 124–27. Davies also took it upon himself to give the Prime Minister a lengthy exposition of his own personal views, including the suggestion that Churchill might now regret his decision to support Stalin instead of Hitler during the war. (*FR: Potsdam,* I, 73.)

[58] For messages regarding the timing of the Big Three conference, see *FR: Potsdam,* I, 3–20. According to Davies, Truman told him on May 21 that he had delayed the

Harriman objected to the delay, arguing that Soviet-American relations constituted "the number one problem affecting the future of the world" and that the two countries "were getting farther and farther apart." The President held to his timetable, however, prompting Harriman to suggest sending Harry Hopkins to Moscow at once to try to settle outstanding difficulties. Truman had previously considered this possibility, and after checking with Hopkins informed Stalin on May 19 that Roosevelt's former confidant would accompany Harriman back to the Soviet Union.[59]

By sending Hopkins to Moscow, Truman clearly demonstrated his desire to continue Roosevelt's Russian policy. "I want peace and I am willing to work hard for it," the President wrote in the diary which he sporadically kept during his early days in the White House; "to have a reasonably lasting peace, the three great powers must be able to trust each other." On the next day, Truman told Stettinius that he was confident that "Harry would be able to straighten things out with Stalin. He stated that. . . . the Hopkins Mission was going to unravel a great many things and that by the time he met with the Big Three . . . most of our troubles would be out of the way." Truman instructed Hopkins to "make it clear to Uncle Joe Stalin that I knew what I wanted—and that I intended to get—peace for the world for at least 90 years." The United States, Hopkins was to say, had no territorial ambitions or ulterior motives in Eastern Europe or anywhere else in the world, but when it made commitments it planned to keep them, and expected other nations to do the same. Truman left Hopkins free, he later wrote, "to use diplomatic language or a baseball bat if he thought that was the proper

Big Three meeting until after the first test of the atomic bomb, scheduled for mid-July. The President made a similar statement to Stimson on June 6. (Davies Diary, May 21, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 17; Stimson memorandum of conversation with Truman, June 6, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 421.) But Truman explained to other advisers who knew about the bomb that he was postponing the meeting until he could finish work on the budget. (*FR: Potsdam,* I, 11, 13.) The question of whether the bomb influenced Truman's timing thus remains inconclusive. For two conflicting interpretations on this matter, see Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy,* chapter 3; and Kolko, *Politics of War,* pp. 421–22.

[59] Grew memorandum, Truman-Harriman conversation, May 15, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* I, 13–14; Truman to Stalin, May 19, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 21–22. For the origins of the Hopkins mission, see Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* pp. 885–87; and Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 257–58.

approach." But the President was well aware of Hopkins' sympathetic attitude toward the Russians, and by choosing him to undertake this mission ensured that the approach would be conciliatory.[60]

At their first meeting on May 26, Hopkins frankly told Stalin that within the past six weeks a serious deterioration in American opinion of Russia had occurred. Disaffection had developed not among the small minority who had always been hostile to the USSR but among "the very people who had supported to the hilt Roosevelt's policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union." This situation was very dangerous because it placed limitations on Truman's freedom of action: "Without the support of public opinion and particularly of the supporters of President Roosevelt it would be very difficult for President Truman to carry forward President Roosevelt's policy." Hopkins went on to explain the reasons for this feeling of alarm in the United States. He told Stalin that the "cardinal basis" of Roosevelt's foreign policy had been the assumption that both the United States and the Soviet Union had worldwide interests. At Yalta the two countries had come close to settling the outstanding issues between them. But because of the failure to carry out the Yalta agreement on Poland, public opinion in the United States had become upset. A series of events, unimportant in themselves, had left Americans bewildered at the Big Three's inability to agree.

At this point Stalin interrupted Hopkins to say that the Soviet Union wanted to have a friendly Poland, but that the British wanted to revive the old *cordon sanitaire.* Hopkins replied emphatically that the United States had no such intention; that Americans "would desire a Poland friendly to the Soviet Union and in fact desired to see friendly countries all along the Soviet borders." Stalin commented that if this was so, then it would be easy to reach an agreement on Poland.[61]

Hopkins explained that Poland was a symbol of American ability to work with the Soviet Union. The United States had no special interests in Poland and would recognize any government which the Polish people would accept and which was friendly to the Soviet Union. What upset

[60] Truman Diary, May 22, 1945, printed in Hillman, *Mr. President,* p. 116; Stettinius calendar notes, May 23, 1945, Stettinius Papers, Box 245; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 258.

[61] Bohlen notes, Hopkins-Stalin meeting of May 26, 1945, quoted in Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* pp. 889–90.

the people and the government of the United States was the unilateral action which the Russians and the Lublin Poles had taken in Poland. Something would have to be done to calm this concern. If the American people were to abandon isolationism, "our people must believe that they are joining their power with that of the Soviet Union and Great Britain in the promotion of international peace and the well being of humanity."

Stalin replied with a frank exposition of the Russian view on Poland. He told Hopkins that twice within the last twenty-five years the Germans had invaded Russia through Poland. The Poles had either been too weak to resist or had let the Germans through because they hated the Russians so much. Polish weakness and hostility had hurt Russia in the past; Russia had a vital interest in seeing to it that Poland was strong and friendly in the future. Stalin admitted taking unilateral actions in Poland, but said that this had been done for military reasons, not from any desire to exclude the Soviet Union's allies from participation in postwar Polish affairs. The Russian leader then proposed a practical solution of the problem. The present Warsaw government would form the basis of the future Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, but representatives from other Polish groups who were friendly to both the Allies and the Russians could have four or five out of the eighteen or twenty ministries in the government.[62]

Hopkins relayed this information to Washington, and by June 6 was able to tell Stalin that Truman had agreed. The President and his advisers did not regard this solution of the Polish problem as final. Ambassador Harriman warned Truman on the 8th:

> I am afraid Stalin does not and never will fully understand our interest in a free Poland as a matter of principle. He is a realist in all of his actions, and it is hard for him to appreciate our faith in abstract principles. It is difficult for him to understand why we should want to interfere with Soviet policy in a country like Poland, which he considers so important to Russia's security, unless we have some ulterior motive.

But Truman's willingness to accept Stalin's offer marked a realization on his part of something Roosevelt had found out earlier: given the realities

[62] Bohlen notes, Hopkins-Stalin meeting of May 27, 1945, quoted *ibid.*, pp. 899–901.

of the situation in Eastern Europe, the best the United States could hope for was that world opinion would force the Soviet-dominated Polish provisional government to hold free elections. In time, Truman even came to sound like Roosevelt when he discussed Poland. He told Dr. T. V. Soong later in June that he wanted the Polish question settled "in such a manner as to insure tranquility and stability." At Potsdam the following month, the President reminded Stalin: "There are six million Poles in the United States. A free election in Poland reported to the United States by a free press would make it easier to deal with these . . . people." But the Hopkins-Stalin agreement in no way altered the balance of power in Poland. The most that could be said for the new government in Warsaw, *Time* observed, "was that in forming it Russia had paid lip service to the Yalta pledges, and given the U.S. and Britain a chance to save face." [63]

If Stalin drove a hard bargain on Poland, however, he proved to be most accommodating on the other matters which Hopkins and Harriman took up with him. Russia would enter the war against Japan as promised, Stalin assured the Americans, and would scrupulously observe the independence of China. The Allied Control Council for Germany would begin work as quickly as possible, with Marshal Zhukov serving as the Soviet representative. The Russian leader indicated that he would be glad to meet Truman and Churchill in the vicinity of Berlin in mid-July. Near the end of Hopkins' stay in Moscow, Stalin cooperatively agreed to the American position on voting in the United Nations Security Council, thus breaking a deadlock which had threatened to wreck the work of the San Francisco Conference. "There has been a very pleasant yielding on the part of the Russians to some of the things in which we are interested," Truman told a press conference on June 13. "I think if we keep our heads and be patient, we will arrive at a conclusion; be-

[63] Harriman to Truman, June 8, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* I, 61; Grew memorandum of Truman-Soong conversation, June 14, 1945, *FR: 1945,* VII, 902; minutes, 5th plenary meeting, Potsdam, July 21, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* II, 206; *Time,* XLVI (July 16, 1945), 14. See also Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 263–64; McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia,* p. 591; and Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly,* p. 65. Admiral Leahy later noted: "The chief concern of Truman, as had been the case with Roosevelt, was to see that the Poles got a democratic government representing the majority of the inhabitants. Adding to the interest of America was the large and vocal group of Polish Americans who were important politically." (*I Was There,* p. 467.)

cause the Russians are just as anxious to get along with us as we are with them. And I think they have showed it very conclusively in these last negotiations." [64]

VI

The Hopkins-Stalin compromise settled the controversy over Poland for the time being, leaving Germany as the major issue facing the Big Three when they met at Potsdam in July.[65] United States plans for the occupation of Germany had been in a state of flux at the time of Roosevelt's death, with the State Department pushing a reparations program which looked toward revival of the German economy, while the Army prepared to implement JCS 1067, which still incorporated Morgenthau's punitive scheme of institutionalized chaos. But developments between April and July forced American officials to resolve the ambiguity of their German policy once and for all in favor of rehabilitation rather than repression.

The inadequacies of JCS 1067 became painfully apparent once military government authorities began trying to put it into effect. Confronted with the prospect of starving Germans, General Lucius D. Clay, military governor for the United States zone, quickly saw the illogic of prohibiting a resumption of industrial activity. Lewis Douglas, Clay's financial adviser, complained in amazement: "This thing was assembled by economic idiots! It makes no sense to forbid the most skilled workers in Europe from producing as much as they can for a continent which is desperately short of everything!" Unable to get Washington to undertake still another revision of JCS 1067, Douglas resigned in protest. Clay remained, taking advantage of loopholes in the directive to mitigate its more punitive provisions.[66]

Furthermore, Washington officials were becoming convinced that economic chaos, whether in Germany or in Europe as a whole, could only benefit the Soviet Union. In a conversation with Secretary of War Stim-

[64] Truman press conference of June 13, 1945, *Truman Public Papers, 1945,* p. 123. See also Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* pp. 891, 901–3, 907–8, 910–12.

[65] McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia,* pp. 590–91.

[66] Clay, *Decision in Germany,* pp. 16–19; Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors,* p. 251.

son on May 13, former President Herbert Hoover advocated a return to his World War I tactic of fighting communism by shipping food to starving Europeans. Three days later Stimson warned Truman of the importance of keeping Western Europe "from being driven to revolution or Communism by famine." But the Secretary of War pointed out that the rehabilitation of liberated Europe could not be separated from the problem of Germany, a subject on which there had already been too much "emotional thinking." Proposals such as Morgenthau's for keeping the Germans hungry would be a "grave mistake":

> Punish her war criminals in full measure. Deprive her permanently of her weapons, her General Staff, and perhaps her entire army. Guard her governmental action until the Nazi educated generation has passed from the stage —admittedly a long job. But do not deprive her of the means of building up ultimately a contented Germany interested in following non-militaristic methods of civilization. . . . It is to the interest of the whole world that they [the Germans] should not be driven by stress of hardship into a non-democratic and necessarily predatory habit of life.

Navy Secretary Forrestal had come to similar conclusions. Germany had to be denied the capacity to make war, he wrote on May 14, but "to ignore the existence of 75 or 80 millions of vigorous and industrious people or to assume that they will not join with Russia if no other outlet is afforded them I think is closing our eyes to reality." [67]

Truman needed no convincing. Although he had signed the revised version of JCS 1067, knowing that occupation authorities needed some kind of directive, the new President made it clear that he would not oppose modification of the document's harsher provisions. Truman relied more heavily on State Department advice than Roosevelt had, while at the same time the War Department, under the influence of Stimson and Clay, was beginning to back away from Morgenthau's ideas. Although the new Chief Executive treated the Treasury Secretary courteously, dif-

[67] Stimson memorandum of conversation with Hoover, May 13, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 421; Stimson to Truman, May 16, 1945, *ibid.;* Forrestal to Senator Homer Ferguson, May 14, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* p. 57. See also Hoover to Stimson, May 15, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 421. The rigid ban which JCS 1067 imposed on political parties in the American zone also caused concern in the State Department and among occupation authorities for fear it would strengthen underground activity by German communists. See *FR: 1945,* III, 944, 949, 951; *FR: Potsdam,* I, 438, 472–73, 489, II, 774–75.

ferences between them soon became obvious. Truman asked Morgenthau to delay publication of his plan for Germany until after the Potsdam Conference: "I have got to see Stalin and Churchill, and when I do I want . . . all the cards in my hand, and the plan on Germany is one of them. I don't want to play my hand before I see them." In a conversation with State Department officials on May 10, the President said that he "entirely disagreed" with Morgenthau's recommendation that synthetic oil plants in Germany be destroyed. Later that month, Truman rebuked the Treasury Secretary for questioning the need to go through elaborate legal procedures in dealing with Nazi war criminals: "Even the Russians want to give them a trial." Early in July, just before leaving for Potsdam, the President finally asked for Morgenthau's resignation. In retrospect, Truman acknowledged that he had always opposed the Morgenthau Plan. It would have been "an act of revenge," he argued, "and too many peace treaties had been based on that spirit." [68]

But the Administration's decision in favor of rehabilitation made it all the more important to work out an agreement with the Soviet Union on reparations. If the Russians were given free rein to take what they wanted, they would strip the industrialized areas of western Germany, producing the economic chaos which Washington wanted to avoid. But if the Russians did not obtain a satisfactory reparations settlement, they might deny badly needed food shipments from their zone to the West, making it necessary for the British and Americans to launch a costly import program to ward off starvation. Hence, Washington officials sought an arrangement whereby they could control the flow of reparations to the Soviet Union without provoking reprisals. As Stimson told Truman: "We must find some way of persuading Russia to play ball." [69]

On July 3, 1945, three days before his departure for Potsdam, Truman

[68] Blum, *Morgenthau Diaries: Years of War,* pp. 451–52, 459–68; Grew memorandum of conversation with Truman, May 10, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 509; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 235–36. Truman says that he asked for Morgenthau's resignation after the Treasury Secretary demanded to be taken to Potsdam. Morgenthau's diary account, however, indicates that he only expressed regret that no Treasury representatives would be present at the Big Three conference and that he himself proposed his resignation. (Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 327; Blum, *Morgenthau Diaries: Years of War,* pp. 465–66.)

[69] Potsdam briefing book paper, "Policy Toward Germany," *FR: Potsdam,* I, 440–41; Stimson to Truman, May 16, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 421.

named James F. Byrnes to replace Stettinius as secretary of state. Byrnes had attended the Yalta Conference at Roosevelt's request, but otherwise had little diplomatic experience. He did have an impressive domestic record, however, having served in both houses of Congress, on the Supreme Court, and as director of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion. The new Secretary of State looked forward to applying the negotiating techniques he had found useful in these jobs to the problems of foreign affairs. Truman and Byrnes had one overriding objective at Potsdam: they wanted to clear up remaining wartime problems so that United States military and economic responsibilities in Europe could be terminated as quickly as possible. Both men were able practitioners of the art of politics, acutely sensitive to the American public's desire for a return to normalcy at home and abroad. Both tended to look upon the Russians as fellow politicians, with whom a deal could be arranged.[70]

Soviet actions prior to Potsdam made it clear that Moscow would drive a hard bargain. The Russians had already systematically stripped the areas they occupied of heavy industry, railroad rolling stock, agricultural implements, and even furnishings from houses, but argued that these goods came under the category of "war booty" rather than reparations. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union had unilaterally turned over a large section of its occupation zone to the Poles, causing an exodus into the remainder of Germany of several million displaced Germans while reducing the area from which food for the Anglo-American zones could be made available. The Allies had agreed at Yalta that Poland should receive "substantial accessions of territory" from Germany to compensate for land taken by the Soviet Union, but London and Washington considered the boundary which the Russians assigned to the Poles—the line of the Oder and Western Neisse rivers—as running much too far to the west.[71]

Meanwhile the Reparations Commission, meeting in Moscow, had made no progress toward resolving that complex issue. The Russians

[70] McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia,* pp. 611–12, 622; Daniels, *Man of Independence,* pp. 285–86; Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History,* pp. 207–9.

[71] Potsdam briefing book paper, "Suggested United States Policy Regarding Poland," June 29, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* I, 743–47. For Russian war booty removals, see Kennan to Stettinius, April 27 and May 3, 1945, *FR: 1945,* III, 1200, 1203–5.

continued to accord first priority to the removal of a fixed amount of goods and services from Germany—$20 billion, the figure accepted "as a basis for discussion" at Yalta, of which half would go the Soviet Union—regardless of what this would do to the German standard of living. The Americans, fearing economic collapse, continued to insist on the "first charge" principle, which would allow the extraction of reparations only after imports essential to maintain the German economy had been paid for. "It was clear to us," General Clay later wrote, "that for many months to come German production would not suffice to keep the German people alive, and that the use of any part of it for reparations would mean that once again the United States would be not only supporting Germany but also paying the bill for reparations." [72]

Determined not to repeat the post-World War I experience, Truman and Byrnes took a firm stand on reparations throughout the conference. "There was one pitfall I intended to avoid," Truman later recalled; "we did not intend to pay, under any circumstances, the reparations bill for Europe." The Secretary of State repeatedly stressed that "there will be no reparations until imports in the American zone are paid for. There can be no discussion of this matter." Convinced that the Russian position on war booty and the Polish-German border precluded any over-all arrangement on reparations which the Americans could accept, Byrnes proposed that each occupying power simply take what it wanted from its own zone. Since the Anglo-American zones contained the bulk of German heavy industry, Byrnes offered to give the Russians a certain percentage of what could be spared from these areas, and to exchange a further amount in return for food shipments from the Soviet zone.[73]

The Russians, still hoping for commitment to a fixed sum, did not like this proposal. A percentage of an undetermined amount, Molotov pointed out, meant very little. To compensate for war booty removals and the transfer of part of eastern Germany to Poland, the Soviet foreign minister offered to reduce the total reparations bill which the Russians sought, but Byrnes and Truman refused. They did offer to accept the Oder–Western Neisse line, pending final determination by the peace conference, if Moscow would agree to the American position on

[72] Clay, *Decision in Germany,* p. 38. Discussions in the Reparations Commission are covered in *FR: Potsdam,* I, 510–54.

[73] Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 323; minutes, 6th foreign ministers' meeting, July 23, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* II, 279–80. See also *ibid.,* pp. 274–75, 295–98, 450–52, 471–76.

reparations. Faced with the alternative of getting no reparations from the Western zones at all, the Russians reluctantly went along with this bargain. The final protocol provided that reparations claims of each victor would be met by removals from the territory each occupied, but that in addition the Russians would receive from the Anglo-American zones 10 percent "of such industrial capital equipment as is unnecessary for the German peace economy." The Soviet Union would get another 15 percent of such material from the West in exchange for an equivalent value of food, coal, or other commodities from the Russian zone.[74]

Once the United States had decided to rehabilitate Germany, it could not agree to Moscow's demand for a guaranteed amount of reparations without placing unacceptable burdens on the American taxpayer. The compromise Byrnes arranged at Potsdam allowed the Soviet Union shipments of industrial equipment from the Western zones, but placed British and American officials in a position to control the flow of these goods through the "first charge" principle. At the same time, it obligated the Russians to help feed the American and British zones by sending food from the East. This arrangement promoted American economic interests but still left room for continued cooperation with the Soviet Union. By increasing the authority of the zonal commanders at the expense of the Allied Control Council, however, the Potsdam agreement undermined the principle of a unified Germany for which proponents of rehabilitation had long fought. Molotov realized this at once. Would not Byrnes's proposal, he asked, "mean that each country would have a free hand in their own zones and would act entirely independent of the others?" [75] But the President and his secretary of state, preoccupied with their immediate goal of minimizing American responsibilities in Europe, failed to see or chose to ignore the long-range implications of their own policy.

On other issues, Potsdam produced mixed results. The Russians agreed readiiy enough to the establishment of a Council of Foreign Ministers which would begin work on peace treaties with former Axis satellites. Efforts by the Americans to secure a stronger Soviet commitment to the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe failed, however, as the Russians insisted on equating the situation in Eastern Europe with that in Italy

[74] *FR: Potsdam,* II, 296–97, 473, 480, 512–14, 1485–86.

[75] Bohlen minutes, Byrnes-Molotov conversation, July 27, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* II, 450.

and Greece. Stalin did renew his promise to enter the war against Japan, and cooperatively provided the Americans with news of peace feelers from Tokyo. A series of other matters, including the disposition of Italian colonies, revision of the Montreux Convention on the Black Sea straits, troop withdrawals from Iran, and an American proposal for the internationalization of inland waterways, were referred to the new Council of Foreign Ministers for future consideration.[76]

American officials left Potsdam with ambivalent feelings regarding the possibilities of future cooperation with the Soviet Union. Admiral Leahy noted that the British and Americans had been forced to accept many unilateral actions taken by the Russians since Yalta, but rejoiced that Truman had "stood up to Stalin in a manner calculated to warm the heart of every patriotic American" by refusing to be "bulldozed into any reparations agreement that would repeat the history of World War I." Byrnes believed that the concessions that had been made reflected the realities of the situation in Europe, and that his "horsetrade" on reparations and the Polish boundary question had left the way open for further negotiations at the foreign ministers' level. General Clay anticipated no serious difficulties in working with the Russians in Germany: "They know what they *want* and it is always easy to do business with those who do know their own desires." [77]

But the police-state atmosphere of the Soviet zone, together with painfully obvious evidence of looting, repelled the Americans. Secretary of War Stimson described the Russian attitude on war booty as "rather oriental," while Reparations Commissioner Pauley termed it "organized vandalism." Harriman pictured Russia as "a vacuum into which all movable goods would be sucked," and commented that "Hitler's greatest crime was that his actions had resulted in opening the gates of Eastern Europe to Asia." Joseph E. Davies, always a sensitive barometer of anti-Russian sentiment, noted that "the hostility to Russia is bitter and surprisingly open—considering that we are here to compose and secure peace":

> There is constant repetition of the whispered suggestions of how ruthless the Russian Army had been in looting and shipping back vast quantities of ev-

[76] Potsdam protocol, August 1, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* II, 1478–98.

[77] Leahy, *I Was There,* pp. 497–98; George Curry, *James F. Byrnes,* p. 125; Clay to Baruch, August 8, 1945, Baruch MSS, "Selected Correspondence."

erything from cattle to plumbing fixtures. . . . The atmosphere is poisoned with it. The French are carrying everything, including the kitchen stove, out of their territory. Our own soldiers and even some members of this delegation are "liberating" things from this area. But the criticisms are leveled only against the Soviets.

Davies worried that the President was "surrounded by forces actively hostile to the Russians, even to the point of destroying Big Three unity." [78]

But Truman took a more balanced view than many of his advisers. "Joe," he explained to Davies, "I am trying my best to save peace and to follow out Roosevelt's plans. . . . Jim Byrnes knows that, too, and is doing all he possibly can." The President found the tenacious bargaining tactics of the Russians frustrating—"on a number of occasions I felt like blowing the roof off the palace"—but thought he understood and could deal with the Soviet dictator: "Stalin is as near like Tom Pendergast as any man I know," the former senator from Missouri later commented. The Russians were negotiating from weakness rather than strength, Truman believed, because "a dictatorship is the hardest thing in God's world to hold together." While Stalin might want to dominate the world, he would likely find himself more concerned in future years with the problem of remaining in power. Moreover, Russian aggressiveness was based in part upon expectations of a postwar depression in the United States, a development which Truman hoped to avoid. According to one close observer, Truman after Potsdam approached the problem of dealing with Russia in the manner of a typical Middle American "who believed without contradiction in loving his neighbor and steadily watching him at the same time." Stalin was "an S.O.B.," the President told his startled companions on the voyage home, but then he added affably: "I guess he thinks I'm one too." [79]

[78] Stimson to Truman, July 22, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* II, 808–9; Pauley to Byrnes, July 27, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 889; Forrestal Diary, July 29, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 79–80; Davies Diary, July 15, 16, 19, 21, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 18.

[79] Davies Diary, July 16, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 18; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 369, 411–12; Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors,* pp. 278–79; Forrestal Diary, July 28, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* p. 78; Daniels, *Man of Independence,* pp. 276, 278–79, 285–86; Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey II, *No High Ground,* pp. 1–2. Daniels believes that Truman reached his conclusions about the weaknesses of dictatorships from having watched the operations of the Pendergast machine in Kansas City. (*Man of Independence,* p. 285.)