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The Impotence of Omnipotence: American Diplomacy, the Atomic Bomb, and the Postwar World

Knowledge that the United States had successfully tested the first atomic bomb on July 16, 1945, probably made the difficulties of dealing with the Russians at Potsdam seem less than overwhelming to the President. News of the secret explosion in the New Mexico desert had greatly cheered Truman and his advisers, contributing to their firm stand on German reparations and to their declining interest in securing Russian military assistance against Japan. American officials had anxiously debated whether to tell Stalin about the bomb before its use. Their conclusion, reported to the President by Secretary of War Stimson, had been to inform the Russians but to give them as little additional information as possible. Truman carried out this recommendation on July 24, casually telling the Soviet leader that the United States had developed a powerful new weapon. The President did not go into details, and Stalin simply expressed the hope that the device would be used on the Japanese.[1]

[1] Stimson Diary, July 3, 1945, Stimson MSS; minutes, meeting of the Combined Policy Committee, July 4, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 13; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 416; Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly,* p. 263; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy,* pp. 572–73. For the effect news of the successful test had on American and British negotiators at Pots-

The possibility of employing the bomb to shorten the war had long been taken for granted by American and British political leaders. Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed as early as September, 1944, that if the weapon was ready in time it might, "after mature considerations," be put to use against the Japanese. Actually, F.D.R.'s position was less equivocal than the tone of this document indicates. Stimson later wrote that "at no time, from 1941 to 1945, did I ever hear it suggested by the President, or by any other responsible member of the government, that atomic energy should not be used in the war." Admiral Leahy thought that "FDR would have used it in a minute to prove that he had not wasted two billion dollars." Churchill concurred: "There was unanimous, automatic, unquestioned agreement around our table; nor did I ever hear the slightest suggestion that we should do otherwise." President Truman's attitude was equally clear: "I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used." Throughout the war Anglo-American military strategy had been to seek victory as quickly as possible through technology, not manpower. The decision to drop the bomb marked the logical culmination of that effort.[2]

But the bomb had more than purely military implications. American possession of this revolutionary new weapon drastically altered the postwar balance of power, making it at least technically feasible for the United States to impose its will upon the rest of the world. "God Almighty in His infinite wisdom [has] dropped the atomic bomb in our lap," Senator Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado proclaimed in November, 1945; now for the first time the United States, "with vision and guts and plenty of atomic bombs, . . . [could] compel mankind to adopt the policy of lasting peace . . . or be burned to a crisp." No responsible official in the Truman Administration wanted to go that far, but the President and his advisers did expect that the American nuclear monopoly would

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dam, see the Stimson Diary, July 16–19, 21–22, 24, 30, 1945, Stimson MSS; and the Davies Diary, July 28, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 19.

[2] Roosevelt-Churchill *aide-mémoire,* September 19, 1944, printed in Gowing, *Britain and Atomic Energy,* p. 447; Henry L. Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," *Harper's,* CXCIV (February, 1947), 98; Leahy interview with Jonathan Daniels, quoted in Daniels, *Man of Independence,* p. 281; Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy,* p. 546; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 419. See also Walter Smith Schoenberger, *Decision of Destiny,* pp. 44–47. For Anglo-American military strategy, see chapter 3.

improve the West's bargaining position with the Soviet Union. In particular, they anticipated that in return for agreeing to turn control of the bomb over to an international agency, they might secure political concessions from the Russians in Eastern Europe and elsewhere.[3]

These hopes were frustrated, however, for "atomic diplomacy" proved to be a surprisingly ineffective means of securing American objectives. The new weapon must have impressed Kremlin leaders—they apparently ordered a quick acceleration of their own bomb development program—but they carefully avoided any outward signs of concern.[4] The Soviet position on Eastern Europe became increasingly rigid after August, 1945, while Russian diplomats showed only the most casual interest in American plans to place control of atomic weapons in the hands of the United Nations. Washington officials had no intention of actually using the bomb to compel Moscow's cooperation, and they had devised no clear strategy for employing the weapon's potential power as a bargaining instrument on specific issues. Moreover, with the end of the war Congress began to reassert its authority over the conduct of foreign affairs, severely restricting the Administration's freedom of action not only in the field of international control but also in more conventional areas of military and economic policy. As a result, American leaders found it just as difficult, if not more so, to shape external developments to their liking after the bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki than they had before these awesome events had taken place.

[3] *Congressional Record,* November 28, 1945, pp. 11085–86; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 87; Stimson memorandum of conversation with Truman, June 6, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 421; Davies Diary, July 28–29, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 19. See also Daniels, *Man of Independence,* p. 266; and Herbert Feis, *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II,* pp. 194–95. Gar Alperovitz has argued that American officials did not regard use of the bomb as necessary to bring about Japan's surrender, but dropped it because "a combat demonstration was needed to convince the Russians to accept the American plan for a stable peace." (*Atomic Diplomacy,* p. 240.) Alperovitz fails to show conclusively that policy-makers at the time believed a Japanese surrender to be imminent, however, nor does he consider the domestic criticisms Truman and his advisers would have faced had they allowed the war to continue after the bomb had become available. Moreover, Alperovitz's account rests on the questionable assumption that Truman had, upon coming into office, decided to reverse Roosevelt's policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union. (On this point, see chapter 7.) For an effective critique of Alperovitz by a fellow revisionist, see Kolko, *Politics of War,* pp. 421–22, 538–43.

[4] On this point, see Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence,* pp. 415–17.

II

The use of atomic energy for military purposes created special problems for a nation which prided itself on reaching decisions democratically. Public knowledge of the issues had always been regarded, accurately or inaccurately, as a prerequisite for successful operation of the American political system. But nuclear energy was a totally new field which only a tiny minority of Americans could understand. The process of educating the public would take time and, because of the forbiddingly technical nature of the subject, could never be thorough. Government officials could not wait for the people to become informed before deciding what to do with the new weapon, yet constitutionally they could not exclude them, or their representatives in Congress, from the policy-making process. Many national leaders themselves did not fully understand the problems they were now called upon to resolve. Hence, the formulation of United States policy on the control of atomic energy took place in an atmosphere of uncertainty, confusion, and ignorance.

The Truman Administration began considering the diplomatic implications of atomic energy shortly after Japan surrendered. Two alternatives confronted Washington officials: the United States could retain its monopoly over the bomb as long as possible, or it could turn over its weapons to an international authority on the condition that future nuclear powers do the same. Since most experts agreed that the American monopoly would be temporary, [5] the first approach threatened to precipitate a dangerous armaments race with the Soviet Union. International control, while it might prevent such a contest, involved risking American security by giving the nation's most powerful weapon to an unproven world body whose successful operation would depend in large measure upon the attitude of Moscow. Congressional fears to the contrary notwithstanding, the Truman Administration never seriously con-

[5] Scientists who had constructed the bomb pointed out that the weapon had evolved from the application of widely known scientific laws, and that given time any major industrial nation, including the Soviet Union, could emulate the American achievement. Alice Kimball Smith, *A Peril and a Hope: The Scientists' Movement in America, 1945–47,* provides a detailed discussion of the views of the atomic scientists. See also James B. Conant, *My Several Lives: Memoirs of a Social Inventor,* pp. 490–91.

templated giving the "secret" of the bomb directly to the Russians. But by the end of 1945, it had chosen to work for international control, and to seek the cooperation of the Soviet Union in that effort.

No man did more to set the stage for discussions within the government on this subject than Henry L. Stimson, who, as secretary of war, had supervised the Manhattan Project from the beginning. Despite his advanced age and varied duties, Stimson avoided a narrowly military approach to the bomb and, during 1945, brooded deeply over how the new weapon would affect American foreign policy. He told Truman that "development of this weapon has placed a certain moral responsibility upon us which we cannot shirk." [6]

In general, the Secretary of War accepted the scientists' view that atomic energy should be placed under international control. What concerned him was the possibility that the totalitarian nature of the Soviet regime might make it impossible for any outside agency to keep Russian nuclear development under surveillance. Internal pressures would eventually force a liberalization of Stalin's dictatorship, Stimson believed, and for a time he toyed with the idea of denying the Russians information about the bomb until these changes had taken place.[7] But by September, 1945, he had decided that the United States should make at least one direct and immediate effort to work out an international control agreement with Moscow.

The Secretary of War had concluded, upon reflection, that "any demand by us for an internal change in Russia as a condition of sharing in the atomic weapon would be so resented that it would make the objective we have in view less probable." If the United States did not approach the Russians with a plan for cooperation, "a secret armament race of a rather desperate character" might break out. Stimson granted that such an initiative might permit Soviet scientists to speed up their own bomb construction program, but "if we fail to approach them now

[6] Stimson to Truman, April 25, 1945, quoted in Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service,* p. 636.

[7] As early as August, 1944, Stimson had referred cryptically to the necessity of bringing Russia "into the fold of Christian civilization" and to "possible use of S1 [the atomic bomb] to accomplish this." (Stimson notes for a conversation with Roosevelt, dated August 23, 1944, Stimson MSS, Box 413.) See also Stimson to Truman, "Reflections on the Basic Problems Which Confront Us," July 19, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* II, 1155–57.

and merely continue to negotiate with them, having this weapon rather ostentatiously on our hip, their suspicions and their distrust of our purposes and motives will increase." The Secretary of War recommended that the United States, after consultation with its collaborators in the bomb project, Great Britain and Canada, make a direct proposal to the Soviet Union for a mutual halt in further bomb construction. Existing weapons would be impounded, and an international agreement would be obtained forbidding the use of atomic energy for military purposes.[8]

Stimson's recommendations received a mixed reception inside the military establishment. Robert P. Patterson, Stimson's successor as secretary of war, agreed that a direct approach to the Russians should be made. Patterson felt that the United States could not count on retaining its atomic monopoly for more than four years. All efforts should therefore be directed toward preventing a nuclear armaments race, "even though we now have and probably would continue for some time to have the military advantage of a start in such a contest." An expression of caution, however, came from Patterson's counterpart in the Navy Department, James V. Forrestal. Knowledge of the bomb construction process was the property of the American people, Forrestal warned, and

> until we are very sure that it is the sense of the people to make disposition of this knowledge even to our Allies it seems to me that it is a step that should be considered most carefully and taken only after complete study and reflection so that the charge may never be levelled that it was done on impulse.

Forrestal worried about whether the United States could trust the Russians, who were, he felt, "Oriental" in their thinking. Washington should not rely on the honesty of the Kremlin leaders "until we have a longer record of experience with them on the validity of engagements, not from an expedient but from a moral point of view." The Secretary of the Navy favored having the United Nations appoint the United States as "the trustee of all information regarding the atomic bomb." In return Washington would agree to use the weapon only according to directions from the world organization.[9]

[8] Stimson to Truman, September 11, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 40–44.

[9] Stimson Diary, September 17, 1945, Stimson MSS; Patterson to Truman, September 26, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 54–55; Forrestal memorandum, September 21, 1945, Forrestal MSS, Box 100; Forrestal to Truman, October 1, 1945, *ibid.,* Box 2. See also Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 94–96; and Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 526.

Like Forrestal, the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed reservations. They admitted that the basic principles by which the bomb had been built were widely known, but noted that certain technical and manufacturing processes were still secret. Release of this information could only accelerate the armaments race. Until the major powers had agreed to settle their differences, the United States should insist on retaining the secret of these processes. Admiral William D. Leahy, who as Chief of Staff to the President served as the principal liaison officer between the Pentagon and the White House, also advised against giving up any secrets regarding bomb manufacture, and called for a program to keep the United States ahead of other nations which were trying to develop nuclear weapons. Those who thought international control could prevent use of the bomb were, in Leahy's view, simply uninformed.[10]

Stimson's proposals also evoked a mixed reaction from the men who had developed the bomb. Reflecting the attitude of the atomic scientists, Vannevar Bush, director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, pointed out that Stimson had not suggested giving up the secret of the bomb: "that secret resides principally in the details of construction of the bombs themselves, and in the manufacturing processes." All that Stimson had recommended was to make known basic scientific knowledge which could not be kept confidential. Russia might well benefit more from this exchange of information than would the United States, but at least Washington would know, based on whether or not Moscow reciprocated, whether it could trust the Soviet Union.[11]

But Major General Leslie R. Groves, who had directed the Manhattan Project for the War Department, strongly criticized the idea of exchanging information with the Soviet Union. Groves viewed with skepticism the atomic scientists' statements that the Russians could build a bomb in four or five years, noting irritably that "the more they talk the shorter the time seems to get." He felt that the United States should retain control of nuclear weapons "until all of the other nations of the world are as anxious for peace as we are. And by 'anxious for peace,' I mean in the heart and not by speech or signature in a treaty which they do not in-

[10] Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum to Truman, date not given, quoted in Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 527–28; Leahy Diary, October 17, 1945, Leahy MSS.

[11] Bush to Truman, September 25, 1945, quoted in Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 527, and summarized in Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* p. 421.

tend to honor." Basically, Groves believed, the question was "whether we want to work to the bone to support other nations in luxury while they have long week-ends." [12]

Secretary of State James F. Byrnes also resisted any immediate move toward international control because he hoped the American monopoly over the bomb might make the Russians easier to deal with. As early as April, 1945, Byrnes had predicted to Truman that with exclusive possession of atomic weapons the United States would be able to dictate its own terms at the end of the war. In August, he had told J. Robert Oppenheimer, head of the Los Alamos scientific laboratories, that an international agreement to control nuclear energy was not practical in the near future. Instead Oppenheimer and his "gang" should proceed at full speed to develop a hydrogen weapon. Byrnes thought that too much emphasis had been placed on the views of the scientists in discussing international control. Although he admired their achievement in developing the bomb, he felt that they were no better informed than he on the question of whether to share knowledge of it with other countries. Inspection was the key: if the United States did not feel it could trust other nations to open their facilities to inspection, then it should not relinquish information on methods for manufacturing the bomb. The Secretary of State believed that the American monopoly would last, not from four to five years, as the scientists estimated, but from seven to ten years, and opposed doing anything to shorten its duration.[13]

Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson differed strongly with his chief on this issue. In a memorandum to Truman written while Byrnes was attending the London Foreign Ministers' Conference in September, 1945, Acheson emphasized the scientists' conclusion that "what we know [about] the bomb is not a secret which we can keep to ourselves."

[12] *New York Times,* September 22 and November 8, 1945. In his memoirs, Groves claimed that he "wholeheartedly concurred" with Stimson's proposal of September 11, 1945. (*Now It Can Be Told,* p. 408.) Groves's statements at the time do not support this assertion, however.

[13] Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 87; Oppenheimer to Stimson, August 17, 1945, quoted in Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* p. 417; Stettinius calendar notes, September 28, 1945, Stettinius MSS, Box 247; minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, October 16, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 59–61; Forrestal Diary, October 16, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* p. 102; Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly,* pp. 261–65.

There could be little doubt that the Russians were working on nuclear weapons:

> The joint development of this discovery with the U.K. and Canada must appear to the Soviet Union to be unanswerable evidence of an Anglo-American combination against them. . . . It is impossible that a government as powerful and power conscious as the Soviet Government could fail to react vigorously to this situation. It must and will exert every energy to restore the loss of power which this situation has produced.

Acheson regarded a nuclear armaments race with Russia as futile because there could be no defense against the bomb, and use of it might destroy civilization. Under these circumstances, "the advantage of being ahead in such a race is nothing compared with not having the race." If the United States tried to proclaim itself sole trustee of the weapon, the Russians would regard this as nothing less than outright exclusion. The United States, Acheson concluded, would have to seek Soviet cooperation in some form of international control.

Acheson recognized that his suggestion might create political difficulties: "The public and Congress will be unprepared to accept a policy involving substantial disclosures to the Soviet Union." The Truman Administration could not wait, however, for public opinion to come around. Open debate of this issue would only exacerbate relations with Russia, making agreement more difficult to obtain, and in turn further inflaming domestic opposition. The United States would have to find a way to assure the Russians that they were not being kept from the secret of atomic energy, while at the same time educating the American people to the fact that this secret would not keep.[14]

Evidence of how fragile the United States nuclear monopoly was became painfully clear on September 30, 1945, when Canadian Prime Minister William L. Mackenzie King informed the President that Ottawa officials had uncovered an elaborate Russian espionage network, operating in both Canada and the United States, which had already transmitted an undetermined amount of information about the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union. Truman showed little surprise at this news, and advised against doing anything "which might result in premature action in any direction." Several weeks later the President explained to

[14] Acheson to Truman, September 25, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 48–50. See also Acheson, *Present at the Creation,* pp. 123–25.

Stettinius that, although the Russians were clearly working on a bomb, he was not as concerned as Mackenzie King. There was no "precious secret" which the United States could withhold from other countries. The American monopoly would last for from four to ten years. Washington would have to use that time to work out an international agreement to control atomic energy in the interests of world peace. Eventually American bombs would be turned over to the United Nations Security Council; nuclear weapons would be outlawed, just as the use of poison gas had been. The international control of atomic bombs was "the Number One problem of the world at the present moment," but Truman was confident that "we would in time come to some intelligent solution." [15]

The President's October 3 message to Congress on both the domestic and the international aspects of atomic energy represented a compromise between the conflicting points of view his advisers had expressed. "The essential theoretical knowledge upon which the discovery is based is widely known," he pointed out. Other nations would in time produce atomic bombs. Under these circumstances, the only alternative to "a desperate armaments race which might well end in disaster" was an agreement between all potential atomic powers to renounce the use of the bomb for military purposes. Accordingly, Truman announced that he would soon begin negotiations with Britain and Canada, and later with other nations, in an effort to work out such an arrangement. He did not, however, accept Stimson's proposal for an immediate approach to the Soviet Union.

The President's statement committed him to the principle of international control, but without going into detail about how such a control system might work. Anticipating congressional criticism, Truman pointedly emphasized that the forthcoming discussions would in no way reveal the manufacturing processes which had produced the bomb. He also promised to consult Congress fully as developments warranted, and to submit to it any agreements requiring congressional approval. "I should think he would be God damned glad to consult with Congress before negotiating agreements," Senator Vandenberg later growled to a reporter.

[15] J. W. Pickersgill and D. F. Forster, *The Mackenzie King Record, 1945–1946,* pp. 40–41; Stettinius calendar notes, October 22, 1945, Stettinius MSS, Box 247. For the Canadian spy case, see Pickersgill and Forster, *The Mackenzie King Record, 1945–1946,* chapters 2–4; and the *Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate Disclosures of Secret and Confidential Information to Unauthorized Persons, passim.*

"I wouldn't think any one human being would take the responsibility for settling this issue." [16]

II

Vandenberg's remark reflected a growing determination on the part of Congress, and particularly the Senate, to reassert its traditional authority over the formulation of foreign policy. For reasons of national security, legislators during the war had allowed the Chief Executive almost a free hand in dealing with other countries. Congressmen played a significant role only in drawing up plans for the United Nations, and then only at the invitation of the Roosevelt Administration.[17] But the wartime relationship between the White House and Capitol Hill was clearly an abnormal one, which legislators, at least, did not expect to continue after victory. Japan's surrender in August, 1945, signaled the gradual reemergence of Congress as a major influence on the making of foreign policy, and brought about a corresponding diminution in the freedom of action available to the Truman Administration.

The creation of a Special Senate Committee on Atomic Energy in October, 1945, made it clear that this was one field in which Congress would expect to influence policy. Most legislators reacted initially to news of the atomic bomb by asserting that the United States should not share the "secret" of its new weapon. Tom Connally, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, suggested that the United Nations might be given a fleet of "atomic bombers" for use in keeping the peace, but opposed letting the world organization build bombs of its own. Richard Russell, another influential Senate Democrat, agreed: "I think we ought to keep the technical know-how to ourselves as long as possible." Vandenberg, now ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, called for retaining the American atomic monopoly until there was "absolute free and untrammeled right of intimate inspection

[16] Message to Congress of October 3, 1945, *Truman Public Papers, 1945,* pp. 362–66; Frank McNaughton to *Time* home office, October 6, 1945, McNaughton MSS. See also Truman to Tom Connally, September 24, 1945, quoted in Hillman, *Mr. President,* p. 49.

[17] Roland Young, *Congressional Politics in the Second World War,* pp. 146–48, 163–64; Westerfield, *Foreign Policy and Party Politics,* pp. 184–90, 203–12.

all around the globe." The Michigan Republican warned his colleagues: "There can be no dark corners in an atomic age." [18]

Some congressmen felt that the amount of money which the United States had spent on the bomb entitled it to at least a temporary monopoly. Representative Chester E. Merrow, Republican of New Hampshire, pointed out that the bomb had cost two and a half billion dollars: "Why anyone should desire to make available the knowledge we have acquired by our genius and our industry is beyond my comprehension." Senator Tom Stewart, a Tennessee Democrat, also stressed the high cost of the project: "We had to dig out the secret the hard way. . . . I want others to get the secret the hard way, as we found it." [19]

Fears of how other nations might use the bomb caused many legislators to oppose sharing knowledge of it. Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas wanted to know with certainty what Russia would do with atomic weapons before the United States released "this valuable military secret." Calling attention to Soviet intransigence, Representative Harold Knutson of Minnesota argued that until Moscow's intentions became clearer, "we had better keep the atomic-bomb secrets locked up in a burglar-proof vault." It would be "unthinkable," Senator Vandenberg proclaimed, to let Russia take the secret of atomic energy "behind its black-out curtain to do with it whatever Moscow pleases." American intentions with regard to the bomb aroused no such anxieties. Senator Connally observed that the bomb would be safe in the hands of the United States because "we shall never use it, except in the interest of world peace or our own necessary self-defense." Senator Raymond Willis of Indiana echoed Connally's views: "We know that we shall use atomic energy as an instrument of peace. We do not know what is in the minds of leaders of other nations." [20]

[18] Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* pp. 424, 435–36; *New York Times,* September 9 and 21, 1945; Vandenberg press statements of August 25, 1945, quoted in Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 221. Connally also favored leaving domestic control of atomic energy in the hands of the military: "I feared that by diverting control to civilians, information might leak out so other nations would learn things they shouldn't." (Tom Connally and Alfred Steinberg, *My Name Is Tom Connally,* p. 306.)

[19] *Congressional Record,* October 9, 18, 1945, pp. 9502, 9787–88.

[20] North American Newspaper Alliance telegraph poll, cited in the *New York Times,* September 29, 1945; Vandenberg to Edward A. Thompson, October 26, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 223; *New York Times,* September 9, 1945; *Congressional Record,* October 4, 1945, p. 9407.

Some members of Congress eventually realized that the United States could not hope to retain a permanent monopoly over the bomb. Jerry Voorhis of California, who maintained contacts with the atomic scientists, told the House of Representatives that "if I believed for one moment that it were possible for the United States to keep the secret . . . that is what I would be for doing." But "those who really know" maintained unanimously that there was no secret to keep. Senator Vandenberg also gradually came around to this point of view: "All of our scientists, without exception, testify that any other nation can . . . in the course of the next few years . . . produce atomic bombs of their own whether we like or not." For this reason Vandenberg supported international control, after foolproof inspection systems had been devised. Other senators argued, however, that the head start which the United States enjoyed in bomb development would give it a permanent advantage over other nations. Senator Johnson of Colorado told the Senate: "We have the jump on the rest of the world in [the bomb's] development and use. That is the important thing. We should not fritter away that significant and tremendous advantage by surrendering its know-how and its formulas to anyone." "By the time they have discovered the secret," Senator Stewart of Tennessee asserted, "we shall . . . be too far ahead of them and they will be afraid to use the secret they have discovered." [21]

Congressional fears that the Truman Administration might share atomic bomb information with Russia reached a high point on September 22, 1945, when newspapers carried accounts of the previous day's cabinet meeting at which Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace was reported to have advocated such a course of action. Despite subsequent denials from both Wallace and Truman, concern on Capitol Hill mounted. *Time* correspondent Frank McNaughton reported to his editors that "if the Truman Administration should give away the secret of the atomic bomb there would be hell to pay in Congress. Nothing the Administration might do could cause more trouble or so severely shake confidence as this one act." A quickly arranged telegraph poll of congressmen taken the following week supported McNaughton's conclusions: fifty-five out of sixty-one responding senators and representa-

[21] *Congressional Record,* September 12, October 18, November 28, 1945, pp. 8568–69, 9787–88, 11085–87; Vandenberg to L. F. Beckwith, November 13, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 224.

tives unequivocally opposed sharing knowledge of the bomb with any country.[22]

Legislators on Capitol Hill reflected in general the attitudes of their constituents on the international control of atomic energy. Opinion polls showed that to a surprising extent Americans realized that their monopoly over the bomb would not last. A survey made in September, 1945, revealed that 82 percent of a national sample expected other nations to develop bombs of their own sooner or later. The same poll indicated, however, that 85 percent of those questioned wanted the United States to retain exclusive possession of the weapon as long as possible. International control evoked little support: a poll taken in August, 1945, and repeated two months later, showed that more than 70 percent of the public opposed turning nuclear weapons over to the United Nations.[23] Clearly the Truman Administration would have to overcome considerable skepticism on the part of Congress and the public if it was to implement its program of international control.

Congressional wariness on the subject of atomic energy grew largely out of a distrust of Russia that had increased substantially since the spring of 1945. Soviet behavior in Eastern Europe had alienated many Americans, as had the uncompromising position of Russian negotiators at San Francisco and Potsdam.[24] Simultaneously, evidence had begun to accumulate that the Kremlin might be embarking on a new crusade to organize world revolution. In April, Jacques Duclos, a leading French communist, had publicly attacked American party members for collaborating with nonrevolutionary elements during the war. The *Daily Worker,* the newspaper of the "nonpartisan" Communist Political Association, reprinted Duclos's criticisms, together with a contrite acknowledgment by Earl Browder of their validity. Shortly thereafter the association dissolved itself, becoming once more the Communist Party of the United States. Early in June, six people, including several State Department officials, were arrested for having leaked sensitive documents to the

[22] *New York Times,* September 22 and 24, 1945; McNaughton to *Time* home office, September 22, 1945, McNaughton MSS; North American Newspaper Alliance poll, cited in the *New York Times,* September 29, 1945.

[23] National Opinion Research Center poll of September, 1945, American Institute of Public Opinion polls of August 22 and October 3, 1945, cited in Cantril and Strunk, eds., *Public Opinion,* pp. 21–22. See also Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," Nos. 34 and 36, September 6 and October 5, 1945.

[24] On this point, see chapter 7.

editors of the journal *Amerasia.* Only two of the six were prosecuted, and these received light fines, but the fact that the editor of *Amerasia* had been seen with Browder and the Soviet consul in New York led many observers to suspect espionage.[25]

The House Committee on Un-American Activities had seemed almost moribund after the decision of its chairman, Martin Dies of Texas, not to seek reelection in 1944. But when the Seventy-ninth Congress met early in January, 1945, John E. Rankin of Mississippi executed a smooth parliamentary maneuver which transformed the body into a permanent standing committee of the House, with broad investigative powers. The apparent shift in tactics by the international communist movement in the spring of 1945 gave the revived committee a tempting target, and in September it began its first postwar investigation of American communism. The committee wanted to find out, according to Representative Gerald W. Landis, "whether the Communists are still planning to destroy or overthrow the American system of government." Rankin, with a shrewd eye for publicity, added that the hearings would cover the Hollywood film industry: "Alien elements are at work out there to overthrow our Government by means of subtle propaganda in our movies." The inept broadsides of Rankin and his colleagues shed little light on the real relationship between the Kremlin and American communists, but they did publicize the possibility of internal subversion at a time when Soviet-American relations were rapidly deteriorating.[26]

[25] Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities,* pp. 175–76; Earl Latham, *The Communist Controversy in Washington,* pp. 203–16; U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, *The "Amerasia" Papers: A Clue to the Catastrophe of China, passim.* For the effect of the Duclos article on the American Communist Party, see Irving Howe and Louis Coser, *The American Communist Party: A Critical History (1919–1957),* pp. 437–49; David Shannon, *The Decline of American Communism,* chapter 1; and Irving Ross, "It's Tough to Be a Communist," *Harper's,* CXCII (June, 1946), 533–36. Historians have differed sharply on the intent behind the Duclos article. See, for example, Schlesinger, "Origins of the Cold War," pp. 43–44, which argues that the article did signify a reversion to revolutionary tactics, and Kolko, *Politics of War,* pp. 441–42, which asserts that it did not. Whatever the purpose of the article, however, it is clear that observers in Washington interpreted it as an ominous shift in the party line.

[26] Goodman, *The Committee,* pp. 167–70, 176; *New York Times,* September 24, 1945.

Shortly after V-E Day, several other congressional committees began clamoring for the opportunity to investigate Russian-American relations by visiting the Soviet Union. Ambassador Harriman secured assurances from Molotov that such groups would be welcome, and at least three separate delegations of legislators made the trip during the late summer congressional recess. One of these groups, composed of seven members of the House Select Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning, toured Russia and thirteen other European countries in an effort to decide what American policy should be regarding postwar loans to foreign governments. On September 14, 1945, this delegation, led by Committee Chairman William M. Colmer of Mississippi, enjoyed the distinction of a personal interview with Joseph Stalin.[27]

Colmer told the Soviet leader that his committee knew about the Russian desire for a loan from the United States. How, he wanted to know, would the Soviets use the money, how would they pay it back, and what could Washington expect in return? Stalin acknowledged that the Soviet Union had applied for a $6 billion loan some six months earlier, but had heard nothing from the United States since. The loan, he said, would be used to purchase American industrial equipment which the Soviets wanted for reconstruction, and would be repaid by exports of gold and various raw materials. Stalin expressed irritation about American inquisitiveness regarding repayment: Washington was talking freely about lending money to Chiang Kai-shek—surely the Soviet Union had greater capabilities of paying back a loan than did the Chinese. Colmer thought Stalin's answers "responsive although at times . . . evasive." The Soviet Union's police-state atmosphere shocked the Mississippi congressman and his colleagues, however, as did the strong fear of Russia which they encountered in surrounding countries. The delegation stopped off in London on its way home to report to Secretary of State

[27] Harriman to Stettinius, June 15, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 861–62. Also visiting Russia in September, 1945, were four members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, investigating the need for aid under the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and Democratic Senator Claude Pepper of Florida, who went to Russia as a private citizen. The House Foreign Affairs Committee delegation report, not issued until May 31, 1946, is printed in *U.S. News,* XX (June 28, 1946), 63–70. On Pepper's visit, see his account, written for the North American Newspaper Alliance and printed in the *New York Times,* October 1, 1945; Kennan to Acheson, September 15, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 881–84; and *Time,* XLVI (October 1, 1945), 27.

Byrnes, and later conferred personally with President Truman. Before both men Colmer's group stressed the necessity "of stiffening our collective backbone in dealing with the Soviet Republic." [28]

The Colmer committee was willing to approve an American loan to the Soviet Union, but only if the Russians met certain conditions. They would have to disclose what proportion of total production they devoted to armaments. They would be required to reveal vital statistics on the operation of the Soviet economy, and to provide an opportunity to check the accuracy of these figures. The Soviet Union would have to give up the administration of relief for political purposes in Eastern Europe and disclose the terms of its trade treaties with the countries of this area. Within both the USSR and the East European countries under its control, the Kremlin would have to guarantee full protection of American property, the right to distribute American books, magazines, newspapers, and motion pictures, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and free elections. Finally, the United States should insist upon "the fulfillment of Russia's political obligations on the same terms as those of other Governments. This includes the withdrawal of Russian occupation forces in accordance with the Potsdam agreements and the Yalta conference and other agreements." In short, Colmer and his colleagues demanded that, in return for an American loan, the Soviet Union reform its internal system of government and abandon the sphere of influence it had so carefully constructed in Eastern Europe. "Unless Russia reconverts her war machine to peace," Colmer asked, "why should we support it? It may mean business, but . . . it may not be good business." [29]

The Truman Administration still had not given up the idea of a loan

[28] Kennan to Acheson, September 15, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 881–84. See also a summary of notes taken by an unnamed member of the delegation and published in the *New York Times,* November 8, 1945; and Representative Colmer's own account of the interview, *Congressional Record,* August 2, 1946, pp. A4895–A4898. George F. Kennan, who served as interpreter for the delegation, recalls that one slightly intoxicated congressman went into the meeting with Stalin threatening loudly to "biff the old codger one in the nose." Much to Kennan's relief, however, the congressman "did nothing more disturbing than to leer and wink once or twice at the bewildered dictator." The incident, Kennan says, was one in a long series "that gradually bred in me a deep skepticism about the absolute value of people-to-people contacts for the improvement of international relations." (Kennan, *Memoirs,* pp. 276–77.)

[29] *New York Times,* November 12, 1945; Colmer address to a meeting of the National Industrial Conference Board, New York City, November 20, 1945, printed in the *Congressional Record,* November 26, 1945, pp. A5103–A5105.

to the Soviet Union; it simply sought to withhold economic assistance until the Kremlin made certain concessions in the political sphere. During the summer of 1945 Administration officials had secured from Congress an increase in the lending authority of the Export-Import Bank, so that a loan could be granted without precipitating a full-scale debate on Capitol Hill. This approach did not take the question completely out of the hands of legislators, however, for they could still make trouble for the Administration if they disapproved of the terms of the loan. Colmer's committee made it clear that, to satisfy Congress, the State Department would have to demand such sweeping political concessions as to make Moscow's rejection of the loan a foregone conclusion. Assistant Secretary of State Will Clayton explained to Ambassador Harriman late in November that the department had been "pursuing [a] policy of not encouraging active discussions and at present [the] matter is dormant." [30]

The net effect of the reassertion of congressional authority which took place in the fall of 1945 was to drive the Truman Administration toward a firmer Russian policy. Whether Congress would support the measures necessary to implement such a program, however, was open to doubt. Although the United States now had an atomic bomb, its conventional armed forces, after V-J Day, had begun to disappear. More than twelve million men and women had been on active duty in all branches of the services at the end of June, 1945. One year later this figure would drop to barely three million. By June of 1947, the number of military personnel would be down to one and a half million. Secretary of War Patterson and Navy Secretary Forrestal warned the cabinet as early as October 26, 1945, that the rapid pace of demobilization was threatening the American strategic position throughout the world. President Truman agreed: "So far as I was concerned, the program we were following was no longer demobilization—it was disintegration of our armed forces." [31]

[30] Clayton to Harriman, November 30, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 1048. See also Herring, "Aid to Russia, 1941–1946," chapter 9.

[31] U.S. Bureau of Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957,* p. 736; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 509. Adam B. Ulam suggests that American fears regarding the strategic impact of demobilization may have been exaggerated. Apparently the Soviet Union also demobilized rapidly after World War II. *(Expansion and Coexistence,* p. 414).

But Truman could do little to resist demands to "bring the boys home." Congressmen found their mailboxes filled with letters from wives calling for the quick return of their husbands, often accompanied by baby pictures and even baby shoes. At one point a group of furious war wives literally besieged General Eisenhower in a congressman's office on Capitol Hill where he had gone to testify on demobilization. Servicemen in the Far East stamped home-bound mail with the legend "No Boats No Votes," an obvious reference to possible retaliation in the 1946 congressional elections if the release of troops did not speed up. In January of 1946, riots broke out at several overseas military installations to protest the slow pace of demobilization. "The President has shown a lot of guts in many matters," former Undersecretary of State Joseph Grew wrote to a friend, "but if you can persuade him to stop demobilization, with all its political implications, you're a bigger man than I am." [32]

Prospects that Congress would approve Administration plans for a postwar military establishment seemed dim. In October, 1945, Truman called for the continuation of selective service and the institution of universal military training, a program which would require a year of training for all physically-fit eighteen-year-old men. Both proposals aroused strong opposition in a nation which had never before known permanent conscription in peacetime. Moreover, with the war over many Americans hoped for relief from the crushing burden of taxation which a large military program would require. By December, 1945, *Newsweek*'s editors saw little chance that Congress would extend the draft past its May 15, 1946, deadline, while "only dramatically menacing world developments" appeared likely to secure passage of universal military training. James Reston noted early in 1946 that those congressmen who shouted loudest for a tough anti-Russian policy were the least willing to vote the money and the manpower necessary to implement such a policy.[33]

In assuming this contradictory stance, legislators were merely reflecting the views of their constituents, most of whom wanted the government to "get tough with Russia" while at the same time bringing back the low taxes and volunteer military forces of the prewar period. Not for

[32] R. Alton Lee, "The Army 'Mutiny' of 1946," *Journal of American History,* LIII (December, 1966), 555–71; *Newsweek,* XXVII (February 4, 1946), 55–57; Grew to Barrett Wendell, November 16, 1945, Grew MSS, Box 123.

[33] Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 510–11; *Newsweek,* XXVII (January 7, 1946), 16; *New York Times,* March 17, 1946.

some time would Americans realize that they could not have both. This attitude on the part of Congress and the public left the Truman Administration in an awkward position: further compromises with the Russians were sure to be politically unpopular, yet strategically the nation was in no condition to resist the Kremlin's next moves. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that, despite their atomic monopoly, American officials felt very little freedom to maneuver as they turned to the problem of postwar relations with the Soviet Union.

III

The first postwar confrontation with Russia came in September, 1945, when the foreign ministers of the United States, the USSR, Great Britain, France, and China met in London to draw up peace treaties for Finland, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria, all former German satellites. American diplomats had not sought to challenge Russian control of these countries as long as the war was on, but after Germany's surrender they expected free elections to be held in accordance with the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe. Moscow seemed willing to tolerate democratic procedures in Finland and possibly Hungary, but American observers in Bucharest and Sofia accused Soviet occupying forces of trying to set up puppet governments in Rumania and Bulgaria. Truman expressed concern over these reports, and late in the summer of 1945 began an effort to secure Russian compliance with the agreement made at Yalta.[34]

State Department officials realized that the United States lacked the power to influence directly events in Rumania and Bulgaria, but hoped that by delaying the signature of peace treaties and withholding diplomatic recognition they could force implementation of the Yalta accord. Truman and Byrnes endorsed this strategy, and at Potsdam made it clear to the Russians that the United States would not recognize or make

[34] Joseph C. Grew memorandum of a conversation between Truman and Arthur Bliss Lane, June 4, 1945, quoted in Grew, *Turbulent Era,* II, 1464–65. For reports from American observers in Rumania and Bulgaria, see *ibid.*, pp. 1454–55; and *FR: Potsdam,* I, 357–432. News that the Russians were seizing American-owned industrial equipment in Eastern Europe as reparations intensified the Administration's concern. (*Ibid.*, pp. 420–32.)

peace with the former German satellites in Eastern Europe until their governments had been reorganized and until American press and radio correspondents had been admitted. Byrnes told Molotov that "we would, frankly, always be suspicious of elections in countries where our representatives are not free to move about and where the press cannot report freely." Truman promised Stalin that "when Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria were set up on a basis where we could have free access to them, we would recognize them but not sooner." [35]

Information that the atomic bomb would soon be ready contributed to the Administration's decision to press for self-determination in the Balkans. Byrnes explained to Joseph E. Davies at Potsdam that "the New Mexico situation [the first successful test of the bomb] had given us great power, and that in the final analysis, it would control." Late in August, the Secretary of State told John J. McCloy that he intended to go to the London Foreign Ministers' Conference with the implied threat of the bomb in his pocket, and on September 4 Stimson recorded in his diary a similar conversation with Byrnes: "His mind is full of his problem with the coming meeting of the foreign ministers and he looks to having the presence of the bomb in his pocket, so to speak, as a great weapon." The Secretary of State begged Stimson to keep the President from even mentioning the possibility of international control until after the London meeting.[36]

Byrnes's hope that American possession of the bomb would make the Russians more manageable was quickly frustrated, however, for at London Molotov proved to be more stubborn than ever. The Soviet foreign minister reiterated the bid Stalin had made at Potsdam for Russian control of former Italian colonies in Africa. He also accused the Americans of supporting anti-Russian elements in Eastern Europe, and asserted that the regimes in Rumania and Bulgaria were more representative than the British-sponsored government of Greece. When Byrnes argued that

[35] Potsdam briefing book paper, "Recommended Policy on the Question of Establishing Diplomatic Relations and Concluding Peace Treaties with the Former Axis Satellite States," June 29, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* I, 357–62; Llewellyn E. Thompson minutes, 5th foreign ministers' meeting, July 22, 1945, *ibid.*, II, 231; Thompson minutes, 8th plenary meeting, July 24, 1945, *ibid.*, II, 359.

[36] Davies Journal, July 29, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 19; Stimson Diary, August 12–September 4, 1945, Stimson MSS; minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, October 10, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 55–56.

American correspondents had been allowed into Greece but had been kept out of Rumania and Bulgaria, Molotov neatly parried: "Apparently in Greece the correspondents were happy, but the people were not; whereas in Rumania the people were happy, but the correspondents were not." The USSR, Molotov added, considered the feelings of the people more important than those of the correspondents. The Soviet diplomat made Moscow's position clear: unless the British and Americans accepted Russian terms for peace treaties in Eastern Europe, he would not accept the Anglo-American draft terminating hostilities with Italy.

Byrnes patiently tried to reason with Molotov in a series of private meetings. The long dispute over Poland, he explained, had made the American people sensitive to the need for strict observance of the Yalta agreements. Americans knew that Moscow had imposed a subservient regime on Rumania, and that neither in that country nor in Bulgaria could American newsmen travel freely. The Secretary of State asked Molotov to look at the problem from his point of view: If he did sign treaties with Bucharest and Sofia, they would have to go before the Senate. How, the senators would wonder, did Byrnes know that regimes in those countries had popular support? The Secretary of State would have to reply that, because of the exclusion of American correspondents, he knew little about these governments. The Senate would then probably reject the treaties. Byrnes assured Molotov that the United States did not want unfriendly governments along Russia's border. But neither did it want unrepresentative regimes which would violate the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe. Could not coalitions be formed which would be friendly to the Russians and at the same time representative? If this could be done, it would be greeted with joy in the United States and would permit Byrnes to support the Soviet position as he wished to do.[37]

The Soviet foreign minister remained unmoved. In an apparent attempt to improve his bargaining position, he called on September 22 for the exclusion of France and China from further discussion of the satellite peace treaties, arguing that their participation up to this point had violated instructions agreed upon by the Big Three at Potsdam. Two days later, Molotov demanded establishment of an Allied Control Council in Japan, composed of representatives from the United States, the Soviet

[37] Bohlen minutes, Byrnes-Molotov conversations, September 16 and 19, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 194–201, 243–47.

Union, Great Britain, and China, to supervise the policies of General Douglas MacArthur and the American occupation forces. Byrnes refused to give in on either of these points, and after a futile appeal to Stalin by Truman, the conference broke up early in October with Big Three unity in serious disarray. The foreign ministers could not even agree on a public communiqué.[38]

The failure of the London Conference left Byrnes surprised and disappointed. Publicly he maintained a conciliatory posture: the experience of London, he told a national radio audience shortly after his return, had shown "the hard reality that none of us can expect to write the peace in our own way." But in private, the Secretary of State bitterly accused Moscow of duplicity: "The Russians were welching on all the agreements reached at Potsdam and at Yalta." Stalin's word was worth little, Byrnes warned his cabinet colleagues:

> Though they had a formal treaty of non-aggression with Japan the Russians, as far back as Yalta, were making definite plans for their attack upon Japan. . . . Stalin and Molotov would probably be insulted today if you implied that they had intended to keep their solemn treaty with Hitler. By implication of the same process of reasoning, it would not be wise for us to rely on their word today.

There was no question, the Secretary of State told his predecessor, Stettinius,

> but that we were facing a new Russia, totally different than the Russia we dealt with a year ago. As long as they needed us in the War and we were giving them supplies we had a satisfactory relationship but now that the War was over they were taking an aggressive attitude and stand on political and territorial questions that was indefensible.

[38] *FR: 1945,* II, 313–15, 328–29, 331, 334, 336–39, 357–58. The United States had rebuffed an earlier Russian bid for a role in the occupation of Japan, made at the time of that country's surrender in August, 1945. On this episode, see Herbert Feis, *Contest over Japan,* pp. 15–17, 19–20; Deane, *The Strange Alliance,* pp. 278–79; and Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 412, 430–32, 440–44. In his memoirs, Byrnes states that Molotov brought up the question of Japan in a private meeting on September 22, before discussing the matter of French and Chinese participation in negotiating the satellite peace treaties. (*Speaking Frankly,* p. 102.) Feis has concluded from this that the Russians were mainly interested in the Japanese question and brought up the exclusion of France and China only after Byrnes had avoided discussion of it. (*Contest over Japan,* p. 42.) But the official American records of the conference, cited above, contain no indication that Japan was discussed prior to September 24.

What the Russians really wanted, Byrnes thought, were uranium deposits in the Belgian Congo; hence Molotov's interest in the Italian colonies of Libya and Tripolitania. The Soviet foreign minister had been "insufferable," the Secretary of State told Joseph Davies; he was "almost ashamed" for having taken what he did from Molotov. If the Senate ever found out how the Russians had behaved at London, the situation would become "very much worse." [39]

But members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee strongly applauded Byrnes's refusal to compromise when he appeared before them on October 8. The only question in the minds of the senators seemed to be whether the Secretary had been tough enough with the Russians, and whether he intended to continue this policy in the future. Similarly John Foster Dulles, who had attended the London Conference as a Republican observer, praised Byrnes's decision to "stand firm for basic principles." Professions of wartime unity had been nothing more than "soothing syrup," Dulles argued; it was no longer necessary, nor was it healthy, to hide the fact that fundamental differences now existed between the United States and the Soviet Union.[40]

The London Conference demonstrated clearly that simple possession of an atomic bomb had not made the United States omnipotent in its dealings with Moscow—the Russians seemed almost to go out of their way to show that they had not been impressed. Byrnes had no intention of actually threatening use of the bomb to force concessions from the Russians, but he had hoped to hold back an American commitment to the international control of atomic energy until the Soviet Union agreed to a European peace settlement which Washington could accept.[41] Molotov's studied intransigence at London, however, raised doubts as to

[39] Byrnes radio address of October 5, 1945, *Department of State Bulletin,* XIII (October 7, 1945), 507; Stettinius calendar notes, September 12, 1945, Stettinius MSS, Box 247; minutes of a meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, October 16, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 59–61; Stettinius calendar notes, September 28, 1945, Stettinius MSS, Box 247; Davies notes of conversation with Byrnes, October 9, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 22. See also Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 102–3.

[40] *New York Times,* October 7, 9, 1945; *Time,* XLVI (October 15, 1945), 21; Curry, *Byrnes,* p. 157. See also James Reston's column in the *New York Times,* October 14, 1945.

[41] Stettinius calendar notes, September 28, 1945, Stettinius MSS, Box 247; minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, October 10, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 55–57.

whether the Russians were interested in signing peace treaties on any terms but their own. Moreover, Truman's October 3, 1945, message to Congress on atomic energy, made without consulting the absent Secretary of State, had undercut Byrnes's bargaining strategy by endorsing international control long before any European peace agreements were in sight.

Truman's decision to commit the United States to the principle of international control worried the Secretary of State. Molotov, he told Patterson and Forrestal, might now insist on taking up the issue of atomic energy before concluding peace treaties with the defeated German satellites. Besides, not enough yet was known about technical aspects of the problem to draw up a workable control scheme. Public ventilation of the subject would only intensify pressure, both at home and abroad, for the United States to relinquish control of the bomb too soon. Accordingly Byrnes planned to "plead with the President not to push the question of consultation." [42]

But the President had already backed away from the full implications of his October 3 message. In a press conference on the 8th, he distinguished between the scientific principles which had been applied to build the bomb and the actual technical processes of construction: "So far as the scientific knowledge is concerned, all the scientists [in the world] know the answer, but how to put it to work practically is our secret. . . . If they catch up with us on that, they will have to do it on their own hook, just as we did." Truman's first major postwar speech on foreign policy, delivered in New York on October 27, 1945, suggested that the world might be better off if the bomb remained in American hands:

> In our possession of this weapon, as in our possession of other new weapons, there is no threat to any nation. The world, which has seen the United States in two great recent wars, knows that full well. The possession in our hands of this new power of destruction we regard as a sacred trust. Because of our love of peace, the thoughtful people of the world know that that trust will not be violated, that it will be faithfully executed.

This address led the editors of the *Nation* to comment that Truman had assumed the ambitious task of conducting American foreign policy si-

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

multaneously according to the principles of Theodore Roosevelt and St. Francis of Assisi.[43]

Writing to a close friend early in November, Forrestal explained that the President simply had not yet committed himself firmly on the subject of international control: "Until the Russians indicate that they are willing to play on a basis of reciprocal confidence it is very difficult to establish the basis for negotiations." Forrestal felt that Truman was "passionately desirous" of making peace as soon as possible, but was at the same time reluctant to relinquish an element of American power which might help shape the final settlement.[44]

The President's emphasis on exclusive possession of the bomb, together with his apparent delay in formulating a policy on international control, stimulated considerable criticism from liberal observers. Radio commentator Raymond Gram Swing, who had close ties with the atomic scientists, charged as early as October 12 that Truman was seeking security through "the power to kill rather than . . . the power to reason," and called on public opinion and Congress to force a repudiation of this policy. Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt wondered publicly how "we can hold this secret and expect others to trust us when we, apparently, do not trust anyone else." J. Robert Oppenheimer told Byrnes that negotiations with the Russians on international control should not be delayed any further. Byrnes replied gruffly that the Administration, not the scientists, would handle diplomatic questions.[45]

But Truman was also coming under pressure from the British and Canadians, with whom he had promised to discuss international control. On October 16, Prime Minister Clement Attlee reported strong sentiment in Parliament for a statement on atomic energy. Attlee offered to delay until he could consult with Truman, but warned that he could not

[43] *Truman Public Papers: 1945,* pp. 381–82, 437; *Nation,* CLXI (November 3, 1945), 445. Truman does *not* quote this portion of his October 27 speech in *Year of Decisions,* pp. 537–38.

[44] Forrestal to E. Palmer Hoyt, November 1, 1945, Forrestal MSS, Box 63.

[45] Swing radio broadcast of October 12, 1945, Swing MSS, Box 28; *Time,* XLVI (October 22, 1945), 22; Byrnes account of conversation with Oppenheimer, minutes of a meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, October 23, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 61–62. A State Department survey of editorial opinion noted that the President's press conference statement on October 8 had received "severe criticism and demands for reconsideration . . . from a large number of editors and commentators." ("Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 37, October 19, 1945).

postpone comment indefinitely. The first full session of the United Nations General Assembly was to take place in London in January, 1946. The success of this meeting might be jeopardized if no policy on international control had been agreed upon. Attlee offered to come to Washington as soon as possible with Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King to begin negotiations. In his October 27 address, Truman mentioned once again the possibility of talks with the British and Canadians, and three days later announced that Attlee and Mackenzie King would arrive early in November.[46]

Nevertheless, Truman and Byrnes still dragged their feet in formulating a policy to be put forth in these negotiations. Several times during October Secretary of War Patterson prodded Byrnes without result to begin work on this matter, and on November 1 he expressed his anxieties in a formal letter to the Secretary of State. Patterson also communicated his concern to Vannevar Bush, who asked to see Byrnes on November 3. From this meeting Bush learned to his dismay that "there was no organization for the meeting, no agenda being prepared, and no American plan in form to present." The Secretary of State then surprised Bush by asking him to formulate such a plan. Pulling his wits together, Bush spent the weekend drawing up suggestions for the negotiations and on November 5, five days before Attlee and Mackenzie King were due to arrive, presented his ideas to Byrnes.[47]

The basic American objective, Bush wrote, was to avoid an atomic arms race which could lead to a future war. The major difficulty involved was the suspicious attitude of the Soviet government. The solution was "to make the agreements in such manner that it will be in Russia's interest to keep them." Bush advocated proposing to the Russians a series of steps, to each of which the Soviet Union would be asked to conform. First, the Russians would be invited to join with the British and

[46] Attlee to Truman, October 16, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 58–59; *Truman Public Papers: 1945,* pp. 437, 453. For a summary of the British attitude toward international control, see Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* pp. 456–58.

[47] Minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, October 16 and 23, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 59–62; Patterson to Byrnes, November 1, 1945, cited in Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* p. 459; memorandum by Captain R. Gordon Arneson on "Negotiations with the British and Canadians, November 1–November 16, 1945," April 17, 1946, *FR: 1945,* II, 63–69; Bush to Stimson, November 13, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 427. See also Vannevar Bush, *Pieces of the Action,* pp. 296–97.

the Americans to create, under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly, an organization to disseminate scientific information in all fields, including atomic fission. This would cost the United States nothing because most of this scientific information would be available to the Russians anyway. It would, however, serve as a test of Moscow's intentions. The second step would involve formation of a United Nations Commission of Inspection which would have the right to inspect any scientific laboratory in any country engaging in atomic research. The commission would assume its functions gradually, so that the United States would not immediately have to expose the operations of its atomic plants. After the inspection system had been perfected, all nations would agree as a third step to stockpile materials capable of atomic fission, releasing them for peaceful purposes only. The Commission of Inspection would report any diversion of fissionable material to the production of weapons. Until the full plan went into effect, the United States would continue to produce material necessary to make bombs, but would promise the world not to assemble actual weapons. After the inspection system had begun to operate, other nations would be invited to inspect this American stockpile of fissionable material.[48]

President Truman endorsed these proposals on November 7 apparently because, as Bush noted, they constituted the only plan the Administration had. In the process of drafting the formal document, however, the State Department added one additional step providing for safeguards to protect states which complied with the agreement. As finally approved by Truman, Attlee, and Mackenzie King on November 15, 1945, the agreement called for establishment of a United Nations commission which would work

(a) for extending between all nations the exchange of basic scientific information for peaceful ends;
(b) for control of atomic energy to the extent necessary to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes;
(c) for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction;
(d) for effective safeguards by way of inspection and other means to

[48] Bush to Byrnes, November 5, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 69–73; Bush and Groves to Byrnes, November 9, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 74.

> protect complying states against the hazards of violations and evasions.

The accord specified that "the work of the Commission should proceed by separate stages, the successful completion of one of which will develop the necessary confidence of the world before the next stage is undertaken." [49]

The Truman-Attlee-King agreement was a cautious plan which did not, as Bush repeatedly pointed out, provide for any premature relinquishment of the American atomic monopoly. The international control system would go into effect gradually, one step at a time, a feature of the plan which would cause confusion later on because the State Department had made the institution of safeguards the last step in the process. If at any time the Russians failed to complete a step to American satisfaction, the United States could drop out. All in all Bush approved of the plan, although the slipshod method in which policy had been formulated appalled him: "I have never participated in anything that was so completely unorganized or so irregular," he wrote to Stimson. "I have had experiences in the past week that would make a chapter in 'Alice in Wonderland.' " [50]

The improvised nature of the Truman-Attlee-King accord made it impossible for the Administration to consult congressional leaders until only a few minutes before the agreement was publicly announced. Senator Robert La Follette had warned Admiral Leahy two days earlier that the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee resented their exclusion from the policy-making process. Now the two leading members of that committee, Connally and Vandenberg, reacted with considerable irritation, even to the extreme point of refusing to pose for pictures with Truman, Attlee, and Mackenzie King. Connally told Byrnes that he and Truman had no authority to promise to share information on atomic energy without consulting Congress. Vandenberg returned to the Senate and made a long-planned speech on the "iron curtain" in which he emphasized pointedly that it was in the Congress "where a basic and unavoidable share of the responsibility for these fateful decisions inevitably resides and where it is going to stay." [51]

[49] Bush to Stimson, November 13, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 427; Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* pp. 461–65; *Truman Public Papers: 1945,* pp. 472–75.

[50] Bush to Stimson, November 13, 1945, Stimson MSS, Box 427.

[51] Leahy Diary, November 13, 1945, Leahy MSS; Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,*

The manner in which the Truman Administration handled the issue of international control illustrated the confused state of policy-making in Washington in the fall of 1945. In the belief that American possession of the bomb would make the Russians easier to deal with, Byrnes had opposed even discussing the subject until after a general European peace settlement. But Truman, under pressure from the atomic scientists and advisers like Stimson and Acheson, publicly endorsed international control without consulting the Secretary of State. Byrnes did manage to delay formulation of a specific control proposal for a time, but could not do so indefinitely because of the President's earlier public statement. Meanwhile no one had consulted Congress, whose leaders, suspicious from the beginnning of international control, had come to believe that the Administration was about to give the bomb away. Actually the views of the President, the Secretary of State, and congressional leaders were not far apart. All would likely have agreed with Truman when he told Joseph Davies in September, 1945:

> When we get down to cases, is any one of the Big Powers—are we, going to give up these locks and bolts which are necessary to protect our house . . . against possible outlaw attack . . . , until experience and good judgment say that the community is sufficiently stable and decent, and the police force sufficiently reliable to do that job for us [?] Clearly we are not. Nor are the Soviets. Nor is any country if it can help itself.[52]

But confusion over tactics obscured agreement regarding goals, so that by the end of 1945 a serious conflict had developed between the State Department and Congress over the international control of atomic energy.

IV

Shortly after the conclusion of the London Conference, James Reston observed that two schools of thought on how to handle Russia now existed within the government, based on contradictory perceptions of Moscow's intentions. One group of policy-makers had virtually written off the pos-

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pp. 226–27; *Newsweek,* XXVI (November 26, 1945), 34; *Congressional Record,* November 15, 1945, pp. 10696–99.

[52] Davies notes of conversation with Truman, September 18, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 22.

sibility of settling outstanding issues, arguing that the Kremlin was firmly committed to a program of unlimited expansion. Further concessions would only whet Stalin's appetite; the United States and its Western European allies should begin pooling their military and economic resources if the Russian dictator's ambitions were to be thwarted and the world balance of power restored. These officials applauded Byrnes's hard line at London as a step in the right direction. But a second group within the government held that the Soviet Union still shared with the United States a common interest in establishing a world security system which would prevent future wars. They admitted that serious disagreements had arisen, but felt that these could be overcome if both sides showed a willingness to negotiate and compromise. This more optimistic group did not condone Soviet behavior in Eastern Europe, but questioned whether the Kremlin could realistically be expected to relax its control over that part of the world while the United States continued to oppose Russian participation in the occupation of Japan and in the administration of former Italian colonies in Africa.[53]

Much of the confusion which surrounded the formulation of American policy in the fall of 1945 stemmed from the fact that the Truman Administration had not yet committed itself to either point of view. Congressional leaders and most military officials had, by this time, begun to advocate a firmer approach to Moscow. Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had given Byrnes a warm reception on his return from London, and Navy Secretary Forrestal was advising the President to speak out publicly against the Russians in order to counteract growing pressure for demobilization. Truman himself seemed to be moving toward a tough line. In his Navy Day address on October 27 the President announced that while in some cases it might not be possible to prevent forcible imposition of an unrepresentative regime on an unwilling people, the United States would never recognize any such government.[54]

But Truman had not, at this time, given up hope of reaching an accommodation with the Russians. In a long private conversation with

[53] *New York Times,* September 30, October 14, 1945.

[54] *New York Times,* October 9, 1945; *Newsweek,* XXVI (October 22, 1945), 30; Forrestal Diary, October 16, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 101–2; Truman speech of October 27, 1945, *Truman Public Papers: 1945,* pp. 431–38.

Stettinius five days earlier, the President had observed that cooperation with Moscow during the war had been based solely on military necessity. Now, with victory achieved, "it was inevitable that we should have real difficulties but we should not take them too seriously." The breakdown of the London Conference had not upset Truman: "This was almost bound to happen at the end of the war. . . . It was perhaps better to [have it] happen out in the open at this stage." Serious differences existed between Russia and the United States, but the President hoped "that we could work them out amicably if we gave ourselves time." The United Nations could play an important role in this process, and so could personal diplomacy. Stalin, Truman commented, was "a moderating influence in the present Russian government. . . . It would be a real catastrophe if Stalin should die at the present time." Truman believed that the USSR, like the United States, was having serious postwar internal problems, and that "this might explain some of the things that they had been doing." [55]

Byrnes, too, was having second thoughts about the tough policy he had followed at the London Foreign Ministers' Conference. Even before departing for home, he had announced American willingness to recognize the government of Hungary pending the holding of free elections, and to consider Moscow's request for establishment of an Allied Control Council in Japan. He had heard criticism "from all sides" of Washington's refusal to allow its allies to participate in the occupation of Japan, he commented: "We were going off in a unilateral way as the Russians were going off in the Balkans." On October 9, shortly after arriving back in Washington, the Secretary of State told Davies that the United States had compromised on Poland, Finland, and Hungary, and would try to do the same thing on Rumania and Bulgaria. The next day he announced the dispatch to those two countries of a delegation headed by Mark Ethridge, publisher of the *Louisville Courier-Journal,* to check on the accuracy of State Department reports regarding Russian activities. The Secretary of State opposed Forrestal's suggestion that Truman publicly condemn Soviet policy, arguing that this would be an unnecessarily provocative move, and viewed as "a revelation" news from Ambassador Harriman late in October that Stalin really was upset over American

[55] C. P. Noyes notes, Truman-Stettinius conversation, October 22, 1945, Stettinius calendar notes, Stettinius MSS, Box 247.

policy in Japan. On October 31, four days after Truman's bellicose Navy Day speech, the Secretary of State told a New York audience that while the people of Eastern Europe should have the right to choose their own forms of government, the Soviet Union did have legitimate security interests there. The United States, he promised, would never support anti-Russian movements in that part of the world.[56]

Late in November, Byrnes proposed another meeting of the Big Three foreign ministers, to take place in Moscow before Christmas. The Secretary of State had found it difficult to press for more authority for American representatives in Rumania and Bulgaria while denying Russian requests for a role in the occupation of Japan, and was now prepared to arrange a compromise even over the objections of General MacArthur, the Supreme Allied Commander. Moreover, he realized that as long as the Rumanian and Bulgarian peace treaties remained unsigned, the Russians would have an excuse to keep troops in those countries. Byrnes had also concluded that Molotov himself had caused many of the procedural difficulties at London; by holding the new conference in Moscow the Secretary of State hoped to deal directly with Stalin, thus bypassing the obstinate Soviet foreign minister. The American attitude on the Balkans had not changed, Byrnes told British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, but if the Russians agreed to talk about that issue "I should think that that would be evidence of their willingness to reach some compromise." Bevin, who could be obstinate himself, objected strongly to the proposed meeting and agreed to attend only after Byrnes threatened to go to Moscow without him.[57]

The Secretary of State had also altered his tactics for dealing with Moscow on the subject of atomic energy. Byrnes had originally planned

[56] Bohlen minutes, Byrnes-Molotov conversations, September 28 and 30, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 437, 489; Stettinius calendar notes, September 28, 1945, Stettinius MSS, Box 247; Davies memorandum of conversation with Byrnes, October 9, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 22; *New York Times,* October 11, 1945; Forrestal Diary, October 16, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 101–2; Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly,* p. 108; Byrnes speech of October 31, 1945, *Department of State Bulletin,* XIII (November 4, 1945), 709–11. For Harriman's talks with Stalin about Japan, see Feis, *Contest over Japan,* pp. 51–77. For the Ethridge Mission, see Mark Ethridge and C. E. Black, "Negotiating on the Balkans, 1945–1947," in Dennett and Johnson, eds., *Negotiating with the Russians,* pp. 184–203.

[57] Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime,* pp. 318–19; Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly,* pp. 108–9; Byrnes to Bevin, November 27 and 29, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 582–83, 588–89. See also Byrnes's memoranda of conversations with Lord Halifax, November 29, 1945, and with Michael Wright, December 4, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 590–91, 593–95.

to present the Truman-Attlee-King proposal for international control at the first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in January, 1946, without consulting the Russians in advance. But the atomic scientists and several of their prominent supporters in Congress argued that the matter should be discussed with the USSR prior to that time. Benjamin V. Cohen and Leo Pasvolsky, two of Byrnes's closest advisers, recommended a similar course of action, as did the British. Byrnes yielded to these pressures and, on November 27, advised Bevin that the Moscow negotiations would also deal with atomic energy. The Secretary of State then organized a committee of advisers, headed by Cohen and Pasvolsky, to decide what he should tell the Russians.[58]

The draft proposal which Byrnes's advisers worked out adopted the four basic steps toward international control mentioned in the Truman-Attlee-King agreement. It differed significantly from that document, however, by failing to make completion of one stage an absolute requirement for implementation of the next: "successful international action with respect to any phase of the problem is not necessarily a prerequisite for undertaking affirmative action with respect to other phases." [59] This change of wording was of great importance, for conceivably scientific and technical information regarding atomic energy might now be exchanged prior to the establishment of foolproof safeguards. It is unclear whether or not this modification represented an effort by State Department officials to improve the chances of Russian acceptance. What is clear, however, is that this new formula seriously undermined the acceptability of the proposal to the Congress of the United States.

On December 10, 1945, the Secretary of State called in key members of the Senate Foreign Relations and Atomic Energy committees to brief them on what he proposed to do at Moscow. The senators were still

[58] Cohen and Pasvolsky to Byrnes, November 24, 1945, cited in Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* p. 470; Byrnes to Bevin, November 27, 1945, *FR: 1945;* II, 582–83. See also Byrnes's memorandum of a conversation with Lord Halifax, November 29, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 590; and a British *aide-mémoire* of that date, *ibid.,* pp. 77–78. Byrnes had told a group of reporters on November 21 that he intended to go directly to the General Assembly meeting in January without consulting the Russians in advance. (*New York Times,* November 22, 1945.) For the views of the atomic scientists and their supporters in Congress, see *ibid.,* November 17, 1945; Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* p. 470; and Smith, *A Peril and a Hope,* pp. 222–24.

[59] "Draft Proposals on Atomic Energy for Submission to the Soviet Government," December 10, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 92–96.

angry over Byrnes's handling of the Truman-Attlee-King agreement and resented his failure to seek their advice earlier—one senator commented that the Foreign Relations Committee had been created to "consult" with the Executive, not to be "informed" of what it had already decided to do. But the senators' anger stemmed from more than this lapse of protocol. They strongly criticized the State Department's draft proposal on atomic energy for leaving open the possibility of exchanging information before the institution of safeguards. Senator Vandenberg warned that the Senate would oppose giving up any scientific data "unless and until the Soviets are prepared to be 'policed' by UNO." Any other course of action would be "sheer appeasement." Senator Connally asked whether the Secretary of State had not reversed the proper order of procedure—should he not seek safeguards before exchanging scientific information? Upon learning that Byrnes had invited Dr. James B. Conant to serve as a consultant on atomic energy at Moscow, the Texas senator snorted irritably at the folly of entrusting such delicate missions to "college professors." Byrnes received this outburst of senatorial ire without comment, and two days later left for the Soviet Union. Feeling that they had made little impression on the Secretary of State, the senators asked for a meeting with the President himself.[60]

Truman met with Connally, Vandenberg, and their colleagues on December 14, 1945, two days after Byrnes's departure for Moscow. The President appeared surprised to learn that the State Department's draft proposals would permit the exchange of scientific and technical information prior to the establishment of safeguards, but when the senators suggested that Byrnes be instructed by radio to change his plan, Truman remained noncommittal. Vandenberg noted that the senators had at least made their protest: "We shall hold the Executive Department responsible. It is our unanimous opinion that the Byrnes formula must be *stopped.*" [61]

[60] Vandenberg Diary, December 10, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 227–28; Connally and Steinberg, *My Name Is Tom Connally,* pp. 289–90; *New York Times,* December 20 and 29, 1945. As had been the case with the Truman-Attlee-King agreement, Byrnes's tardiness in consulting the Senate resulted more from his habit of leaving policy undecided until the latest possible moment than from a desire to bypass Capitol Hill. Conant's appointment was also a last-minute affair; see his *My Several Lives,* pp. 476–77.

[61] Vandenberg Diary, December 11, 1945 [misdated], Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 229.

But the President did not ignore the senators' criticisms. He quickly ordered Acting Secretary of State Acheson, who had attended the meeting, to cable a full account of it to Byrnes in Moscow. On December 17, the Secretary of State replied, maintaining that he had never intended to make possible the exchange of information without safeguards, and promising to follow the more strictly worded formula of the Truman-Attlee-King agreement. When news of the senators' confrontations with Truman and Byrnes leaked to the press on December 20, the President, now reassured, sent the Secretary of State an expression of confidence.[62]

Surprisingly enough, Byrnes had less trouble winning Russian acceptance of the American plan for a United Nations Atomic Energy Commission than he did in securing congressional approval. The Russians showed little apparent interest in the question at Moscow, and aside from asking that the commission report to the Security Council instead of to the General Assembly, suggested no changes in the American plan. The conferees agreed that the commission would, by separate stages, make proposals to exchange basic scientific information, limit the use of atomic and other weapons of mass destruction, and set up effective safeguards. Repeating the Truman-Attlee-King formula, the agreement provided that "the work of the Commission should proceed by separate stages, the successful completion of each of which will develop the necessary confidence of the world before the next stage is undertaken." [63]

Byrnes's chief objective at Moscow was to resolve the impasse over Rumania and Bulgaria, so that work on peace treaties with Germany's former satellites could begin. The Ethridge report, presented to Byrnes on December 7, 1945, offered little reason for optimism. It stated frankly that "constant and vigorous intrusion [by the Russians] into the

[62] Acheson to Byrnes, December 15, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 609–10; Byrnes to Acheson, December 17, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 609*n;* Acheson to Byrnes, December 21, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 709–10; *New York Times,* December 20, 1945.

[63] Moscow Conference communiqué, December 27, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 822–24. A convenient summary of the negotiations on atomic energy at Moscow is in Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* pp. 475–76. Molotov seemed determined to minimize the importance of the bomb during the Moscow negotiations. He requested that the subject be moved from first to last place on the conference agenda, and took considerable delight in asking Conant whether he had an atomic bomb in his pocket. Stalin chided his foreign minister for his flippant attitude, however, and congratulated the American scientists on their "great invention." (Conant, *My Several Lives,* pp. 482–83; Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime,* pp. 336–37.)

internal affairs of these countries is so obvious to an impartial observer that Soviet denial of its existence can only be regarded as a reflection of the party line." The report noted that, according to present American policy, peace could come only if representative governments existed throughout Europe. To concede the Soviets a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe would only be to invite its extension. Unless the United States was prepared to abandon the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe, it should take steps to ensure its implementation. By the time the report reached him, however, Byrnes had decided to make another attempt at compromise with the Russians. For this reason he circulated the report privately, but refused to allow its publication.[64]

At Moscow, Byrnes and Molotov had no more luck in reaching an accord on Eastern Europe than they had had at London three months earlier. But the Secretary of State placed his main hope on a direct appeal to Stalin, and at his first meeting with the Russian leader on December 23 he secured the concessions he wanted. Stalin emphasized the Soviet Union's determination to have only friendly governments along its borders. He then conceded, however, that "perhaps the Bulgarian parliament could be advised to include some members of the loyal opposition in the new Government" and that "in the case of Rumania . . . it might be possible to make some changes . . . which would satisfy Mr. Byrnes." Byrnes jumped at the opportunity and rapidly worked out with Stalin an agreement calling for a three-power commission to go to Rumania and advise the government to take in two additional ministers. The Soviet government would itself propose a slight broadening of the Bulgarian regime.[65]

Stalin's concessions did nothing to weaken Russian influence in Eastern Europe—George F. Kennan aptly described them as "fig leaves of democratic procedure to hide the nakedness of Stalinist dictatorship." [66]

[64] "Summary Report on Soviet Policy in Rumania and Bulgaria," December 7, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 633–37; Ethridge and Black, "Negotiating on the Balkans," pp. 200–2.

[65] Record of the Byrnes-Stalin meeting of December 23, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 752–56. During this conversation Byrnes mentioned the Ethridge report, announcing that he might have to publish it if no accord was reached on Rumania and Bulgaria. Stalin replied that if this happened he would ask a Soviet journalist, Ilya Ehrenburg, to report publicly on conditions in those two countries. The Soviet leader assured Byrnes that Ehrenburg would be as "impartial" as Ethridge had been.

[66] Kennan, *Memoirs,* p. 284.

But the concessions had great symbolic importance for Byrnes. He could now say that the Russians had at least genuflected before the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe by agreeing to make the governments of Rumania and Bulgaria more representative, in much the same way that Stalin had bowed in the direction of the Yalta Polish agreement in May by agreeing to a token broadening of the Warsaw government. This would make it possible for Byrnes to justify extending diplomatic recognition to Rumania and Bulgaria, and to conclude peace treaties with them.

In return, the Secretary of State agreed to make token concessions on the issue of Japan. The United States would establish an "Allied Council," made up of representatives of the United States, the British Commonwealth, China, and the Soviet Union, which would consult with and advise General MacArthur on occupation measures. But this body was in no way comparable to the Allied Control Council in Germany—MacArthur was obliged to take its advice only if the "exigencies of the situation" permitted. The General himself was to decide when they did and when they did not. Just as the agreement on Eastern Europe allowed the Americans to save face while tacitly acknowledging Soviet control, so the Far Eastern accord allowed the Russians a token role in the occupation of Japan without in fact impairing American authority.[67]

The Moscow agreement indicated clearly that Byrnes had abandoned "atomic diplomacy." In order to secure any kind of agreement at all from the Russians, the Secretary of State had been forced to fall back upon the *quid pro quo* negotiating tactics he had employed at Potsdam. But the situation had changed profoundly since the summer of 1945: the critical manner in which leading Republicans and Democrats, as well as Truman himself, greeted Byrnes's efforts at Moscow indicated that compromise with the Soviet Union was no longer politically feasible. As a result, the United States government moved, during the first three months of 1946, into a fundamental reorientation of policy toward the Soviet Union.

[67] Moscow Conference communiqué, December 27, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 819. See also Feis, *Contest over Japan,* pp. 103–4.