9

Getting Tough with Russia: The Reorientation of American Policy, 1946

Byrnes felt that he had achieved much at Moscow. The Russians accepted his plan for a general peace conference and his list of states to be invited. The compromise arrangement on Rumania and Bulgaria, though vague, at least committed the Soviet Union on paper to the principle of self-determination. Stalin agreed to token participation in the occupation of Japan without challenging American control of that enterprise, and reiterated his recognition of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government in China, a gesture which seemed especially significant just as General George C. Marshall was embarking on his mission to try to end the civil war there. Much to Byrnes's surprise, the Russians accepted without significant modification the American plan for a United Nations Atomic Energy Commission which would begin work on international control. The foreign ministers failed to reach agreement only on the question of when the Russians would withdraw their troops from northern Iran, which they had occupied during the war. Consequently, the Secretary of State returned to the United States "far happier" with the

results of this meeting than with the outcome of the London Conference fifteen weeks earlier.[1]

But though the initial editorial reaction to Moscow was generally friendly, Byrnes quickly found himself under attack from leading Republicans and several of his own colleagues in the Truman Administration. Russian behavior over the past year had gradually convinced many Washington officials that Stalin had no interest in self-determination, the revival of world trade, or collective security. Only by negotiating with the Soviet Union from a position of strength, they felt, could the United States obtain the kind of peace settlement it wanted. Byrnes's refusal to compromise at London had pleased American advocates of a tough line, but they worried that at Moscow he had made concessions which the Russians could only interpret as a sign of weakness. Why, they asked, should the United States, sole possessor of the atomic bomb, continue to appease Moscow? [2]

This divergence over policy developed because of poor communication between the State Department, the White House, the Capitol Hill. Byrnes, overconfident of his abilities as a negotiator, had switched abruptly to more conciliatory tactics after the failure of the London Conference without giving congressional leaders or the President a clear idea of his intentions. Up to this point Truman, preoccupied with domestic problems, had allowed his secretary of state a free hand. But dissatisfaction with Byrnes's performance at Moscow forced the President to reassert his authority in the field of foreign affairs. Simultaneously, Republican leaders made it clear that any further compromises with the Soviet Union would cause them to launch a public attack on Administration policy. Byrnes, slowly realizing how far he had strayed from the prevailing mood in Washington, moved early in 1946 to repair his relations with the White House, Congress, and leading Republicans by reverting to a firmer position in his dealings with the Russians.

Confusion over Soviet intentions also contributed to the Truman Ad-

[1] Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly,* pp. 121–22. See also the *Washington Post,* December 26 and 28, 1945; and the Davies Diary, January 4, 1946, Davies MSS, Box 22.

[2] *Newsweek,* XXVII (January 7, 1946), 29; *Time,* XLVII (January 7, 1946), 19–20; Davies Diary, December 31, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 22. See also Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime,* p. 317; and the Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 42, January 8, 1946.

ministration's vacillating foreign policy. Without a convincing explanation of the motives underlying Russian behavior, Washington officials found it difficult to decide upon a consistent plan of action.[3] If Kremlin leaders were chiefly interested in guaranteeing Soviet security, opportunities still existed to resolve outstanding disputes. Truman had been operating on this assumption when he met Stalin at Potsdam, and Byrnes apparently adhered to it as late as December, 1945, in his talks with the Russians at Moscow. But other American officials were coming to feel that they had misjudged the Kremlin's policy: Soviet actions in Eastern Europe in 1945, together with the change in tactics by the international communist movement, convinced them that Moscow had embarked on a program of unlimited expansion which threatened the very survival of the United States and its Western allies. A series of alarming developments in February, 1946, lent credence to this view, as did a persuasive analysis of the relationship between ideology and Soviet diplomacy by George F. Kennan, the American chargé d'affaires in Moscow.

The convergence of these external and internal trends in late February and early March, 1946, produced a fundamental reorientation of United States policy toward the Soviet Union. Up to this time the Truman Administration, despite occasional outbursts of angry rhetoric, was still trying to resolve differences with Moscow through negotiation and compromise. In March, 1946, however, Administration officials began bringing their diplomacy into line with their rhetoric. From this time on American policy-makers regarded the Soviet Union not as an estranged ally but as a potential enemy, whose vital interests could not be recognized without endangering those of the United States. Truman and his advisers continued diplomatic contacts with the Russians, but they firmly resolved to offer no further concessions of the kind Byrnes had made at Moscow. The Secretary of State himself accurately described the new policy as one of "patience with firmness"; [4] in time it would come to be known by a less precise but more ominous term—"containment."

[3] On this point, see Joseph and Stewart Alsop, "We Have No Russian Policy," *Washington Post,* January 4, 1946.

[4] Curry, *Byrnes,* p. 210.

II

Truman's dissatisfaction with Byrnes's conduct of foreign policy had been growing for several months. Part of the difficulty was personal. According to one observer, Byrnes resented having been denied the Democratic vice-presidential nomination in 1944, and felt himself better qualified to occupy the White House than Truman. The President himself later acknowledged that he had chosen Byrnes to be secretary of state partly out of a sense of guilt over the 1944 episode. Whatever the reason for his appointment, Byrnes had clearly intended to be a strong secretary of state. As mobilization and reconversion director under Roosevelt, he had enjoyed virtually complete autonomy in organizing the wartime economy. This exceptional delegation of power, Truman believed, caused Byrnes to think that as secretary of state he could have a free hand in running foreign policy.[5]

During his first months in office, the Secretary of State showed an almost ostentatious desire to act as an independent agent. At the London Conference of Foreign Ministers, he refused to report back to the State Department. "Hell," he told the secretary of the American delegation, "I may tell the President sometime what happened, but I'm never going to tell the State Department about it." At the Moscow Conference in December, Byrnes remarked to Ambassador Harriman that he did not intend to send daily reports to Washington: "I don't trust the White House. It leaks. And I don't want any of this coming out in the papers until I get home." Byrnes did send Truman one direct dispatch from Moscow describing the progress of the meeting, but it gave the President little information he did not already have from the newspapers. Truman considered this an inadequate account from a cabinet member to the Chief Executive: "It was more like one partner in business telling the other that his business trip was progressing well and not to worry." [6]

[5] Daniels, *Man of Independence,* p. 308; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 546–47. See also Acheson, *Present at the Creation,* pp. 136–37.

[6] Interview with Theodore C. Achilles, Dulles Oral History Project; Cabell Phillips interview with Harriman, quoted in Phillips, *The Truman Presidency,* p. 148; Byrnes to Truman, December 24, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 760; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p.

Byrnes's reputation as a compromiser also caused alarm among Administration advisers. Senator Tom Connally viewed his appointment as secretary of state with considerable skepticism because he felt that the South Carolinian was "devoted to expediency." The publisher of the *Army-Navy Journal* warned Truman's press secretary in December that Byrnes, overly anxious to reach agreements with the Russians, might make concessions of which the American people would not approve. Harriman developed strong doubts about Byrnes after the London Conference, and resolved never to accept another diplomatic post under him. Kennan, Harriman's counselor in the Soviet Union, observed Byrnes closely at Moscow and concluded that he had no fixed objectives: "His main purpose is to achieve some sort of an agreement, he doesn't much care what. The realities behind this agreement, since they concern only such people as Koreans, Rumanians, and Iranians, about whom he knows nothing, do not concern him. He wants an agreement for its political effect at home." When the Moscow decisions were announced, the United States mission staff in Rumania regarded them as a "sell-out," and for a time considered resigning en masse. The American ambassador in Italy, Alexander Kirk, told C. L. Sulzberger in the spring of 1946 that Byrnes was "awful" and had "given far too much away to the Russians." [7]

Admiral William D. Leahy, the crusty Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, criticized Byrnes with particular vehemence. One of the first of Truman's advisers to advocate a tough policy toward the Soviet Union, Leahy by the end of 1945 had come to regard almost anyone who would consider agreement with the Russians as an appeaser. Byrnes's efforts to settle the Chinese civil war by encouraging Chiang Kai-shek to bring communists into his government caused Leahy to wonder, in the privacy of his diary, whether the Secretary of State might not be under the influence of "communist" elements in the State Depart-

549. On Byrnes's administrative methods, see also Acheson, *Present at the Creation,* p. 163; *The Journals of David E. Lilienthal,* II, 159; and Feis, *Contest over Japan,* pp. 124–26.

[7] Connally and Steinberg, *My Name Is Tom Connally,* p. 289; John C. O'Laughlin to Charles G. Ross, December 18, 1945, Truman MSS, OF 386; Kennan Diary, December 19, 1945, quoted in Kennan, *Memoirs,* pp. 287–88. See also the Sulzberger Diary, January 24, 26, April 22, 1946, quoted in Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles,* pp. 292–93, 311.

ment. The Moscow agreement seemed to confirm his suspicions: both the State Department and the new Labor government in Britain, he wrote, were bowing before Russian demands in a manner resembling what Chamberlain had done at Munich.[8]

Truman himself had expressed concern over his secretary of state's attitude shortly before Byrnes left for Moscow. He was fond of Byrnes, the President told Joseph E. Davies, a mutual friend, but Byrnes was a "conniver." Truman expected to have to do some "conniving" himself "to get the boat steady." Davies attributed Truman's displeasure with Byrnes partly to the Secretary of State's carelessness about keeping the President informed, partly to indications that "someone had been needling him against Byrnes." At Truman's request, Davies saw Byrnes on December 11, but apparently failed to convey to the Secretary a full expression of the President's mood.[9]

Byrnes's decision to release the Moscow Conference communiqué before consulting the White House further irritated Truman, who awaited the Secretary's return from the Soviet Union in an angry mood. Upon landing in Washington on December 29, 1945, Byrnes instructed the State Department to arrange for a radio report to the nation. At the same time he asked the White House for an appointment with the President. Truman replied pointedly through his press secretary that Byrnes should see the Chief Executive before reporting to the nation. Accordingly, Byrnes met Truman that evening on the presidential yacht *Williamsburg.* Recollections differ as to precisely what took place. Truman recalled that he took Byrnes into a stateroom and complained about the Secretary's inadequate reporting of developments in Moscow. "I said it was shocking that a communiqué should be issued in Washington announcing a foreign-policy development of major importance that I had never heard of. I said I would not tolerate a repetition of such conduct."

Byrnes himself, however, remembered receiving criticism only from Admiral Leahy, not Truman. George Allen, director of the Reconstruc-

[8] Curry, *Byrnes,* p. 342; Leahy Diary, November 28, December 11, 26, 28, 1945, January 1, 1946, Leahy MSS. There is some evidence that Leahy deliberately leaked information critical of Byrnes to certain favored newspaper columnists. See the Davies Journal, January 28, February 5, 1946, Davies MSS; and Tristam Coffin, *Missouri Compromise,* pp. 40–41.

[9] Davies Journal, December 8 and 11, 1945, Davies MSS, Box 22. See also Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors,* pp. 300–1.

tion Finance Corporation, was present on board the *Williamsburg* and recalled no evident bitterness between Truman and Byrnes. Allen did receive the clear impression, however, that Truman had decided "to put an end to the holdover policy of Russian appeasement." Another guest on the *Williamsburg,* Clark Clifford, remembered no particular hostility between the President and the Secretary of State but noted that "all through dinner Leahy, in a really effective and gentle manner to which Byrnes could not take exception, had the needle in him." Leahy himself recorded in his diary that he asked Byrnes repeatedly what benefits the United States got out of the Moscow agreement, but that Byrnes had been unable to tell him. Truman had shown great dissatisfaction with Byrnes before his arrival on the yacht, Leahy observed, but the Secretary of State had apparently managed for the time being to soothe the Chief Executive.[10]

Whatever Truman told Byrnes on board the *Williamsburg,* there is no doubt that the President disliked the Moscow agreement. As he went over the conference documents Byrnes had left with him, Truman later wrote, "it became abundantly clear to me that the successes of the Moscow conference were unreal." The President particularly objected to Byrnes's failure to secure concessions from the Russians on the international control of atomic energy and on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Iran. Truman brooded over these developments for a week, and then on January 5, 1946, called Byrnes to the White House for a reprimand. Reading from a memorandum written out in longhand, Truman told the Secretary of State that although he would like to delegate as much authority as possible to cabinet members, he did not intend to abdicate his right as President to make final decisions. For this reason, it was vital for Byrnes to keep the President constantly informed as to the course of diplomatic negotiations.

The President then launched into a violent attack on Russian policy. He had only that morning read the Ethridge report on conditions in Rumania and Bulgaria, and was determined not to recognize these two governments until their composition had been radically changed. He called for a vigorous American protest against Russian actions in Iran,

[10] Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime,* pp. 342–43; Truman, *Year of Decisions,* p. 550; Jonathan Daniels interviews with George Allen and Clark Clifford, cited in Daniels, *Man of Independence,* pp. 309–11; Leahy Diary, December 29, 1945, Leahy MSS. See also Acheson, *Present at the Creation,* p. 136. For the Moscow Conference communiqué, see the *Department of State Bulletin,* XIII (December 30, 1945), 1027–32.

which were "an outrage if I ever saw one." He charged that the Russians intended to invade Turkey and seize the Black Sea Straits. Truman did not think the United States should "play" at compromise any longer: "Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making. Only one language do they understand—'how many divisions have you?' . . . I'm tired of babying the Soviets." [11]

Truman's outburst at Byrnes stemmed from more than bruised pride over the Secretary's failure to consult him. It indicated clearly the President's growing determination to put into effect a firmer policy toward the Soviet Union. An arrangement whereby the Russians would convey the appearance of self-determination within their sphere of influence had seemed acceptable enough in Poland in May of 1945, but by December, when Byrnes agreed to similar compromises in Rumania and Bulgaria, public trust in Russian intentions had badly eroded. Opinion polls showed that at the time of Japan's surrender, 54 percent of a national sample had been willing to trust the Russians to cooperate with the United States in the postwar world. Two months later, following the failure of the London Conference, this figure had dropped to 44 percent. By the end of February, 1946, it would stand at 35 percent.[12]

For a man of his long experience in domestic affairs, Byrnes seemed oddly unaware of this progressive deterioration of faith in the good intentions of the Soviet Union. The praise he won for his firm stand at London apparently surprised him, as did the criticism he incurred for his compromises at Moscow.[13] Truman, however, fully realized the importance of this gradual shift in opinion, especially in view of increasingly ominous indications that Republicans might try to capitalize on it in the 1946 congressional elections. The wartime policy of conceding whatever

[11] Truman memorandum for conversation with Byrnes, January 5, 1946, Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 551–52. Byrnes denied ever having read or listened to this memorandum. George Curry, Byrnes's biographer, suggests that Truman did not actually read the memorandum to Byrnes, but sought to express his concern in a less forceful manner. Byrnes himself did not take it as a reprimand, and claims that if he had read the document he would have resigned on the spot. (Curry, *Byrnes,* pp. 189–90.)

[12] American Institute of Public Opinion polls of August 8, October 17, 1945, and February 27, 1946, cited in Cantril and Strunk, eds., *Public Opinion,* p. 371. In each of these national samples, between 13 and 16 percent of those polled were undecided as to whether Russian cooperation could be expected.

[13] Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime,* p. 317; memorandum of a conversation between Byrnes and Georges Bidault, May 1, 1946, *FR: 1946,* II, 204.

was necessary to reach agreement with the Russians was no longer politically feasible; the President made it clear that the Secretary of State would have to accustom himself to a less conciliatory approach.

II

Between September of 1945 and March of 1946 Republican criticism of Administration diplomacy reached its greatest intensity since before Pearl Harbor. The bipartisan foreign policy which Roosevelt and Hull had so painstakingly constructed now seemed to be falling apart. Secretary of State Byrnes, who strongly supported bipartisanship, found himself under increasingly violent attack from prominent Republicans who had grown disenchanted with his Russian policy. Byrnes eventually succeeded in placating these Republican critics, just as he placated Truman and his other critics within the Administration. To do this, however, the Secretary had to repress his strong inclination to deal with the Kremlin in the same way that he had dealt with the United States Congress—by practicing the politics of compromise.

Initial indications of G.O.P. dissatisfaction came in October, 1945, when James Reston reported that "leading members of the Republican Party" resented Byrnes's failure to ask their advice before formulating diplomatic policy. Reston's story left little doubt that one of the party leaders to whom he referred was John Foster Dulles, the unofficial Republican spokesman on foreign affairs. In an effort to bolster bipartisanship, Byrnes had invited Dulles to serve on the American delegation to the London Foreign Ministers' Conference. The Secretary of State sought no suggestions in advance of the meeting, however, leading Dulles to conclude that his only function had been to place a Republican stamp of approval on policies already decided upon by the Administration. Dulles also objected to Byrnes's penchant for compromise and, according to the testimony of at least two observers, threatened to lead the Republican Party in a public attack on the Secretary of State if he yielded to Soviet demands.[14]

[14] *New York Times,* October 9, 1945; interviews with Carl W. McCardle and Theodore C. Achilles, Dulles Oral History Project. See also John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace,* pp. 29–30. In a conversation with Stettinius on October 1, 1945, Dulles said that he was "discouraged and unhappy" about the way the foreign ministers'

During the following months prominent G.O.P. leaders criticized Administration policy with increasing frequency. The Republican members of Congress issued a statement on December 5, 1945, calling for greater efforts to fulfill wartime pledges to small nations. Governor Dwight Green of Illinois told the Republican National Committee that the party should not hesitate to protest the "shameful betrayal of Poland." Senator Homer Capehart of Indiana grumbled that Byrnes's concessions at Moscow reminded him "of Chamberlain and his umbrella appeasement of Hitler." In January, 1946, House Minority Leader Joseph W. Martin proclaimed Republican opposition to "any betrayal of the small nations of the world in the making of the peace." [15]

The views of Senator Arthur H. Vandenburg of Michigan would, more than those of any other individual, determine the Republican position on policy toward the Soviet Union. Early in 1945 Vandenburg had strongly criticized the Yalta accords on Eastern Europe, but after President Roosevelt sent him to the San Francisco Conference, he formed a close working relationship with Secretary of State Stettinius and played a vital role in rallying Senate support for the United Nations Charter. Truman's decision to replace Stettinius with Byrnes threatened to undo the Administration's close ties with Vandenburg. The Michigan senator distrusted Byrnes because "his whole life has been a career of compromise." The South Carolinian had gained his great influence in the Senate and later with Roosevelt through his ability to conciliate, but Vandenberg's experience at San Francisco had taught him that the only way to deal with the Russians was to be firm and unyielding. Accordingly, as Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., observed, "the very quality for which Byrnes had been best known in the Senate was the one that Vandenberg feared might be Byrnes's undoing in the international political field." [16]

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meeting had gone. While he expressed no direct criticism of Byrnes, Dulles did say that the Secretary of State was "extremely nervous, . . . tired out and exhausted, and facing this failure of his first mission on his own was getting under his skin." Dulles then praised the "nerve and guts" Stettinius had shown at San Francisco by risking a breakup of the conference rather than give in to Russian demands, and said that he was still telling all the Republicans about it. (Stettinius calendar notes, October 1, 1945, Stettinius MSS, Box 247.)

[15] *New York Times,* December 6, 1945; *Newsweek,* XXVI (December 17, 1945), 36; *Washington Post,* December 29, 1945; *New Republic,* CXIV (February 11, 1946), 172.

[16] Vandenberg to Mrs. Vandenberg, undated, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 225; *ibid.,* p. 243.

Vandenberg also distrusted Byrnes because the new Secretary of State refused to ask his advice on foreign policy. Dean Acheson, who understood the Michigan senator well, observed that one could get Vandenberg to agree to almost anything provided only that one patiently consulted with him in advance. Byrnes's reluctance to perform this civility got him into as much trouble with Vandenberg as it did with Truman. The Secretary of State chose Dulles instead of Vandenberg to represent the Republican Party at London. Even worse, he repeatedly failed to seek the counsel of Vandenberg and other senators while formulating policy on the international control of atomic energy, a matter about which Vandenberg felt strongly. Consequently, the Michigan senator began the year 1946, in the words of his son and confidant, "with deep reservations . . . regarding the consistency and clear-sighted self-interest of our policy as practiced by Byrnes." [17]

In December of 1945, Truman asked both Vandenberg and Dulles to represent the Republican Party at the first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, which was to take place in London the following month. Vandenberg wrote to Dulles that he did not want to go to London, but, he conceded, "it may be my duty to go along." Dubious about his ability to work with Byrnes, the Michigan senator reserved his right to resign from the delegation if he disagreed with the Administration's proposals on the international control of atomic energy. Privately he let it be known that he would come home sooner than anyone expected "if at London I collide with a Truman-Byrnes appeasement policy which I cannot stomach." [18]

Vandenberg did come close to resigning when he read the agreement on international control which Byrnes had made at Moscow. He explained to Senator Brien McMahon, a fellow member of the Senate Atomic Energy Committee:

It listed *four* stages for the work of the UNO Commission—"disclosures" *FIRST* and total "security" LAST. Then it said that "the work of the Com-

[17] Dean Acheson, *Sketches from Life of Men I have Known,* pp. 126–27; Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* p. 237. Byrnes has said that he selected Dulles to go to London instead of Vandenberg because Dulles "had not been active in partisan politics." (Interview with James F. Byrnes, Dulles Oral History Project.) For Vandenberg's criticisms of Byrnes's policy on the international control of atomic energy, see chapter 8.

[18] Vandenberg to Dulles, December 19, 1945, and Truman, December 21, 1945, Vandenberg, ed., *Private Papers,* pp. 230, 232; Vandenberg to John W. Blodgett, December 24, 1945, Vandenberg MSS.

mission should proceed by separate stages" and that each "stage" should be completed before the next is undertaken. It seemed to me that this could be read in no other way than that the precise thing is to happen against which both *our* Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee is so earnestly opposed. I felt that I had no right to go to London, as a Senate spokesman, under any such instructions to promote any such objectives.

To another friend, Vandenberg described the Moscow communiqué as "one more typical American 'give away' on this subject." The senator communicated his displeasure to Acting Secretary of State Acheson, who quickly set up an appointment with the President on December 28.[19]

Truman and Acheson assured Vandenberg that the Moscow statement meant that adequate security arrangements would accompany each stage in the establishment of international control. With Truman's approval, Vandenberg issued a public statement making this point clear. These reassurances made it possible for the Michigan senator to accompany the American delegation to London: "Indeed," he wrote Senator McMahon, "the circumstances *now* probably *demand* that I go." Since a literal reading of the Moscow communiqué would not include Truman's qualifications, it was vital, in Vandenberg's view, that this document not be made the basis of the proposal to be presented to the General Assembly.[20]

At London, both Vandenberg and Dulles worried over the Secretary of State's apparent willingness to conciliate the Russians and exerted pressure on him to take harder positions. Vandenberg told *Newsweek* correspondent Edward Weintal: "Thank heavens that Jimmy Byrnes hates disagreements, because I don't know where I would be if he decided to continue this fight." *Newsweek* later reported Vandenberg's fear that the Secretary of State "might be tempted to yield on vital issues for harmony's sake." Eleanor Roosevelt, another American representative at London, wrote privately that "Secy. Byrnes is afraid of his own delegation." Byrnes returned from London deeply apprehensive about the future of bipartisanship. Dulles, he charged, had leaked to reporters the fact that there had been disagreement among the United States delegates. Vandenberg was upset over accusations from fellow Republicans

[19] Vandenberg to McMahon, January 2, 1946, and C. E. Hutchinson, December 29, 1945, Vandenberg MSS.

[20] *New York Times,* December 29, 1945; Leahy Diary, December 28, 1945, Leahy MSS; Vandenberg to McMahon, January 2, 1946, Vandenberg MSS.

that he had become an "appeaser" by working with Byrnes, and was also looking for a way out of bipartisan cooperation. "The fact had to be faced," the Secretary of State told his colleagues in the cabinet, "that Vandenberg's—and for that matter Dulles's—activities from now on could be viewed as being conducted on a political and partisan basis." [21]

Public statements which Dulles and Vandenberg made on their return from London gave Byrnes ample cause for concern. While Vandenberg expressed optimism regarding the new world organization's prospects, he criticized the timidity of American policy:

> The United States must not be a silent partner in this cooperative enterprise. It is our right and it is our duty to speak in these councils just as firmly and just as earnestly for ideals of justice and the fundamentals of freedom as it is for others in the UNO to assert their viewpoints. I hope to see the Government of the United States more firmly assert its moral leadership in these respects.

Stettinius later explained to Cordell Hull that "Van is pretty sore on not being taken into camp a little bit more, not only in London but in Washington too. He and Jimmy [Byrnes] are not getting on at all well. . . . Van . . . says collaboration at the present time is just being told about it the night before it goes into the newspaper." Dulles, in speeches at Princeton University and before the Foreign Policy Association in New York, complained that the Administration had chosen its delegation at the last minute and had given it no meaningful tasks to perform. Future delegations should be allowed time to develop policies which would be "realistic and significant and expressive of the righteous faith of the best of America." *Newsweek* reported late in February that both Vandenberg and Dulles were angry at Byrnes and might refuse to serve on any more delegations with him.[22]

James Reston, who had called attention to Republican discontent with Administration foreign policy in the fall of 1945, found it even

[21] Interview with Edward Weintal, Dulles Oral History Project; *Newsweek,* XXVII (January 21, 1946), 39–40; Eleanor Roosevelt to Bernard Baruch, January 16, 1946, Baruch MSS, "Selected Correspondence"; Forrestal Diary, January 29, 1946, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* p. 132. See also the Stettinius calendar notes, January 7, 1946, Stettinius MSS, Box 247.

[22] *New York Times,* February 17, 23, March 2, 1946; Stettinius calendar notes, March 1, 1946, Stettinius MSS, Box 247; *Newsweek,* XXVII (March 11, 1946), 19.

greater after the London United Nations meeting. Republicans objected, he noted, to Administration insistence that members of the American delegation carry out State Department policies, even though they had not been consulted on them in advance. But G.O.P. dissatisfaction grew out of substantive as well as procedural considerations: "Republicans seem to favor a bolder and what they believe would be a much more forthright policy of leadership in world affairs than the Administration is now following." The 1946 congressional elections were approaching. Republican leaders, scenting victory, had no desire to associate themselves with a policy of "appeasement" which might hurt them at the polls.[23]

Republican criticism reached a climax on February 27, 1946, when Vandenberg rose on the floor of the Senate to express his feelings. "What is Russia up to now?" he demanded:

> We ask it in Manchuria. We ask it in Eastern Europe and the Dardanelles. . . . We ask it in the Baltic and the Balkans. We ask it in Poland. . . . We ask it in Japan. We ask it sometimes even in connection with events in our own United States. What is Russia up to now?

Vandenberg asserted that two rival ideologies, democracy and communism, now found themselves face to face. They could live together in harmony, but only

> if the United States speaks as plainly upon all occasions as Russia does; if the United States just as vigorously sustains its own purposes and its ideals upon all occasions as Russia does; if we abandon this miserable fiction, often encouraged by our own fellow-travellers, that we somehow jeopardize the peace if our candor is as firm as Russia's always is; and if we assume a moral leadership which we have too frequently allowed to lapse.

The United States should draw a line, Vandenberg proclaimed, beyond which it would not compromise. Then it should make clear, through plain speaking, precisely where that line lay. "Where is right? Where is justice? There let America take her stand."

The Michigan senator praised the "sterling services" at London of his Democratic counterpart, Senator Connally, the "distinguished" conduct of the new American ambassador to the United Nations, Stettinius, the "sturdy" manner of British Foreign Secretary Bevin, the "able" perform-

[23] *New York Times*, February 26, 1946.

ance of French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault, and even the "brilliant" Soviet representative, Andrei Vishinsky, "one of the ablest statesmen I have ever seen in action." But he pointedly avoided any praise for Secretary of State Byrnes, an example, Arthur Krock noted, of "derogation by omission." When Vandenberg finished speaking, the Senate and the galleries stood and applauded, while a large group of colleagues lined up to shake his hand.[24]

Vandenberg's speech clearly served notice on the Truman Administration that if it continued the conciliatory policy which Byrnes had employed at Moscow and at the General Assembly meeting in London, it could not expect further support from the Republican Party. The prospect of congressional elections less than seven months away made this threat seem particularly ominous. What Vandenberg and his fellow Republicans did not know, however, was that the President and his advisers had already decided to implement the hard line which the G.O.P. had called for. An important new analysis of the influence of ideology on Soviet behavior had given Administration officials the rationale they needed for a "get tough with Russia" policy. At the moment Vandenberg was speaking, State Department speechwriters were placing the finishing touches on the first public statement of the Administration's new position.

III

American officials had been worrying about the relationship between communism and Soviet foreign policy for some time. Ambassador Harriman, who had never taken too seriously the abolition of the Comintern, reported as early as January, 1945, that the Russians were using local communist organizations as one means of extending their influence over neighboring countries, but he still interpreted this activity as an effort to ensure the security of the Soviet Union. By April of that year, however, Harriman had become convinced that ideology had replaced security as the chief determinant of Soviet policy. "The outward thrust of Commu-

[24] *Congressional Record,* February 27, 1946, pp. 1692–95. See also the *New York Times,* February 28 and March 1, 1946; and the *New Republic,* CXIV (March 11, 1946), 335–36.

nism [is] not dead," he told Navy Secretary Forrestal; "we might well have to face an ideological warfare just as vigorous and dangerous as Fascism or Nazism." [25]

The apparent abandonment of "popular front" tactics by the international communist movement alarmed government leaders, just as it did members of Congress. State Department officials attached great significance to Jacques Duclos's attack on the Communist Party of the United States, regarding it as clear evidence that Moscow had decided to resume its efforts to spread world revolution. In June of 1945, the department prepared a long report for President Truman on international communism. Taking note of recent developments in the French, Italian, and American parties, the analysis concluded that communism posed a serious challenge to the government of the United States. American communists could be expected to attack the Truman Administration for having abandoned Roosevelt's policies. Communists would attempt to gain confidential information by infiltrating sympathizers into sensitive government positions. Communist-inspired labor disputes would break out. In Europe, communists would attempt to impede the operations of American occupation forces. The report advised treating United States communists as an "un-American" fifth column group owing allegiance to a foreign power. It predicted that party members would try to portray any action taken against them as anti-Soviet, but argued that decisive moves against domestic subversion might actually improve relations with Russia by demonstrating "the inherent strength of this country." [26]

George F. Kennan warned from Moscow in July, 1945, that the abolition of the Comintern had in no way weakened Moscow's control over the international communist movement. Foreign communists had always demonstrated total loyalty to Moscow's orders, he maintained, even when these ran counter to the best interests of their own countries. Undersecretary of State Joseph Grew echoed Kennan's conclusions: "Evidence has been accumulating for some time that [the] Communist In-

[25] Harriman to Stettinius, January 10, 1945, *FR: Yalta,* pp. 450–51; Forrestal Diary, April 20, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* p. 47. See also Harriman to Stettinius, April 4, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 817–20.

[26] Memorandum by Raymond E. Murphy, special assistant to the Director of European Affairs, Department of State, on "Possible Resurrection of Communist International, Resumption of Extreme Leftist Activities, Possible Effect on United States," June 2, 1945, *FR: Potsdam,* I, 267–80. For the Duclos article, see chapter 8.

ternational is being reactivated on a regional basis." Communist parties throughout the world were taking advantage of the vacuum left by the defeat of Germany and inevitable postwar dislocations to win support for their cause. Absence of a direct link with Moscow only made their efforts more efficient. Secretary of State Byrnes suggested at Potsdam that differences in ideology between the Soviet Union and the United States were so pronounced that peaceful relations between the two countries might be impossible. Byrnes did not fully accept this pessimistic appraisal, as his subsequent behavior at Moscow made clear, but he was sufficiently concerned about the possibility of internal subversion to order a discreet purge of questionable elements within the Department of State in the fall of 1945.[27]

No one within the government took these indications of a revived communist movement more seriously than did James V. Forrestal, secretary of the navy. He wrote in May, 1945, that "we must face our diplomatic decisions from here on with the consciousness that half and maybe all of Europe might be communistic by the end of the next winter." One month later he told Harry Hopkins and Lord Halifax, the British ambassador, that the United States could work with the Russians only if they had given up their old intention of communizing the world. Forrestal clearly ascribed Soviet behavior to ideology, not to a desire for security. He pointed out to Senator Homer Ferguson that

> the bolsheviks have the advantage over us of having a clear outline of economic philosophy, amounting almost to religion, which they believe is the only solution to the government of man. It is the Marxian dialectic; it is as incompatible with democracy as was Nazism or Fascism because it rests upon the willingness to apply force to gain the end, whether that force is applied externally or by internal commotion.

Forrestal noted that he had not had much time to think about this problem, but that someone within the government should be thinking about it.[28]

[27] Kennan to Byrnes, July 15, 1945, *FR: 1945,* V, 866–67; Grew to Kennan, July 25, 1945, *ibid.,* pp. 872–73; Walter Brown notes of a conversation with Byrnes, July 24, 1945, quoted in Curry, *Byrnes,* p. 345. For Byrnes's departmental "purge," see *ibid.,* pp. 140–44.

[28] Forrestal Diary, May 14 and June 30, 1945, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 57–58, 72; Forrestal to Ferguson, May 14, 1945, *ibid.,* p. 57. See also Arnold A. Rogow, *James Forrestal: A Study of Personality, Politics, and Policy,* chapter 4.

Toward the end of 1945, Forrestal commissioned Professor Edward F. Willett of Smith College to prepare a report on the relationship between communism and Soviet foreign policy. This was a vital topic, the Navy Secretary wrote Walter Lippmann, "because to me the fundamental question in respect to our relations with Russia is whether we are dealing with a nation or a religion." Willett's paper stated that the ultimate goals of communism were well known; what was not clear was whether the leaders of the Soviet Union still adhered to that doctrine. If they did not, then there was at least a possibility of settling outstanding differences. But if the Kremlin had firmly committed itself to communism, its objectives would be so diametrically opposed to those of the United States "as to make warfare between the two nations seem inevitable." Another of Forrestal's advisers argued that while the Russians might still give primary emphasis to maintaining their own security, it looked as though Stalin would not consider himself secure as long as capitalism survived anywhere in the world. "We are trying to preserve a world in which a capitalistic-democratic method can continue," Forrestal wrote early in 1946, "whereas if Russian adherence to truly Marxian dialectics continues their interest lies in a collapse of this system." [29]

On February 9, 1946, in Moscow, Joseph Stalin made a rare public speech in which he stressed the incompatibility of communism and capitalism. World War II had broken out, the Soviet leader asserted, because of the uneven rate of development in capitalist economies. War could have been avoided had some method existed for periodically redistributing raw materials and markets between nations according to need. No such method could exist, however, under capitalism. Stalin clearly implied that future wars were inevitable until the world economic system was reformed, that is, until communism supplanted capitalism as the prevailing form of economic organization. Emphasizing how rapid economic development under the Soviet Union's first three Five-Year Plans

[29] Memorandum by E. F. Willett on "Dialectical Materialism and Russian Objectives," January 14, 1946, Forrestal MSS, Box 17, "Russia study" folder; memorandum by Thomas B. Inglis on "Soviet Capabilities and Possible Intentions," January 21, 1946, *ibid.*, Box 24, "Russia" folder; Forrestal diary, January 2, 1946, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, p. 127. Forrestal circulated Willett's memorandum widely among government officials and such key nonofficial advisers as Walter Lippmann, Henry Luce, and Bernard Baruch. (*Ibid.*, p. 128; Vincent Davis, *Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, 1943–1946*, pp. 221–22, 328.)

had made possible victory over Germany, he called for three postwar Five-Year Plans, so that "our country [will] be insured against any eventuality." [30]

Sympathetic American observers of the Soviet Union interpreted Stalin's speech as an attempt to rally support within his country for the new Five-Year Plan. The Soviet dictator, they contended, had to stress the existence of dangers from the outside world to justify to his people the difficult sacrifices which the new plan would demand. Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace viewed the address as a friendly challenge to prove that the American economic system could work without frequent depressions.[31]

Most observers, however, agreed with *Time,* which described the speech as "the most warlike pronouncement uttered by any top-rank statesman since V-J Day." The Russians had abandoned the "soft" policy they had followed during the war, the magazine asserted, and were now returning to the slogans and tactics of world revolution. The *New York Times* noted editorially that Stalin's address would disappoint those who assumed that communism and capitalism could coexist peacefully in the postwar period. Ambassador Harriman, arriving back in Washington at the end of his three-year tour of duty in Moscow, told Admiral Leahy that the primary objective of Soviet foreign policy was now to extend communist ideology to other parts of the world. Even liberals like Eric Sevareid and William O. Douglas saw ominous overtones in Stalin's speech. Sevareid wrote in March:

> The attitude of the American Communist Party . . . coupled with the line taken by Communists in France, England, South American countries and other places, . . . make it as clear as daylight that the comintern, formalized or not, is back in effective operation. If you can brush aside Stalin's speech of February 9, you are a braver man than I am.

Douglas told Forrestal simply that Stalin's speech constituted "the Declaration of World War III." Forrestal himself from this time on appar-

[30] *Vital Speeches,* XII (March 1, 1946), 300–4.

[31] *New Republic,* CXIV (February 18, 1946), 235–36; Raymond Gram Swing broadcast of February 11, 1946, Swing MSS, Box 29; Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 45, February 26, 1946; *New York Times,* February 20, 1946.

ently concluded that it would be impossible for democracy and communism to coexist.[32]

Stalin's February 9 address came at an extremely tense period in Soviet-American relations. Washington officials worried over the apparent determination of the Russian government to retain troops in Iran and Manchuria. In the United Nations Security Council the Soviet Union had just used its veto for the first time, not on a matter vital to its national security, but on a relatively minor issue connected with the presence of Anglo-French forces in Syria and Lebanon. On February 16, 1946, news of the Canadian spy case broke with the announcement from Ottawa of the arrest of twenty-two individuals on charges of trying to steal information on the atomic bomb for the Soviet Union. Several days later, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and General Leslie R. Groves admitted to a Senate committee that the Russians had obtained secret data on the bomb through the Canadian espionage operation.[33]

The Canadian spy case frightened Americans not only because it involved the atomic bomb but also because it seemed to indicate a link between Soviet espionage activities and the world communist movement. *Time* noted darkly that "there is no doubt that Russian Communism holds a peculiar attraction for some scientists and technicians." Representative John Rankin warned that the spy ring extended "throughout the United States and is working through various Communist front organizations," but that the House Un-American Activities Committee was on its trail. Admiral Leahy expressed the hope that the spy case would expose some of the communists who he believed had infiltrated the State Department. The Canadian incident greatly strengthened the

[32] *Time,* XLVII (February 18, 1946), 29–30; *New York Times,* February 11, 1946; Leahy Diary, February 21, 1946, Leahy MSS; Sevareid to Harry Snydermann, March 22, 1946, Sevareid MSS, Box 1; Forrestal Diary, February 17, 1946, Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 134–35. For the State Department's reaction to Stalin's speech, see *FR: 1946,* VI, 695*n.*

[33] *New York Times,* February 17, 1946; Hewlett and Anderson, *The New World,* p. 501. The February 16 announcement had been stimulated, in part, by a Drew Pearson radio broadcast on February 3 which had revealed some details of the case. Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King believed that the Pearson account had been officially "inspired": "I may be wrong but I have a feeling that there is a desire at Washington that this information should get out." (Pickersgill and Forster, *The Mackenzie King Record, 1945–1946,* pp. 133–35.)

argument of those within and outside the Administration who had been calling for a firmer policy toward the Soviet Union. As the *New Republic* lamented, the episode played into the hands of "Army officers and reactionary Congressmen, whose entire answer to the atomic-bomb question is unlimited bomb production in this country and unlimited espionage in other countries." [34]

Two weeks after Stalin's speech, and one week after news of the spy case broke, there arrived at the State Department a long cable from George F. Kennan, the American chargé d'affaires in Moscow, analyzing the motives behind Soviet behavior. Kennan had developed strong feelings about communism while serving in the Moscow Embassy during the 1930s: "I was never able to accept or condone the stony-hearted fanaticism that was prepared to condemn . . . entire great bodies of people . . . for no other reason than that their members had been born into certain stations of life." Returning to Moscow to serve under Harriman in 1944, Kennan soon found himself at odds with the prevailing policy of cooperation with the Russians. Repeatedly he bombarded the State Department with unsolicited critical analyses of Soviet policy, couched in discursive literary language. These efforts made no impression whatsoever in Washington, if, indeed, they were ever read. By February of 1946, however, the mood had changed. Wartime collaboration had collapsed, and Ambassador Harriman was on his way home for good. Kennan, left in charge of the Moscow Embassy, was surprised to receive a cable from an exasperated State Department soliciting his opinion on why the Russians behaved the way they did.

"They had asked for it. Now, by God, they would have it." Kennan rapidly composed an eight-thousand-word telegram, "neatly divided, like an eighteenth-century Protestant sermon, into five separate parts," and sent it off to Washington. The Soviets, he wrote, saw the world as split into capitalist and socialist camps, between which there could be no peaceful coexistence. They would try to do everything possible to strengthen the socialist camp, while at the same time working to divide

[34] *Time,* XLVII (February 25, 1946), 25–26; *New York Times,* February 17, 1946; Leahy Diary, February 16, 1946, Leahy MSS; *New Republic,* CXIV (March 4, 1946), 299–300. Joseph E. Davies found himself very much alone when he argued that "Russia in self-defense has every moral right to seek atomic bomb secrets through military espionage if excluded from such information by her former fighting allies." (*New York Times,* February 19, 1946.)

and weaken capitalist nations. In time, capitalism would collapse because of its own internal contradictions and socialism would rise to take its place. Kennan emphasized that the Russians had not arrived at this analysis from an objective study of conditions outside the Soviet Union. Rather, it stemmed from the Kremlin leaders' need to justify their autocratic rule—a need Russian rulers had felt for centuries. For Stalin and his associates, Marxist ideology provided the justification

> for the dictatorship without which they did not know how to rule, for cruelties they did not dare not to inflict, for sacrifices they felt bound to demand. Marxism is the fig leaf of their moral and intellectual respectability. Without it they would stand before history, at best, as only the last of that long succession of cruel and wasteful Russian rulers who have relentlessly forced their country on to ever new heights of military power in order to guarantee external security for their internally weak regime.

The implications of Kennan's analysis were ominous. If Soviet foreign policy was formulated not in response to what happened in the rest of the world but solely as a result of conditions within Russia, then no action of the United States, no matter how well intentioned, could bring about any diminution of hostility toward the West. The United States was confronted with "a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with [the] U.S. there can be no permanent modus vivendi, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure." The Russians would try to achieve their objectives by increasing the power and influence of the Soviet state, while at the same time working through "an underground operating directorate of world communism, a concealed Comintern tightly coordinated and directed by Moscow." Under these circumstances only two courses of action remained to the United States: first, to resist as effectively as possible communist attempts, external and internal, to overthrow Western institutions; second, to wait for internal changes within the Soviet Union to produce some change in Russian policy.[35]

The reaction in Washington to this explanation of Soviet behavior was, in Kennan's words, "nothing less than sensational." President Truman read it, the State Department sent Kennan a message of commendation, and Secretary of the Navy Forrestal had it reproduced and made

[35] Kennan to Byrnes, February 22, 1946; *FR: 1946,* VI, 696–709. See also Kennan, *Memoirs,* pp. 68–69, 292–93.

required reading "for hundreds, if not thousands, of higher officers in the armed services." The telegram arrived just as pressures were converging from several sources to "get tough with Russia." Truman himself had done nothing to implement his resolution to "stop babying the Soviets" in the month and a half since his reprimand to Byrnes, but on February 20, 1946, he told Admiral Leahy that he was extremely unhappy with the existing policy of appeasing the Russians and was determined to assume a stronger position at once. Kennan's telegram of the 22d provided precisely the intellectual justification needed for this reorientation of policy.[36]

Kennan himself, writing in retrospect, recognized clearly the importance of the timing:

> It was one of those moments when official Washington, whose states of receptivity . . . are . . . intricately imbedded in the subconscious . . . , was ready to receive a given message. . . . Six months earlier [it] would probably have been received in the Department of State with raised eyebrows and lips pursed in disapproval. Six months later, it would probably have sounded redundant, a sort of preaching to the convinced. . . . All this only goes to show that more important than the observable nature of external reality, when it comes to the determination of Washington's view of the world, is the subjective state of readiness on the part of Washington officialdom to recognize this or that feature of it.

The telegram, Kennan later admitted "with horrified amusement," read "like one of those primers put out by alarmed congressional committees or by the Daughters of the American Revolution, designed to arouse the citizenry to the dangers of the Communist conspiracy." [37] But at the time it proved persuasive enough, providing American officials with the intellectual framework they would employ in thinking about communism and Soviet foreign policy for the next two decades.

IV

The first public expression of the Administration's new policy came on February 28, 1946, in a speech which Byrnes delivered to the Over-

[36] Kennan, *Memoirs,* pp. 294–95; Leahy Diary, February 20, 21, 1946, Leahy MSS. For the reception of Kennan's telegram in Washington, see also Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries,* pp. 135–40; Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks,* p. 133; and Lilienthal, *Journals,* II, 26.

[37] Kennan, *Memoirs,* pp. 294–95.

seas Press Club in New York. Americans had welcomed the Soviet Union into the family of nations as a power second to none, the Secretary of State pointed out:

> We have approved many adjustments in her favor and, in the process, resolved many serious doubts in her favor. . . . Despite the differences in our way of life, our people admire and respect our Allies and wish to continue to be friends and partners in a world of expanding freedom and rising standards of living. But in the interest of world peace and in the interest of our common and traditional friendship we must make it plain that the United States intends to defend the [United Nations] Charter.

Through that document the major nations of the world had pledged themselves to renounce aggression. "We will not and we cannot stand aloof if force or the threat of force is used contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter." No nation had the right to station troops on the territory of another sovereign state without its consent. No nation had the right to prolong unnecessarily the making of peace. No nation had the right to seize enemy property before reparations agreements had been made. The United States did not regard the status quo as sacrosanct, but it could not overlook "a unilateral gnawing away at the status quo." Byrnes concluded in a manner reminiscent of Theodore Roosevelt: "If we are to be a great power we must act as a great power, not only in order to ensure our own security but in order to preserve the peace of the world." [38]

Since it came only one day after Vandenberg's strong Senate speech attacking Administration foreign policy, many observers regarded Byrnes's address as nothing more than a hastily written reply to the Michigan senator. Irreverent reporters quickly dubbed it the "Second Vandenberg Concerto." Arthur Krock commented that the barbs Republican leaders had been aiming at the State Department had clearly had their intended effect. Vandenberg himself did not hesitate to claim credit for the Secretary of State's new position. Early in April he admitted to Hamilton Fish Armstrong that he had been "partially responsible" for Byrnes's speech. The Secretary of State had been "loitering around Munich" but was now "on the march." By July, the senator was writing that "almost everybody . . . concedes to me the *major influence* in *changing* the American attitude from 'appeasement' to *firm resistance.*"

[38] *Department of State Bulletin,* XIV (March 10, 1946), 355–58.

A year later, Vandenberg would look back to his own address as a crucial turning point:

> At London . . . I was completely dissatisfied with our complacency in the presence of Soviet truculence. You may recall that I made a vigorous speech on the floor of the Senate immediately upon my return. Thereafter, former Secretary of State Byrnes sharply shifted his official position and I am bound to testify that during the remainder of his term he vigorously resisted any such "appeasement" and firmly stood his ground in behalf of American rights and American ideals.[39]

Republican pressure undoubtedly did influence the Secretary of State's new position. Even if Byrnes did not revise his address at the last moment, as he later claimed, Vandenberg's remarks on the floor of the Senate made it possible for the Secretary to speak with far greater confidence of getting a favorable response. But to see Byrnes's February 28 address merely as an oratorical gesture designed to placate Arthur H. Vandenberg is to underrate considerably its significance. This was the first open manifestation of the tougher Russian policy toward which the Truman Administration had been moving since the Moscow Conference. It also offered an important indication that Byrnes had resolved his differences with critics inside the Administration over the conduct of foreign affairs. The calm but uncompromising tone of the Secretary's remarks reflected a policy whose time, in the view of American leaders, had clearly come. "Perhaps the most significant thing about this forceful address," Anne O'Hare McCormick concluded, "is that he [Byrnes] thought it was what the country wanted and was waiting to hear." [40]

Less than a week after Byrnes spoke, Winston Churchill, former Brit-

[39] *Time,* XLVII (March 11, 1946), 19; *Newsweek,* XXVII (March 21, 1946), 35; *New York Times,* March 2, 1946; Vandenberg to Armstrong, April 2, 1946, Frank Januszewski, July 27, 1946, and H. W. Smith, March 6, 1947, Vandenberg MSS.

[40] *New York Times,* March 2, 1946. Byrnes later denied having revised his speech to take into account Vandenberg's criticisms. He explained that he had avoided taking a strong stand prior to this time because he had been worried about the weaknesses of the armed forces. "I thought it wise not to voice publicly my concern when we had only a twig with which to defend ourselves." But after hearing a report from General Eisenhower on the progress of Army reorganization, Byrnes felt he could safely speak. (Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime,* p. 349.) Truman told Stettinius on February 28 that Vandenberg had found out in advance about Byrnes's speech, and had arranged to give his own address on the floor of the Senate one day earlier. (Stettinius calendar notes, February 28, 1946, Stettinius MSS, Box 247.)

ish prime minister and now a private citizen, introduced the phrase "iron curtain" to the world in a speech at Fulton, Missouri. Truman himself lent tacit endorsement to Churchill's March 5, 1946, message by accompanying him to Missouri and personally introducing him to the Fulton audience. Administration officials later denied that the President had had any advance knowledge of what the British statesman proposed to say, but in fact Churchill had carefully cleared his address with the White House several weeks in advance, and both Truman and Byrnes had read the final draft of the speech prior to its delivery. Far from being a surprise, the harshly anti-Soviet Fulton address was very likely, as *Time* suggested, a "magnificent trial balloon" designed to test the American public's response to the Administration's new "get tough with Russia" policy.[41]

Churchill had arrived in the United States in January, 1946, to begin a long Florida vacation. At Truman's request he agreed to speak at Fulton in March, and as early as February 10 flew to Washington to tell the President what he planned to say. News that the President planned to introduce the former prime minister caused some concern among Administration advisers. Robert Hannegan, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, warned Joseph Davies that Truman's presence on the platform might be construed as an endorsement of whatever Churchill said. Davies went directly to the President on February 11, advising him to be sure to ask to see Churchill's text in advance. Truman blandly replied that this would not be necessary, since the speech would only be "the usual 'hands across the sea' stuff." [42]

The British leader continued to keep Administration officials fully informed of his progress in drafting the Fulton speech. Secretary of State Byrnes and his friend Bernard Baruch flew to Florida to see Churchill on February 17, and there heard an outline of the proposed address. When

[41] *Time,* XLVII (March 18, 1946), 19. For subsequent disclaimers of responsibility by the Administration, see Truman's press conference of March 8, 1946, *Truman Public Papers: 1945,* p. 145; and the statement by Press Secretary Charles G. Ross, *New York Times,* March 19, 1946.

[42] Leahy Diary, February 10, 1946, Leahy MSS; Davies Journal, February 11, 1946, Davies MSS, Box 23. See also Lord Halifax to Henry L. Stimson, February 13, 1946, Stimson MSS, Box 429. For background on the Fulton speech, see Jeremy K. Ward, "Winston Churchill and the 'Iron Curtain' Speech," *The History Teacher,* I (January, 1968), 5 ff.

Churchill came through Washington on his way to Fulton, he gave "dress rehearsals" of the speech to both Byrnes and Admiral Leahy. Churchill sent Truman a copy of his comments before they left Washington, but the President, anticipating criticism from the Russians, decided not to look at it so that he could truthfully say he had not read the speech prior to its delivery. Byrnes did, however, give the President a full summary of the address. Later, on the train, Truman changed his mind and actually read the speech, remarking according to Churchill that "it was admirable and would do nothing but good though it would make a stir." [43]

The Fulton address painted a much gloomier picture of the state of international affairs than that to which Americans had been accustomed:

> From Stettin in the Baltic to Triest in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow.

The Soviet Union, Churchill asserted, did not want war. But the Russians did want "the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines." No one could know with certainty what were the limits of these "expansive and proselytizing tendencies." Western powers could not hope to preserve peace by allowing Moscow free rein: "From what I have seen of our Russian friends . . . I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness." The United Nations offered the best hope for peace. But Churchill cautioned that the world organization itself would be ineffective unless there developed a "fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples." [44]

[43] *New York Times,* February 18, 1946; Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime,* p. 349; Leahy Diary, March 3, 1946, Leahy MSS; Francis Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers: The War and Post-War Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Earl Attlee,* pp. 162–63.

[44] *Vital Speeches,* XII (March 15, 1946), 329–32. The actual phrase, "iron curtain," was not new. Churchill had used the term in a telegram to Truman on May 12, 1945 (see Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy,* pp. 489–90), and Senator Vandenberg had used it in a Senate speech (*Congressional Record,* November 15, 1945, pp. 10696–99).

Churchill confused the issue by coupling his frank analysis of Soviet policy with his call for what most observers regarded as an Anglo-American alliance. Senators Claude Pepper, Harley M. Kilgore, and Glen Taylor issued a joint statement on March 6 accusing the British leader of being unable to free his thinking "from the roll of the drums and the flutter of the flag of Empire." Churchill's "fraternal association," they argued, would "cut the throat" of the United Nations. Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt publicly chided her late husband's wartime associate for implying that the English-speaking peoples could get along "without the far greater number of people who are not English-speaking." When Churchill made his next public address in New York on March 15, pickets appeared outside his hotel chanting "Winnie, Winnie, go away, UNO is here to stay!" and "Don't be a ninny for imperialist Winnie!" The State Department at the last minute advised Undersecretary of State Acheson to absent himself from the proceedings so that his presence would not imply official approval of what Churchill said.[45]

Most observers, however, still regarded the Fulton address as a public expression of what the Administration thought privately. Ernest K. Lindley pointed out that government officials, speaking strictly off-the-record, generally applauded Churchill's speech as something which badly needed to be said.[46] There is no reason to question the accuracy of this view. The criticism directed at the Administration's "magnificent trial balloon" did not weaken Truman's resolve to reorient American policy toward the Soviet Union. It simply indicated that while the American people were anxious to "get tough with Russia," they were not yet fully prepared to accept the responsibilities, in the form of closer ties with Britain and other noncommunist nations, which "getting tough" entailed.

If the oratorical efforts of Byrnes and Churchill left any doubt regarding the Administration's new attitude toward the Soviet Union, the manner in which it handled the Iranian crisis of March, 1946, quickly

[45] Taylor-Kilgore-Pepper press release, March 6, 1946, copy in the Theodore Francis Green MSS, Box 414, "Foreign Relations Legislation" file; *New York Times,* March 15, 1946; Acheson, *Sketches from Life,* p. 62. For reaction to the Fulton address, see also the *New York Times,* March 6 and 7, 1946; *Time,* XLVII (March 25, 1946), 19; *Newsweek,* XXVII (March 25, 1946), 28; and the Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 47, March 20, 1946.

[46] *Newsweek,* XXVII (March 10, 1946), 29–30, 36.

resolved them. Early in 1942, Great Britain and the Soviet Union had moved troops into Iran to keep that strategically located and oil-rich country from falling into the hands of the Axis. Both Allies agreed to respect the independence and territorial integrity of Iran and to withdraw their forces six months after the termination of hostilities, an understanding which they reaffirmed at Teheran in 1943, and again at the foreign ministers' conference in September, 1945. Reports reaching London and Washington during the final months of 1945, however, raised fears that the Russians might try to annex the province of Azerbaijan to the Soviet Union, with the intention of bringing all of Iran into Moscow's sphere of influence once the British had withdrawn. Attempts to elicit reassurance on this point from the Kremlin proved unavailing—Stalin told Byrnes at Moscow that if Soviet forces were pulled out Iranian saboteurs might try to blow up the Baku oil fields—and on January 19, 1946, the Iranian government with the tacit approval of the United States placed the question of Azerbaijan before the United Nations Security Council.[47]

At first, Byrnes rejected suggestions that the United States issue a public statement on the situation for fear this "might imply that we have already formed a fixed opinion with regard to the merits of the case." But when the March 2, 1946, deadline for withdrawing foreign troops from Iran passed without any Soviet moves to evacuate Azerbaijan, the Secretary of State adopted a tougher approach. On March 5, the same day Churchill spoke at Fulton, he dispatched a stiff note to Moscow calling for the immediate removal of Soviet forces from Iranian soil. The Secretary then took the unusual step of releasing the substance of this note to the press, without waiting for the Russian reply.[48]

The week which followed was an extremely tense one—*Newsweek* found the atmosphere reminiscent of the fall of 1938, when the Munich crisis was at its height. Early on the morning of March 6, 1946, the State Department received word from its vice-consul in Azerbaijan, Robert Rossow, Jr., that "exceptionally heavy Soviet troop movements" were taking place, not toward the Russian border, but in the direction of Tur-

[47] *FR: 1945,* VIII, 388–522; *FR: 1946,* VII, 289–304. See also the minutes of the Byrnes-Stalin conversation of December 19, 1945, *FR: 1945,* II, 685.

[48] Byrnes to Wallace Murray, January 28, 1946, *FR: 1946,* VII, 317; Byrnes to Molotov, March 5, 1946, *ibid.,* pp. 340–42; *New York Times,* March 6, 1946.

key, Iraq, and the Iranian capital, Teheran. Byrnes, upon hearing of these developments, exclaimed angrily that the Russians now seemed to be adding military invasion to their political subversion in Iran. A Foreign Service officer who showed Byrnes the alleged troop movements on a map recalls that the Secretary beat one fist into the other and announced: "Now we'll give it to them with both barrels." Noting that the Russians had not yet replied to the department's March 5 note, Byrnes and his advisers decided to dispatch a stronger telegram to Moscow asking the reason for these military maneuvers. When, by March 12, no answer had been received, the department released to the press news that Russian tanks were moving on Teheran. Apparently stung by the unwanted publicity, TASS, the Soviet news agency, three days later issued a statement denying these reports "absolutely." [49]

Throughout this period bilateral negotiations between the Russian and Iranian governments had been going on, first in Moscow, then in Teheran, in accordance with a Security Council resolution of January 30. Despite this, the Iranians, with the strong encouragement of the United States, insisted on submitting the issue of Soviet troop movements to the Council, which was due to meet again in New York on March 25. The Russians objected to this procedure, letting the Iranians know privately that they would regard such a move as an "unfriendly" act. On the day the Council met, however, TASS announced that the USSR had promised to pull all troops out of Azerbaijan within five or six weeks. Andrei Gromyko, Russian representative at the United Nations, requested that in view of this accord the Iranian matter be withdrawn from the Security Council agenda. Byrnes refused, arguing that the Iranians had not confirmed the Soviet agreement or made clear whether the Russians expected anything in return. On March 27, after the Council had voted to leave the matter on the agenda, Gromyko angrily and dramatically walked out of the chamber. One week later, however, the

[49] *Newsweek,* XXVII (March 25, 1946), 24; Rossow to Byrnes, March 5, 1946 (received in Washington on March 6), *FR: 1946,* VII, 340; memorandum by Edwin M. Wright, "Events Relative to the Azarbaijan Issue—March, 1946," August 16, 1965, *ibid.,* pp. 346–48; Byrnes to Molotov, March 8, 1946, *ibid.,* p. 348; *New York Times,* March 13, 1946; Kennan to Byrnes, March 15, 1946, *FR: 1946,* VII, 356. James Reston observed later in March that the department had almost certainly exaggerated the seriousness of these Russian troop movements. (*New York Times,* March 20, 1946.)

Soviet and Iranian governments announced a formal agreement calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops by early May and recognizing Iranian sovereignty over Azerbaijan.[50]

Byrnes's decision to push the Iranian issue through the Security Council, even after the Russians had indicated their willingness to withdraw troops from Iran, stemmed chiefly from domestic considerations: the Secretary of State wanted to make clear to his critics at home that the United States had abandoned the politics of appeasement once and for all. Benjamin V. Cohen, Byrnes's close associate, explained the situation to Molotov at the Paris Foreign Ministers' Conference later in April:

> Mr. Cohen made the point that, whereas before a public event such as the retention of Soviet troops, beyond the treaty date, in Iran had occurred, it was possible to attempt privately to arrange matters in dispute, but that once a public event such as in this case had occurred, the issue had to be met in the light of public opinion, and it was impossible then to settle such things on the basis of any deal.

Byrnes himself told French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault that he "had been very much impressed with the way opinion had rallied behind the American position during the discussions of the Iranian question in the Security Council." Soviet popularity in the United States had been "completely dissipated" by Moscow's behavior. The Secretary of State acknowledged that recently he had been subjected to considerable criticism for yielding too much to the Russians. "This period, however, had passed and American opinion was no longer disposed to make concessions on important questions." [51]

V

The period of late February and early March, 1946, marked a decisive turning point in American policy toward the Soviet Union. Prior to this

[50] *FR: 1946,* VII, 322–415. The April 4 agreement granted the Russians 51 percent of the shares in a joint Iranian-Soviet oil company, but the Iranian parliament later refused to ratify this agreement. (Herbert Feis, *From Trust to Terror,* p. 85.)

[51] Bohlen notes, conversation between Byrnes, Cohen, and Molotov, April 28, 1946, *FR: 1946,* VII, 442; Bohlen notes, Byrnes-Bidault conversation, May 1, 1946, *ibid.,* II, 204.

time, Washington officials had frequently resisted Russian demands, but not on a consistent basis. As late as December, 1945, Byrnes was still operating on the assumption that Russia and the United States shared a common interest in settling outstanding difficulties. But by March of 1946, widespread criticism of "appeasement" had made it clear to the Truman Administration that further compromises with Moscow would mean political disaster at home. Simultaneously Soviet behavior, together with Kennan's persuasive analysis of it, convinced Washington officials that Stalin and his associates were ideological zealots who viewed conflict with the West as necessary to attain their objectives. Byrnes's Overseas Press Club speech, Churchill's Fulton address, and the State Department's firm handling of the Iranian crisis meant that American officials had gone as far as they could go in seeking a settlement with Moscow: negotiations would continue, but from now on all the concessions would have to come from the other side.[52]

Contemporary observers clearly saw the period as a pivotal one. A State Department survey of editorial opinion noted that the speeches of Vandenberg, Byrnes, and Churchill were widely regarded as constituting "a turning point in American policy toward Russia," and had produced a public reaction "of unprecedented magnitude." The *New Republic*'s "TRB," always a sensitive interpreter of the Washington mood, observed that judicious men within the government, whom no one could accuse of being Russophobes, now expected a major confrontation with Moscow. Foreign Service officer C. Burke Elbrick wrote privately to Arthur Bliss Lane, the American ambassador in Warsaw: "You will have noted a general toughening in the official attitude not only toward our Polish friends but, what is more important, toward the originator of many of our present difficulties and misunderstandings. We all hope that it will produce fruit." Elmer Davis told his radio audience that people who had been demanding a firmer policy toward Russia were now getting what they had asked for.[53]

[52] Assistant Secretary of State James C. Dunn wrote Byrnes in April that "the basic objectives of the Russians on the one hand and the British, French and ourselves on the other . . . are at present so divergent that the possibility of reaching agreement lies chiefly in the hope that the Russians may feel it essential to improve their relations with the British and ourselves and their world standing." (Dunn to Byrnes, April 18, 1946, *FR: 1946*, II, 72.)

[53] Department of State, "Fortnightly Survey of American Opinion," No. 47, March

The increasing popularity of Secretary of State Byrnes also indicated that a change in policy had taken place—as Byrnes moved toward a tougher position he regained much of the support he had lost through his earlier conciliatory approaches to Moscow. Admiral Leahy now denied recurring rumors that he had tried to have Byrnes fired, and assured the Secretary of State of his friendship. Averell Harriman told C. L. Sulzberger in April that Byrnes had increased in stature and was "a much stronger man now." James Reston and Arthur Krock noted that the Iranian crisis had greatly increased Byrnes's prestige; no one could now assert, Krock commented, that the Secretary of State was "a trader and a compromiser who will always take the easiest way out of a difficulty." Bernard Baruch, whom Truman had just named to represent the United States on the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, congratulated Byrnes on his performance in the Security Council with an elaborately mixed biblical metaphor: "You proved yourself a David in meeting the Goliath of disintegration at the first UNO meeting. . . . Let us not fear the Philistines of whom Samson slew a thousand with the jawbone of an ass. There are bigger asses and bigger jawbones now than in those days." [54]

Another clear sign of the Administration's new policy was the alarm generated among the dwindling number of prominent Americans who still sympathized with the Russians. Joseph E. Davies wrote to Cordell Hull on March 17 that the past year's deterioration of Big Three unity had been nothing short of "tragic." Davies noted that since the Moscow Conference members of the Senate had been demanding that Byrnes take a firmer line, and that the Secretary of State had now yielded to this pressure. Senator Claude Pepper of Florida interpreted recent Russian actions as resulting not from expansive tendencies within the Soviet Union but from fear of a hostile Anglo-American coalition. Former Interior Secretary Harold Ickes publicly implied that the Truman Adminis-

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20, 1946; *New Republic,* CXIV (March 18, 1946), 382; Elbrick to Lane, March 11, 1946, Lane MSS; Davis radio broadcast, March 5, 1946, Davis MSS, Box 13. See also *Newsweek,* XXVII (April 8 and 15, 1946), 16, 20.

[54] Leahy Diary, March 13, 18, 1946, Leahy MSS; Sulzberger Diary, April 22, 1946, quoted in Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles,* p. 311; *New York Times,* April 7, 1946; Baruch to Byrnes, March 31, 1946, Baruch MSS, "Selected Correspondence." See also *Newsweek,* XXVII (April 29, 1946), 16; and *U.S. News,* XX (May 3, 1946), 54.

tration had abandoned President Roosevelt's policy of cooperation with Russia. James Roosevelt, the late President's son, questioned whether Truman had made a real effort to represent the Kremlin's point of view to the American people. Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace sent a letter to Truman on March 14 advocating a wholly new approach to the Russians, stressing the possibility of economic collaboration. Several days later Wallace proclaimed publicly that the United States and Great Britain could not "try to strut around the world and tell people where to get off." [55]

But an opinion poll taken in mid-March demonstrated with emphatic clarity that the American public was no longer prepared to accept the views of Wallace and other Russophiles: 71 percent of those polled disapproved of the policy the Soviet Union was following in world affairs; only 7 percent expressed approval. Sixty percent of the same sample thought the United States was being "too soft" in its relations with Moscow; only 3 percent felt Washington's approach was "too tough." [56] Truman and Byrnes could thus count on solid public support as they moved to implement their new policy of "patience with firmness"; whether Americans would willingly assume the costs of this policy over a long period of time remained, however, very much in doubt.

[55] Davies to Hull, March 17, 1946, Davies Journal, March 25, 1946, Davies MSS, Box 23; *New York Times,* March 21, 15, 19, 1946. Wallace's March 14 letter is printed in Truman, *Year of Decisions,* pp. 555–56.

[56] American Institute of Public Opinion poll of March 13, 1946, cited in Cantril and Strunk, eds., *Public Opinion,* pp. 963, 1060. The exact questions asked in this poll were: "In general, do you approve or disapprove of the policy Russia is following in world affairs?" Approve, 7 percent; disapprove, 71 percent; no opinion, 22 percent. "Do you think the United States is being too soft or too tough in its policy toward Russia?" Too soft, 60 percent; too tough, 3 percent; all right, 21 percent; no opinion, 16 percent.