PUBLIC OPINION AND UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY
1937-1956

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American Project
Working Paper I

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When no source is mentioned in the footnote other than the polling organization and date, the poll may be obtained directly from the polling organization.

AIPO - American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup)

NORC - National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago

FOR - Fortune Magazine

OPOR - Office of Public Opinion Research, Princeton New Jersey

NYHT - New York Herald Tribune

SRC - Survey Research Center, University of Michigan

ROPER - Elmo Roper 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York
INTRODUCTION

In accord with the democratic theory which would have government decisions subject to the will of the majority, we have established election machinery through which the greater number regularly assert their control. But, although we have subjected our officials to the popular will at election time, we have set up no machinery that will enable them to determine the popular will at other times. Between elections they must depend largely on guess work to ascertain the state of public opinion on any given issue. Their personal insights and intuitive sense of public attitudes and reactions may thus determine not merely their own political fate but also the success or failure of national policies.

Now that foreign policy has become a central issue in our national life, and virtually all Americans are personally affected by major foreign policy decisions, it is essential that such decisions have popular support. Historically, however, since foreign affairs by their very nature have been remote from the lives of most Americans and in their day-to-day conduct must be handled by those who have an intimate knowledge of persons and places far removed from the American scene, we have been willing to leave foreign policy-making to those whom we regard as experts. The President and Congress
have created foreign policy with relatively little guidance from the public. We have sought no constitutional means whereby we can make known public opinion on specific foreign policy issues.

Both the lack of an informed public opinion on foreign affairs and the sense of their remoteness reflect certain aspects of the American character that still tend to make any public role in the formation of our foreign policy difficult, if not altogether impossible.1

The demands of a highly competitive society have absorbed the individual American's energy; and only when American interests are visibly threatened by a roaring crisis will he focus his attention abroad. He associates foreign affairs with the expenditure of large sums of money and possible risk to men's lives. Moreover, if not susceptible to a crisis solution such as a declaration of war, foreign affairs seem a long drawn-out process; and we Americans, while prepared willingly and optimistically to concentrate for a brief time to effect a solution, lose interest in a problem which demands sustained effort over a long period. The complex and elastic approach required by foreign policy problems has little appeal to a people who place their faith in simple, straightforward plans and quick, concrete action. Thus Americans have clung to the belief that the Cold War could be resolved if the American and Russian people could somehow get together and talk out their differences; and they have been suspicious of the ways of the State.

1 See Gabriel A. Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950, Chapter III.
Department "expert"—a mood which whas prompted Gabriel Almond to comment that: "There is a heritage of Jacksonian amateurism which perpetuates the myth that America is full of Cincinnatus."^{2}

It is little wonder that the problem of accurately determining public attitudes toward foreign affairs has long perplexed American statesmen. George Kennan, writing about the creation of the Policy Planning Staff in the State Department in 1947, declared that:

People working in this institutional framework soon became conscious of the lack of any general agreement, both within and without our government, on the basic concepts underlying the conduct of the external relations of the United States.^{3}

How, then, in the decisive period before the crises arise, when steps should be taken to prevent them, can the legislators determine the will of the public? How can American public opinion be informed and led in foreign affairs?

The public opinion poll may suggest partial answers to such questions. In the last 20 years, as improved channels of communication have made possible, if not a more intelligent public, at least one which is better informed, there has been a growing awareness both of the existing role of public opinion in domestic and foreign affairs and of the much more influential role possible for an organized

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2. Gabriel A. Almond, op. cit., p. 147.
public opinion. One result of this awareness has been the privately conducted public opinion polls, a scientific attempt to determine public opinion. Granting their limitations, such polls at least provide a clearer picture of the various twists and turns taken by the public mind than was available to researchers before its inception.

This paper examines the role of public opinion in certain military and foreign policy decisions since 1937. First, we shall try to determine what the pattern of public opinion was in relation to key foreign policy issues during the last two decades. We shall then observe the action taken by the Executive branch and Congress, and try to discover in what way this action reflected or influenced popular wishes. The interection of these groups against the changing background of world events may then give us some indication of the extent to which public opinion is malleable, that is, to what degree shifts in public attitudes came about due to changing circumstances and the pronouncements and actions of government leaders. In the end we may gain some perception of the extent to which public opinion can be led.

Finally, we shall try to discover whether, in the apparent inconsistencies of the popular mind, there is evidence of something more than prejudice and self-interest; whether there is some relatively
stable popular consensus concerning our foreign policy on which government officials could rely and within the limits of which they could act from day to day in the name of American democracy.
Even before the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 the growing tension and conflicts of the Thirties on the international scene did not pass entirely unnoticed in a United States largely preoccupied with domestic problems. But, although the nature of events in Europe and Asia made it impossible for any democratic nation to ignore them for long, recognition of their importance was accorded only reluctantly by the American people. This reluctance to acknowledge the danger inherent in the rise of fascism made it difficult for the American leaders to prepare the nation for the inevitable struggle against Germany and Japan—until the pressure of events left little choice.

Personal Neutrality

The general American attitude in the years before our entrance into the war was a mixture of indifference and strong isolationism—complicated by a growing hostility toward fascism. The indifference to the importance of international affairs is most strikingly illustrated in the Gallup polls for the years 1935-1941 which asked: "What do you regard as the most vital issue before the American people today?" Not until the spring of 1939 does "neutrality" rank alongside "unemployment"; and not until the war actually

breaks out in Europe in September do 47 per cent answer "neutrality" and only 24 per cent still consider "unemployment" of greater importance. In response to specific questions about events in Spain and China, Gallup polls showed that most Americans favored complete withdrawal of American citizens and troops from China, and 55 per cent had no preferences in the Sino-Japanese war. In May of 1937, 79 per cent either had no opinion or felt that it make no difference which side won in Spain. The percentage who didn't care was still as high as 60 per cent late in the next year.

The apparent indifference to the fate of other nations was maintained despite the cautious attempts of President Roosevelt to impress upon the American people the seriousness of the mounting crisis. Ever mindful of the fate of President Wilson, Roosevelt had undermined the World Economic Conference at the beginning of his first term; and he regularly behaved in the early New Deal days like thoroughly reformed Wilsonian if not an authentic isolationist. But his active pursuit of friends among our Latin American neighbors and his speech at Chicago in 1937 suggesting that we join with other

5. Ibid., AIPO November 8, 1939.

6. Ibid., AIPO August 2, 1937.


8. Ibid., AIPO December, 1938.
nations in a quarantine of aggressors left little doubt as to where, ultimately his sentiments lay. Roosevelt's warnings, however, were little heeded either in Congress or throughout the nation; the United States took no official position in the Spanish Civil War and merely protested the Japanese invasions of China while refusing to recognize their puppet state of Manchukuo.

From the autumn of 1938 to the Spring of 1940 American indifference was shattered by a succession of shocking events—Munich, the outbreak of a general European war, and the frightening rapidity of the fall of the low countries, France, and Scandinavia. Nevertheless, the strong isolationist heritage was not easily overcome. It had been reinforced in the post World War I era by the failure of that war to solve the problem of international order in Europe. Instead of now attempting to solve those problems collectively and peacefully, the United States decided that they were insoluble and chose to try and forget them, concentrating instead upon the development of our own 'unique' civilization—which was itself facing a serious domestic crisis. Disillusionment following our first major involvement in international affairs was strong throughout the whole inter-war period, and the closer contact with the European nations in 1917-1918 had not necessarily bred closer friendships.
Whereas before the war of 1914-1918 people had been isolationist because they knew little and cared little about Europe, after that war they felt that they knew rather too much.  

The attempt to isolate the nation from Europe's problems was not due merely to a feeling of superiority. At the root of isolationism was an overwhelming and deeply emotional desire for peace; and peace, Americans felt, could be maintained only by standing aloof from international conflicts, thus avoiding wars which were not in the American interest. The activities of the Nye Committee seemed to confirm the suspicion that we had been tricked into World War I -- a popular attitude reflected in a 1937 poll indicating that 70 per cent of the nation felt that we should not have entered that war.

Although the nation remained indifferent despite the rapid march of events throughout the rest of the world, isolationism tended to grow stronger among large factions because of those very events. The more ominous the world situation looked, the more determined many became to keep America isolated.


Although President Roosevelt was anxious to take more positive steps towards the prevention of war in Europe, the sharp criticism he received when he suggested quarantining the aggressors, and the opposition to the idea of a World Disarmament conference that same year, forced him to modify his approach, if not his plans, and continually reassure the isolationist elements that he would not lead the United States into another war. That the nation did not entirely trust his protestations was evident in polls taken from 1937-1939 showing that percentages of 67-73 felt that Congress rather than the President should control our neutrality policy,\textsuperscript{11} although the approval of his handling of foreign affairs increased after September of 1939, when his warnings proved justified. But distrust of his pleas for collective action on a world basis remained high and a majority from 1938-1942 consistently registered the opinion that our reluctance to participate in a collective organization to preserve peace was in no way responsible for World War II.\textsuperscript{12}


\textsuperscript{12} Hadley Cantil, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 403-404, AIPO September 23, 1938, July 29, 1941, December 15, 1942.
Despite its apparent strength, the personal neutrality which the American people hoped to maintain could not withstand for long the effects of the injustices perpetrated by the Fascist govern- ments, and, more important, their threatening military and geographic gains. The gradual increase in hostility towards Germany, Japan, and Italy can be charted in direct relation to the expansion of their power. It was the course of world events, rather than the efforts of President Roosevelt or the work of such groups as the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, which led to a marked increase in sympathy for the Allies and a willingness to risk war to aid them.

Increasing hostility towards Germany in particular can easily be traced throughout the years prior to our entrance into the war. Even in 1935 Germany was the nation most disliked by Americans -- no doubt due largely to her World War I role. But more than half of those questioned had no feeling one way or another about foreign nations; and as late as 1937, 62 per cent of a sample group had no particular attitude towards Germany. However, by the first half of 1938, as the war tension increased, opinion had changed to such an extent that 65 per cent admitted that they hoped for the defeat of Germany should she go to war with France and England.\footnote{Philip E. Jacob, \textit{op. cit.} p. 51. AIPO May 27, 1938.}
the Munich crisis and at the height of the anti-semitic drive in Germany, 65 per cent stated their willingness to boycott German goods.\textsuperscript{14} 

Personal neutrality towards the Axis powers was never regained after Munich. Americans were by no means sure that 'peace with honor' had been achieved, and the atmosphere was one of uneasiness, although we did not hesitate to voice indignation at Japanese action in China and at the Soviet invasion of Finland and the Soviet pact with the Nazis. The Nazi invasion of Poland struck fear into the hearts of Americans, a fear that was briefly supplanted by a misplaced optimism during the 'phony war' of the winter of 1940, when isolationist sentiment ran high. But the nation was united now in its anti-fascist attitudes despite Hitler's offers of peace. The shock with which Americans watched the fall of Europe and the London blitz in 1940 sharply increased the realization of America's stake in the outcome of the war and markedly strengthened the sympathy for the Allied cause.

The presidential election in the fall of 1940 revealed the degree of unity that existed within the nation on foreign policy issues. The events of the past summer were fresh in the minds of

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 52. AIPO March 15, 1939.
most voters, although understanding may not have been commensurate with their importance. Our hatred of war had not diminished, however, and, with nonintervention the overwhelming sentiment, the two candidates had great difficulty making any significant differences in their foreign policy proposals. Both wished to aid the Allies; neither wished for United States intervention; neither dared to hint that the two might prove incompatible. The result was that foreign affairs were taken out of the campaign by mutual consent until the last few weeks, when the Republicans, in a play for the noninterventionist vote, made bitter charges that Roosevelt could not be trusted to keep the nation at peace. But Americans seemed satisfied with the President's gradual policies, and during the next year approved the steps that he took to reaffirm support of the Allies. In the autumn of 1941 some three-fourths of those Americans with opinions declared themselves still in favor of his foreign policy. In the few months prior to our entry into the war the American people were united in their desire to see the Axis powers defeated. The question was now only one of means. There was no longer any significant degree of personal neutrality.

Financial and Commercial Neutrality

The undermining of personal neutrality was not accompanied by a similar rapid disintegration of support for a policy of financial and commercial neutrality. Although war raged about us, we clung to the idea that we could insulate ourselves from it by strict control of our finances and trade. The rationale for this type of thinking was supplied by the dubious findings of Senator Nye's group, which would have had the nation believe that it had been duped into entering the first war because of the schemes of the munitions makers. Our attitude towards international finance had been soured further by the failure of the European nations to repay their war debts to us—a failure which had prompted Congress to pass the Johnson Act in 1934 forbidding loans to governments in default to the United States.

The belief that our trade and finance policies had been the cause of our entrance into World War I had also given rise to a series of Neutrality Acts in 1935-1937 which would have insured us against entering another war for similar reasons. The major drawbacks of this legislation were that it allowed no distinctions between belligerents, prohibiting loans and shipments of arms to the invaded nation as well as the aggressor, and that it wrongly assumed the United States would never be attacked. It was felt that we could
avoid war merely by severely limiting all contacts with the belligerents and, in effect, abandoning our traditional right of freedom of the seas. The limitations that it imposed upon the executive's handling of foreign affairs were a decided obstacle to the efforts of Roosevelt and Hull to bring aid to the hard-pressed Allies, but, in view of the results of public opinion polls taken in this prewar period, the Acts seemed indeed to be a reflection of popular attitudes.

American thinking on the matter of loans to the Allied nations showed remarkable stability in a period when many other attitudes were undergoing fluctuation in accordance with the changing events abroad. Late in 1937, despite our traditional goodwill toward China, Americans refused by an overwhelming 95 per cent to consider lending money either to China or Japan. As late as the end of 1938 nearly half the population still wanted to collect the debts incurred by the European nations in World War I, and in the Spring of 1939 only 21 per cent favored changing the Johnson Act so that we could lend money to France and England in case of a European war. Another 10 per cent would have favored loaning them the funds to buy "airplanes and other war materials" in this country.

19. Ibid., AIPO May 14, 1939.
The outbreak of hostilities made very little difference to the thrifty American. Despite a Gallup poll in October indicating that 62 per cent of the American people were willing to "do everything possible to help England and France win the war except go to war," when questioned specifically about lending money to those nations to enable them to buy war supplies here, 82 per cent were opposed. That this reaction was due in part to these nations having defaulted on their World War I loans is indicated by polls that same month on the matter of loans to Finland, the only nation that did repay us. Just after her invasion by Russia, on November 30th 1939, some 65 per cent of the sample of respondents would have allowed Finland to borrow money to buy war supplies here, and when queried about a specific sum of money—a type of question which usually brings approval down, 61 per cent still felt that Finland should be allowed to borrow $60,000,000.

The first indication that the public might favor a more lenient policy toward the Allied powers came with the public approval of

20. Ibid., p. 967. AIPO October 3, 1939
21. Ibid., p. 1101. AIPO December 22, 1939
22. Ibid.
the President's islands-for-debts scheme, whereby we would acquire the West Indian Islands of England and France in return for the funds which they owed us. This had the approval of nearly 7 in 10 Americans. By March of 1940 a narrow margin of 55 per cent to 45 per cent favored loaning money to England and France to buy war supplies here if it seemed that they might be losing the war. However, over 50 per cent still continued to oppose loans for the purchase of goods for China and loans to Norway and Sweden after the invasion of Scandinavia. Not until the Wehrmacht had swept over most of Europe, and London had been subjected to the fury of the Luftwaffz, was a fairly small majority willing to amend the Johnson Act so that England could borrow money from us... (54%-46%). But 65 per cent (vs. 35%) felt strongly that the Act should not be changed to enable both England and France to borrow funds.

The dispute over selling war materials to the Allied nations focused initially on the Neutrality legislation, which placed an embargo upon direct or indirect shipments of such goods to the belligerents in time of war. As long as this embargo remained in

24. Hadley Cantril, op. cit., p. 1101, AIPO March 4, 1940.
25. Ibid., p. 1102. AIPO February 20, 1940.
26. Ibid., AIPO April 28, 1940.
27. Ibid., AIPO November 20, 1940.
28. Ibid.
effect, it was of great harm to the Allied cause, for England and France had not built up a war machine comparable to that possessed by Germany, and both allies were in great need of any war materials that the U.S. could supply.

The situation became critical in the spring of 1939 when the Cash and Carry provision of the 1937 Act expired and signs of war continued to increase. The President and Secretary Hull were anxious to have the whole of the Neutrality legislation repealed but were persuaded that, in view of the strong isolationist bloc in the Senate, it would be best to try only to revoke the arms embargo. This, it was believed, would serve notice to Germany that we would not abandon our friends should war come, for it would be the British navy that would be able to take advantage of our supplies. The President, fearing to arouse the hostility of his Congressional enemies, proceeded cautiously and left a large share of the battle to Senators Pinman and Bloom. But almost eight months of debate ended in July of 1939 in a failure to revoke the embargo. Congress had not been persuaded either of the imminence of war or that the President could be trusted with the discretionary powers that would be his under the new legislation.

The caution exercised by the President in attempting to get the embargo revoked was perhaps necessary in view of Senatorial opposition,
but it was not entirely justified in light of the results of Gallup polls taken in this period. It is true that in September of 1938, at the time of the Munich crisis, only 34 per cent expressed willingness to sell military equipment to England and France in case of war, but by February of the next year the sentiment had risen to 52 per cent, and by the end of March to 66 per cent. During the summer months the percentage stayed at around 60 per cent—surely an adequate indication that Congress should take favorable action on the Bloom Bill, especially when it would seem that the majority backed the step despite the fact that it was likely that such action would lead to our involvement in war. However, when asked specifically about the Neutrality Law, approval of its revision was not so clear cut. Only 57 per cent in March said that it should be changed, and in August 51 per cent said that Congress was right in defeating the Bloom Bill, although the country was evenly divided on the eve of war about the wisdom of changing the neutrality legislation.

29. Ibid., p. 1156, AIPO September 13, 1938.
30. Ibid., AIPO February 16, 1939.
31. Ibid., p. 1157, AIPO March 21, 1939.
32. Ibid., AIPO July 26, 1939.
33. Ibid., AIPO March 30, 1939.
34. Ibid., AIPO August 8, 1939.
35. Ibid., AIPO August 17, 1931.
The revision of the neutrality law which was effected once the outbreak of war had given the movement impetus did give the President his cash-and-carry clause back and a repeal of the embargo on finished munitions, at the same time imposing severe restrictions on American shipping. But the Congressional vote was pretty solidly on party lines despite the relative lack of partisanship shown throughout the country. In September, while the debate was under way, as many as 62 per cent, when asked directly about revision of the bill, felt that it should be changed, and, when asked in more general terms if "England and France should be allowed to buy war supplies here if they pay cash and take them away in their own ships," 70 per cent expressed approval. Both opponents and advocates of the proposed revision gave as their reason the desire to keep the United States out of the war—although the advocates were markedly more eager to aid Britain and France. 36

Once the Neutrality Laws had been liberalized—to the extent that the Allies could now buy war material here by paying cash and transporting their goods home in their own ships with no danger to American men—the demand for further aid died down during the winter of the 'phony' war. Not until the spring of 1940 and the

36. Ibid., p. 1158, AIPO September 19, 1939.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid, AIPO October 10, 1939.
Chart 1

OPINION ON AID TO ALLIES AND DEFENSE

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<th>Mar</th>
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<td>1939</td>
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Per cent of total jobs

100

- Per cent willing to pay more taxes for a larger army
- Per cent who think U. S. should give more aid to Allies
- Per cent who believe all men 20 years old should serve one year in service
- Per cent who would favor a changed law to lend money to Allies
- Per cent who think U. S. should declare war on Germany

Germany invades Czechoslovakia

- Germany invades Poland
- Russia invades Finland
- Germany invades Norway
- Armistice
- Low Countries

German sweep through the Low Countries, France, and Scandinavia were there signs that Americans decidedly favored increased aid to England. In fact, the horror with which the people of the United States watched the advance of the German army is distinctly mirrored in the public opinion polls taken in the spring of that year. Sharp upswings occurred in the percentages favoring increases in aid, taxes, and defense measures. (See Chart 21, p. 16.)

An indication of dissatisfaction with the current policy of aid, involving no official commitment to either side, could be seen in a March poll indicating that 52.1 per cent wanted to "Do everything possible to help England and France without actually going to war if Germany seemed to be winning." 40 A series of polls begun in May of 1940 is an even clearer indication that the Administration could have adopted a far bolder program of aid to the Allies—and with some justification claimed that they had the backing of a majority of the American people.

The first of these polls asked what we should do about helping England and France. The respondents were given four courses of action that could be followed: 1) doing less than we are doing now; 2) doing neither more nor less; 3) declaring war on Germany and sending our armed forces abroad; 4) doing everything possible except go to war. (On the last three dates France was eliminated from the

question and Italy was added alongside Germany.) The results were as follows:

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<tr>
<td>May 14, 1940</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<td>June 11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
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<td>July 20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>76</td>
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Perhaps even more significant is the answer to a question asked for a whole year—from May of 1940 to Nov. 1941, showing the gradual upward curve of the number willing to aid England at the risk of United States involvement in the war.

Chart 2

100

90

80

70

60

50

40

30

20

10

May June July Aug Sept Oct Dec Jan April May

41. Ibid., p. 971, AIPO May 14, 1940.

This tremendous upsurge in sentiment favoring a greatly augmented aid program was scarcely altruistic. The rapidity of the German sweep was horrifying; the broad expanse of protecting ocean shrank correspondingly each time the Nazis crossed the borders of another European nation. More and more Americans began to be aware that the safety of the United States was inextricably bound up with the fate of the Allied Nations. And as long as it was thought that Britain was willing and able to withstand the German onslaught, Americans were willing to send her all possible aid consonant with our security here at home.

The decided shift in attitudes in the spring of 1940 from one of a somewhat passive support of the Allies to one of an active espousal of the Allied cause led inevitably to our irrevocable commitment to the British. Those large numbers who now favored aid at the risk of war also supported President Roosevelt when he agreed to exchange some 50 average destroyers in return for British bases.

The 61 per cent of the population who favored the destroyer deal included the Republican candidate for President, Wendell Willkie. Criticism was made only of the manner in which the deal was concluded. Popular support continued for the President's assertion in December

of that year that "We must be the great arsenal of Democracy."

Although the Destroyer-Bases deal was a significant departure from any pretense at neutrality, it could be argued that the terms were so favorable to the United States that it was excusable on the grounds of our national defense. The Lend Lease agreement with Britain in the early spring of 1941 should therefore be taken as the point of no return. From this time on, there could be no reversal of our policy of support of the Allied nations. That the American people made this commitment unwittingly cannot be argued. The proposal was formally made by President Roosevelt in his annual message to Congress on January 6, 1941. By the end of the month 82 per cent of the populace had heard about the plan, and by February 14th a remarkable 91 per cent said that they had heard of the bill. The majority support was not overwhelming, approval never being voiced by more than 58 per cent; only 31 per cent supported it in the belief that the measure would help keep us out of the war.

In the last year before our entrance into the war public opinion


45. Ibid., p. 410, AIPO February 14, 1941.

46. Ibid., p. 409, OPOR January 29, 1941.

47. Ibid., p. 410, AIPO February 28, 1941.
favoring aid did not fluctuate greatly. We openly and wholeheartedly backed the Allies; and although there was no further impetus to extending our commitment, perhaps because there were no further setbacks after England successfully weathered the blitz, there was support for the Administration policy of increased aid to China, but restrictions were placed on trade with Japan, and Japanese assets in this country were frozen. The question of aid to the Soviet Union once she had been attacked by Germany, was not so clear cut. The traditional American sympathy and friendliness for China had never extended to Russia; and there was a large reservoir of ill will toward the Communists. There was also the belief that the Soviet Union could not withstand the armies of Germany for long, and that any aid to her would eventually fall into German hands. But in the summer of 1941 Germany seemed more menacing than communism, and the attitude that bolstering the Soviet Union would gain time for us prevailed.

By autumn of 1941 there was certainly no noteworthy dissent on the policy of all-out aid to the Allies, and there was public support for American convoys of Allied shipping as far as Iceland, a system begun late in August as a logical sequel to the Lend Lease program insuring the safe arrival of such aid. The last step in the abolition of a policy of commercial neutrality was inevitable—
repeal of the most objectionable sections of the old Neutrality Laws by a close congressional vote in November. This made possible an arming of American merchant ships that the convoys were designed to protect, a measure backed by 91 per cent of the American people, and the use of American ships to carry goods to Britain, which had the support of 61 per cent.

Military Neutrality

The consistency with which an overwhelming majority of American citizens opposed direct intervention in the World War right up until Pearl Harbor was due in large part to the belief, or hope, that what happened abroad would not endanger our security at home. When, however, the startling Allied reverses of 1940 took place, a curious dualism in our thinking about military neutrality developed. On the one hand, Americans continued to vociferously oppose any declaration of war on the Axis, and, on the other hand, they became more and more eager to take steps to strengthen the Allies and contain the Axis powers—steps that could not but lead inevitably to our formal participation in the conflict. At the same time that we stood firmly against actual intervention we began to declare it more

1. More important that Germany be defeated.

2. Per cent willing to risk war with Japan rather than let Japan continue her aggression

3. More important that U.S. stay out of war.

4. Per cent who would vote to go to war against Germany if a national vote were taken

May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar April May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec


important to aid the Allies and defeat Germany than stay out of the war. (See Chart $2$ and Chart $3$ pp. 18 and 23)

The change that came in public attitudes in the spring of 1940, when a steadily increasing percentage began to feel that the salvation of the Allies was important enough to risk war, was due to the sudden awareness that the Allied Nations were vital to our security, that we continued to formally oppose intervention was due to the frantic hope that somehow we could so strengthen England with war materials that she could carry on the fight alone, and that it would therefore not be necessary for us to intervene.

The opposition to American participation in a second world war had been strengthened by the widespread conviction in the interwar period that the nation had been foolish to enter World War I. We know that as late as 1937 Gallup had found 70 per cent declaring our intervention in World War I a mistake, but, when questioned about our probable intervention in a second conflict, there was invariably a majority—(from 1938-1941)—that felt we would be drawn in once again. Only twice, in August of 1939, before the war broke out, and in February of 1940 in the era of the 'phony' war,

51. Quincy Howe, op. cit., p. 672.


did this group drop below 40 per cent. But by 1941 the percentage of Americans who felt that our entrance was inevitable ranged from 72 to 85 per cent.54

Although most Americans were sure that we would be drawn in, a series of polls taken from 1937 onwards generally found that over 80 per cent believed that we should not enter. Only once, in May of 1941,55 did those in favor of direct intervention reach 27 per cent; by October of 1941 those favoring intervention were only 17 per cent of the total. Even with our friendliness towards Finland in the matter of loans, when asked if we should send our Army and Navy to her aid, 95 per cent gave a flat 'no' as their answer.57

This aversion to a formal declaration, however, did not stand in the way of a somewhat realistic view of the situation. In September of 1941, 56 per cent of the population felt that for all practical purposes we were already in the war.58

55. Ibid., p. 973, AIPO May 29, 1941.
56. Ibid., p. 977, AIPO October 22, 1941.
57. Ibid., p. 970, AIPO February 20, 1940.
58. Ibid., p. 974, AIPO September 17, 1941.
The attitudes about war in Asia deserve special note. Although we both hated and feared Hitler's might, fear never predominated in our attitude toward Japan. Since Americans were ignorant of the real power of Japan and contemptuous of her militaristic ambitions, they were far more willing for the United States to take a strong stand against the expansion of her Empire than against that of Hitler. Although we had been indifferent to the outcome of Japan's struggle with China back in 1937, by the spring of 1939 her actions in China had so enraged us that 72 per cent declared themselves in favor of an embargo on the shipments of arms and munitions to Japan, and 66 per cent were willing to boycott Japanese goods. 59

Upon the announcement of the Tripartite Pact in the autumn of 1940, 57 per cent felt it would be advisable for us to prevent Japan from becoming more powerful even though we risked war. 60

Throughout the next year the public continued to support the restrictive policies adopted by the administration against Japan—policies that made a clash with her inevitable. Yet on the eve of

60. Langer and Gleason, The Undeclared War 1940-1941, op. cit., p. 33.
war only 51 per cent suspected that we were about to go to war in the Far East, and 79 per cent were confident that our navy was strong enough to beat Japan's -- which perhaps explains why 69 per cent were agreeable to taking steps to restrict Japanese power.

The American attitude was unmistakably hostile. In the summer of 1941, 52 per cent felt that the United States should go to war with Japan if it was the only way to keep her from seizing the Dutch East Indies and Singapore. But the contradiction was present here too. Throughout 1941 over 70 per cent repeatedly declared themselves unwilling to actually declare war upon her.

Although Americans continued to oppose a declaration of war against any Axis power, the polls indicated their willingness to risk war to aid England and an increasing conviction that it was more important to defeat Germany than to avoid war, in other words, that war under certain conditions might be preferable to a policy of legal neutrality. In fact, when, in November of 1941, a representative sample was asked if they would go to war if the nation's leaders

61. Ibid., p. 923.
65. See Ibid., p. 975.
agreed that it was the only way that Germany could be defeated, as many as 70 per cent agreed that we should intervene. But the contradictory strands in American attitudes—a willingness to support warlike action while opposing actual intervention—made it virtually impossible for the President to press for a declaration of war even though he was urged on by the interventionists. Americans were eager to back England with all measures short of actual war, but shied away from formal declarations. In view of this prevailing sentiment, it would have been impossible to have gotten a declaration of war passed by the militant isolationist bloc in the Senate and win the wholehearted support of the American people. An unrealistic policy was the only one that the United States was prepared to accept.

Attitudes towards Defense
Although Americans clung tenaciously to the idea that it was possible to preserve their military neutrality, they were not unaware of the necessity for maintaining strong defenses. The policy of rearmament that President Roosevelt adopted in 1937, including an attempt to strengthen the solidarity of the Western hemisphere and

66. Ibid., p. 976 OFOR October 19, 1941.
build up our military force, met with the approval of the American people at all times. As early as 1935, 75 per cent wanted a larger army and navy. Polls in 1938 before Munich indicated that 65 per cent were in favor of a larger army, and 53 per cent were willing to pay more taxes to bring this about. By the end of that November, 82 per cent wanted to increase the size of the army; and Americans greeted with approval Roosevelt's announcement at Kingston, Ontario that we would help defend Canada in the event of an attack. This approval was indicative of a new awareness, encouraged by the Administration, of the importance of a united hemisphere to our own security.

Throughout 1939 there were further indications that a more extensive military build-up was desired. Public opinion in January supported the President's plans for increased national defense, and 67 per cent of those polled agreed that such an increase was needed. However, Congress in the next month refused to make a small appropriation for a submarine base at Guam. The outbreak of war in the fall

67. Ibid., p. 939 AIPO October 26, 1935.
68. Ibid., p. 940 AIPO September 23, 1938.
69. Ibid., p. 941 AIPO September 23, 1938.
70. Ibid., p. 941 AIPO January 7, 1939.
caused no change in the solidly favorable opinion on defense measures. Americans did not want war; they were not yet ready to commit themselves to the Allied cause but they were well aware that the country's security was going to depend upon its strength. Even the most confirmed isolationist did not dispute this. Somewhat increased support for a larger armed force was indicated in October, when 64 per cent (in contrast to only 53 per cent the previous autumn) now were willing to pay more in taxes for a larger army. That Hitler's peace proposals in the winter did not fool the American people is indicated in a February poll showing 79 per cent behind the President's proposed 28 per cent increase in spending for defense purposes.

But the real upsurge in demand for a stronger America came with the Allied defeats in the spring. The dramatic losses suffered by the Allies left only 15 per cent of the American people feeling that our armed forces were strong enough to withstand an attack by any foreign power. Eighty-three per cent were now behind an increase in our army even though it might mean more taxes; and,

71. Ibid., AIPO October 10, 1939.
72. Ibid., AIPO February 18, 1940.
73. Ibid., p. 942 AIPO June 2, 1940.
74. Ibid., AIPO May 14, 1940.
two days later, on May 16th of 1940, an almost unanimous public (92 per cent) was behind the President's request to Congress that defense spending be increased by one half in the next year. Now, in July, Gallup revealed that 75 per cent were willing to pay "considerably more taxes" to meet the cost; and the more restricted sample taken by Fortune found 93.6 per cent anxious for the government to spend 'whatever is necessary' to build up our forces quickly. Congressional passage that summer of new measures for defense indicated that it was not entirely unresponsive to public pressure.

At the same time that the polls clearly demonstrated the immense enthusiasm among Americans for stronger defenses, they also showed that perhaps President Roosevelt and Congress were justified in not proceeding with all the defense measures some Administration advisors wished. There was evidence that the American public wanted to 'have their cake' too. Polling results late in 1940 revealed a widespread tendency to think that increased defense production goals could be met simply by hiring more men--rather than by lengthening the work week. A Fortune poll also showed that 58.1 per cent felt that our present standard of living could be maintained

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75. Ibid., p. 942, AIPO May 16, 1940.
despite the need for a large sector of the economy to shift to rearmament. But the public was realistic enough to realize the value of the Burke-Wadsworth Selective Service bill, and 86 per cent favored Congress' approval.

In the last year of peace there was no let-down in the demand for military preparedness, but there continued to be controversy as to the sums to be expended to provide adequate security. Increased funds for rearmament were approved by Congress; and further Executive steps to forge tighter bonds within the Western Hemisphere, including the Act of Havana and the move to take Iceland and Greenland under our protection, met with public approval. In fact, the election of 1940 and polls taken in 1941 showed a large measure of support for the way in which the President was handling the difficult problems of foreign affairs and national defense. Only Congress, in its extension of the Selective Service by only a single vote, showed itself reluctant to support him.

Some Conclusions on Prewar Opinion

Analyzing the interplay between public opinion, the Executive,

and Congress in the period prior to our entry into World War II, four main conclusions emerge:

1. The willingness of the nation to rise to the challenge of Fascism was largely determined by the course of events in Europe and Asia rather than by any skillful manipulation of public opinion by political leaders.

A glance at the public opinion polls around the spring of 1940 will confirm this. The explanation is simple. When confronted by the power of the German nation, the American people became frightened. Swiftly and dramatically it became clear that the defeat of the Allied nations might bring serious harm to the United States. From that point on, Americans were willing to do almost anything to aid the Allies as long as it was thought that England could win.

2. American opinion was strongly influenced by wishful thinking.

Although the events of the spring of 1940 had impressed most Americans with their gravity, there was still reluctance to accept the full implications of the weakened position of the Allies. Although there was an increasing inclination to intervene in the war when it seemed that England would be unable to withstand the Axis alone, it is debatable whether the American nation would have intervened in time to prevent an English defeat. Certainly there would have been nowhere near the unanimity of opinion that Pearl Harbor
brought. The reluctance to accept the realities of the connection between the cause of the war and the security position of the United States can only be termed wishful thinking.

3. A comparison of public opinion with Congressional legislation clearly shows that Congress was not in tune with public opinion. Public opinion polls showed that the American public was willing to make loans to the Allied nations at the end of 1940; the relevant section of the Neutrality Law was not repealed for a year. Public opinion was agreeable to selling war materials to the Allies from early 1939 on; the Neutrality laws were not liberalized until that fall, and the vote was heavily on partisan lines then. The willingness of the American people to commit themselves more fully to the Allied cause was seen in the spring of 1940; the President's Destroyer-Bases deal was the first result. Congress finally passed Lend Lease almost a year later. The final revision of the Neutrality Laws was on a close vote, and this on the eve of war. On only two issues, intervention and defense, was Congressional action relatively in accord with popular attitudes, although even here there were certain lapses which could be seen in the narrow margin of victory for the selective service extension.

If the Congressional body is viewed merely as a reflector of
popular opinion, then the time lags for legislative action can be excused. But if the American people were looking to Congress for leadership in this difficult period, they could not but have been disappointed.

4. In reviewing the leadership exercised by the Executive in this period, we find that the polls often showed public opinion to be ahead of the President's actions—as distinct from his plans.

There were several reasons for President Roosevelt's hesitancy. His freedom of action in the field of foreign affairs was hampered both by the weakness of his political position in domestic affairs and by the determined opposition of the isolationist bloc in Congress, which was personally antagonistic towards him. Then, too, the issues involved all required particularly careful handling, for they were charged with emotion. Our personal neutrality may have been minimal, but opinion on intervention remained hyper-sensitive.

The President's greatest success came in the field of national defense, an area where the country's security was obviously involved and therefore one in which public support was not difficult to obtain. He took the initiative early in defense measures; and the strengthening of the solidarity of the Western hemisphere was brought about largely through executive initiative. On the issue
of the nation's armed strength his measure of public support was
large, although there seemed to be little inclination to make any
sacrifices to strengthen the country. However, in view of the fact
that American self-interest was involved it seems likely that Roosevelt
could have achieved even greater support for a bolder program of
defense if he had taken the lead in pointing out that sacrifice
was necessary.

On the question of aid to England, the President constantly
worked to bring the nation fully behind the Allies. He had been
against the original Neutrality Acts, and he worked for their revision
in 1939 and 1941. To commit the United States more fully to the
Allied cause, he had made the first move with his Destroyer-Bases
agreement, but it is not unlikely that he could have brought about
an even earlier commitment once in the Spring of 1940, it had been
demonstrated that all aid to England was in the interests of our
own security. An actual declaration of war, however, would certainly
have provoked a bitter partisan battle in Congress. Moreover, in
view of his difficulty with the selective service extension and the
close vote on the revision of the Neutrality Acts that fall, it is
apparent that such an attempt would, at that time, have been to
no avail. Indeed, it probably would only have damaged his aid pro-
gram by causing nationwide dissension.
Thus the key to the support enjoyed by Roosevelt in his foreign policy was the course of international events; and it was his ability to capitalize upon them which made it possible for him to work to strengthen the nation and its ties with the Allies. When the deteriorating international situation forced upon the United States the realization that its security was at stake, it proved willing to take certain steps to strengthen itself and England.

That the nation would also have been receptive to a bolder leadership is entirely possible so long as the nation's leaders kept in mind that security, rather than idealism, played the foremost role.
The American public during World War II was primarily concerned with the progress of the war and the wartime conditions on the home-front. The significant aspect of wartime public opinion for our purposes, however, is that which dealt with the postwar world. The attitudes that were then formed about our allies and the thought that was given to the problems that would have to be faced once the war was over were determining factors in the development of the whole postwar situation.

Of our major allies, China was the one toward which Americans traditionally had the greatest goodwill, a sentiment that was not to diminish during the war years when President Roosevelt sought to establish China as a major power. American friendliness was reflected in a poll taken early in 1944 which indicated that if we were able to send food to only one foreign nation, 41 per cent would want such relief to go to China. Only 18 per cent would send it to England, the second choice.

Attitudes toward England, another traditional ally, were by no means overwhelmingly favorable in the war years. Although in December of 1941 a majority were ready to aid England at the risk of becoming involved in the war, the close association during the next years was a cause of much friction. Polls taken during the war indicated that Americans approved British sportsmanlike qualities but deplored British class distinctions and "superior attitudes". As for England's abilities as a fighting partner, Americans consistently rated her effort to win the war well below that of Russia and slightly below that of China. Despite this evidence of ill will, the war of necessity brought the United States and Britain much closer together, and the American public didn't doubt that we would and must cooperate with Great Britain in the postwar years. They were equally certain that she could be depended upon to cooperate with us.

Opinion of Russia underwent many changes between 1939 and 1947. Americans distaste for Soviet internal policies in the thirties was heightened by the Nazi-Soviet pact and only partially overcome when the Soviet Union joined the Allies in 1941. Initially we

81. Ibid., pp. 957-8, OPOR June 3, 1942, NORC April 6, 1943
82. See Ibid., pp. 1062-3.
83. Ibid., p. 765, FOR September, 1945. See also pp. 1062-3.
hesitated to send aid to her, for there seemed little likelihood
that the Soviets could survive the thrusts of the Nazi drives, and
we feared that the aid would only be lost to Hitler's armies. But
in the later years of the war, Americans came to have great respect and
admiration for Soviet fighting prowess. In fact, in September of
1945 a Fortune poll revealed that the Soviet Union was most admired
by Americans of for "the way she handles her military campaigns." She
was also generally considered to be the ally working the hardest
to win the war. Respect for Soviet military achievements by no
means indicated any readiness to approve of communism although
American opinion gradually came to feel that communism was prefera-
able to a fascism.

In American thinking about relations with Soviet Russia in
the postwar world, a percentage ranging from 38 per cent to 55
per cent in the years 1942-1945 felt that Russia could be trusted
to cooperate with us after the war. In January of 1945,
however, when our armies were sweeping ahead on all fronts
and victory seemed imminent, only 48.3 per cent of the
American people in a Fortune poll felt that America and

84. Ibid., p. 765 FOR September, 1945. See also pp. 1062-3.
85. See Ibid., pp. 370-1.
Russia would get along with one another better than they had before the war. In that year Gabriel Almond characterized American opinion as being divided more or less into three equal groups: one "invariably distrustful" of Russia, a second "fully sold on Russia's amicable and peaceful intentions," and the third, a middle group, varying "from a noncommittal view to one of hope and moderate optimism."

By 1946 the first group, hostile to Russia, was gaining adherents, and some 50 per cent felt that Russia was bent on dominating the world, a percentage growing to 77 per cent in 1948. (See Chart no. 4 p.42)

World War II forced the American public to concentrate more attention on foreign affairs than at any time before; but that Americans were not yet aware that foreign affairs would continue to play an equally important role in the postwar years is indicated in a series of polls taken during the war years.

In 1943 and 1944 those asked what the most important problem would be in the next presidential term overwhelmingly replied unemployment and economic readjustment—58 per cent and 36 per cent. A "lasting peace" was a poor second, with only 13 per cent and 12

87. G. A. Almond, op. cit. p. 95.
Chart 4

OPINION IN WORLD WAR II

Per cent who think U. S. should take active part in world affairs after war.

Per cent who think peace lasting 50 years can be worked out

Per cent who think Russia will cooperate after the war


1942 1943 1944 1945

per cent naming this the most important problem. From August of 1945 until December of 1946 the per cent considering unemployment the major problem in the next year dropped from 53 per cent to 2 per cent, as the millions of veterans returning to the home front were absorbed into an economy starved for peace-time goods. Meanwhile the rash of strikes in the nation's industries had occupied the country's attention, and labor problems grew in importance from a low of 4 per cent in 1945 to 40 per cent in December of 1946 who felt this to be the most important problem ahead. During this period the problem of making a lasting peace grew in importance only from 5 per cent to 26 per cent.

The treatment that the Axis nations should receive at the hands of the victors once the war was ended was a postwar international problem which received wide consideration in the United States. Large majorities were agreed that both Japan and Germany should be disarmed and occupied by an occupation force for at least several years. On the general policy that should be followed in dealing with a conquered people, Americans made a sharp differentiation between enemy peoples and their leaders. Although it was commonly

AIPO August 24, 1943. NORC October, 1944.

felt that the Axis leaders should be executed, 50 per cent in 1944 thought that the German people should be treated fairly. 91 Only 33 per cent felt this about the Japanese people, 53 per cent putting more emphasis on their supervision. 92

This relatively friendly attitude in a time of total war was also reflected in American attitudes toward the problems of reconstruction and relief abroad. In 1943 an average of 75 per cent of two samples expressed their willingness to continue "rationing and other sacrifices after the war" in order to help feed and rebuild those countries that had been devastated. 93 Fifty-one per cent were willing to help all countries in need of our aid; 38 per cent held out for just "some" countries. 94 In September of that same year another 73 per cent agreed that they would be willing to pay more in taxes to make such help possible. 95 A certain amount of self-interest was revealed, the same poll showing that 78 per cent thought that helping other countries recover from the war would be the best way to insure prosperity for the United States; and in July of

91. Ibid., p. 1115, NORC February, 1944.
92. Ibid., p. 1118 NORC February, 1944.
93. Ibid., p. 735, NORC January 11, 1943. NORC June 18, 1943.
94. Ibid, p. 736, NORC September, 1943.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid., p. 737, NORC March, 1945.
1945 the nation was about evenly divided on its willingness to continue the current rate of taxes to make European recovery possible. Throughout 1945 and 1946 majorities were ready to "put up with the present shortages of butter, sugar, meat, and other rationed food produces in order to give food to people who need it in Europe"; but only 33 per cent were willing to make such sacrifices for Japan. In 1946, majorities were willing to return to food rationing to send food abroad, and 70 per cent expressed readiness to have their families eat one fifth less for this purpose.

Despite a general willingness to aid in the relief and reconstruction of less fortunate nations, the American people clung firmly to the notion that debts incurred by foreign nations should be repaid. However, although 73 per cent in 1943 and 83 per cent in September of 1945 felt that the United States should be repaid for Lend Lease sent abroad during the war years, only 29 per cent thought that we would be reimbursed. The firmness


100. Ibid, p. 1107, AIPO March 10, 1946.


102. J. Bruner, op. cit., p. 244, AIPO, March 1943.
with which many held to their belief can be seen in a 1943 NORC poll which showed that 70 per cent would not consider Lend Lease paid in full even if the Allies used the money and goods to save American lives. Thirty-seven per cent would want to collect even if it meant a depression in England; 46 per cent would change their minds if such was the case. This attitude towards allied debts was reflected in the initial American hostility towards a loan to Britain immediately after the war. Approval for the first of many postwar loans was secured only after the necessity for such a measure had been carefully explained.

The fact that American opinion seemed to reject specific proposals to make world cooperation viable was no indication of a reluctance to play a large role in international affairs in the postwar world. In fact, the most important American attitude to result from the wartime period was a new willingness to take a leading role in international affairs. Early in 1945 "8 persons out of 10 still believed that on the day of Pearl Harbor the President should have been making every effort to keep the nation out of war." But these same people had, in polls from December of 1941 to October

103. Ibid., p. 86, NORC, May, 1943.
104. Bailey, op. cit., p. 79.
of 1945. come to feel that the United States must take a major part in the international scene.\textsuperscript{105} Although few were willing to enter into agreements with the other nations on disarmament, by 1943 some three fourths of the adult population were in favor of an international police force.\textsuperscript{106} The idea of a new union of nations also met with popular approval. Throughout the war years there was a majority in favor of the United States joining some sort of successor to the League; and in January of 1943 81.6 per cent were willing to stay on rationing to feed the starving populations of the world in order to make a union of nations work.\textsuperscript{107} There was the same measure of approval two and a half years later even though only 39 per cent felt that such an organization had a good chance of preventing wars. (44 per cent felt that its chances were fair.)\textsuperscript{108} The extent to which Americans placed their faith in the project can be seen in the fact that 64 per cent were willing to let such an international organization decide on the size of our Army, Navy, and Air Force.\textsuperscript{109} (See chart no. 4 p. 42)

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 373, NORC January 11, 1943.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 909, NORC January, 1943.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p. 910, NORC July, 1945.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 911, NORC July, 1945.
Although American opinion in World War II was a summary of wartime opinion and a question predominantly concerned with the progress of the war itself, the attitudes developed about the post-war world were, in general, favorable to a policy of internationalism. The nation was on relatively friendly terms with our fighting partners. There was no overwhelmingly bitter hatred towards enemy nations. Americans were sympathetic to the tremendous problems of postwar reconstruction, realizing at the same time that American aid in recovery efforts, besides being a humane obligation, would serve American interests. On the principle of international cooperation we Americans voiced this assent; and in June of 1945 the United States signed the United Nations charter confirming the nation's participation in international affairs and reversing its pre-war stand towards cooperative action among the nations of the world.

If this was the state of popular opinion in the United States up to the closing months of World War II, what, then, was the reason for the apparent reversal of attitudes in subsequent months as the United States hastened to disarm while the situation in Europe and Asia deteriorated?
The first peacetime problem that the American people had to face was that of the demobilization of the nation's gigantic war machine and the reintegration of millions of men into a peacetime economy. The speed with which this was accomplished indicated that the nation considered demobilization purely a domestic problem. Americans, it seemed, were anxious only to "Bring Our Boys Home" from the fighting fronts as swiftly as possible and absorb them into an economy converted to the production of scarce peacetime goods. There was no apparent regard for the international consequences attendant upon the reduction of our armed force from 12 million to 1.5 million men within two years and the power vacuum thereby created.

The point system under which the demobilization was carried out was conceived prior to the end of hostilities and was put into effect shortly after victory had been won in Europe. The effect of the point system was to decimate the ranks in such a way as to leave the whole of the military strength of the country seriously weakened; the most experienced men were sent home first, and the release of men as individuals instead of as
armed force units riddled division organization.

That there was a widespread support for a speedy return of soldiers to their homes was not questioned. Elmer Davis characterized this support "as nearly unanimous as this country has ever seen"; Morison and Commager, writing of the Congressional elections of 1946, gave as a reason for the Republican victory the universal exasperation at the apparent slowness of demobilization. Rovere and Schlesinger, while berating the "fatal mistake" of the Great Demobilization, rationalized that it would, indeed, have been difficult for the West to maintain the will to keep its vast armies intact in advance of any clear demonstration by the Soviet Union of hostile intent.

As already noted, the polls taken in the last years of the war all gave evidence of an internationalist trend in the thinking of the American public. Was the expressed wish to disarm the Axis nations and police them with an occupation force for several years something that Americans expected other nations to carry out without American aid? Did they think, as distrust of Russia rose perceptibly, that an army of less than two million men would be sufficient deterrent to the forces of the Soviet Union? What of the polls

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taken in 1945-1947 which never showed less than 69 per cent in favor of compulsory military training? How can these polling responses be reconciled with a purported eagerness to disband the nation's armed might? The demonstrations staged by our troops abroad and the congressional mail from anxious mothers cannot be denied, but surely many Americans were aware of the consequences of creating a power vacuum in Europe and Asia.

Polling questions related to demobilization were begun as early as 1943, at which time Gallup asked whether the men in the armed forces should be released after the war whether or not they had jobs waiting for them. In 1943, 50 per cent of a national sample and 48 per cent of the families with a member in the service would have kept the troops under arms until there were enough jobs. 113 A year later the response was somewhat more evenly divided between those who would release the troops and those who would keep them in the service. 114 When asked in the summer of 1944 when most of the troops serving in Europe could be returned home after the fighting had stopped, 36 per cent of the respondents named a time longer

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114. Ibid., FOR, July, 1944.
than six months and including one and one half years. Forty-two per cent of the sample thought it would be over one and one half years. At the end of 1944 the predictions were more pessimistic. When asked when the troops could be sent home after the fighting had stopped on the two fronts, the responses were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Europe</th>
<th>From Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 yrs.</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3 yrs.</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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A few months later, as the fighting drew to a close in Europe, 63 per cent felt that even when Germany had been defeated the Navy could still not afford to release any of its three million men, although 52 per cent did feel that the Army would be able to release some of its eight million troops.

Questions on attitudes about the international situation, which bore less directly on demobilization also gave some indication of how Americans felt about the maintenance of a strong military force. Early in 1944 a Fortune poll found 73 per cent of a national

115. Ibid., AIPO July 18, 1944.
116. Ibid., p. 452, NYHT December 28, 1944.
117. Ibid., p. 457 NYHT December 28, 1944.
118. Ibid., p. 924 AIPO February 20, 1945.
sample favoring an occupation of Germany for several years. By summer a majority not only favored keeping some of our armed forces there for two years or more--but also favored keeping "as many men in Germany and other enemy countries as the English and Russians do." A year later, in the spring of 1945, a large majority still felt that the United Nations should occupy Japan and Germany for several years, and a smaller majority wanted the United States to maintain enough strength in both the Atlantic and Pacific areas to be able to stop singlehandedly any trouble that might arise. 

But Administration leaders were certain that the American public would not tolerate the maintenance of a strong army and navy--as indeed it had not throughout the nation's history--and the Great Demobilization was begun. By 1946 the armed services had been reduced from 12 million to 3 million men. Meanwhile, in 1945, 64 per cent had stated that we would have to keep our occupation troops in Japan for many years--in fact, when asked for how

121. Ibid., p. 452, NYHT May 10, 1945.
122. Ibid., p. 944, FOR June 1945.
123. Ibid., p. 457, AIPO October 3, 1945.
long it would be necessary to police Japan, 24 per cent mentioned
one to five years, and another 39 per cent suggested between 6 and
20 years. However, despite this apparent determination to prevent
Japan from disturbing the peace of the world once again, a September
poll found 43 per cent expecting another war within 25 years and an
additional 25 per cent anticipating war at least within 50 years.

When questioned specifically about the demobilization, 72
per cent in June of 1945 felt that the point system was a fair one.
By September, one month after hostilities had ceased, 56 per cent
felt that the men were being released fast enough from the Army
and only 23 per cent would have the release rate speeded up. The
views of those with a relative in the Army varied only slightly more
in favor of faster demobilization. Others, with a relative in the
Navy, were somewhat more impatient, with 38 per cent calling for more
rapid demobilization of our naval forces and only 38 per cent
satisfied with the current state of affairs. In November there
was slightly more dissatisfaction evident. Now only 50 per cent

124. Ibid.
125. NORC, September 1945.
127. AIPO, September 20, 1945.
felt that the Army release system was a fair one, with 40 per cent feeling that changes were needed. Opinion on the Navy's method was still pretty evenly divided. 128

In 1946 there was no letdown in the desire to continue the occupation of enemy countries. Polls taken late in the year found 80 per cent in favor of keeping troops in Europe and Japan. 129 Even more surprising in view of attitudes toward demobilization, was the 60 per cent approval for retaining the several thousand troops in China while General Marshall attempted to bring peace to that country. Of the 32 per cent in favor of bringing this group of men home and the 8 per cent with no opinion, 14 per cent changed their minds and were willing to keep them in China when told that some people thought that Russia might gain control of China if the United States forces were withdrawn. 130

Opinion about demobilization itself did not vary greatly from the previous year. In the early part of 1946 about 50 per cent continued to feel that the troops were being released fast enough, and those in favor of a more rapid discharge of men remained

128. AIPO, November 22, 1945.


130. NORC November 1946.
around 30 per cent. Late in the year, 73 per cent put themselves down in favor of reducing the size of our army and navy if other countries would reciprocate, but only 21 per cent held out any hope that the others would agree. Sixty-five per cent then felt that, even if others would agree to reductions, the United States still needed to keep the largest navy and air force, as a means of keeping the country out of further war.  

Meanwhile, a poll in August had found 55 per cent in favor of increasing the size of our armed forces, and a later one in November found 58 per cent wanting to keep them at least at their current size and 14 per cent favoring an increase regardless of cost. Less than one in four would reduce the forces in order to save money. By this time, responses to the trend question asked by NORC from August 1945 through October 1946 on whether it would be more important for the United States to concentrate on "making the UN so strong that no country would dare start a war or on "making our own defenses so strong that no country would dare attack us" had shifted from slight majorities favoring the United Nations

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132. NORC November 1946.
133. NORC August 1946
134. NORC October 1946.
solution to an emphasis on our own defenses, by 51 to 44 per cent margins.

The public opinion polls have shown us that in the immediate postwar years the American public had not altered the basically internationalist position arrived at during World War II. There was no inclination to abandon the occupation of the Axis countries and, although there was dissatisfaction with the demobilization, it was not overwhelmingly hostile. The willingness to keep troops in China when the reasons were pointed out indicated that there was room for effectively exercised leadership. In view of this it is interesting to examine just what attempts were made by Administration leaders to prevent or slow down the demobilization.

According to Harry Truman, despite his personal misgivings and those of General Eisenhower, he had no choice but to allow the "disintegration" of the nation's military strength to take place, because there was such a clamor for demobilization from the press, Congress, and the public.

A dictator can use his soldiers as soulless pawns, but in a government like ours the voice of the people must be heeded; and the American people wanted nothing more in that summer of 1945 than to end the fighting and bring the boys back home. 136

135 NORC August 1945 - October 1946.
The fighting in Europe had hardly ended when pressure began to build up for the release of men in the armed forces. With the end of hostilities in the Pacific, the public demand for the discharge of the millions of men in the service became insistent.

A 'point' system for determining eligibility for discharge on the basis of length of service, combat duty, time overseas and parenthood credit was put into effect shortly after VE-Day....

Nevertheless the criticisms came. Nevertheless, the demand for speedier demobilization continued to increase. On Sept. 18 I issued a statement assuring the American people that the return of servicemen from the fighting fronts of the world to their homes was proceeding as fast as the circumstances permitted. In less than one month after the day of Japan's surrender, the number of men discharged each day from the Army had risen from 4,200 to more than 13,200. Our soldiers were being returned to civilian life at a rate in excess of 650 per hour. This rate, I announced, would be steadily increased to more than 25,000 discharges per day by January, 1946...

Many letters from parents and appeals from organizations came to me pleading for the release of various groups. Members of the Congress were reminding me that their constituencies were bombarding them with telegrams and letters. On January 8, 1946, I issued a statement in which I said that while I recognized the anxiety and impatience of families, it was just not possible to discharge every member of the armed forces promptly.

On April 17, 1946, at a press conference in the White House, I called attention to the fact that discharges in the Army had reached nearly 7,000,000. I termed this 'the most remarkable demobilization in the history of the world, or 'disintegration', if you want to call it that.'

Our frenzied demobilization, in fact, grew out of our antagonism toward maintaining a large standing army. There was only one alternative, in my opinion, and that was a prepared soldier-citizenry.

What a nation can do or must do begins with the willingness of its people to shoulder the burden. In
1945-1946 the American people had chosen to scuttle their military might. I was against hasty and excessive demobilization at the time, and stated publicly that I was; and General Eisenhower, then Army Chief of Staff, spoke out against it also. The press and Congress, however, drowned us out.\textsuperscript{138}

President Truman in his public statements following the victory in Japan repeatedly declared that it would be necessary for the United States to remain militarily strong. However, since he envisioned the armed strength of the nation being sustained by means of a selective service, he made no strong move to stop the demobilization of the seasoned troops at hand. He apparently assumed that the maintenance of a strong well-trained force was not immediately necessary. Little more than a month after the surrender of Japan he stated:

\begin{quote}
I think we should all be very clear about one thing. An impression has spread that the speed of demobilization is governed by our future needs for occupation and other forces. That is, of course, not true.

No one now can accurately forecast what those needs are going to be. Our earlier estimates are being constantly revised...

Carrying on our demobilization as rapidly as we can—which we are now doing—we shall not really face the problem of the size or makeup of the occupation forces until next spring...\textsuperscript{139}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid, February 7, 1955.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, September 20, 1945.
was ample evidence that these men felt that a strong America and some sort of national military training was of paramount importance. Yet these were the men who had formulated the point system which was rapidly bringing about a tremendous reduction in America's strength. While General Marshall in particular was extremely blunt in his warning of the raveness of our weakened position, he himself had announced in September of 1945, in answer to what the Times called "virtually a summons" before members of both Houses of Congress, that the point requirements had been lowered and the boys would be sent home even faster.

The concern of other government leaders is reflected in Secretary Forrestal's records of high government meetings at the time. In October of 1945 those present at a State-War-Navy meeting were all in agreement that the hasty demobilization of the armed forces was of grave danger to the country. At this time Mr. Forrestal suggested that the President make the Soviet attitude known to the public, but Secretary of State Byrnes was fearful that this would damage Soviet-American relations and nothing was done. At a Cabinet meeting three months later Acheson was gravely concerned about the effect of demobilization upon our foreign policy, and

Forrestal suggested a nation-wide press and radio campaign to impress upon the country the seriousness of the situation— to which the President agreed. But again nothing was done to halt the rapid dispersal of our armed strength.

**Some Conclusions on Postwar Opinion**

The disparity between public opinion as recorded by the polls and the executive concept of public attitudes permits us to make several conclusions:

1. The point system which permitted Harry Truman's "frenzied demobilization" was not an accurate reflection of public opinion. The system, conceived before the war had ended, was based not upon recorded public attitudes at the time but upon what government leaders thought that public opinion would be once the fighting had stopped. The new internationalist trend in the thinking of the American people, the fear of another war, the desire to occupy enemy countries for several years, the realization that troops would not be sent home immediately—all these public attitudes revealed in wartime polls were disregarded by the Administration. Later, the willingness of a sizable majority to keep troops in China, especially when the reason for such a move was given, was further evidence that public opinion would not have been entirely adverse.

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to the maintenance of substantial armed strength had the need been
explained.

2. Congress let itself be influenced by a vocal minority.

The pressures that President Truman spoke of were those upon
Congressmen in the form of mail and pressure groups which have seldom
proved representational. American mothers were impatient for their
sons' return; and no one had given them sufficient reason why they should
not be. Few citizens, or Congressmen, cared to take such an unpopular
stand as to suggest that perhaps the soldiers were being sent home
too fast when no leader in the government had come forward to pro-
test the method and speed of the demobilization. Congressmen,
reluctant to resist the pressure of their heavy mail, talked instead
of the unassailable position of the United States as a world power
and joined in the popular clamor to reduce that power.

3. The failure to maintain a strong America was a failure of
leadership not of an unwilling public.

What was needed was an intensive effort on the part of the
Administration to explain to the American public the consequences
of the tremendous reduction of military manpower before adequate
replacements could be made ready. President Truman pleaded for
a strong America through a vigorous selective service program,
but he permitted the current national military strength to drain
away at a phenomenal rate. Throughout the United States, faith in
both the United Nations and the Atom bomb seemed to make conventional
power unnecessary as well as expensive. When the President himself
admitted that he did not know what the occupation needs would be,
and thus showed his uncertainty of the job, requirements in convention-
al power terms, he could scarcely expect his countrymen to know
what force would be needed. His failure to outline the country's
tasks realistically made it impossible for the public to understand
why a large armed force was still necessary--and one could be
expected to approve a large armed service for no apparent reason.

In view of the tragic absence of strong national leadership,
what was remarkable was not that 30 per cent would have speeded up
the demobilization but that 50 per cent felt that it was being
carried out rapidly enough.
THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

Two years of peace brought little relief from the chaos of 1945. Fighting continued in many parts of the world, and in Europe a kind of paralysis prevailed. Not only was the immense problem of reconstruction still to be faced; the spirit of cooperation that existed during the war years had all but vanished. Hostility towards Russia had increased rapidly throughout 1946, and now Europe's economic problems were heightened by political disunity. The situation demanded a leader and a plan, but England and France, the war's victors, were themselves in no position to exercise the kind of bold leadership necessary; and the United States, the only Western nation capable of rendering vital economic aid, seemed to have withdrawn to the far side of the Atlantic.

In the United States few citizens could have been unaware of the crisis in Europe as disturbing reports poured in from every European capital. But, although American suspicion of Russia was widespread, there was still a tendency to hope that peace was not entirely lost, and a kind of wishful thinking encouraged by the lack of leadership in the immediate postwar years, when little effort was made to impress upon the American people the fact that international cooperation and the economic viability of Europe...
were partly America's responsibility. The devastation of World War II had left only the United States in a position to act but, would she?

The steady worsening of the European crisis certainly did not pass unobserved in Washington, but the administration too seemed paralyzed. The numerous crises that arose in the first two years after the war were met separately, not with a cohesive plan. Although officials must have noted a world wide pattern in Russia's actions, there was little attempt to meet the challenge with anything but a piecemeal approach. Part of the answer lay in an unwillingness to antagonize Russia for fear of making the situation worse. Domestically, the political situation was uncertain. Harry Truman had little of the popularity of his predecessor; and for the first time in more than a decade the Republicans, whose aim was to reduce government expenditures, controlled Congress. There was a general assumption that the voters were waiting only till 1948 to elect a Republican president. The time could not have been more inauspicious for new demands upon America's economic and political resources.

In light of the deteriorating economic and political situation in Europe, the British decision to withdraw from Greece by March 31, 1947 and cease financial assistance to Turkey could not have seemed particularly serious to most Americans. But to government observers it was open acknowledgement of the decline of the British power on
which the United States had traditionally relied to maintain the balance of power in Europe. With only Russia in a position of strength, the United States must step in if it wanted to prevent all of Europe from falling to communism. The condition in Greece was not one that promised a simple solution. The British had been financing a weak, corrupt Greek government against attacks by communist guerrilla forces which had just launched a heavy offensive. Economic and military collapse seemed imminent. In Turkey, Soviet pressure threatened the independence of the Turkish nation. The situation was not one in which the American people would be anxious to become involved.

The decision to take over the British commitment in Greece and assume a major role in the Near East was made by the President and his advisors in the face of a highly adverse domestic situation. It was a decision that took great courage. Russia was firmly entrenched in all of the Balkans but for Greece and in all of Central Europe to the Elbe. The weakened British who were gradually withdrawing from many of their Asian outposts, could no longer afford to sustain the Greek government and help with the development of Turkey. If the Russians were to be denied another satellite, the United States must come to the aid of the Greek and Turkish people to prevent the economic collapse of their nations.
On March 12, 1947 President Truman requested of Congress $400 million for aid to Greece and Turkey and authorization to send military and civilian personnel to supervise this aid and assist in reconstruction.

The momentous nature of President Truman's request was apparent. He was not only asking for a large loan to bolster two badly weakened economies but also enunciating a new "policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." The Truman Doctrine, as it came to be called, was the government's answer to Soviet expansion. The necessity for such action was not questioned among top government leaders; in fact, the near unanimity of support in government circles was as remarkable as the attempt made to mobilize congressional and popular opinion behind this unprecedented action.

Before the President made his request to Congress, he appointed a committee to inform the nation's leaders of the need for a bold foreign aid program. Congressional leaders were also called in to be briefed on the world situation. At the first meeting of the President and top State Department and Congressional leaders, Senator Vandenberg insisted that the President present the issue frankly to the American people if he wished the bipartisan support of
Congress; and it was the administration's acceptance of Vandenburg's advice which enabled the program to be carried through successfully.

Public reaction to the Truman Doctrine was widespread, and the volume of comment tremendous. The discussion in general tended to center about Greece, a country more familiar to the American people than was Turkey and the country where the situation was more critical. Fortunately, State Department studies of press and radio opinion have made it possible to study both the articulate comment and the opinion registered in the numerous public opinion polls.

Press Comment

In the months prior to the President's message there had been increasing dismay in the nation's press over the military situation in Greece, although no approval of the character of the Greek government. As the British withdrew from the area there was some demand that the United States send economic aid to Greece, but most commentators warned against a military commitment. Popular awareness of the crucial nature of the Greek situation was minimal, and the atmosphere was scarcely favorable to a deeper involvement in the area.

The initial response to the proposed sending of both military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey was one of generally strong

approval in the press and on the radio. Support for the President was not restricted to any one group, and virtually all recognized the significance of the step that the country was taking. Opposition was present, however, and soon a nationwide debate began. Strong liberals and right wing isolationists joined forces in a very vocal minority to protest the President's plan and its implications for America's future role in world affairs. But two such diverse groups could not unite on any alternative program.

On one hand, Henry Wallace and his followers feared that a hardening of our policy towards Russia would lead to war. On the other hand, isolationists were dismayed at the prospect of an American commitment to an active role on the international scene. Extreme liberals were concerned that the Truman Doctrine was imperialistic and were especially unhappy about the provisions for military assistance. Their conservative allies were upset at the cost of such a program and the likelihood that this would be the first of many. Fearing that our economy could not stand the strain, they would have much preferred to leave the problem to the British, especially as Turkey had not even been an ally in the war and was not visibly on point of collapse. Such views were evident in the pages of the Jackson, Mississippi Daily News: 143

Who shall say that the people of any nation may not have Communism if that is what they desire? If the ideological and military conflict with Russia is inevitable, another little nation or two gone Communist won't prove to be the deciding factor in an atomic war.

Since they are evidently determined to engage in the experiment, wouldn't it be better to let the nations of Europe get their bellyful of Communism and thereby learn the folly of such a plan of government?

Efforts to combat Communism in the Balkans with American dollars are not likely to succeed.

Then when we have bankrupted ourselves trying to bail out the staggering nations of Europe, Communism will have a field day in the United States.

With nothing to show for our immature generosity except more calls for help, the time has come to call a halt before we join other nations in the international breadline.

The Christian Century, on the other hand, was more disturbed by the military implications of the proposed policy.

The President now asks the United States to take the law into its own hands. In total disregard of our solemn pledges to maintain international peace by collective action, he proposes to meet the speculative threat of Russian aggression by an overt threat of American military power....

Mr. Truman's excitement over this 'crisis' is not rooted in pure altruism. It reflects the militaristic ideology that has become ascendant in his administration, which is now dominated by military minded statesmen headed by himself and his new secretary of state....

The American people are not ready to cast their traditions and ideals on the scrap heap. They want to help the stricken peoples of the world, but they
do not want to dominate them. They are willing to give millions for humanitarian relief, millions—yes, and billions if necessary—for the support of the United Nations in the discharge of its world mission against every threat of war, but not one dollar for empire.

There were several issues that troubled both supporters and opponents of President Truman's proposal. Internationalists were particularly disturbed that the Truman Doctrine and its aid to Greece and Turkey would by-pass the United Nations, perhaps seriously damaging the prestige of the new world organization; although the UN was in no way equipped to handle an emergency of this sort, it was not until Senator Vandenberg added an amendment to the aid bill that opposition was destroyed. This amendment provided for an end to the aid once termination had been requested by either the UN or Greece and Turkey or if the President determined that the objectives of the aid had been accomplished.

While this quieted most objections about the United States' unilateral action, those who were disturbed about the character of the governments of both Greece and Turkey were never entirely satisfied. Naturally there was strong reluctance to support reactionary governments. But most commentators came to feel that in view of the situation in Eastern Europe, there would be a better chance for the development of democracy under the current regimes.

But there was also the implied assumption that communism could be fought with American dollars. While the Right was concerned at the demands imposed upon the country's economy, others felt that in a battle for men's minds the dollar was a very limited weapon. Criticism was also leveled at the President's speech for its failure to spell out in detail the implications of the proposed program. Some feared that it meant an ideological crusade against communism everywhere. Others felt it to be only a practical program to stop the imperialistic expansion of Soviet Russia in those areas where her territorial ambitions were clearly defined. All wanted more information.

Despite sharp opposition by a minority, the press expressed general support for the Truman Doctrine, and press support increased as the seriousness of the situation became more generally known. An editorial in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette the day after the President's speech gives the approach taken by many of the program's supporters.

The course President Truman has recommended that Congress follow in providing assistance for Greece and Turkey represents a basic reversal in traditional American foreign policy. When the alternatives to this course are considered, however, one concludes that President Truman has recommended a radical departure in the best interests of the Western democracies.
To permit the collapse of Greece, and subsequently Turkey, would be to invite Russian domination of areas vital to our security. The only way to prevent the collapse is to assume the financial burden soon to be put down by Britain. Ours is the only country capable of taking over.

We would much prefer to see this and other issues handled within the United Nations, the agency created for just such a purpose.

But we cannot escape the fact that at present the United Nations is not equal to the situation.

With so much at stake for what remains of the world’s democracies, with the need so urgent to protect our own enormous investment in the victory so recently won, President Truman has pointed to the logical choice for this country. We hope that Congress will accept his recommendations in the non-partisan spirit in which they were made.\footnote{145}

Public Opinion

The support for both military and economic aid in press and radio comment was not immediately reflected in the surveys of popular opinion taken at the time. Polls taken at the end of March and early April did show a high degree of awareness of the program. By April third some 83 per cent stated they had heard of Congress's discussion of the matter.\footnote{146} The reason for such a program was thought by one third to be humanitarian. Almost half felt that it had been conceived in order to stop Russia.\footnote{147} Not until late in June was the humanitarian concept gained,\footnote{148} was

\footnote{145. \textit{Pittsburgh Post-Gazette}, March 13, 1947.}
\footnote{146. NORC, April 3, 1947.}
\footnote{147. Jones, op. cit., p. 179.}
\footnote{148. NORC June, 1947.}
the measure of support for these two reasons about evenly divided. It was evident that there was also some question about the character of the governments that would be aided. A majority were uncertain that the governments of Greece and Turkey enjoyed the support of the majority of their citizens. 149

On the general principle of aid for the two countries, 60 per cent initially approved funds to help Greece "get back on her feet." 150 Two weeks after Truman's speech some 56 per cent would specifically approve $250 million aid for Greece, with 32 per cent in opposition. No difference appeared between Republicans and Democrats. 151 There were 49 per cent also behind the $150 million grant to Turkey, where the danger did not seem imminent. 152 By April those in favor of money to help Greece recover from the war ranged around 67 per cent; and in June, while the support for Greek aid dropped to 55 per cent, the per cent in outright opposition had also dropped to 19 per cent. At this time, 26 per cent had either no opinion or gave a qualified answer. 154

On the military aspects of the aid program, public opinion polls showed a marked lack of enthusiasm. When the question was

149. AIPO, March 29, 1947.
150. NORC, March 22, 1947.
152. Ibid.
153. SRC April, 1947.
154. NORC June, 1947.
first asked, a majority (48 per cent to 38 per cent) opposed military
supplies to Greece even when the avowed purpose, as stated in the
question, was to put down communist attacks; and by April dis-
approval had grown to 53 per cent. At the end of 1947, however,
when military aid had become government policy, 45 per cent were
favorable and 38 per cent opposed.  
When questioned about military
advisors for Greece, initial response to a small survey was favor-
able (47 per cent to 41 per cent), although a week or so later
a larger survey found 54 per cent disapproval.  In the case of
Turkey, there was a more even division. There the small survey
found 43 per cent (against 41 per cent) wanting military supplies
and experts sent to strengthen Turkey against Russian pressure.
The fact that this early poll included mention of both "experts"
and "supplies" may have been the reason for approval for helping
Turkey, as the real opposition was to military supplies. A few weeks
later the larger survey revealed 55 per cent opposed to sending our
military experts to train the Turkish army  

156. NORC, April, 1947.
December, 1947.
159. AIPO, March 28, 1947.
opposed to sending military supplies.\textsuperscript{162} In this later April period
64 per cent believed that "the Greek government in Greece is in
danger of being overthrown by the Communists". Only 56 per cent
believed "Turkey in danger because of Russian pressure" this no
doubt partly explains the slightly greater approval for sending
military supplies to Greece.\textsuperscript{163}

NORC found that when questioned about the risk of war involved
in furnishing military aid to the two nations, 52 per cent felt
that war would be more likely if we provided military supplies
while 27 per cent thought it less likely.\textsuperscript{164} Two weeks later the
percentages had varied by only a few points.\textsuperscript{165} Meanwhile Gallup
found that 54 per cent thought that war would not be a likely
result if we provided only money.\textsuperscript{166}

An interesting poll by Gallup appeared later, in September,
in the \textit{Washington Post} dealing more directly with US intervention
in Greece. A large majority favored further US moves to help Greece

\textsuperscript{162} NORC, April, 1947
\textsuperscript{163} NORC, April 7-9, 1947.
\textsuperscript{164} NORC, March 19-22, 1947.
\textsuperscript{165} NORC, April 3, 1947.
\textsuperscript{166} AIPO, March 28, 1947.
in her struggle against Russia if the aid planned proved insufficient.

Four courses of action were then proposed. The largest per cent (40) would cooperate with the UN and tell Russia that any further moves would be considered war against the rest of the world. The next proposal, with 28 per cent of the respondents behind it, was to send US troops to the Greek border in cooperation with the UN. Backing for the other suggestions was negligible. Support for these militant proposals was given despite the initial reluctance to send even military goods.

The administration of the Truman Doctrine by American civilian experts was widely favored by the American public. At the same time, a majority felt that the UN would be able to handle the matter effectively by itself and that the UN should take a more active part in solving the problem of Greece and Turkey. Although this seemed to indicate that the American people were not willing to shoulder the necessary responsibility, other polls showed them not unaware of the new role that the United States was assuming. A decidedly large majority was conscious of England's declining role, and there was ample majority support for the new turn our foreign

168. NORC, April 3, 1947.
policy had suddenly taken. Public approval for the manner in which Harry Truman was carrying out the duties of the presidential office shot up from 48 per cent in February to 60 per cent in March. By April 63 per cent counted themselves "generally satisfied" with the foreign policy of the United States. All three polls were no doubt directly related to public attitudes toward the Truman Doctrine. Other polls taken after the President's message showed general agreement on a policy of attempting to put down Communist-staged armed revolts in other foreign countries. On aid in general, 71 per cent approved the continued spending of "large sums to aid war torn countries."

The vigorous attempt made by the Administration to win support for a revolutionary step in the nation's foreign policy was most significant in its long-run implications. By frankly revealing the deterioration that had taken place in Western Europe, the Administration largely overcame press and radio opposition to the Truman plan; and in the wake of the Administration's efforts, the public showed that it was willing, as it had been during World War II, to help European nations recover from the devastation of

170 SRC, April, 1947.
172 SRC, April, 1947.
the war. There was general approval for the principle of the aid bill even though the public was still unwilling to risk involvement in any military action. Popular support for a new foreign policy was strong—and the way was paved for further moves.
V

THE MARSHALL PLAN

The Truman Doctrine was the first stage in the revision of United States policy. Although it proposed in outline a broad new concept, it suggested specific steps to remedy the ills of only two nations. Although Europe was heartened that the United States was anxious that no further nations succumb to Russian pressure, the President’s speech had not suggested how the United States was prepared to salvage the economy of the rest of Europe. The peoples of Europe waited for further proposals.

American commentators, too, waited for a plan of action based on the new principles. Thus once the problem of aid to Greece and Turkey had been handed over to Congress, Under Secretary Acheson spelled out in greater detail the problems ahead. Early in May, in a speech at Cleveland, Mississippi, the Secretary told the Delta farmers of the grim economic situation that prevailed throughout Europe:

... last winter’s blizzard did show up the extremely narrow margins of human and national subsistence which prevail in the world today, margins so narrow that a blizzard can threaten populations with starvation and nations with bankruptcy and loss of independence. Not only do human beings and nations exist in narrow economic margins, but also human dignity, human freedom, and democratic institutions. It is one of the principle aims of our foreign policy today to use our economic and financial resources to widen these margins. It is
necessary if we are to preserve our own freedoms, and our own democratic institutions. It is necessary for our national security. And it is our duty and privilege as human beings.\footnote{173}

And in New England, a Connecticut paper commented:

\ldots To restore the non-Soviet world economically, is, to put it mildly, a task of formidable complexity and difficulty. But we shall have to face the facts. Only if the western world can be rehabilitated to the point at which it can once more sustain itself will we ourselves be able to prosper and perhaps survive.\footnote{174}

In Washington, work went ahead on the problem of an over-all plan to salvage the European situation. At the same time, throughout the spring of 1947, debate in the press and on the radio on the problem of aid increased the pressure upon Washington officials to work out a practical, integrated solution based upon the new principles already sketched by the President and Secretary Acheson. Although Senator Vandenberg had declared that there would be no new foreign aid programs that session, Europe's problems could not wait upon the U.S. Congress. Thus, on June 5, 1947, at Harvard University's commencement, Secretary of State Marshall declared:

\begin{quote}
It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to assist in the return of normal
\end{quote}

\footnote{173. J. Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 30.}

\footnote{174. \textit{Hartford (Conn.) Courant}, May 10, 1947.}
economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability or assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. Such assistance, I am convinced, must not be on a piecemeal basis as various crises develop. Any assistance that this government may render should provide a cure rather than a palliative. Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full cooperation, I am sure, on the part of the United States government. Any government which maneuvers to block recovery of other countries cannot expect help from us. Furthermore, governments, political parties, or groups which seek to perpetuate human misery in order to profit therefrom politically will encounter the opposition of the United States. 175

Press Comment

The Marshall Plan for a cooperative effort between the United States and the nations of Europe to restore the productive power of the war-shattered economies was, again, a revolutionary step. It was public acknowledgment by the U.S. government that our welfare was interdependent with that of Europe, that the United States had responsibility for the restoration of Europe’s economic health. Unlike the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine, Secretary Marshall’s speech was not a dramatic announcement of a new crisis. In fact, it was the subsequent excited response from the capitals.

175. J. Jones, op. cit., pp. 34-35.
Europe that aroused many Americans. But its total impact was no
less, and public response was strong. In the press and among radio
commentators support was immediate. The New York Herald Tribune,
in one of hundreds of editorials that appeared immediately through-
out the country, summarized the proposal:

Secretary of State Marshal was presenting a
starkly but hopefully realistic picture of Europe's
problem and the role which the United States must play
in solving that problem.

Mr. Marshall's speech was directed at two objectives--
to a divided Europe and to a puzzled United States.
Europe must prepare a master plan, one which will re-
recognize that American resources are not inexhaustive
and that political panaceas will not aid their re-
covery. The United States must be prepared to assume
heavier burdens, for longer than it had hoped or expected,
as an investment in restoring the world to sanity and
good economic health. To carry through this complicated
operation will require the best efforts of the best
brains, here and abroad, as well as a broad public
acceptance within the United States of the necessity
of the program and confidence in the efficiency with
which it is to be carried out. Mr. Marshall has
evidently embarked upon the organization of such a
program which will fulfill these requirements and he
has make a most encouraging beginning. 176

The far reaching support for the plan (editorial support
ranged around 10 to 1) was based on its new approach to the problem
of reconstruction. It signaled the end to piecemeal planning.

Europe was to be treated as a unit--as it must be if its resources

were to be mobilized effectively. And, better yet, it was not another dollar handout; it left the initiative to the nations of Europe. It had answered objections to the Truman Doctrine by putting the emphasis on economics rather than ideology. If Russia did no choose to cooperate, the onus would be upon her.

Although the strongest criticism came from those who felt that Europe would be unable to wait for a complicated plan and urged instead that funds be granted immediately, there was still a limited but adamant group opposed to the whole idea. This group of hard core opponents of the Truman Doctrine was not appeased by this latest approach—those on the Right still fearing the drain upon the economy of the United States, and those on the Left fearing further provocation of Russia. Qualified supporters, like the Wall Street Journal, realized that the need was great but felt that the United States would be unable to afford the cost.

Throughout the summer, and indeed until the European Recovery Plan Act was passed in the spring of the following year, support and enthusiasm for Secretary Marshall's proposals remained high in recorded comment. Senator Vandenberg's early suggestion that an inventory of this nation's resources be taken and President Truman's appointment of three committees on June 22 to study foreign aid were welcomed as sound practical approaches. Meanwhile, the leading
papers reported fully on all developments in the planning; and by the end of the summer the discussion had centered upon how, not whether, the aid was to be sent. President Truman did not submit his $17 billion bill for European Recovery to Congress along with his recommendations for its passage until December 19th of that year. In the interim, the Paris Conference of the 16 nations in September was observed with great interest, and its conclusion was met with favor—although it was felt that the sum they had requested was large. The New York Times was particularly enthusiastic:

Not until now have the American people had an opportunity to look at the other side of the ledger—that side setting forth concretely what the Plan means in terms of Europe's cooperation and production and reconstruction. We believe that these will constitute a genuinely thrilling revelation to those who had been thinking of this underwriting operation as simply so much more stopgap financial aid. 177

About this time the leading paper in the East began to urge that emergency aid be made available since the Marshall Plan could not be put into effect for many months and Europe needed help immediately after the devastating winter of 1947 and the subsequent drought. Increasing impatience with the slowness of the government to deal with the European situation and the lack of information were somewhat abated by President Truman's call for a special session

177. New York Times, September, 1947
of Congress and the various government reports on our national resources and aid problems that came in from the committees the President had appointed in June. Press and radio enthusiasm continued undiminished all during the fall months, although the setbacks received by the proposed interim aid measure, introduced pessimism about the eventual passage of the Marshall Plan itself. Each week major newspapers carried several editorials urging passage of aid, and radio commentators were tabulated at about 12 to 1 favor of the measure.

Finally, in December, an interim aid bill was passed by Congress, and Truman then sent the Marshall Plan Act before it for consideration—accompanied by a plea for its passage. His proposal for $17 billion over a four-year period received wide national support despite the size of the request. Division came, however, over the President's proposal for its administration under the State Department. During January the Senate Foreign Relations Committee heard more than 90 persons express largely favorable views on the measure in well publicized hearings; but discord over the proposals for the administration of aid continued. The Senate Committee's preparation of its own bill met with approval as it did not change the President's to any large extent, and the decision to set up an independent agency to administer the program and to request funds for only a 12 month period was widely welcomed.

By March the Communist Coup in Czechoslovakia and new Russian demands upon Finland, as well as impending elections in Italy, added
greatly to the sense of urgency with which European recovery was regarded. Where economic reasons had been predominant before, now stopping communism became an important aim. Criticism of the Administration’s features was almost nil. The Marshall Plan Act passed both Houses on April 3, 1948—and was widely heralded throughout the nation.

Opinion of National Groups

Before we turn to the public opinion polls of this period, we may look first at the support received by the Plan from national organizations, which are in many cases the link between the people and Congress. Here again, as in the nation’s press, we find the support of a decided majority. Some 48 national groups put themselves on record as favoring the Plan, while only four recorded opposition. The character of this support ranged from the National Grange to the ADA, with only business organizations notably lacking in enthusiasm, although strongly supporting the principle of aid. The opinion of the business groups was cautious, urging more discussion of the various technical aspects of the program. The CIO and the AFL, on the other hand, were strongly in favor of large scale aid, though not necessarily the Marshall Plan. Of the farm organizations, the leaders of the major groups voiced support despite the fact that much of the farm population remained unconvinc
d of the need for a plan. A poll taken in the early months after
Marshall's speech by the Wallace Farmer and Iowa Homestead found 32 per cent of the nation's farmers against lending $5 billion a year to get the program started and an additional 39 per cent generally opposed. Support, however, did come from the major veterans' and women's groups. The American Legion Platform called it the "most important instrument" for dealing with the spread of communism. Religious organizations were notably enthusiastic about relieving the distressed conditions on the continent. Not one of the special interest groups took issue with the general principles which underlay a program of extensive aid to Europe.

Public Opinion

When we review public attitudes toward the Marshall Plan, we find that they bore a direct relation to knowledge of the Secretary's proposal. As knowledge of the Plan spread, support grew. Not until the autumn of 1947, however, was more than half the population aware of the Marshall Plan; and only one-fifth realized that it was based upon the principle of self-help despite efforts of government officials to make that point clear and the relatively large volume of press coverage. At this time, in October of 1947, the marked disparity between educational

179. AIPO, November 2, 1947.
180. NORC, October, 1947.
groups was apparent. Seventy-five per cent of the college-educated population had heard of the plan, a percentage dropping to 47 per cent and 28 per cent among the High School and Grade School graduates. During the winter and into the spring of 1948, when the program was being debated in Congress, awareness of the plan did grow to around 80 per cent—with 98 per cent of the college group and 61 per cent of the least educated group claiming knowledge of the aid bill. At this time support for the Plan was also at its highest. It is important to note, however, the distinction between an "aware" and an "informed" citizen. Those "informed" about the Marshall Plan, and thus able to discuss it with some knowledge, were only counted at about 14 per cent as late as February, 1948. It is also important to note that there was a distinction between those in favor of foreign aid in general and those who were behind the Marshall Plan specifically, although the Marshall Plan itself consistently had many more supporters than opponents. In the month following Secretary Marshall's speech at Harvard, Gallup polls estimated that of the population that had heard of

181. NORC, March, 1948.
182. NORC, October, 1947.
183. See Lester Markel, Public Opinion and Foreign Policy, New York, Harpers, Chapter 2, pp. 49-56.
184. Ibid., p. 52.
his proposals some 57 per cent were in favor and only 21 per cent opposed.\textsuperscript{185} Of the "aware" group 55 per cent also put themselves on record as favoring an advance of "as much as $5 billion a year so that European countries could buy what they need here." This time 35 per cent objected.\textsuperscript{186} However, 50 per cent were decidedly unwilling to pay more taxes to let European nations buy what they needed in the United States. In this case, only 41 per cent approved of a tax raise.\textsuperscript{187}

By the autumn of 1947, when an increasingly large per cent had become aware of the debate over the foreign aid program, NORC found 80 per cent behind the sending of "machinery and other supplies to help get the factories and farms [of Western Europe] running again."\textsuperscript{188} The strength of this support became apparent when the respondents were asked if they would still approve if it meant shortages of "things you want to buy." Approval then dropped from 80 per cent to 49 per cent.\textsuperscript{189} One month later, in November, only 29 per cent of a total sample approved the Marshall Plan in particular, although 47 per cent of those who had heard of it previously were in favor.\textsuperscript{190}

\textsuperscript{185} AIPO, July 23, 1947.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{188} NORC, October, 1947.
\textsuperscript{189} NORC, October, 1947.
\textsuperscript{190} AIPO, November, 1947.
end of the year, before President Truman had laid the program before Congress, approval was up once again. Now 56 per cent of those 64 per cent who had heard of the plan favored it.

The strength of this support had mounted, too, for 49 per cent favored the plan (against 40 per cent in opposition) even if it was to mean a postponement of a tax reduction, although slightly over half prescribed conditions of some sort (i.e., supervision or repayment) in their approval. In a breakdown by degree of information, another gallup poll asking for opinions on "lending Western European nations like England, France, Holland, and Norway c. $20 billion over the next 4 years to be spent for goods bought in this country" read like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Favor</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>Qualified</th>
<th>N.O.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best informed</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less informed</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaguely informed</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heard of but didn’t know purpose</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the aid program was presented in Congress, a large percentage of all groups classified by education were aware of the debate and the Senate hearings in particular. At this time, in January, 51 per cent said that they were satisfied with the President’s efforts

192. NORC, December 1947.
to help Europe recover from the war, and another 70 per cent in a Fortune Poll expressed their approval of the Marshall Plan. More general approval for this program was tabulated by Gallup when he found 40 per cent in favor of the bill and a higher 56 per cent approval among those who had previously heard of the program. By late March approval was registered by 51 per cent of the population, with only 12 per cent in actual opposition. At this last count before the measure was passed, 66 per cent of the knowledgeable group approved the Plan.

Although approval of the Marshall Plan was never voiced by more than a bare half of the population, approval ran as high as 66 per cent among the group who had heard of it prior to the time when they were questioned about their attitudes. That knowledge of the plan was but one factor in securing approval is indicated in the fact that approval within this knowledgeable group also increased over the eleven-month period between the Harvard speech and the passage of the bill.

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194. Ibid., NORC, January 1, 1948.
195. Ibid., Fortune, January 1, 1948.
196. AIPO, February 1948.
197. NORC, March 1948.
Other reasons for support of the measure are shown in several polls taken over the eleven months. The initial reaction to the new concept of foreign aid was that we should help everyone who needed it whether or not they were unfriendly to us, (53 per cent to 41 per cent). This humanitarian motivation largely predominated throughout the fall, and the first hint that the public would approve of using the Marshall Plan as a weapon against communism came in December. At this time Gallup found as much as 11 per cent greater approval for aid being used to improve conditions and to prevent European nations "from going Communist--rather than merely lending them the money "to be spent for goods bought in this country."

In February, humanitarianism still predominated, however, as 56 per cent of those familiar with the plan saw its purpose as that of helping Europe--only 8 per cent feeling that it was to curb communism. But by the end of March, communist success in Czechoslovakia may well have caused 36 per cent to declare that the main purpose of the aid was to prevent communism, in contrast to the 32 per cent who still felt that the aid was to enable European countries to "stand on their own feet again."

200. Ibid., Vol. XII, Summer 1948, p. 366, AIPO, February 8, 1948.
201. NORC, March 1948.
Apparently, the knowledge of the economic conditions that prevailed in Europe was not a large factor in the growing approval for the plan. Shortly after Marshall gave his speech, 80 per cent of those people questioned about the situation in Europe felt that Europeans needed our help in order to get enough to eat. By October, the great majority still felt that conditions were bad, but there was some division over the exact degree of seriousness. Forty-three per cent termed the situation "extremely bad," 47 per cent felt them to be "only fairly bad." A negligible 6 per cent were unaware of any serious economic situation. It was interesting to note that despite increasing support for the aid program, 59 per cent in November (and 64 per cent in December) were convinced that Western Europeans were not working hard enough for their own recovery. Only about one fifth of the sample felt that they were doing their share.

The character of the support given the Marshall Plan by the general public was as varied as that noted in the press and among the various national organizations. Geographically, polls taken just before passage of the measure found only a 12 per cent difference

203. NORC, October 1947.
204. NORC, October, 1947.
in the various sections of the country. New England and the Mid-
Atlantic states led the support, with the Central States lagging
slightly behind the rest. Politically, the difference between the
major parties was even less noticeable, since both Dewey and Roosevelt
supporters joined in supporting rehabilitation aid. A State Department
Study of the range of support among occupational groups found, not
unexpectedly, the highest support coming from professional people—
63.5 per cent approval. Among farmers and other proprietors it was
around 46 per cent; housewives, 35 per cent; and wage earners,
c. 30 per cent. The major differences came, as we have seen, in the
different educational levels. A Roper tabulation in February of
1948 obtained the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heard of Plan</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>Grade S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>generally favorable</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generally against</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undecided</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not heard</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Conclusions

1. Knowledge of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan was the
most important factor in the degree of public support they received.

The polls taken on the Marshall Plan are evidence. The character
of support for the new plans was diversified. Both humanitarian

206. Ibid.
and anti-Communist motivations were present. The consistency with which approval was greater among the more "aware" and the better educated groups suggests that the degree of support which can be mobilized for a foreign policy measure will largely depend upon the extent to which the public can be informed.

2. The success of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan can be directly attributed to the leadership exercised by the Administration. The mobilization of public opinion behind these new foreign policy concepts was a major feat. Against terrific political odds, what appeared inevitably to be essentially unpopular measures received the unqualified backing of top government leadership. That government leaders were unstinting in their efforts to put across these new plans is the key to their success. The President, the Secretary of State, and Under Secretary Acheson all spoke out clearly in favor of these programs; the State Department worked indefatigably to inform both Congress and the leaders throughout the country. Senator Vandenberg was able to guide legislation through Congress with the knowledge not only that government leadership supported the bill fully but also that the Administration was working to mobilize the opinion of the country. While Congress itself was never opposed to the principles of the plan, there was a great deal of controversy over the methods to be used; and it was the patient work of Senator
Vandenberg, coupled with the often expressed Congressional sentiment that "there was no alternative" that brought about the passage of the European Recovery Program. Nevertheless, the acceptance of revolutionary foreign policy principles by a majority was a direct result of the direct appeal of the executive branch to the common sense of the American people.
VI
ASIA: TRUMAN AND MACARTHUR

The postwar situation in Asia, where the newly independent nations were caught up in the tasks of organizing stable governments while simultaneously attempting to control the explosive forces of nationalism and suppress communist efforts to take over power whenever local conditions could be exploited, was as threatening to long-range American interests as was the situation in Europe. But there was no comparable effort on the part of the Administration to formulate an American policy in Asia, and no act of Presidential leadership an attempt to inform and enlist the support of American public opinion behind a constructive approach to the Asian problem.

While the Asian situation deteriorated steadily, there were apparently only confusion and bitter disagreements in American minds as to what the nation should do. It was not until Communist North Korean forces crossed the 38th parallel in June 1950 that the challenge in Asia inspired a direct and unequivocal American response. At the start of the Korean War, the issue seemed well defined and restricted, the American task clear.

But the entrance of Chinese Communist forces into the war raised questions and doubts in American minds. Where and how was the war to end; indeed, how was it to be fought? Could the supply bases of the Northern troops outside Korea be attacked? Would it be enough
to drive the invaders back to the 38th parallel? Would North Korea have to be occupied? How could the flow of Chinese troops to the aid of the North Koreans be stemmed? These were a few of the questions that a perplexed public asked as the UN forces suffered severe setbacks in the winter of 1950-1951.

Opinion Situation

In the last month of 1950 the press was primarily concerned with the intervention of the Chinese troops into the war, and commentators of both press and radio disagreed sharply on the course to be followed. The majority were firmly against extending the war further into Asia, and the possibility of complete withdrawal was debated. By the end of January, although questioning about the purpose of the fighting continued, the improvement in the military situation was reflected in the more restrained and optimistic comment on the whole Korean issue. When mounting evidence that a war of attrition was likely the desire increased for a peace settlement, many commentators suggested the 38th parallel as the dividing line.

In September of 1950, when the military situation was favorable to the UN forces, 81 per cent of an NORC poll thought that the United States had been right to send troops to stop the Communist invasion of the South. But by January of 1951, the percentage in

207. NORC, September 1950.
approval had dropped to a low of 55 per cent, climbing back only
five points by March. A Gallup poll in January which asked
whether United States troops should stay on in Korea found 66
per cent in favor of withdrawal of our forces "as fast as possible," with only 25 per cent in favor of remaining. In the next month,
when the situation had improved, the figures were reversed. Sixty-
seven per cent agreed that we should stay on. Over half the population
was now confident that we would be able to fight indefinitely.

In September, when asked about the general policy to be followed
in the conduct of the war, more than half of the people polled
wanted not only to drive the Communists out of South Korea but also
to go on to try and occupy North Korea as well. In February
they were almost evenly divided on whether the UN should try to
work with the Chinese Communists to settle the war or refuse to compromise
with them and simply "take stronger measures against them," although
Gallup found large popular sentiment in favor of a truce at the
38th parallel if the Chinese agreed to stop fighting at that point.
According to poll figures, dissatisfaction with the manner in which
the United Nations was handling the situation was felt by 50
per cent of Americans in the first two months of 1951, probably
because of the military reversals and the slowness of the U.N.
in labeling Red China an aggressor; but there was no indication
of any desire to withdraw from the organization.

THE DISMISSAL

The dismissal of General MacArthur had an explosive effect
upon the American people when it was announced on April 11, 1951.
It came at a time when dissatisfaction and confusion about our
Korean policy—as well as our whole Far Eastern policy—was rife,
and it was to serve as a focus for nationwide discontent. The
Korean War had not been a popular crusade. The number of citizens
who could have located Korea on a map prior to June of 1950 must
have been infinitesimal. The number who could now have defined
in a few well chosen words the exact nature of the war and the objectives
the United States government had in mind was probably not much larger.
Even in the nation's top command there was no precise answer to
be found. Indeed, a press conference held by General Van Fleet later
in April, after the MacArthur dismissal, revealed a certain fogginess
in the mind of the 8th Army commander himself:


216. NORC, February 1951.
At Van Fleet's first press conference on April 22, 1951, he was asked by a correspondent: 'General, what is our goal?' 'I don't know,' Van Fleet said. 'The answer must come from higher authority.' 'How may we know, General, when and if we achieve victory?' 'I don't know,' Van Fleet replied, 'except that somebody higher up will have to tell us.'

To many Americans, General MacArthur, with his frank, forthright statements, his record during the Second World War, and his success in Japan, stood as the only tangible factor in the whole murky Korean situation. That the General was perhaps responsible for the military reverses that had shocked the nation a few months previously was apparently forgotten. His idiosyncracies—the corn cob pipe and the casual dress—were famous. His aloofness enhanced his reputation as something of a seer on Far Eastern matters. The technical constitutional issues involved carried little weight against the tremendous surge of popular feeling for him that the President's announcement had aroused. The overwhelming emotional support for MacArthur was certainly a reflection of the bewilderment that prevailed about Korea. The austere and commanding figure of MacArthur, with his blunt program of maximum force, seemed at the moment to offer the way to the only goal that the American people could comprehend—unconditional surrender.

PUBLIC REACTION

It is significant that in the nationwide debate which followed upon the President's decision, it was the so-called public opinion leaders—the Administration, the great majority of editors, and the radio commentators—who stood in opposition to the public consensus. Although an extremely vocal section of the press was vigorous in its support of the General, it was a minority. (This does not mean that the majority was uncritical of the Administration. It was, on the contrary, loud in its demand that the President clearly define the aims of the United States in Korea.) But this support for the correctness of the President's action was not enough to halt the tremendous volume of vitriolic telegrams and letters that poured into the White House and flooded Congressional offices.

This mail was sent by the 58 per cent of the population which immediately opposed the dismissal. Only 28 per cent favored the 218. In May and July this high percentage of President's action. In May and July this high percentage of protest dropped some 10 points but shortly climbed again to register around 60 per cent in favor of the General. 219 The difference in groups by education was only about 4 to 8 per cent. Among political

218. NORC, April 1951.

219. NORC, May, July, August, October, and November 1951.
groups, President Truman had the backing of only 36 per cent of his own party, with 53 per cent in opposition. Among Republicans a scant 17 per cent approved of what he had done, while 72 per cent were opposed. Independent voters tended to adhere more closely to the divisions in the Democratic party. 220

Of interest are the reasons given in a late April poll by the NORC. Those who felt that the President had been correct spoke chiefly of MacArthur as having failed to obey orders and having gone "outside his military job." About one-sixth thought that his policies "might have brought us into war with the Soviet Union."

Those who disapproved of what the President had done replied as follows: 221

1. MacArthur understood the situation better; was on the spot and knows Far East better: 43

2. MacArthur is a good, experienced general; great man; best general we ever had: 19

3. MacArthur's policies are best; he could have ended war; should have been given free hand; was right about bombing Communists: 12

4. MacArthur is too great to be fired; didn't deserve a disgrace; should have been done quietly; deserved a hearing, a chance to explain: 22

220. NORC, April 1951.

221. NORC, April 1951 (the percentage total exceeds 100 per cent because interviewees gave more than one answer).
5. Miscellaneous--Asiatic people like him; bad time
time to change Generals; Truman was playing
politics, hasn't proved his case: 25%

Millions turned out to greet MacArthur as he made his way
across the country on his return; and when on April 19th he made
his address before a joint meeting of Congress, he commanded the
largest television and radio audience the nation had yet known.
The response to his speech was no less tremendous. In Congress,
where the reaction was on partisan lines, one Representative was
moved to declare: "We heard God speak here today." 222

Press comment was more restrained, although there was no attempt
to minimize the forcefulness and drama of the occasion. While most
felt that the issue was whether MacArthur's proposals would bring
war with Russia or not, there was sharp controversy about the answer.
Many agreed with James Reston when he said:

Big questions raised by General MacArthur's speech
are not whether we want what General MacArthur wants but
whether we are prepared to risk what he is prepared to risk
and whether we are prepared to risk it alone. Almost
everybody wants advantage of total victory over Chinese
Communists without disadvantage of total war, but is
this possible or even probable? 223

222. Richard H. Rovere and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The General
and the President, New York: Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1951, p. 15.
The tendency of many editors and commentators, especially on the East Coast, was to back the attempt by the Administration to limit the war.

The General's speech was only the beginning of the debate with the Administration, but popular interest did not sustain its high pitch much past MacArthur's testimony, which opened the Senate hearing on May third. The hearings themselves, while begun as an inquiry into the dismissal of the General, ranged broadly over the whole of the Far Eastern situation and America's global strategy. Articulate comment during this period generally agreed that the controversy had been of some value in clarifying our policy, and went on to criticise the Administration for the absence of leadership. The perspective brought by the testimony of the Secretary of State and the Joint Chiefs gave support to the general press view that the Administration had been correct in acting as it had; but the opposition remained unconvinced, arguing that MacArthur's firmer policies were actually being adopted, thus vindicating him. There was little doubt, however, that both interest in the matter and the General's influence had waned considerably. As the hearings were drawing to a close at the end of June, press attention shifted to expectation of a cease fire agreement and away from the heated partisanship to which the dismissal had given rise.
EFFECT OF DISMISSAL ON FOREIGN POLICY OPINION

Although the emotional atmosphere that pervaded the country subsided in the course of the hearings as public interest dropped sharply, it is interesting to study what effect, if any, MacArthur and his views had on the thinking of the American people about our foreign policy.

Prior to the dismissal, there were some 60 per cent who felt that the United States had been right to send its troops to Korea to halt the invasion of the Northern forces. This percentage remained constant until November of 1951, when it dropped to 54 per cent—possibly because of discouragement over the truce talks. In analysing an April poll, it can be seen that the supporters of the President were somewhat more in favor of having sent troops than were MacArthur's followers (75 per cent and 60 per cent). On the question of whether to try to work out a cease fire agreement or continue fighting, the division that existed prior to the dismissal continued on into the end of April, with the General's adherents only

224. NORC, March 1951.
225. NORC, November 1951.
226. NORC, April 1951.
slightly more in favor of continuing the war. By the end of the year there was definite support for a continuation of the talks; even 61 per cent of MacArthur's supporters favored them, although only three out of ten people had hopes of a satisfactory agreement.

As to our general policy in Korea, a late April poll found 68 per cent in favor of keeping our troops there—only a one point difference from the February tabulation. The percentage rose to 73 per cent in May. A breakdown of the earlier April poll reveals that 69 per cent of MacArthur's supporters and 77 per cent of those who had favored his dismissal were in favor of keeping troops in Korea. A July Gallup poll did find a 54 per cent to 35 per cent count advocating withdrawing UN troops if the Communists agreed to withdraw theirs; but this was by no means a defeatist attitude, as indicated in two polls at the close of the year after many months of peace talks.

227. NORC, April 1951.
228. NORC, October 1951.
229. NORC, November 1951.
230. NORC, April 1951.
231. NORC, May 1951.
232. AIPO, July 1951.
233. NORC, November 1951, December 1951.
Which one of these three things comes closest to your idea of what we should do in Korea?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Nov.</th>
<th>Dec.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pull our troops out of Korea and bring them home.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attack the Communist forces now with everything we have.</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Continue the war on the present basis while the peace talks are going on.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who chose number 2 in November were fairly evenly divided on whether Russia would enter the war.

Two specific policies that General MacArthur advocated—bombing the Chinese supply bases in Manchuria, and freeing the troops of Chiang Kai-Shek for active duty—were also the subject of several polls. Four times a sample polling section was queried on whether United States airplanes should be allowed to cross the Manchurian border and bomb Communist supply bases inside China, with the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should bomb</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should not</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is an analysis of responses in April and October between those who supported MacArthur and those who believed that the President had been right in dismissing him:

234. NORC, April 1951, May 1951, August 1951, October 1951.
235. NORC, April 1951, October 1951.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dismissal Right</th>
<th>Dismissal Wrong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should bomb</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should not</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apparently there was a definite shift in opinion toward a more vigorous policy later in the year among that group which supported President Truman's decision, while the views of the General's friends remained unchanged.

April and May surveys on whether to give the Chinese Nationalist government all the help it needed to attack the Communists on the mainland indicated that 58 per cent and 56 per cent would approve such a step. In a breakdown of the late April poll, those who had approved MacArthur's dismissal were only slightly opposed to aiding the Nationalists (45 per cent to 41 per cent). Those who had opposed the dismissal were far more strongly in favor of the aid policy (71 per cent to 16 per cent). In late April, 65 per cent were anxious for the United States to stay out of an all-out war with the Chinese. However, it is interesting to see that a question asked in the next month as to whether those two policies

236. NORC, April 1951 May 1951.
237. NORC, April 1951.
would be more likely to end the war or start an even larger war showed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End fighting</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even worse war</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. o.</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidently the approximately 55 per cent in May who approved the bombing and help for the Nationalists consisted of the 35 per cent who hoped those policies would end the war plus about 20 per cent who were frankly in favor of an all-out war.

As the MacArthur hearings progressed, the questioning and the discussion in the nation shifted from the Korean war itself to larger policy questions, such as relations with our Allies, whether or not we were prepared to risk a big war, the relative importance attached to Europe and Asia, and the general handling of our foreign affairs. All were questions which General MacArthur had directly or indirectly raised, and all were subjects of polling interviews in the year of his dismissal.

A majority of the respondents questioned (54 per cent) were dissatisfied with "the way England, France, and our other Allies are cooperating with us in the struggle against world communism." 239

238 NCRC, May 1951.
239 NCRC, May 1951.
The most frequently mentioned complaints were that they had not supplied enough troops and that they traded with Communist countries.

We have already noted a late April poll which revealed a strong majority of 65 per cent who felt that we would try hard to avoid the risk of war with Communist China. The reason for this wish was apparent in the fact that 71 per cent indicated that in a war with China we would also find ourselves fighting Russia.

On the more general matter of our foreign policy towards Europe and Asia, April polls found MacArthur supporters not very far from the position of the opposition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pro MacArthur</th>
<th>Pro Truman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve troops to Europe</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For economic aid to Asia</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Arms aid to Asia</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar question asked over a period of a year reveals the slightly increased importance of Asia in American thinking, although not at the expense of Europe. Two years later, however, Europe had regained much of its importance in the public's mind.

---

240. NORC April 1951.
241. NORC, April 1951.
In general, which do you think is more important for the U.S. to do—-to keep the Communists from taking over Asia, or to keep the Communists from taking over Europe?

(Similar question on all surveys)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>N.O.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1950</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1951</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 1953</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the above attitudes reflect American policy at the time, and although both groups were in favor of Secretary Acheson continuing in office in the autumn of 1951 (granting that MacArthur's supporters were far less enthusiastic), popular favor for the "handling of our foreign affairs" was down to 28 per cent in April and 34 per cent the next month. By October, those in approval had increased somewhat, but there was a marked difference between the two groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Dismissal</th>
<th>Against Dismissal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve handling</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Once the MacArthur controversy died down, it became difficult to recall how vital it had seemed at the time, for its effect

243. NORC, October 1951.
244. NORC, April 1951, May 1951.
245. NORC, October 1951.
on the nation was not easy to discern. However, two conclusions can be drawn from our study of this period:

1. The actual dismissal of General MacArthur assumed only a temporary importance.

The most immediate consequence was certainly the immense tide of popular sentiment running against President Truman. The President never had a majority of citizens in agreement with him on the rightness of his action in dismissing the General. His supporters initially included some 28 per cent of the population, and only once, in July, were they as many as 39 per cent. By November only 27 per cent felt that he had been correct in what he had done. A second indication of public disapproval, as distinct from the comment in the press and on the radio, was the very low esteem in which his handling of our foreign affairs was held. But by the end of the year, this disapproval had somewhat abated.

More surprising however, was the relatively minor effect the General had on the attitudes of Americans toward foreign policy. There was little if any change of popular opinion on the dispatch of U.S. troops to Korea in the preceding year, on keeping our troops there, the desirability of a cease fire, and avoiding a major war. While the importance of Asia in the American mind did increase

246. NORC, April 1951, May 1951, July 1951, August 1951, October 1951, November 1951.
there was no inclination to underrate the importance of Europe.
The one important effect that MacArthur's views did have was to
cause Americans to advocate a more militant policy in Asia--
to the extent of bombing the Manchurian bases and using the Nationalist
troops against the Communists. It is very likely that this was
an expression of the deep frustration felt by almost all Americans
over the inconclusiveness of the fighting.

The long-range consequences of the Truman-MacArthur debate
were not apparent until the hearings drew to a close. Most observers
were then able to agree that the controversy had served to clear
the air and make the public somewhat more aware of the delicate
situation in which the United States found itself in the Far East.
The government spokesmen had presented their case well; and, although
the most violent opponents were not appeased, the testimonies of
administration leaders had a moderating influence. Despite the
"emotional jag" that had been touched off when the General returned
to the United States--and the vast irritation of American with the
cautious policies of the Administration--by the end of the year, signs
of patience were evident. Frustrating truce talks had gone on for
six months. Three to one majorities felt that neither Russia nor
Red China wanted the Korean war to end.  

247  AIPO October 1951.
Yet there was no sizable demand for cessation of the talks.

2. The real significance of the Truman-MacArthur controversy was that it reflected a divided American opinion on the nation's entire Far Eastern policy—which, in turn, reflected a lack of national leadership.

Truman and the Administration emerged apparent victims, but it was clear that the dispute had arisen in the first place from indecisive leadership. MacArthur offered a quick, conventional military victory, or so it appeared. The President asked for patience and could not promise success. MacArthur spoke of the well-trained Nationalist troops that were eager to fight the Communists. President Truman could not explain clearly why this ready supply of men could not be used. Moreover, he had to ask the American people to be prepared to live in a state of crisis, and to accept the fact that sometimes there were more important considerations than a military victory.

The intelligent use of the hearings by the Administration was only a partial solution, for the questions that the American people were asking in the winter of 1950-1951 went largely unanswered. No solution to the problem of the Chinese troops and how to end the war was ever clearly outlined by the Administration, which failed to offer a clear, alternate program to the General's proposal for maximum force.
The problem became one of communication—of the Administration's policies to the people. Congress in this instance did not have an independent role, for the issue, unlike the others that we have studied, involved no legislation. Reasoned arguments in the press were not enough to stem the highly emotional response to the figure of a great General. The failure of the Administration to identify itself with the policies that it did practice and to enlist public support behind the figure of the chief executive is nowhere more evident than in the polls which showed the American people in favor of most of its foreign policies—yet supposedly strongly opposed to the way in which our foreign affairs were handled. This paradox continued well after MacArthur had passed from the center of attention.
Grain to India

After the main principles underlying extensive foreign economic aid had been approved by the American public at the time of the Marshall Plan in 1947-1948, public opinion did not concern itself very seriously with the matter for several years. The Korean War seemed to make military aid to those nations who had chosen to ally themselves with us logical as well as eminently desirable. However, in the spring of 1951 the question of economic aid actively engaged popular interest a second time. In December of 1950, Mme. Pandit, India's ambassador to the United Nations, had asked the United States government for two million tons of grain on "special and easy" terms to avert an impending famine in the coming summer.

Mme. Pandit's request came at an apparently favorable time in terms of prevailing American attitudes toward aid. Several polls taken over a one-year period, from March of 1949 through April of 1950, found between 70 per cent and 75 per cent of the respondents agreeing on principle that "it is a good policy for the United States to try and help backward countries in the world to raise their standard of living." 248 When that same question was asked again in November of 1950 after the beginning of the Korean war, scepticism

248. NORC, March 1949, November 1949, April 1950.
about the value of such aid was reflected in the percentage drop from the 73 per cent of April to a 62 per cent in November; but those in favor of aid were still a definite majority. Asked directly about whether aid in raising the standard of living of Asian countries would make them "less likely to go Communist," those who agreed, 60 per cent, were comparable in numbers to those who had considered aid a good idea generally. 250

When queried more specifically about sending aid to "friendly countries in Asia," decided majorities of 62 per cent (right after the Korean invasion) and 71 per cent in the spring of 1951 were ready to back help to friends. 251 Even larger percentages later in 1951--77 per cent in July, and 75 per cent in October--were willing to send economic aid "to countries that have agreed to stand with us against Communist aggression." 252

Although this scattering of polls makes it difficult to generalize about attitudes toward aid it is possible to see that a majority was agreed upon the value of foreign aid even though the Korean war had proved that recipients would not necessarily turn out to be

249. IORC, April 1950, November 1950.
250. NORC, October 1950.
251. NORC, July 1950, April 1951.
252. NORC, July 1951, October 1951.
military allies. There was, naturally, an even greater enthusiasm for supporting those nations with whom we were allied militarily; but no sharp distinction was made between "friends" and those nations which had chosen to remain neutral in the Korean struggle until the time of the proposed bill to provide grain for India in response to Mme. Pandit's request.

A year prior to Mme. Pandit's request, relations between the United States and India were of the most cordial, and optimism and general good-will had marked Nehru's visit to the United States in 1949. A little more than a year later, in the early months of 1951, the situation had noticeably deteriorated. When, in 1949, Nehru had made some disturbing statements about the neutral role India hoped to play in world politics, their significance had not been fully appreciated; but in 1950, when a neutral India had declined to take an active military part in the United Nation's action in Korea, Nehru's words had taken on a new meaning.

India's refusal to send troops to join the United Nations' forces in Korea aroused American hostility, which was increased by India's recognition of the Chinese Communist government and her proposal that this government be given the Nationalist's seat on the Security Council.
There were Americans who felt that we should not have intervened in Korea, but, since the step had been taken and the United Nations had officially joined us, the American public could not understand why a leading noncommunist member of the UN would not back the intervention fully. The defeats suffered by the UN forces in the winter of 1950 did not help American attitudes toward India.

India's stock had subsequently fallen still lower due to the Indian attitude on the Japanese peace treaty. The outright dismay felt by many at the course Nehru had chosen to follow now frequently found expression into sharp criticism. Unlike China and Israel, India had no strong bloc of American political support, and Nehru's often incomprehensible acts found few defenders.

It was, therefore, in an atmosphere of considerable American ill-will that the President sent a special message to Congress in February asking for a gift of grain to be sent to India. It took over five months of congressional debate and delay before even a loan was granted. The final passage of the measure by the Senate in June marked a victory for the many private citizens, charitable organizations, and much of the nation's press who worked long months for the passage of the bill to bring relief to a starving people.
The appeal to humanitarian instincts was strong. It would seem that no one could possibly argue that it would be wrong for us to give food grains to people on the verge of starvation. But objections sprung up from all sides.

The chief reason for hesitation was of course political. Since Nehru had not chosen to align India with the West, the limited but highly vocal group that opposed the Indian leader in Congress felt that the grain should be used as a bargaining instrument to secure India's allegiance. While only a very small group actually would not have allowed a grant, there were many who were opposed to simply giving the grain away— which, indeed, India had not requested. Some of these opponents expressed concern over the depletion of U.S. resources; and there was support for exchanging the grain for strategically important materials that India possessed.

In the course of the five months, hundreds of reasons were unearthed as to why the grain should not be sent. Was India's need as great as she made it out to be? Was the shortage really due to natural causes or to poor planning? Couldn't relief be gotten easily from adjacent Pakistan, or did India seek food elsewhere for political reasons? Should the new lands India had just planted with jute have been used for wheat instead— or was planting jute
a part of her trade war with Pakistan? The Chicago Tribune's sceptical attitude was typical of such thinking. In their one editorial on the grain issue entitled "How Real Is India's Famine?", they declared:

Our feeling about the loan...is that we want to be shown. We don't mind the money involved...because the treasury gives away billions and just might as well give it to the Indians as to other foreigners. Certainly we do not begrudge the wheat to starving people. But what we don't like is being played for suckers and we'd like to be sure in this case...

Behind the questions lay a deep resentment of India's neutrality. Americans were being killed in Korea to uphold the United Nation's concept of collective security, to protect Asia from the advance of Communism. Meanwhile, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York India sought to prevent the UN from branding Communist China an aggressor.

The opponents of the grain bill were only a small segment of national opinion whose influence was important chiefly in Congress. Support for and interest in the measure elsewhere was widespread. With few exceptions, commentators voiced solid support. Church, labor, and political groups, as well as private citizens from all over the country showed remarkable interest. Instances were noted.

of private individuals sending in bags of grain to the Indian Consulate in New York. "Letters to the Editors" columns frequently contained references to the matter as the United States displayed wide concern for the Indian people for the first time. The volume of comment in the press was confined chiefly to instances such as when former President Hoover and President Truman publicly endorsed the measure—but articulate opinion was so strongly in favor of the bill at these times that there was no reason to think that lack of coverage (now concentrated on the MacArthur debate) meant a change of heart.

The New York Times was perhaps the leader in what became virtually a nationwide campaign to pass the bill. The coverage of the Times itself took on something of the nature of a crusade, with 20 editorials all strongly urging passage. The character of this support is best seen in the first of these editorials:

If there has been some hesitation in extending help in some quarters in this country because India's stand on Chinese communist aggression seems something less than valorous, such hesitation should be clearly stamped as unworthy. We may not agree with the political analysis of some of India's leaders, but that has nothing to do with the fact that millions of helpless persons look to us for a chance of survival. We may think that Prime Minister Nehru may be mistaken in his appraisal of Peiping, but there can be no mistake about the reality of hunger.
By the same token the argument that perhaps we should 'combat communism' is as tawdry as it is threadbare... hunger doesn't create communism...

It is not the reason why our help should be given. That ground lies in the moral obligation laid upon us by our plenty.

The emphasis was primarily on humanitarianism, but the value of counteracting Russian and Chinese offers was not overlooked. There was a minimum of discussion of the means by which the grain should be sent, although comment was generally in favor of a gift, with no "strings." Enthusiasm for Nehru's foreign policy was certainly minimal; but there was strong feeling that the grain should be sent as a humanitarian gesture of one people toward another and that political considerations should not be involved. The compromise measure that was eventually adopted was accepted as "better than nothing."

Unfortunately, Congress was none too responsive to the idea of its "moral obligation" despite the clamor from citizens groups, the impatience of the press, and the endorsement of two such diverse public figures as Hoover and Truman. As a direct consequence of Nehru's protest at branding Red China the aggressor in Korea,

Senator Tom Connally, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, sidetracked the request by referring it to the Subcommittee on Near Eastern Affairs while the whole question of United States relations with India was considered. When the bill did finally move onto the floor of Congress, the battle was sharp, despite the backing of Senators Taft and Knowland and the bipartisan committee of 24 Congressmen formed to push the measure through. The intransigency of the House Rules Committee made a compromise bill of half loan-half grant necessary to end a 6 week deadlock, but House action was immediately postponed when Nehru publicly objected to the strings that had been attached to the Congressional bill. Not until the middle of June was there finally agreement between the House and the Senate on a loan—not a gift—ending five months of debate.

Recorded public opinion on the matter showed a majority in favor of giving, rather than loaning, food—even when the wording of the pollster's question contained reference to India's opposition to our Korean policy. Fifty-five per cent favored the gift, a percentage that went as high as 68 per cent among the college educated groups; 37 per cent disapproved. However, of the 37 per cent opposed to a gift, 26 per cent would send food if India were
to give something in return. Another April poll, this time by Gallup, in which India's position on Korea was not mentioned found a comparable 59 per cent favoring the gift. The polls would seem to indicate that political considerations were not a factor in the backing that the bill received from the public.

Although the grain bill did not receive the most vigorous backing of the chief executive—who was certainly kept busy with the MacArthur affair—there was no doubt where his sentiments lay. The press and many public groups, as well as numerous individual citizens, showed great unanimity of support. Despite the bitterness engendered by the Korean war and the hostility of a vocal group within Congress, the general public also favored the grain bill. There was no love for India among a large percentage of Americans—and even less understanding; yet a majority would have approved a gift of the grain, or at least a loan, over a month before Congress acted favorably. Plainly, it was the emotional appeal—that of a starving people—which won the support of so many Americans. The delay in legislative action was due less to inadequate leadership than to the legislative process which permitted a small group of

255. NORC, April 1951.
256. AIPO, April 25, 1951.
men motivated by political considerations to hold up the measure at will. One might conclude that the passage of the bill due to the strong measure of support that it received from the leading opinion formulators throughout the country and to the pressure they exerted upon congressmen.

Interval: 1951-1956

For the next five years, although each year the debate over the appropriation for foreign aid caused a flurry of interest, and it was an issue of certain importance in the elections, there was neither any radically new program nor any crisis such as that of a starving India to rouse the interest of Americans. The gradual shift in the character of foreign aid from economic to preponderantly military emphasis, and a slower shift away from Europe to Asia, took place with relatively little public notice. Not until early in 1956 was foreign aid again the subject of a nationwide controversy when the concepts underlying foreign aid and the current handling of the program were called into question by many national figures.

In the years between the India grain debate and the 1956 dispute, opinion on most aspects of foreign aid remained relatively constant. Foreign aid regularly received the approval of a majority. Even when an April 1954 question specified the amount of the President's proposal for foreign aid appropriations—and mention of figures
generally brings approval percentages shown---some 56 per cent found his proposal "about the right amount," with 8 per cent finding it inadequate. The total, therefore, in favor of at least the amount mentioned was 64 per cent. Only one in four found the figure too large. Meanwhile, the approval for help for "Backward Countries," which had dropped to 52 per cent in the dark hours of the Korean war, rose to a new high of 70 per cent early in the spring of 1955.

258 In general, do you think it is a good policy for the United States to try to help backward countries in the world to raise their standard of living, or shouldn't it be any concern of our government?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S. should help</th>
<th>No concern</th>
<th>N.O.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1949</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1949</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1950</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1950</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1952</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1952</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1955</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One aspect of the United States' foreign aid efforts which met with particular approval was the technical assistance program.

In May 1955 almost 2 out of 3 Americans claimed to have heard of

257. NORC, April 1954.
258. NORC, March 1955.
259. NORC,
the program when it was briefly described to them. A breakdown of groups by educational levels found 86 per cent of the college-educated group claiming knowledge, and 49 per cent of those who had attended only grammar school—almost half—declared that they were familiar with the plan of sending experts to backward nations to help them with agricultural and health problems. That support for the program did not entirely hinge upon prior knowledge can be seen in the fact that, whereas 64 per cent of the national sample had heard of the program previously, 79 per cent, after a brief explanation, favored it. Support was considerably higher, however, among the group who had been informed before the interview (90 per cent) than among those who had not heard of it before.

A more significant clue to the ready support that such a program commanded was provided in the willingness of the public to spend money to see that it was carried out. Once it was discovered (see Chart, p. 129) that 75 per cent and 79 per cent in 1949 and 1955 were willing to help underdeveloped nations raise their living standards, the following question was asked:

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261. NORC, May 1955.
This year the United States is spending about $1.25 million (1949: $45 million) for this purpose. Does that seem to you too much, not enough, or about the right amount to spend on it next year?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>November 1949</th>
<th>March 1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough</td>
<td>7% (39)</td>
<td>10% (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About right</td>
<td>32% (107)</td>
<td>21% (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much</td>
<td>20% (75)</td>
<td>11% (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>16% (52)</td>
<td>16% (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>75%</strong></td>
<td><strong>79%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a 13 per cent increase in these years among the group who felt that the figure—considerably larger in 1955—was either adequate or not enough. At the same time opposition to the figures mentioned dropped. A poll later in May of 1955 mentioning no specific sum but asking whether it was a good idea to spend money for the technical assistance program found 79 per cent willing.

From the time of the Marshall Plan the use of foreign aid as a political weapon was openly acknowledged, but there were many disputes as to the relative efficacy of various types of aid used for political purposes. Two interesting polls, one in October of 1950 which we have already noted, and a second in September of 1954, asked whether United States help in aiding Asian countries to raise their living standards would make those countries “much more likely to go Communist.” In 1950 those feeling aid was an effective weapon totaled 66 per cent. From 66 per cent in approval...
When questioned about military versus economic aid, there was over a long period popular support for military aid for both Europe and Asia. In November of 1955 69 per cent voiced approval of military supplies for Western Europe. A series of polls taken in 1950 and 1951 found from 51-61 per cent favoring sending "military supplies to help those countries in Asia which are threatened by communism." In the case of Asia, however, there was a gradual shift in opinion away from military aid. Polls in September of 1954 and a year later in November of 1955 found 65 per cent and 74 per cent behind the proposition that to "keep communism from spreading in Asia" it was "more important to send those countries economic aid." Only 28 per cent, in each case, were opposed.

To whom this aid should be sent was a further problem that troubled administrators during those years. Should it be sent only to proven friends, or should the neutral blocs also be recipients? The polls of 1950 and 1951 found large majorities favoring aid to friendly countries in Asia. In January of 1955 as many as 78 per cent agreed to continue sending "economic aid--like machinery and supplies--to countries that have agreed to stand with us against"

265. NORC, November 1955.
When it was asked whether we should continue this economic aid to "countries like India, which have not joined us as Allies against the Communists," the sample was much more evenly divided. Only 47 per cent of the national sample wished to continue such a policy; 41 per cent were opposed. The college group were 76 per cent in favor and 27 per cent opposed; the grammar school group were 46 per cent in favor and 37 per cent opposed.

It is apparent that between the grain loan and the 1956 debate public opinion was not particularly interested in foreign aid, despite the very real changes in the character of the program since the Marshall Plan had been initiated. Although a majority of Americans continued to approve the foreign aid program, they were not critically concerned with what was an admittedly necessary but costly policy. However, there was considerable awareness that aid could be an effective political weapon; and, although military aid had increasing approval, there were also increasing percentages coming to feel that, in Asia anyway, economic aid was a more efficacious means of winning allies. A discrepancy in this attitude can be noted


269. NORC, January 1955.
in the close division of sentiment on sending aid to neutral nations. If Americans felt that aid was an effective weapon—and 66 per cent of them did—why then did they hesitate to send it to neutral nations who presumably needed to be won to the West? This conflict was perhaps one indication of a growing uncertainty in the minds of some about the exact role that foreign aid could and should play in America's foreign policy.

Foreiign Aid: 1956

At the close of 1955, as the annual aid bill was being prepared, the first signs of a battle over foreign aid appeared. The Eisenhower administration, pledged to reduce government spending, had managed to cut down on its foreign aid appropriation requests in previous years by making use of already appropriated funds. Thus, although the appropriation request had grown smaller each year, the actual expenditure had not—a situation which gave a deceptive appearance to foreign aid efforts and certainly created false hopes among those concerned about government expenditures.

But by 1956, previously appropriated funds were nearly exhausted. The President was in the uncomfortable position of having to almost double the previous year's request in an election year—and in the face of the hostility of both a large section of Congress and many members of his own party who had never fully accepted the concept of foreign aid.
That the problem should have arisen at this politically inauspicious moment was not due entirely to poor planning. The sense of urgency that responsible government leaders felt, and which caused them to try and force through a measure unpopular with their own party, was also a result of a new Soviet challenge in the field of foreign aid. Hitherto the Soviet Union had confined its aid endeavors to nations within the satellite bloc. Now it had begun, in Asia and the Middle East as well as Yugoslavia, to offer aid on terms that the United States could not always match.

Although initial Soviet efforts were not nearly as extensive as those of the United States, the nature of the Communist bloc made it potentially a very formidable rival. Soviet state control of industry gave Soviet aid offers flexibility that western democracies could not hope to rival. Satellite nations with growing industries could absorb raw materials from Asia that the United States was unable to use. The technicians sent by the Russians gave the communists an excellent means to achieve ideological as well as economic penetration.

President Eisenhower did not have to convince Congress of the necessity for foreign aid. Few congressmen could be said to oppose all aid. But there was opposition to the character of the program proposed by the Administration—-to its flexibility, the type of aid,
its purpose, the recipients. There was the issue of whether aid should be given solely for political reasons or only for economically sound programs. Without the advantage of any bold new idea such as the Marshall Plan advocates had put forward, and without any similar crisis situation to inspire a novel approach, the President found himself pushing an outdated plan with a few new trappings at a politically inauspicious time. The task was made even more difficult by the reluctance of many of the President's party to support foreign aid, much less a considerably larger appropriation than had been expected, and at the same time commit themselves for several years in advance, when the Republican Party stood committed to reducing the Federal budget.

Congressional opposition was based upon many factors, the initial one being irritation at the Administration for having given the congressmen the impression, at a December 1955 White House meeting, that the 1956 request would not exceed that of the previous year. This inept handling of the situation did much damage, for congressional leaders immediately put themselves behind the smaller figure on the basis that support of a larger program would be difficult to explain to the voters. Other political considerations were also factors in the congressional reluctance to support the President. Many Republicans had, in 1952, campaigned against foreign aid, and
a shift might prove embarrassing. The Democratic and Republican leaders in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senators George and Wiley, were having their own election problems in states whose voter were by no means sold on the value of foreign aid. The Democratic party itself had long advocated foreign aid, but now support for those programs was no longer strong from the large bloc of Southern Democrats who had grown more protectionist as Northern industry moved into the South. 270

Aside from political considerations, which were certainly not favorable in the spring of 1956 for a greatly enlarged foreign aid program and any long-term commitment, the international situation ostesibly did not lend itself to the President's arguments. There seemed to be a lessening of tension in relations with the Soviet Union. In Europe, our allies were cutting down on their defense efforts. France's strength was being drained in Africa. German rearmament was proceeding slowly. Although there was much talk about the new Soviet economic penetration into underdeveloped areas, there was no agreement on the best method with which this threat could be fought. Our aid programs seemed to have won us no friends in Asia; and the rationale for defense spending and increased military aid was more clear cut.

Objections to foreign aid had existed, in one form or another, ever since the programs had been initiated. What was significant about the 1956 Congressional debate was the number of traditionally internationalist members who rebelled against the Administration's leadership. The very men who had provided the backbone of support in the last eight years for the aid appropriation were, at best, reluctant to back the President's most recent request. These men were discouraged about the efficacy of a program which put its heaviest emphasis upon military aid, sending disproportionate sums to small nations such as Pakistan, Korea, and Nationalist China and serving to distort their economies and antagonize their Asian neighbors. Were a few friendly troops in Pakistan of value to the West if Afghanistan, India, and Burma were thereby alienated? More arms to the Middle East and Asia did not seem to be making permanent friends for the West—especially when a fairly small Soviet loan often got more publicity than several years of large United States gifts. Such criticism of the program by men who did not underestimate the danger of the new Soviet efforts proved a formidable obstacle to the Administration, which was left defending what appeared to be the wrong program at the wrong time.

Naturally, in such circumstances public discussion of foreign aid was at a high level throughout the nation all during the spring of 1956. A majority of commentators were strongly in support of
both the continuation and the enlargement of the aid program, and
many were also for an economic emphasis as well as for the flexibility
which a long-term commitment would give to it. Even the Hearst
press joined the majority support given Secretary Dulles for his
Philadelphia address in February, in which he urged a more flexible
long-term economic aid program. Some agreed with former President
Truman's criticism that not enough aid had been requested. Henry
Cabot Lodge, Jr. and Adlai Stevenson both came out for an increased
channeling of aid through the United Nations, a plan which in both
1952 and 1955 had had very few supporters among the general public.
Another aid advocate, Walter Reuther, wanted the United States to
set aside 2 per cent of its Gross National Product for the next
25 years to stimulate the economic growth of underdeveloped nations;
and Paul G. Hoffman asked for a $25 billion program spaced over
the next five years. Meanwhile commentators such as William H.
Chamberlain and David Lawrence urged a policy of selective aid.

Among the general public—where we have already seen a strong
backlog of approval for foreign aid—Gallup found 57 per cent
approved for the appropriation of about $4 billion "for countries
in other parts of the world to help prevent their going Communist"
when they were told that this amount was what congressional foreign
aid appropriations had averaged in "recent years." The difference
in response between the two political parties was negligible, and
opposition was declared by only one in four. This poll, however, cannot be considered a wholly accurate indication of opinion, for the working of the question was such that a favorable reply should not have been difficult to elicit from anyone opposed to communism. Also, the $4 billion average claimed did not take into consideration the fact that in the last two appropriations the sum had been under $3 billion.

The underlying reason for majority approval for the $4 billion figure in the Gallup poll was also reflected in two NORC polls taken in the same period. The first of the NORC polls revealed that eight out of ten Americans felt that Soviet efforts "to win the friendship of countries like India, Egypt, and Burma by offering them economic aid and other help" were "a serious problem for our government."

Forty-nine per cent thought that the problem was very serious, 33 per cent somewhat serious. A small fraction, 12 per cent, felt that it shouldn't "concern us very much at all." The second question disclosed that 40 per cent thought that the United States "should try harder to win the friendship of such countries... most recommending more economic and technical assistance... while 52 per cent were satisfied with the present effort of the government."
Although there seemed to be a new regard for the dangers of Soviet penetration into Asia and the Middle East, the responses to queries about where economic aid should be sent showed only slight changes since 1955. In February of 1956 80 per cent now approved economic aid to "countries that have agreed to stand with us against Communist aggression." This was 2 per cent more than in the previous year. In the 1956 poll 89 per cent of the college-educated group favored aid to our friends, and a sizable majority (72 per cent) of the grammar school group also approved. In the case of aid to neutrals, approval went up from 47 per cent to 53 per cent for continuing aid to "countries like India, which have not joined us as allies against the Communists." But when it was asked whether long-term authority should be granted by Congress to enable the Administration to help nations on projects that required more than a year or two to complete, the only national poll, taken early in February of 1956, found very sizable opposition to the unusual request. The question used by the pollsters remained the respondent that "some projects, such as large dams, take

274. NORC, February 1556.
five or ten years to complete;" but, nevertheless, 65 per cent answered
the "we should refuse to commit ourselves beyond a year at a time."
Only 25 per cent would agree that we should contribute for "a period
of years in some cases." Even the college-educated group, which
had always stood in favor of aid, refused to agree to such a
commitment, although the margin in this case was a close one.

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The appropriation bill for 1957 finally agreed upon by both
Houses of Congress fell considerably short of what the Administration
had requested. That fact was due to more than the political and
international situation. The President and Secretary of State
made evident a concern which was amply shared by both Congress and
the public. But it was not enough simply to transmit an awareness
of the serious nature of Soviet economic penetration; there should
also have been a comprehensive plan to deal with it adequately.
This was never proposed. There was only the established plan, weighted
towards the military and larger than ever, which left both inter-
nationalists and isolationists dissatisfied. Moreover, at a time
when an extensive foreign aid program was needed more than ever,
the President found himself hampered by his party's past as well

277. NORC, February 1956.
as by indecision among his advisors on an effective plan. The inadequacy of Administration leadership was reflected in the state of American public opinion. A large percentage felt that the problem of foreign aid was a serious one, but polls on sending aid to neutrals shifted only a few points, and there was only a 57 per cent majority in favor of a $4 billion program in response to a favorably worded question. Although a majority expressed satisfaction with present aid efforts, a very sizable 40 per cent did not. And, when a long-term commitment was proposed, the public would have none of it.
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