

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THE
VIETNAM WAR
Executive and Legislative Roles and Relationships
Part I
1945-1961

PREPARED FOR THE
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LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

HON. CHARLES H. PERCY,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In response to the request of the Committee on Foreign Relations for an in-depth analysis of the role of the committee, the Senate, and Congress as a whole in the Vietnam war, including major decisions of the Executive and the relationships between the two branches, I am transmitting Part I of a four-part study of this subject, covering the period 1945-61. Part II will deal with 1961-65, Part III with 1965-69, and Part IV with 1969-75.

This study is being prepared by Dr. William Conrad Gibbons, Specialist in U.S. Foreign Policy in the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division.

Sincerely,

GILBERT GUDE, *Director.*

FOREWORD

For most Americans, the Vietnam war was a national tragedy, and for many it was also an intense personal tragedy. Beginning in 1945 as a revolution against France, it eventually became a war against Communist control of state of Indochina. Before it ended, 5½ million American military personnel and thousands of American civilians had served in the area; 58,000 Americans had been killed, and more than 150,000 were wounded and hospitalized. War deaths from both sides amounted to at least 1,300,000 for the period between 1965 and 1975, approximately 45 percent of which were noncombatant civilians. Almost as many deaths, most of them civilians, were said to have occurred during the period 1945-54.

Sometimes called America's "longest war," it was also one of the most expensive in our history, costing an estimated \$150 billion in direct expenses, and probably more than \$500 billion in total costs, which is an amount nearly equal to the size of our national debt in today's currency.

The Vietnam war had a profound effect on America. It helped to unravel a general foreign policy consensus, alienate many young people, and create doubt about the viability of our government's policies. In its wake, new divisions emerged between Congress and the Executive, making it more difficult to reestablish the cooperation, trust, and continuity needed to fashion an effective bipartisan foreign policy.

Thus, by any standard, the Vietnam war represented an enormous commitment, and a grievous loss.

The Congress of the United States shares with the Executive the responsibility for decisions that led to our involvement in the Vietnam war and for approving the personnel and funds it required. Only by examining those decisions can we gain from this bitter experience the full understanding needed to act more wisely in the future.

It has been with this goal in mind that the Committee on Foreign Relations under the chairmanship of Senator John Sparkman asked the Congressional Research Service to conduct an in-depth study of the roles and relationships of Congress and the Executive in the Vietnam war.

The material and findings contained herein are the work of the Congressional Research Service, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Committee or its present or past members.

April 15, 1983.

CHARLES H. PERCY
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations.

PREFACE

This study seeks to describe and to analyze the course of U.S. public policymaking during the 30 years of the Vietnam war, beginning with the present volume (Part I) on the 1945-61 period. It does not seek to judge or to assess responsibility, but it does attempt to locate responsibility, to describe roles, and to indicate why and how decisions were made.

The study is nonpolitical and nonpartisan, as all products of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) are required to be. Occasional references in the text to "liberal" or "conservative," as well as to "internationalist" or "nationalist," "interventionist" or "noninterventionist," or the use of such adjectives as "influential" or "powerful" to denote relative influence or power, are intended to be guides to understanding rather than political labels.

A project of this size and scope requires the cooperation of many people. At the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, strong support has been provided by Chairman Charles Percy and by former Chairmen John Sparkman and Frank Church; by Staff Director Scott Cohen, and former Staff Directors Pat Holt, Norvill Jones, William Bader and Edward Sanders. Editor Jerry Ehrenfreund was very helpful in preparing the study for printing.

CRS and the author also want to express deep appreciation to those distinguished former officials of the executive and legislative branches who were chosen to represent the various facets of government involved in the making of U.S. policy toward Vietnam, and who have read and commented on some or all of Part I: Robert R. Bowie, William P. Bundy, Andrew Goodpaster, U. Alexis Johnson, and Edward G. Lansdale from the Executive; Francis Wilcox (who was subsequently in the Executive) and Carl Marcy (previously in the Executive) from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Boyd Crawford from the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

We also want to thank the many persons who are participating in this project through their oral histories. Material from some of these appear herein.

In the Congressional Research Service, Director Gilbert Gude and members of his staff have provided the support needed for such a large research project. Director Gude was a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives at the time of growing congressional involvement in the war, and his personal interest and encouragement have been very beneficial.

On the CRS director's staff, James Robinson, the Coordinator of Review, and James Price, the Coordinator of Automated Information Services, and his assistant, Robert Nickel, have been especially helpful. Mr. Robinson, an Asian analyst before becoming responsible for review, made a number of excellent suggestions for

strengthening the manuscript. Mr. Price, a former national defense analyst, encouraged and gave technical support to the interviews. Susan Finsen, the Coordinator of Management and Administrative Services, Beatrice Jones, Edgar Glick, Jeanne Hamilton and others have been most cooperative.

In the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division of CRS, the author particularly wants to thank the Chief, Dr. Stanley Heginbotham, as well as Dr. Joel Woldman, the section head primarily responsible for supervision of the project, and his successor, Robert Goldich, as well as Alva Bowen and Hugh Wolff at an earlier time, for making the study possible, and for their outstanding contribution to the success of the project. Administrative support was also provided throughout by Irene Lecourt, Phyllis Fitzgerald, and Dale Shirachi. The division's library staff has also been very helpful, especially Ida Eustis, Carolyn Hatcher, and C. Winston Woodland, as well as Cheryl Mobley. Valuable research assistance in preparing Part I was provided by interns Vanesa Lide of Cornell University and Connie Skowronski of Lawrence University, under the supervision of Warren Lenhart.

Patricia L. McAdams, an attorney and former CRS employee, was the person principally associated with the preparation of the research materials, the preliminary drafting of some chapters, and the conduct of the interviews. Her excellent work and loyal collaboration have been vital to the success of the project. Dr. Anna Nelson, a historian on the faculty of George Washington University, also provided valuable assistance with the interviews and the archival research while working on contract with CRS. The author also thanks his friend, Dr. Robert Klaus, Executive Director, Illinois Humanities Council, for his encouragement and his careful review of Part I.

The study is being written while the author is Visiting Professor of Government at George Mason University (the state university for northern Virginia) under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act. The excellent Chair of the Public Affairs Department, Dr. Robert P. Clark, Jr., was responsible for this arrangement, and he and others on the faculty and in the administration of the university have provided exceptionally strong support.

Others from the university whose interest and contributions are appreciated include graduate assistants Robert Olson, who helped organize the research materials; Susan Ragland, who helped with the research; and Candace Brinkley, now a member of the faculty, who began transcribing the interviews.

The unstinting help and encouragement of Anne Bonanno, who transcribed most of the interviews, and has been responsible for typing, proofing and coding the text, as well as compiling the index and performing all other tasks involved in preparing the manuscript for publication, have been indispensable. No other person deserves more credit for assisting with completion of the present volume. Others at the George Mason University Word Processing Center have been very helpful, especially Donna Austin-Hodges, Director, Bonnie Ziegler, Virginia Berry and Charlotte Slater, as well as Byron Peters of the Academic Computing Services.

For assistance with archival materials for Part I of the study we thank John Wickman, Director, and the Eisenhower Library staff,

especially archivist David Haight; Dr. John Glennon, General Editor of the Foreign Relations Series, Office of the Historian, Department of State; Nancy Bressler, Curator of Public Affairs Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University; Sheryl Vogt, Head of the Richard B. Russell Library, University Libraries, University of Georgia; and the staff of the Legislative Records Division at the National Archives. Helen Mattas, Staff Consultant, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, has been helpful with historical references pertaining to that committee.

Permission to quote from the Dulles papers at the Eisenhower Library has been given by the Dulles Manuscript Committee, John W. Hanes, Jr., Chairman; to quote from the Richard B. Russell papers by the Richard B. Russell Library; and to quote from the Senator H. Alexander Smith papers by his daughters, Marian Smith (Mrs. H. Kenaston) Twitchell, and Helen Smith (Mrs. Samuel M.) Shoemaker, and by Princeton University Library. We appreciate the cooperation of all of these parties, as well as the cooperation of those individuals who have given permission to quote from their interviews with or letters to CRS.

None of those cited above, nor anyone else connected with the project, bears any responsibility, however, for the facts and views presented herein, which are the final responsibility of the author and CRS.

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CHAPTER 1

FRANCE RESUMES CONTROL AND THE WAR BEGINS

This chronicle of the U.S. Government and the Vietnam war begins in 1945 with the end of World War II and concludes in 1975 with the helicopter evacuation of remaining American personnel from the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.

For most Members of Congress, "Indochina," as the area comprising Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia was called in 1945, was a small, distant, insignificant place of little interest to the United States. It is even doubtful whether any Member of the 79th Congress sitting in 1945 had ever been to Indochina or had any direct knowledge of its peoples and cultures. But this was not unusual. The State Department itself, in part because the area had been a French colony, had only a handful of staff who were knowledgeable on the subject.

For one future Member of Congress, however, the impressions created by a visit to Vietnam in 1945 were unforgettable. In a letter to his parents, Navy Lt. Mark O. Hatfield, later a leader in Senate opposition to the war, described his feelings when his ship anchored at Haiphong:¹

It was sickening to see the absolute poverty and the rags these people are in. We thought the Philippines were in a bad way, but they are wealthy compared to these exploited people. The Philippines were in better shape before the war, but the people here have never known anything but squalor since the French heel has been on them . . . I tell you, it is a crime the way we occidentals have enslaved these people in our mad desire for money. The French seem to be the worst and are followed pretty closely by the Dutch and the English. I can certainly see why these people don't want us to return and continue to spit upon them.

Thirty-five years later Senator Hatfield reflected again on this experience:²

One of the most impressive things was to come into that Haiphong port in an early morning hour when the rising sun was reflecting on the colored tiles of the casino that was on a hill-top overlooking the harbor—sort of the Monte Carlo of Southeast Asia prior to the war—and to see, as we landed, the poverty and the absolute deprivation of the people living in squalid huts at the base of that hill. Here you had the casino, symbolic of the western colonial world, and the poverty of the people themselves, which sharpened the contrast for me between the oppression of colonialism, or occupation, or whatever, and

¹ Mark O. Hatfield, *Not Quite So Simple* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 153-154.

² Congressional Research Service (CRS) Interview with Mark Hatfield, Jan. 11, 1979.

what was emerging as a new spirit of identity for these people. It was going to be independent of any western power, France, America or any other.

When World War II ended in August 1945, the nationalist feelings observed a few weeks later by Mark Hatfield began to be expressed throughout Indochina. In Vietnam, the League for the Independence of Vietnam, popularly known as the Viet Minh, had become the dominant political force. Claiming full leadership, it had taken political control of much of the country after Japan surrendered.³ On August 26, 1945, Emperor Bao Dai abdicated in favor of the Viet Minh and its leader Ho Chi Minh, having told both the French and the Americans of the deep desire of the Vietnamese for their independence, as well as having warned the two Western powers of the consequences if the French returned. In a message in mid-August of 1945 to General Charles de Gaulle, Bao Dai said, addressing himself to the French people:⁴

You would understand better if you could see what is happening here, if you could sense the desire for independence which runs to the bottom of every heart and which no human force can curb. Even if you should manage to reestablish a French administration here, it would no longer be obeyed; each village would become a nest of resistance, each former collaborator an enemy and your officials and your colonials themselves would demand to leave this asphyxiating atmosphere. . . . We could so easily understand each other and become friends if you would drop this claim to become our masters again.

On August 20, 1945, when de Gaulle was about to meet with President Harry S Truman in Washington, Bao Dai sent a similar message to Truman, saying, in part:⁵

. . . we are opposed with all our forces to the reestablishment of French sovereignty over the territory of Vietnam under whatever regime it would be. The colonial regime no longer conforms to the present course of history. A people such as the Vietnamese people who have a two-thousand year old history and a glorious past cannot accept remaining under the domination of another people. The French people must yield to the principle of equity which the powerful American nation has proclaimed and defends. France must recognize this with good grace in order to avoid the disaster of a war breaking out on the territory of our country.

When de Gaulle conferred with Truman, however, he was told that the U.S. "offers no opposition to the return of the French Army and authority in Indochina."⁶

³For a more detailed discussion of events during this period see Ellen J. Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina, 1940-1955* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), and the first-hand account by the head of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services, the predecessor of the CIA) mission to Vietnam in 1945, Archimedes L. A. Patti, *Why Viet Nam?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). Also useful is the first volume in the United States Army in Vietnam series: Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years, 1941-1960* (Washington Center of Military History, United States Army, 1983).

⁴Quoted in Chester L. Cooper, *The Lost Crusade* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1970), p. 45.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶Charles de Gaulle, *The War Memoirs: Salvation, 1944-1946* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 242. See below for further discussion of the reasoning behind Truman's position.

On September 2, 1945, the Viet Minh declared the independence of Vietnam in a document which began with these words:

All men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free.⁷

Bao Dai's prophetic warnings were soon confirmed. During September 1945 French forces began reentering Vietnam, and on September 23 they staged a coup d'etat in Saigon. Violence erupted, and on September 25, 1945, an American was killed by Vietnamese forces resisting the return of the French. He was A. Peter Dewey, a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army, and the head of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services, predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency) team in Saigon. The irony is that he was known for having established close relationships with nationalist leaders. The further irony is that he, the first uniformed American to die in a war in which Congress was to play such a prominent role, was the son of a former Member of Congress, Charles S. Dewey, an isolationist Republican from Illinois (and a well-known international banker). (Lt. Col. Dewey was also the nephew of Thomas E. Dewey, Governor of New York, and Republican nominee for President in 1948.)

On October 1, 1945, several Members of the House of Representatives eulogized Lt. Col. Dewey. Of particular interest, looking back, were the comments of Representative Harold Knutson (R/Minn.), who said that the shot that killed Dewey "... may, in a sense, be another shot 'heard round the world' in awakening the American people to the necessity of deciding how far we as a Nation are going to support with military forces the colonial policies of other nations. If the death of valiant Peter Dewey ... may result in saving the lives of many other American boys, his sacrifice may not have been in vain."⁸

The reactions of Representative Knutson and of Mark Hatfield reflected the strong public and congressional opposition to colonialism that prevailed at the time. Typical of this attitude was the position of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg (R/Mich.), the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee and the foremost Republican supporter of a bipartisan foreign policy after World War II. In a major speech in the Senate on January 10, 1945, as well as subsequently during his role as a member of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Conference in San Francisco, Vandenberg emphasized the importance of having a "just peace," in which the rights of small nations would be protected. He was concerned both about the occupation by Russia of the countries of Eastern Europe and the fate of

⁷Allan Cameron (ed.), *Viet-Nam Crisis. A Documentary History*, vol. 1, 1940-1956 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 52.

⁸*Congressional Record*, vol. 91 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off.), p. 9156 (hereafter cited as CR). For discussion of the incident see Patti, and R. Harris Smith, O.S.S. (Berkeley University of California Press, 1972), pp. 337-345. For declassified OSS reports on the incident and comments by former OSS officials see U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Causes, Origins, and Lessons of the Vietnam War*, Hearings, 92d Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1972), p. 184 and appended documents.

Western European colonies. He was fearful that President Franklin D. Roosevelt was beginning to compromise the principles of the Atlantic Charter, especially the principle in paragraph 3 of the charter recognizing "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." He urged the President to stand fast. "These basic points," he said in his speech, "cannot now be dismissed as a mere nautical nimbus. They march with our armies. They sail with our fleets. They fly with our eagles. They sleep with our martyred dead. The first requisite of honest candor . . . is to re-light this torch."⁹

For many Americans, India was the colony that symbolized colonialism. But it was also the keystone of the British Empire, and American suggestions that it be given its independence after the war invariably evoked strong protests from the British. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who said that he had not "become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire,"¹⁰ declared repeatedly that the reference in the Atlantic Charter to people's freedom to choose their form of government referred only to European countries freed from Nazi rule, and did not apply to colonies such as India. When Roosevelt specifically mentioned the problem of India, Churchill, according to his memoirs, "reacted so strongly and at such length that he [Roosevelt] never raised it verbally again."¹¹

The British were also opposed to suggestions for lessening control over other colonies, such as Indochina, because of the possible effect on their own Empire. At the Tehran Conference in 1943, Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek both approved Roosevelt's proposal for a trusteeship for Indochina, but Churchill was vehemently against the idea. Roosevelt said he told Churchill that Chiang Kai-shek did not want either to assume control over Indochina or to be given responsibility for administering a trusteeship in Indochina. Churchill, he said, replied, "Nonsense," to which Roosevelt retorted, "Winston, this is something which you are just not able to understand. You have 400 years of acquisitive instinct in your blood and you just do not understand how a country might not want to acquire land somewhere if they can get it. A new period has opened in the world's history, and you will have to adjust to it." "The British," Roosevelt said in 1944, in recounting this episode, "would take land anywhere in the world even if it were only a rock or a sand bar."¹²

In Congress, there was strong opposition to colonialism, and widespread support for the independence of India in particular. At an executive session (closed to the public and press) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 1, 1943, the U.S. Ambassador to India, William Phillips, testified that India's demands for independence posed serious problems for the allies in the war as well as for the postwar period. This was Senator Vandenberg's entry in his diary:¹³

⁹CR, vol. 91, p. 166.

¹⁰London Times, Nov. 11, 1942.

¹¹Winston Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950), p. 209.

¹²Thomas Campbell and George C. Herring (eds.), *The Diaries of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), p. 40.

¹³Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr. (ed.), *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), p. 53.

Senator [Robert M.] La Follette bluntly said to Phillips that the fate of India is no longer Britain's own exclusive business, since our American boys are supposed to die there for Allied victory, and that F.D.R. should tell Churchill that he either yields to a reasonable settlement of the Indian independence question . . . or that American troops will be withdrawn from that sector. Phillips substantially agreed and, to our amazement, said he had told F.D.R. that precise thing. All of which moved Senator [Tom] Connally to say that he himself had told the President that he ought to "turn the heat" on Churchill; that we ought to be "giving" instead of "taking" orders. It was clear from Phillips' testimony that India is "dynamite"—and that its destiny will be a bone of contention at the peace table.

On the other hand, there was growing concern in the executive branch and in Congress about the need for avoiding any postwar international territorial arrangements that would threaten U.S. base rights in the Mariana, Caroline, and Marshall islands which had been governed by the Japanese under mandates from the League of Nations, and were being taken during the war by U.S. forces. The argument was that in order to acquire bases in the Pacific necessary for future U.S. security these islands had to be either annexed or controlled completely by the United States.

Within the executive branch, there was solid support among civilian as well as uniformed authorities for protecting U.S. base rights in the mandated islands. The Navy was the strongest proponent, and in a discussion with one of his advisers Roosevelt asked, "What is the Navy's attitude in regard to territories? Are they trying to grab everything?" The adviser, Charles W. Taussig, replied that the Navy "did not seem to have much confidence in civilian controls," and that "the military had no confidence" in the U.N. He told the President of one admiral's letter to the Secretary of the Navy urging that the Navy be represented at the San Francisco Conference "to protect themselves against 'the international welfare boys.'"¹⁴

Beginning in 1944, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and all of the service secretaries, led by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox (and subsequently James A. Forrestal), strongly opposed State Department plans for an international trusteeship system. This, they argued, could prevent the U.S. from obtaining the kind of control over the Pacific islands which it needed, as well as weakening the strategic position of the Western powers in other areas of Asia and the world.

In Congress, this position was strongly supported by the naval affairs committees in the House and Senate. The Senate committee, chaired by Harry F. Byrd (D/Va.), even traveled to San Francisco to confer with U.S. representatives to the U.N. Conference in order to make sure that U.S. naval base rights in the Pacific were adequately protected.¹⁵ Although the House was not directly involved in approving the U.N. Treaty, its naval affairs committee became very concerned about the effect of the U.N. on U.S. bases, and on

¹⁴U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1945, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off.), p. 122 (hereafter cited as *FRUS*).

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 614.

January 23, 1945, established an investigative subcommittee to pursue the matter. Members of the House committee also toured the Pacific in July 1945, and in a report on August 6 the committee recommended, among other things:¹⁶

For (a) our own security, (b) the security of the Western Hemisphere, and (c) the peace of the Pacific, the United States should have at least dominating control over the former Japanese mandated islands of the Marshalls, the Carolines, and the Marianas—commonly known as "Micronesia"—and over the outlying Japanese islands of the Izus, Bonins, and Ryukyu.

The opposition of the British on the one hand and the U.S. military on the other created a serious political and policy problem for the President and his foreign policy advisers as well as the foreign policy committees (Senate Foreign Relations, House Foreign Affairs) of Congress. This was compounded by the fact that, as Secretary of State Cordell Hull maintained, U.S. acquisition of the mandated islands would be grounds for similar claims by the U.S.S.R.¹⁷ And, indeed, the Russians subsequently asked for U.S. approval of a Russian trusteeship for one or more former Italian colonies in North Africa.

The solution to this problem, which was the omission of specific provisions in the U.N. Charter for the future of dependent territories such as India and Indochina, weakened the position of the U.S. in relation to dependent peoples, and, of course, worked directly against efforts to place Indochina under some kind of international trusteeship after the war. On the other hand, it may also have strengthened the postwar international security system, as well as regional security arrangements, especially NATO.

It is important to note that Congress played a double-edged role in these decisions. On the one hand, the military committees of Congress, by supporting the acquisition of Pacific islands for U.S. bases, helped to force the President and the State Department to take a position in the drafting of the U.N. Charter that favored the European powers, and made it more difficult for the U.S. to deal with the French on Indochina or the British on India or the Dutch on Indonesia.

On the other hand, the foreign policy committees of Congress, while generally favoring independence and self-determination for colonial territories, failed to anticipate adequately or to grapple with the postwar consequences of instability in the colonies. Rather, they tended to accept the compromises being made in the executive branch, and to yield to the concerns of the naval affairs committees about base rights. In part, this resulted from their preoccupation, especially in the Senate, with approval of the U.N. Treaty. They were keenly aware, as was Secretary of State Hull, a former Member of Congress, that the treaty could be threatened by the issue of military bases, and in their efforts to obtain maximum support for the U.N., and to neutralize major opposition, they tried to work out an accommodation on this point. In larger part, howev-

¹⁶U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Naval Affairs, *Study of Pacific Bases*, No. 106 in the series of printed hearings of the committee, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1945), p. 1010. (Pages in the hearings series were numbered consecutively. This report begins on page 1009.)

¹⁷Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. II (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 1466

er, the foreign policy committees of Congress supported the position finally worked out in the executive branch, first, because they considered it to be the only practicable and workable compromise, and, second, because they were participating hand and glove with the executive branch on the development of the U.N., and therefore tended to support both the process and its results. This had the effect, however, of reducing the legislative choices of the foreign policy committees, as well as causing the "loyal opposition" party to be more loyal and less opposite.

As a consequence, during the formation of U.S. policy toward the U.N. neither of the foreign policy committees of Congress conducted any independent inquiries or reviews of the proposal for the U.N. or the position of the U.S. toward such vital questions as the fate of the colonies and the provision for trusteeships. There were no hearings or other inquiries concerning the postwar prospects for areas such as Indochina, and what U.S. policy should be with respect to these areas.

When the U.N. Treaty was sent to the Senate for its advice and consent there was such an outpouring of approval and support that any possible questions about the colonial problem or trusteeship arrangements must have appeared inappropriate if not moot. And there were none, either in the hearings or in floor debate. Only in the report of the Foreign Relations Committee were these matters raised, and this was done by way of reassuring critics. According to the report¹⁸ the security of the U.S. was fully protected by the charter, as evidenced by letters from U.S. military authorities to this effect which had been included in the printed hearings.

The U.N. Treaty was passed by the Senate, 89-2, and neither of the two Members voting in the negative raised the colonial question or trusteeships. Thus, the achievement of this remarkable political consensus, one of the highest ever achieved in the history of U.S. foreign policy, had the effect of chilling debate at the time. It also set the stage for the use of similar consensual techniques in the postwar period, including the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964.

Could the foreign policy committees of Congress have played a stronger role in the development of the trusteeship arrangements of the U.N.? Should they have been less concerned about passage of the treaty and more concerned about the consequences of a postwar plan that did not deal with the problem of the colonies? These important questions transcend the scope of this study, but a brief review may help in clarifying why the foreign policy committees were not more active in relation to the colonial problem, and how this affected their role in relation to Vietnam.

Development of the U.S. Position on Trusteeships

In 1942, when the U.S. Government first began considering the creation of the U.N., the colonial issue was deemed to be a major factor in the development of a postwar international organization. Roosevelt told Russian Foreign Minister Vladimir M. Molotov, for example, that there was "a palpable surge toward independence" in colonial areas, and that the Europeans could no longer hold colo-

¹⁸S. Exec. Rept. 79-8.

nies. In Asia, each colony, including Indochina, was going to be ready in a matter of time, within 20 years, for self-government. Meanwhile, he said, they might be administered under an international trusteeship system.¹⁹

Roosevelt's views were echoed by Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles. In a speech in May 1942 Welles declared:²⁰

Our victory must bring in its train the liberation of all peoples. . . . The age of imperialism is ended. The right of a people to their freedom must be recognized as the civilized world long since recognized the right of an individual to his personal freedom. The principles of the Atlantic Charter must be guaranteed to the world as a whole. . . .

Secretary of State Hull, however, had not been consulted by Welles about the speech, and, besides being piqued by Welles' "disloyalty," he was concerned about proposals to divest European allies of their colonies, particularly at a time when they and the U.S. were together in war. Thus, when the first State Department staff proposal for the postwar period, drawn up in 1942 by a committee under Welles' direction, recommended an international trusteeship for all colonial areas, Hull, "for obvious reasons of political feasibility," in his words, had the proposal rewritten to include only former German and Italian colonies and islands controlled by the Japanese under League of Nations mandates.²¹ There is no indication that Congress was consulted about this change, although Hull was generally in close touch with key Members of Congress, and seldom took a step of any importance without their acquiescence or concurrence.

Beginning in May 1942, Hull asked Members of Congress to join State Department committees engaged in postwar planning. Senators Tom Connally (D/Tex.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Warren R. Austin (R/Vt.), were the first Members, and a number of others were added subsequently. By May of 1943, there were eight Members of Congress on the 23-member group.²² The record does not show, however, whether Connally and Austin were consulted by Hull about the change in the trusteeship plan.

Roosevelt approved Hull's proposal for allowing colonial powers to decide whether to place dependent territories under trusteeship, but he continued to propose an international trusteeship for Indochina. Here, too, there is no indication that any Member of Congress was consulted, but most Members doubtless would have agreed with Roosevelt's opposition to continued French rule, while also approving Hull's concession to what he perceived as realism.

Although Hull felt that it was not politically feasible to propose trusteeships for all dependent territories, he also thought that it was important for the U.S., as he said in the summer of 1942, "to use the full measure of our influence to support the attainment of freedom by all peoples who, by their acts, show themselves worthy of it and ready for it."²³ Thus, in recommending to Roosevelt in

¹⁹Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1948), p. 573.

²⁰*Department of State Bulletin*, May 30, 1942, p. 488.

²¹Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. II, pp. 1228, 1638.

²²See U.S. Department of State, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945*, Publication No. 3580 by Harley A. Notter (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1950), pp. 74, 97.

²³*Department of State Bulletin*, July 25, 1942, p. 642.

November 1942 that colonies not be mandatorily included in the trusteeship system he also proposed a declaration, "The Atlantic Charter and National Independence," applying the Atlantic Charter (a Roosevelt-Churchill declaration in 1942 on principles for the postwar world) to all peoples, whatever their status, in which the allies would commit themselves to help colonies become independent. Colonial peoples would, in turn, be obliged to prepare themselves for independence.

Roosevelt approved the proposed declaration. In February 1943, the British then suggested a joint declaration on colonial policy which, while maintaining control in the "parent" or "trustee" state, would require each colonial power to prepare colonies for self-government. The State Department thereupon revised its earlier declaration to incorporate some of the ideas of the British, and sent the new version, "Draft Declaration by the United Nations on National Independence," to the President in March 1943. The British did not support the new U.S. proposal, however. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden objected to the use of the word "independence," saying that he had to think of the British Empire system, which was based on Dominion and colonial status. Also objectionable was the proposal for setting dates for achieving independence.²⁴

At the Moscow Conference in October 1943, the British refused to discuss the declaration on national independence. At the Tehran Conference in December 1943, as noted earlier, Churchill rejected Roosevelt's proposal for an international trusteeship for Indochina.

In January 1944, the question of U.S. policy toward Indochina was raised by the British. Despite several statements by the President himself and by officials of the State Department to the effect that the U.S. would not prevent the French from reasserting sovereignty over the area, Roosevelt told the British Ambassador that he preferred an international trusteeship. "France has had the country—thirty million inhabitants—for nearly one hundred years, and the people are worse off than they were at the beginning . . . France has milked it for one hundred years. The people of Indochina are entitled to something better than that."²⁵

Meanwhile, the State Department redrafted in early 1944 the proposed declaration on national independence, substituting "self-government" for "independence," and generally weakening the provisions of the earlier draft. The new title was "Draft Declaration regarding Administration of Dependent Territories." Omitted, among other things, was the proposed timetable for independence. After again consulting the British, the U.S. toned down the draft declaration even further, however, as well as the trusteeship arrangements under the proposed U.N.²⁶

The role of Members of Congress in decisions about these compromises in the U.S. position is not clear from the record. After passage by both Houses of Congress of resolutions supporting the

²⁴Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 1237. For the development of the U.S. position see also pp. 1234-1235, and Ruth B. Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1958), pp. 86-91. For the text of the March 1943 draft of the declaration see *FRUS*, 1943, vol. I, p. 747.

²⁵Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 1597. In November 1943 Roosevelt had made a similar comment in a private meeting with Stalin at the Tehran Conference. See *FRUS*, 1943, "The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran," p. 485.

²⁶See Russell, pp. 339-343.

creation of the U.N., which occurred in the fall of 1943, direct participation by Members of Congress in the formulation of U.S. policy was replaced by consultation.²⁷ Active participation resumed only in the spring of 1945 when Members of Congress were appointed as members of the U.S. delegation to the San Francisco Conference.

Although they no longer were actual members of the State Department Planning Group, leading Members of Congress were consulted very closely by Secretary of State Hull and his associates during the 1943-44 period. In the spring of 1944, Hull asked the Foreign Relations Committee to appoint a bipartisan group for the purpose of such consultation. This group, the "Committee of Eight,"²⁸ met frequently with Hull to discuss the U.S. position, and to review confidential working drafts of the proposed U.N. Charter. Additional sessions were held with House leaders, and they too were given the draft of the charter for review. After the 1944 election these consultations were resumed, and Members of Congress were given the Dumbarton Oaks proposal for review. In January 1945 there were additional meetings by the President and State Department officials with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to discuss plans for the U.N.²⁹

Throughout this process of consultation the question of trusteeship arrangements was among the topics of discussion, and it is clear that there was ample opportunity for Members of Congress, especially members of the Foreign Relations Committee, to consider the U.S. position on trusteeships and on the colonial issue. There is no available record as to whether they did, but there is also no indication that, if they did, it had any impact on policymaking. Nor is there any evidence that those members who were consulted disagreed with the way in which the executive branch was handling the colonial issue and the plans for trusteeships. It may be safely assumed, however, that while supporting some moves toward independence, they were also concerned about U.S. base rights in the Pacific.

In the spring of 1944 the internal dispute began between the War and Navy Departments and the State Department over the postwar status of the Pacific islands. As noted earlier, it was the position of the military authorities, civilian as well as uniformed, that these should be tightly controlled by the U.S. At the request of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (who were also concerned that such discussions might adversely affect U.S.-U.S.S.R. relationships at a time when the U.S. was trying to get the Russians to enter the war against Japan), the State Department agreed to remove the section on trusteeships from the draft charter of the U.N. that the U.S. was to present at the Dumbarton Oaks meeting in August 1944, at

²⁷The Subcommittee on Political Problems of the Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations, on which Members of Congress served during 1942-43, gave way in late 1943 to the Informal Political Agenda Group, composed entirely of State Department officials and consultants, which in turn gave way to two similar State Department groups, the Post-War Programs Committee and the Policy Committee, in early 1944. In addition, there was an interdepartmental postwar planning group, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee.

²⁸Democrats Tom Connally (Tex.), Walter F. George (Ga.), Alben W. Barkley (Ky.), Guy M. Gillette (Iowa); Republicans Wallace H. White (Maine), Warren R. Austin (Vt.), Arthur H. Vandenberg (Mich.); and Progressive Robert M. La Follette (Wis.).

²⁹See *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation*, pp. 258, 380, 412.

which the general framework of the U.N. was to be approved.³⁰ The result was that the draft proposal for the U.N.³¹ worked out at the Dumbarton Oaks "Conversations," as they were called, omitted all reference to the trusteeship system and the settlement of territorial questions after the war.

After Dumbarton Oaks, the State Department continued to urge that action be taken on establishing a trusteeship system as well as expressing the position of the U.S. on the future of French, British and Dutch colonies. This was especially important, in the opinion of the State Department, because, as Hull contended, "... we could not help believing that the indefinite continuance of the British, Dutch, and French possessions in the Orient in a state of dependence provided a number of foci for future trouble and perhaps war. Permanent peace could not be assured unless these possessions were started on the road to independence, after the example of the Philippines."³²

In a State Department memorandum to the President on September 8, 1944, Hull suggested a declaration by the governments concerned making "definite commitments" about the granting of independence or full self-government (with Dominion status, where appropriate) to their colonies, including a timetable for such action. He said that they should also pledge that prior to independence each colony would be governed as an international trusteeship. Roosevelt approved the proposal, and sent word to the three countries involved that the U.S. expected to be consulted on postwar plans for Southeast Asia.³³ No action was taken, however, to follow up on the State Department proposal, in part, no doubt, because of Hull's illness followed by his resignation toward the end of 1944.

In November 1944, the State Department proposed that the dispute between State and the War and Navy Departments be referred to an interdepartmental committee. Roosevelt agreed, and reiterated his support for international trusteeships, and his opposition to military demands for U.S. annexation of the mandated island, which, he contended, was neither necessary for U.S. security nor consonant with the Atlantic Charter.³⁴

He said that the Army and the Navy had been urging upon him the point of view that the United States should take over all or some of the mandated islands in the Pacific, but that he was opposed to such a procedure because it was contrary to the Atlantic Charter. Nor did he think that it was necessary. As

³⁰Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. II, pp. 1599, 1706-1707, and Russell, pp. 343-348. For the text of the JCS request, see *FRUS*, 1944, vol. I, p. 700.

³¹"Proposals for the Establishment of a General International Organization," known as the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals.

³²Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 1601.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 1600-1601.

³⁴*FRUS*, 1945, "The Conferences at Malta and Yalta," p. 57. Robert Dallek has argued that Roosevelt's "... commitment to a trusteeship system for former colonies and mandates is another good example of how he used an idealistic idea to mask a concern with power. Believing that American internationalists would object to the acquisition of postwar air and naval bases for keeping the peace, Roosevelt disguised this plan by proposing that dependent territories come under the control of three or four countries designated by the United Nations. The 'trustees' were to assume civil and military responsibilities for the dependent peoples until they were ready for self-determination for emerging nations around the globe." Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979; pp. 536-537. This conclusion is not supported, however, either in Dallek's study or by historical evidence.

far as he could tell, all that we would accomplish by that would be to provide jobs as governors of insignificant islands for inefficient Army and Navy officers or members of the civilian career service.

The issue of the trusteeships was raised again at the Yalta Conference in early February 1945, despite a plea to Roosevelt from Secretary of War Stimson to delay any discussion of the issue.³⁵ Stimson, as mentioned earlier, was supported by the House Naval Affairs Committee, which, in response to a bill introduced in the House in January 1945 to provide for administration by the Navy of all U.S. possessions, including the Pacific islands, had established a subcommittee to study the need for U.S. acquisition and control of the Pacific islands.

At Yalta, the U.S. proposed adding a trusteeship system to the U.N. framework approved at Dumbarton Oaks. The Foreign Ministers agreed that this should be considered, and they proposed further consultations prior to the San Francisco Conference. But when the heads of state met, Churchill was reported to have "exploded," declaring, "I absolutely disagree. I will not have one scrap of British territory flung into that arena. . . . As long as every bit of land over which the British Flag flies is to be brought into the dock, I shall object as long as I live."³⁶ When it was explained that no reference to the British Empire was intended, Churchill appeared to be reassured, but it was clear that the British would only agree to a trusteeship system which did not directly affect colonial territory.

After further discussions, agreement was reached on the following language with respect to the recommendations for a trusteeship system:³⁷

The acceptance of this recommendation is subject to its being made clear that territorial trusteeship will only apply to: (a) existing mandates of the League of Nations; (b) territories detached from the enemy as a result of the present war; (c) any other territory which might voluntarily be placed under trusteeship; and (d) no discussion of actual territories is contemplated at the forthcoming United Nations Conference or in the preliminary consultations, and it will be a matter for subsequent agreement which territories within the above categories will be placed under trusteeship.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Dependent Areas which had been proposed by the State Department in November 1944 did not begin to function until early 1945. In January 1945, the State Department submitted to that committee a revision of its earlier trusteeship proposals. This proposal was vigorously attacked by the War and Navy Departments.³⁸ The argument continued for several weeks. Meanwhile, President Roosevelt had appointed the U.S. representatives to the San Francisco Conference, including four Members of Congress: Senators Connally and Vandenberg, and Repre-

³⁵Russell, pp. 511-516. See *FRUS*, 1945, vol. I, pp. 18-22 for a State Department summary of the War-State controversy, as well as differences between the U.S. and Britain. See also pp. 23-27 for Stimson's memo on his position.

³⁶Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1949), p. 236, and James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper and Row, 1947), p. x. See also *FRUS*, 1945, "The Conferences at Malta and Yalta," pp. 844, 855-56.

³⁷*FRUS*, 1945, "The Conferences at Malta and Yalta," p. 977.

³⁸See Russell, pp. 577-578.

representatives Sol Bloom (D/N.Y.), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Charles A. Eaton (R/N.J.), the committee's ranking minority member. On March 13, 1945, at its first meeting in Washington, the U.S. delegation discussed the proposed U.N. organization, including the arrangements for trusteeships. Representative Eaton asked whether the provision for trusteeships would include the "treatment of colonial problems." Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., who had just replaced Hull, replied that it would not be possible to deal with dependent areas at the San Francisco Conference except for former League of Nations mandates. Senators Vandenberg and Connally stressed the importance of clarifying for the public the fact that the Conference would deal only with creating the organization, and not with the peace settlement itself or other postwar questions such as the future of colonies. They obviously had been well briefed on the U.S. position on postponing the consideration of territorial settlements, including the future of colonial areas, and had accepted that position.³⁹

As the debate continued in the executive branch, the military argued against any consideration of trusteeships at San Francisco, with the possible exception of a resolution agreeing that the matter would be considered later.⁴⁰ This suggestion was rejected by the State Department on April 9, 1945. State sent a memorandum to the President summarizing the status of the issue, and asking for a meeting of the three departments with the President.⁴¹ Roosevelt, then in Georgia, replied that he agreed with State's position, and that they would talk about it when he returned. He died on April 12, before the meeting could be held.

On April 17 the Secretaries of State, War and Navy met with the U.S. delegation to discuss the trusteeship question. Although President Truman had not yet officially acted on the matter, the three departments had finally agreed on a paper for presentation to the White House. After hearing from Secretaries Stimson and Forrestal, the delegation discussed the proposed position. In another meeting the following day each delegate was polled, and all approved the proposal. Senator Vandenberg said the "Congressional opinion is totally in sympathy with the position of the Secretaries of War and Navy."⁴²

It should be noted that this discussion centered on the questions of protecting U.S. security in the Pacific. There was almost no discussion of the broader question of the future of dependent areas, and no official of the executive branch, Member of Congress, or nongovernmental members of the delegation raised the colonial question with the exception of Dr. Isaiah Bowman, (president of The Johns Hopkins University, and a consultant to the State Department prior to being named a member of the delegation). Bowman said, "We have been led into a situation in which the world expects us to do something on trusteeship. We are faced with such questions as whether we wish Somaliland to go to the British. We will have to participate in its disposition. What in this situa-

³⁹*FRUS*, 1945, vol. I, p. 117.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 211-213.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 311-321, 330-332.

tion is our safeguard? It is in the fact that we have set up a principle—a principle of trusteeship in the interests of the natives."⁴³ He agreed, however, that U.S. military needs should be met, and at the meeting the following day he joined the rest of the delegation in approving the proposed position.

Immediately after approval by the delegation, the interdepartmental paper was submitted to President Truman and was approved by him on April 18.⁴⁴ There is no indication that he had any questions or reservations about the proposal, nor did he, unlike Roosevelt, indicate any particular commitment to trusteeships or concern about the future of colonial areas.

Final approval of the U.S. position, which had been slightly modified since the President's action, occurred on April 26, when the delegation met in San Francisco and adopted the revised language.⁴⁵ There was no discussion of the colonial problem. In its final form the proposal provided that all territories, including League mandates and former German and Italian colonies, would be placed under trusteeship only by "subsequent agreement," based on action initiated by the country holding such territory. Moreover, two classes of trusteeships were to be created: strategic and non-strategic. The latter would be under the administrative control of the General Assembly; the former, primarily the Pacific islands being occupied by the U.S., would be under the Security Council, where the U.S. could protect its interests, if necessary, by the veto. Nothing was said in the U.S. paper about the future of British, French or Dutch colonial areas or generally about the responsibilities of nations for dependent areas under their control. Moreover, proposed oversight of trust territories, including investigations and reports, was to be limited, in the U.S. draft, to nonstrategic areas.

During the San Francisco Conference the status of the U.S. trusteeship proposal was reviewed continuously by the American delegation. According to John Foster Dulles, a nongovernmental member of the delegation, this "ritual" was observed: "At the daily meetings of the United States Delegation, Senator Connally and Senator Vandenberg would always put to [U.S. Navy] Commander [Harold E.] Stassen this question: 'Are you sticking to the "subsequent agreement" provision?' Commander Stassen would regularly reply in the affirmative. Then the meeting would go on."⁴⁶

On May 2, 1945, M. Georges Bidault, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, made it quite clear that the French did not intend to place Indochina under the trusteeship system. The principle of trusteeship, he said, applied to other areas, not to Indochina, whose future rested solely with France.⁴⁷

Ultimately, the American trusteeship plan prevailed, and became chapter XII of the United Nations Charter. Pressure from the Soviet Union, China, and some of the smaller countries resulted, however, in the addition of language about the responsibilities of trustee nations toward trust territories. The Soviet Union and China wanted to add the word "independence" as an objective of

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 350.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 445-451, 459-460.

⁴⁶John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 79-80.

⁴⁷Quoted by Patti, p. 117.

the trusteeship system. This was opposed by the British, French, Dutch, South African, and American delegations, which favored the wording "progressive development toward self-government." The U.S. position was that self-government might lead to independence. To support inclusion of the word "independence" would be "butting in on colonial affairs," according to Commander Stassen, the delegate who was representing the U.S. position on the trusteeship question. "While it was unfortunate to oppose Russia on this matter," Stassen said in a meeting of the U.S. delegation, "we also did not wish to find ourselves committed to breaking up the British empire . . . if we sided with the Chinese and the Russians on this issue, there probably would be no trusteeship system since the British will never accept that position." Furthermore, he said, "Independence . . . was a concept developed out of the past era of nationalism. It suggested, and looked in the direction of, isolationism. We should be more interested in interdependence than in independence and for this reason it might be fortunate to avoid the term 'independence.'" Dulles agreed with Stassen. Other delegates disagreed. Charles Taussig, who had been personally close to Roosevelt, reminded the group that both Roosevelt and Hull had insisted that "independence" should be the objective of the trusteeship system. "Mr. Taussig explained that in talks with the President it was clear that he felt that the word 'independence' rather than progressive self-government would alone satisfy the Oriental people. To deny the objective of independence, he felt, would sow the seeds of the next world war."

Of particular interest in relation to Congress' treatment of Vietnam is the position of Members of Congress on the U.S. delegation. Senator Connally supported Stassen's position, as did Senator Vandenberg and Representative Eaton. Representative Bloom's position is not clear, although he was known to favor an independent state of Israel. Connally said he was "afraid that, if the word 'independence' was put in, there would be a good deal of stirring up of a desire for independence and the orderly procedure in the direction of self-government would be interrupted."

Secretary Stettinius as well as Leo Pasvolosky, the State Department's principal specialist on the U.N., indicated, however, that they hoped a way could be found to insert the word "independence" without giving it too much importance. Eventually this was done, and the final language in the charter⁴⁸ provided for the "progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement."⁴⁹

Later in the Conference, the question arose as to the U.S. position on a proposal by the Russians to add "self determination" to the language on trusteeships. The British and French had objected, Stassen said, and had proposed instead the words "in accord with the freely expressed will of the people." Stassen thought the U.S.

⁴⁸United Nations Charter, ch. XII, art. 76(b).

⁴⁹For the discussion in the U.S. delegation see *FRUS*, 1945, vol. I, pp. 792-797, and see generally Russell, pp. 810 ff.

ought to yield to some reference to "self determination." Senator Connally argued, however, that either version, that of the Russians or that of the British and French, "would weaken the position of the United States. . . . To accept 'the principle of self determination' in any form would be to invite trouble," he said, but he agreed to let Stassen handle the problem.⁵⁰ In the end, as the charter language quoted above indicates, the British/French version prevailed.

There is one final note of interest concerning the U.N. Conference and the arrangements for trusteeships. Taking advantage of the opening provided by U.S. insistence on controlling the mandated islands in the Pacific, the Russians themselves asked whether they would be eligible for a trusteeship, and Secretary of State Stettinius was forced to admit that they were, whereupon, as indicated earlier, they asked to become the trustee for the former Italian colony of Tripolitania in North Africa.⁵¹

Several tentative conclusions may now be suggested with respect to the question raised earlier about the role of Congress in the development of postwar U.S. policy toward dependent areas. The debate on trusteeships began with the assertion of broad national principles, based on traditional American values, and ended with decisions based on the immediately perceived political and military requirements for approval of the U.N. Treaty and continued cooperation of America's European allies. As frequently if not commonly happens in the formulation of national policy, broad general principles tend to be qualified and compromised in the process of translating the abstractness of principle into the reality of policy. Thus, even Roosevelt himself, while continuing to favor trusteeships, and opposing restoration of French rule in Indochina, was forced to recognize that the U.S. had important strategic interests in the Pacific islands that might be affected by a trusteeship system. He also found that in order to assure British and French cooperation after the war, he would have to accept compromises in that trusteeship system, beginning with the most important of all, the exclusion from the system of the colonies of Britain, France and the Netherlands. Even with respect to Indochina, which he particularly wanted to see freed from the French, Roosevelt had begun in the several months before his death to accept the possibility of renewed French rule, even though he clung to the hope of ultimate independence.⁵²

Although they may not have been consulted on several of the important decisions made during the process of narrowing the range of choice and finally choosing alternatives, Members of Congress who participated in postwar policymaking tended to arrive at the same or similar conclusions as the President and officials of the executive branch. They, too, were concerned about protecting U.S. strategic interests in the Pacific, and they were, of course, acutely

⁵⁰FRUS, 1945, vol. 1, p. 1055

⁵¹Russell, p. 835.

⁵²On these points see especially Walter La Feber, "Roosevelt, Churchill and Indochina: 1942-45," *American Historical Review*, 80 (December 1975), pp. 1277-1295; Christopher Thorne, "Indochina and Anglo-American Relations, 1942-1945," *Pacific Historical Review*, 45 (February 1976), pp. 73-96, and George C. Herring, "The Truman Administration and the Restoration of French Sovereignty in Indochina," *Diplomatic History*, 1 (Spring 1977), pp. 97-117.

aware of the implications of this issue for public and Senate acceptance of the U.N. Treaty. But they also appreciated the significance of British and other opposition to including colonies under the trusteeship system, and the need for maintaining strong relationships with British and European allies after the war. For most Members of Congress, as well as most officials of the executive branch, these factors tended to outweigh the demands, real or potential, of the dependent areas.

The Communist Threat and Its Effects on U.S. Policy Toward Colonial Problems

The primacy of these political and strategic factors was greatly reinforced during the closing months of World War II as the American people and the U.S. Government became progressively alarmed about Russian (Communist) expansionism. By the spring of 1945, in fact, the debate over postwar policy was shifting toward a new anti-Communist perspective. Spurred in part by warnings from W. Averell Harriman and George F. Kennan in Moscow, U.S. policymakers were rapidly abandoning their hopes for Great Power cooperation, and instead began stressing the maintaining of U.S. power, and of U.S. relationships with Western European and British allies, in order to block the Russians. This, in turn, changed the focus on the colonial issue. Rather than a problem in itself, it was becoming subordinated to the larger problem of preventing Communist expansion. This was exemplified by an OSS policy paper in April 1945 stating that the Russians seemed to be seeking to dominate the world, and recommending that the U.S. take steps to block Russian expansionism. The first priority of the U.S., it argued, should be to create a strong European-American bloc in which France should play a key role. The U.S. should avoid "championing schemes of international trusteeship which may provoke unrest and result in colonial disintegration, and may at the same time alienate us from the European states whose help we need to balance Soviet power." The memorandum went on to say, "The United States should realize its interest in the maintenance of the British, French and Dutch colonial empires. We should encourage liberalization of the colonial regimes in order the better to maintain them, and to check Soviet influence in the stimulation of colonial revolt."⁵³

By the time of the Potsdam Conference in July 1945, the Russian threat seemed increasingly ominous. During the Conference, Averell Harriman met with Secretary of War Stimson, Assistant Secretary John J. McCloy, and Stimson's assistant, Harvey H. Bundy, and, according to Stimson's diary, "confirmed the expanded demands being made by the Russians." Harriman said, among other things, that Stalin had raised the question of a trusteeship for Korea, and Stimson's reaction was that unless the British and French were willing to consider trusteeships for Hong Kong and Indochina, the Russians might demand sole control of Korea. Stim-

⁵³Office of Strategic Services, "Problems and Objectives of United States Policy," Apr. 2, 1945, cited by Herring in "The Truman Administration and the Restoration of French Sovereignty in Indochina," p. 101, and by Thorne, in "Indochina and Anglo-American Relations, 1942-1945," p. 96, from the OSS memorandum located in the Truman Library.

son was so concerned about this possibility that he sought out President Truman, who supported what Harriman had said. Truman also said, according to Stimson, that the Russians were bluffing in some of their moves and demands, and that the U.S. was standing firm. And there is at this point in Stimson's diary only the briefest reference to the reason why Truman was willing to stand firm, and why he did not think that the Russian position on Korea required corresponding action by the British and French. Truman, said Stimson, "... was apparently relying greatly upon the information as to S-1."⁵⁴

S-1 was the atomic bomb, which had just been tested successfully, and Truman assumed that this change in the relative military power of the two countries would enable the U.S. to call any bluffs by the Russians.

The Executive Branch Debates U.S. Policy Toward Indochina

Fear of Communist expansion also tended to strengthen the Office of European Affairs (EUR) in its argument with the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (FE) over U.S. policy toward Indochina. (Prior to 1944, the Office of Far Eastern Affairs had no jurisdiction over colonies. In 1944, a Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs was created in FE, and was later renamed the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs. It could act on colonial questions only with the concurrence of the Office of European Affairs.) FE contended that the U.S. should insist on French concessions to the nationalists in Indochina. EUR on the other hand, urged the strengthening of France, and endorsed French repossession of Indochina. In support of this position, the U.S. Ambassador to France, Jefferson Caffery, reported a conversation with de Gaulle, who said he did not understand American policy. (At that time, March 1945, the Japanese, after letting the Vichy French continue to administer Indochina during the war, had dismissed the French administration and were fighting the French forces stationed in the area. The French had appealed to the U.S. to assist them, but direct assistance had not been approved, and de Gaulle was upset about the failure of the U.S. to come to their aid.) "What are you driving at?" de Gaulle asked Caffery. "Do you want us to become, for example, one of the federated states under the Russian aegis? The Russians are advancing apace as you well know. When Germany falls they will be upon us. If the public here comes to realize that you are against us in Indochina there will be terrific disappointment and nobody knows to what that will lead. We do not want to be Communist; we do not want to fall into the Russian orbit, but I hope that you do not push us into it."⁵⁵

In April 1945, shortly after Roosevelt's death, it became apparent that decisions on U.S. policy toward Indochina could no longer be postponed. The immediate need was to respond to French demands

⁵⁴FRUS, 1945, vol. II, p. 260, fn. 51, quoting the Stimson diary.

⁵⁵FRUS, 1945, vol. VI, p. 300. For the controversy in the State Department see Herring, "The Truman Administration and the Restoration of French Sovereignty in Indochina," pp. 102-105, and the testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1972 by Abbot Low Moffat, Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, 1944-47, in *Causes, Origins and Lessons of the Vietnam War*.

for a role in the liberation of Indochina, a decision with obvious implications for subsequent decisions affecting the area.

In a meeting of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee on April 13, 1945, Robert A. Lovett, then Assistant Secretary of War for Air, said that Admiral Raymond Fenard, Chief of the French Naval Mission in the United States, "had been using a technique of submitting a series of questions to various agencies of the United States Government and by obtaining even negative or noncommittal responses thereto had been in effect writing American policy on Indo-China." Lovett added that U.S. policy needed to be clarified, and that Roosevelt's prohibition on discussing the postwar status of Indochina should "be reconsidered or reaffirmed promptly." The State Department representative on the committee, H. Freeman Matthews (Director of the Division of West European Affairs in EUR), concurred, but he also confirmed the existence of a "divergence of views" within the State Department that was blocking action on the subject. The committee agreed to request the State Department to take up the matter with the President.⁵⁶

In response to this action, the Division of West European Affairs proposed on April 20 a memorandum for the President essentially recommending support for the French position:

The United States Government has publicly taken the position that it recognizes the sovereign jurisdiction of France over French possessions overseas when those possessions are resisting the enemy and has expressed the hope that it will see the reestablishment of the integrity of French territory. In spite of this general assurance, the negative policy so far pursued by this Government with respect to Indochina has aroused French suspicions concerning our intentions with respect to the future of that territory. This has had and continues to have a harmful effect on American relations with the French Government and people.

Referring to the Yalta agreement that the trusteeship arrangements of the U.N. would be based on voluntary action by Allied powers in placing dependent territories under trusteeship, the memorandum stated:

General de Gaulle and his Government have made it abundantly clear that they expect a proposed Indo-Chinese federation to function within the framework of the "French Union." There is consequently not the slightest possibility at the present time or in the foreseeable future that France will volunteer to place Indo-China under an international trusteeship, or will consent to any program of international accountability which is not applied to the colonial possessions of other powers. If an effort were made to exert pressure on the French Government, such action would have to be taken by the United States alone for France could rely upon the support of other

⁵⁶Extract of minutes of the April 13 meeting in *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-67*, book 8, V. B. 2., pp. 1-2. This is the Defense Department's public edition of the *Pentagon Papers*, (hereafter cited as *PP*, DOD ed. [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1971], or Gravel ed., after the edition published by the Beacon Press [Boston: 1971] based on material from Senator Mike Gravel [D/Alaska]). The DOD edition contains in book 8 a collection of documents from 1945-52 that was not printed in the Gravel edition, but most of this material was also printed in *FRUS*.

colonial powers, notably, Great Britain and the Netherlands. Such actions would likewise run counter to the established American policy of aiding France to regain her strength in order that she may be better fitted to share responsibility in maintaining the peace of Europe and the world.

Accordingly, EUR recommended that the U.S. "neither oppose the restoration of Indo-China to France, with or without a program of accountability, nor take any action toward French overseas possessions which it is not prepared to take or suggest with regard to the colonial possessions of our other Allies."

It recommended, further, that the U.S. consider French offers of military assistance in the Pacific "on their merits," and that if these actions had the effect of strengthening French claims of sovereignty over Indochina, that this should not bar the acceptance of such assistance.

In its memorandum, EUR also recommended that the U.S. continue efforts to get the French to liberalize "their past policy of limited opportunities for native participation in government and administration," as well as modifying "colonial preference" economic policies.

FE responded on April 21 with suggested changes in and additions to EUR's draft memorandum to the President. Prepared by Abbot Low Moffat, Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, these emphasized the need to recognize the "independence sentiment" in Indochina, and the adverse effect on U.S. interests which could result from a failure to recognize legitimate demands for self-government. "If really liberal policies toward Indochina are not adopted by the French—policies which recognize the paramount interest of the native people and guarantee within the foreseeable future a genuine opportunity for true, autonomous self-government—there will be substantial bloodshed and unrest for many years, threatening the economic and social progress and the peace and stability of Southeast Asia."

James C. Dunn, Assistant Secretary of State (whose jurisdiction covered EUR), objected strenuously to the changes proposed by FE, and argued that it would be preferable to "let the matter drift." The U.S., he said, needed to strengthen its relationship with France, particularly in light of the new threat to the West posed by the Russians.

Dunn was overruled, and EUR and FE were told by Under Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew, who favored FE's position, to work out a compromise memorandum. During the following month they did so, but Dunn, then at the San Francisco Conference, sent back a "scorching wire" opposing the proposed compromise.⁵⁷

The issue became moot, however, and the memorandum was never sent to the President, as a result of a meeting between Truman and M. Georges Bidault on May 19. Acting on the basis of advice from the State Department, Truman told Bidault that the U.S. would welcome French assistance in the war in the Pacific, but that, because it was a military matter, decisions would have to

⁵⁷Testimony of Abbot Low Moffat in *Causes, Origins and Lessons of the Vietnam War*, p. 168. For the EUR and FE memoranda see PP, DOD ed., book 8, V. B. 2., vol. 1, pp. 5-21. These documents were not included in *FRUS*.

be made by U.S. military authorities in the field based on military needs and capabilities.⁵⁸

Thus, on May 23 the answer went back to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee from H. Freeman Matthews for the State Department. Repeating the President's statements to Bidault, Matthews suggested that "while avoiding so far as practicable unnecessary or long-term commitments with regard to the amount or character of any assistance which the United States may give to French resistance forces in Indochina, this Government should continue to afford such assistance as does not interfere with the requirements of other planned operations."⁵⁹

On June 2, 1945, U.S. hands-off policy toward Indochina was cemented further by Secretary of State Stettinius in a meeting in San Francisco with Bidault and Henri Bonnet, French Ambassador to the United States. Stettinius "made it clear to Bidault that the record was entirely innocent of any official statement of this government questioning, even by implication, French sovereignty over Indochina."⁶⁰

On June 22, 1945, the position of the State Department on U.S. policy toward Indochina was finally hammered out in a policy paper prepared for the use of the War Department, entitled, "An Estimate of Conditions in Asia and the Pacific at the Close of the War in the Far East and the Objectives and Policies of the United States."⁶¹ The U.S., it said, had two objectives: peace and security in the Far East, which required "increased political freedom" in colonial areas; and the maintenance of world peace and security, which required the cooperation of colonial powers with the United States. Faced with the need to "harmonize" policy in relation to these objectives, "The United States Government," the paper concluded, "may properly continue to state the political principle which it has frequently announced, that independent peoples should be given the opportunity, if necessary after an adequate period of preparation, to achieve an increased measure of self-government, but it should avoid any course of action which would seriously impair the unity of the major United Nations."

In discussing Indochina specifically, the paper stated that there was a strong independence movement, and that the French would "encounter serious difficulty" in reestablishing control over the country. "An increased measure of self-government would seem essential if the Indochinese are to be reconciled to continued French control," the paper added, but such action appeared unlikely. As far as U.S. policy was concerned, the conclusion of the paper was as follows:

The United States recognizes French sovereignty over Indochina. It is, however, the general policy of the United States to favor a policy which would allow colonial peoples an opportunity to prepare themselves for increased participation in their own government with eventual self-government as the goal.

⁵⁸See Grew's memorandum to Truman, May 16, 1945, in *FRUS*, 1945, vol. VI, pp. 307-308.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 311.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 312.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 556-580.

The position of the Europeanists, as they were called by some, was generally sustained in the June policy paper, and was reinforced as the cordial relations of wartime grew cool. By August 1945, as has been noted, it was the announced policy of the U.S. to support French repossession of Indochina. Truman even denied that trusteeship was an option. In a conversation with Madame Chiang Kai-shek on August 29, he was asked by Madame Chiang about Roosevelt's proposal for a trusteeship for Indochina. His reply was that "there had been no discussion of a trusteeship for Indo China as far as he was concerned."⁶²

In September 1945, as violence broke out when the French began reoccupying Vietnam, the Office of Far Eastern Affairs recommended that a commission of the war-time allies be sent to Vietnam to investigate the situation and to seek a compromise solution. The Office of European Affairs and others in the State Department objected, however, and George Kennan cabled from his post in Moscow that although the Russians probably would not intervene directly in Indochina, they were seeking to have the French and other Western powers removed from the area so as to leave it "completely open to communist penetration." Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson approved the recommendation of the Office of European Affairs that the proposal not be acted upon unless the situation worsened markedly.⁶³

Beginning in September 1945, and continuing until March 1946, Ho Chi Minh made a number of efforts to bring the Vietnamese cause to the attention of the U.S. Government, but his letters to Truman and to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, as well as conversations with U.S. diplomats, were officially ignored on the grounds that the U.S. could not become directly involved in the French-Vietnamese situation.⁶⁴

Until the publication of the memoirs of Archimedes L. A. Patti, there was no indication, nor was there any reason to believe, that any Member of Congress had been the intended recipient of a communication from Ho Chi Minh concerning the efforts being made by the Vietnamese to solicit U.S. assistance. Patti, however, has revealed that Ho Chi Minh also attempted to contact Congress through a letter addressed to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which, Patti says, "reached my desk" in the State Department sometime between mid-November 1945 and March 1946.⁶⁵ It is doubtful whether the letter was ever transmitted by the Department of State to the Foreign Relations Committee, but there is no available evidence one way or the other.

There is also no record that at this stage any Member of Congress questioned the policy of the executive branch toward Indochina, despite strong and continuing congressional opposition to colonialism.

⁶²*Ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 541.

⁶³Herring, pp. 114-115.

⁶⁴See U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *The United States and Vietnam, 1944-1947*. Staff Study (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1972), pp. 9-14. PP, DOD ed., book 1, I. C., pp. 66-104, contains the texts of some if not most of these communications. This material is missing from the Gravel edition.

⁶⁵Patti, p. 380.

Congress Begins Debate on U.S. Policy in Asia

Questions were being raised in Congress in late 1945, however, about U.S. policy in Asia, and about China in particular. The U.S. Ambassador to China, Patrick J. Hurley, had resigned, charging that U.S. efforts to support the Nationalist government were being undercut by Foreign Service officers who favored the Chinese Communists. He was strongly supported by several Members of Congress led by Senator Styles Bridges (R/N.H.), and at Bridges' instigation the Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on the matter in December 1945 with Hurley as a leading witness.⁶⁶

The issue was ripe for investigation. U.S. policy had been to support the Nationalists while encouraging them to work with the Communists in the war against the Japanese, to be followed by a negotiated political settlement between the Nationalists and the Communists to achieve postwar stability. In October 1945, when it began to appear that the Communists would occupy key parts of North China being vacated by the Japanese, the U.S. sent 50,000 Marines to the area to hold it pending the arrival of Nationalist troops. Despite orders not to become involved in the conflict between the opposing sides, U.S. forces became engaged in hostile action against Communist troops, and the U.S. commander in China, Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, recommended that the troops either be strengthened or withdrawn.⁶⁷ Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson and Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal argued that the U.S. had to take steps to prevent the Russians from controlling Manchuria and North China, and urged the State Department to clarify U.S. policy in this respect, and to take up the matter with the Russians and, if necessary, with the U.N. Meanwhile, they said, U.S. forces should not be withdrawn, but a clearer directive should be given to General Wedemeyer.⁶⁸

There were objections to the deployment of U.S. forces in China from some Members of Congress, primarily Democrats of liberal persuasion. Chairman Connally advised against U.S. military intervention on behalf of what he considered a "corrupt and reactionary" government. Representative Mike Mansfield (D/Mont.) warned a State Department representative that deployment of the Marines could be used by the Russians as an excuse to continue their occupation of Manchuria.⁶⁹ Others argued that the U.S. should not become involved in a civil war, and that the public would not support another war in the Far East.

The hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were inconclusive, and the committee dropped the issue without coming to a formal decision and without writing a report.⁷⁰ In part, this resulted from Truman's appointment on December 15, 1945, of Gen. George C. Marshall as his personal representative to China. Marshall was a man of outstanding reputation and ability, and his

⁶⁶See Bridges' statement, *CR*, vol. 91, pp. 11109-11118.

⁶⁷*FRUS*, 1945, vol. VII, pp. 650-660, 662-665, 679-684.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 670-678, 684-686. A new directive was issued in December 1945. See pp. 698-699.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 580-581.

⁷⁰The unpublished transcript of the hearings, "Investigation of the Situation in the Far East," is in the papers of the Committee on Foreign Relations in the National Archives, Record Group (hereafter cited as RG) 48.

appointment had the desired effect of suppressing, for the moment, the partisan political debate over China.

In a broader sense, however, the abortive inquiry into U.S. Far Eastern policy was indicative of the state of affairs in 1945 with respect to Congress' role in foreign policy. Although Members of Congress had been actively involved in the establishment of the U.N., they had not participated as actively in the making of other major foreign policy decisions affecting the postwar world. As H. Bradford Westerfield has noted, "As an issue in American politics international relations came to be nearly synonymous with international organization, and as the months went by public figures and political leaders of both parties reached extraordinary consensus on that subject—while the decisions which really did most to shape the postwar world were made largely in private by the military, the President, and a few advisers who, for the most part, were leaders of neither political party."⁷¹

This preoccupation with the establishment of the U.N. also tended to result in a corresponding orientation in public and congressional attitudes, which, in turn, reinforced the inaction of Congress in other foreign policy areas and the making of other decisions.

The continuing struggle to exclude "politics" from foreign policy, and to develop a bipartisan or nonpartisan approach to foreign policymaking, also had the effect of inhibiting congressional inquiry. This was particularly true in the case of a subject, such as China, which lent itself to partisan exploitation. When it became apparent that conservative Republicans, led by Senator Bridges, were attempting to make a partisan issue out of Hurley's charges, there was strong bipartisan support from members of the committee for Chairman Connally's efforts to shorten the hearings, as well as not issuing a report on the hearings. In so doing, of course, the committee was continuing its war-time collaboration with the Executive, but the effect, as Connally knew full well, was also to protect the new Democratic President, as well as to help congressional Democrats in the upcoming 1946 election.

In addition, of course, few Members of Congress, even on the foreign policy committees, had much background or experience in international relations. Congressional foreign policy committees were still staffed by only a few persons, none of whom had specialized training in the field. Only after passage in 1946 of the Legislative Reorganization Act did the committees begin to get "professional" staff and to develop a more active role.

In light of these and other factors it is not surprising that the 1945 Foreign Relations Committee inquiry on the Far East died aborning. But the effect, as one scholar has suggested, was to deprive the country of a public examination of key questions facing the United States in Asia at a time when such an inquiry could have been beneficial.⁷² As Westerfield has also noted, partisan divisions over China policy in the following years were attributable,

⁷¹H. Bradford Westerfield, *Foreign Policy and Party Politics: Pearl Harbor to Korea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 144.

⁷²Kenneth S. Chern, "Politics of American China Policy, 1945: Roots of the Cold War in Asia," *Political Science Quarterly*, 91 (Winter 1976-77), pp. 631-645.

at least in part, to congressional avoidance of the China issue in 1945-47.⁷³

U.S. forces were withdrawn from China in 1946, and Marshall continued his efforts to bring peace and stability to the country.⁷⁴ By the end of 1946, however, he concluded that his mission would not succeed and he returned home. In 1947, Congress began actively debating U.S. policy toward China.

Before turning to this next phase it would be well to summarize developments to this point. By the time the Second World War ended, a way appeared to have been found by which to achieve a foreign policy consensus between the legislative and the executive branches, thus overcoming the policy differences that could result from the separation of powers. But this, in turn, contained the seeds of its own contradiction. While these efforts to correct the consequences of the failure to establish the League of Nations proved to be successful in the case of the U.N., in the end they had unforeseen consequences of an opposite kind in the postwar period.

Similarly, the decisions on trusteeships and the acquisition of U.S. bases in the Pacific had an adverse effect on U.S. leadership on the colonial issue and helped to set the stage for future events in Asia, even though they may also have helped to establish stronger international and regional security arrangements.

The War Begins in Vietnam, 1946-48

By late 1945, storm signals were flying in Asia. The Communists were exerting pressure on several countries, and in China the United States was being asked to provide assistance, including military training and advice, to the government in power to assist it in fighting Communist insurgents.

Although the United States was not directly involved in Vietnam, developments there during 1946-48 were also of concern to the U.S. Government, particularly to the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs. But as Abbot Low Moffat said subsequently, "With French forces back in Indochina and with all potential leverage gone, there was little that the United States could do to alter the outcome."⁷⁵ Thus, the United States did little more than to observe while the French reoccupied the country. Fighting continued in the south, but on March 6, 1946, an agreement was signed by which the Vietnamese consented to "welcome amicably" the return of the French Army to the northern part of Vietnam, and the French to recognize the existence of the Vietnamese Republic (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, or DRV, which then claimed to represent all of Vietnam), as a "free state" with its own government and army, as a part of the French Union. Further negotiations failed to produce results, however, and the French announced that the southern part of Vietnam—Cochin China, where their economic in-

⁷³Westerfield, pp. 245, 249.

⁷⁴Herbert Feis, in *The China Triangle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953; reprint ed., New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 423, concluded that U.S. demobilization had rendered the U.S. incapable of effective military action in China: "In this ebb tide of our military effort it seemed unreal to consider any course of action in China which might require the active employment of substantial American forces for an indefinite period of time. There were few then who would have spoken up for a prolongation of military service in order to affect the outcome of the struggle in China, or even to prevent the extension of Soviet control over Manchuria."

⁷⁵*Causes, Origins and Lessons of the Vietnam War*, p. 168.

terests were concentrated—was being established as a “free republic,” obviously to protect their most important holdings and to thwart the reunification of the north and the south. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam objected, and additional negotiations were postponed.

In late 1946, the “First Indochina War” began as fighting broke out between French and DRV forces in the northern part of Vietnam. On November 26, the French shelled Haiphong, which was under the control of the DRV, killing 6,000 or more Vietnamese. On December 19, the Vietnamese attacked French forces in Hanoi and the French then occupied the city. Ho Chi Minh and other DRV leaders fled, and the war began. In 1947, as the war continued, the French turned to Bao Dai, but for months he resisted their entreaties while urging greater concessions to Vietnamese nationalism.

Reactions in the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs were that the U.S. was being put in an increasingly difficult situation by the French. On January 7, 1947, Moffat cabled from Bangkok during a trip to the region: “. . . feel impelled as chief SEA [Southeast Asia] urge prompt US action aimed terminate war Vietnam not only save countless lives but protect position US and other democracies SEA. Hands-off policy seems here based European considerations and temporary French political situation and appears as US approval French military reconquest Vietnam although in fact Vietnam record no worse than French.” “Soviets not directly active SEA,” he added, “and need not be as democracies performing most effectively their behalf. Moral leadership by US essential this area, hundred million people increasing nationalist.” He concluded that “Because of recent French action believe permanent political solution can now be based only on independent Vietnam (alternative is gigantic armed colonial camp). . . .”⁷⁶

Moffat and his associates, however, were rowing against the tide. In late 1946, as he said subsequently, “a concern about Communist expansion began to be evident in the Department.” This led to a “fixation on the theory of monolithic, aggressive communism that began to develop at this time and to affect our objective analyses of certain problems.”⁷⁷

On May 13, 1947, Secretary of State Marshall cabled the U.S. Ambassador in France expressing concern about the lack of progress in settling the “Indochina dispute,” and concluding by warning: “Vietnam cause proving rallying-cry for all anti-Western forces and playing into hands Communists all areas. We fear continuation conflict may jeopardize position all Western democratic powers in southern Asia and lead to very eventualities of which we most apprehensive.”⁷⁸

The Commitment is Made to “Containment” and to the Defense of “Free Peoples”

As the situation in Vietnam continued to worsen, so did the situation in Europe. Early in 1947 the U.S. was officially informed that

⁷⁶FRUS, 1947, vol. VI, pp. 54–55.

⁷⁷*Causes, Origins, and Lessons of the Vietnam War*, p. 169.

⁷⁸FRUS, 1947, vol. VI, pp. 95–97.

the British were withdrawing from the area of Greece and Turkey. This led to the making of a commitment by the United States—the Greek-Turkish aid program—through which the U.S., in effect, assumed Britain's role in the area. But the commitment was not just to Greece and Turkey. Rhetorically, at least, it was, in the words of what became known as the "Truman doctrine," to defend "free peoples" everywhere.⁷⁹

In his address to Congress on March 12, 1947 on the new aid program, President Truman depicted the world situation as one involving a choice between democracy and communism, and declared that "totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States." "I believe," he said, "that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." The U.S. had the responsibility to keep alive the "hope of people for a better life." "The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world—and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own Nation." Failure to aid Greece, which was threatened by Communist insurgents, and to preserve the national integrity of Turkey, would have a profound effect on Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and ultimately on the United States.⁸⁰

This concept is of fundamental importance in the search for the tributaries of public policy which, when joined, formed the stream of policy that carried the U.S. toward involvement in Vietnam. Prior to the Truman doctrine there was no "doctrine" of intervention, no assertion of a universal commitment to the defense of freedom. The Truman doctrine—though this was not the intention of at least some of those involved in its conception—provided a generalized philosophy of intervention, however, that was as broad in its potential application as the concept of the United Nations had been in relation to maintaining peace throughout the world.

One indication of the broad applicability of the Truman doctrine, and the endurance of the philosophy of intervention which it represented, was the speech by President Ronald Reagan to a joint session of Congress on April 27, 1983, on the situation in Central America, in which Reagan said, quoting the above passages from Truman's speech (but without identifying these passages as the Truman doctrine): "President Truman's words are as apt today as they were in 1947. . . . The countries of Central America are smaller than the nations that prompted President Truman's message. But the political and strategic stakes are the same."⁸¹

The Truman doctrine was based on the policy of "containment" formulated by George Kennan, a Foreign Service officer and Rus-

⁷⁹It is interesting to note that "helping others to help themselves"—one of the stock phrases of that period—included in the case of Greece, as it did subsequently in Vietnam, helping others to ask for help. Thus, the message from the Greek Government on March 3, 1947, requesting U.S. assistance, was "drafted in the State Department and suggested to the Greek Government." Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks* (New York: Viking Press, 1955), p. 77.

⁸⁰For the text of the speech see U.S., President, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service), Harry S. Truman, 1948, pp. 176-180.

⁸¹From the text of Reagan's speech in the *Washington Post*, Apr. 28, 1983.

sian expert, in early 1946, and made public in Kennan's anonymous article in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," (signed simply by the letter "X"). According to Kennan, "... the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. . . . Soviet pressure can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of shifting geographical and political points. . . ."

Kennan suggested "containment" as a response to Russian expansionism, and not as general policy for all situations involving a perceived Communist threat. Although he supported aid to Greece, he objected strenuously to the "sweeping nature of the commitments" implied by the language in President Truman's speech on Greek-Turkish aid in which he referred to the defense of "free peoples." Kennan urged that this phrase be removed from the speech, and in his memoirs he said he regretted its effect on subsequent policymaking, culminating in the Vietnam war:⁸²

Throughout the ensuing two decades the conduct of our foreign policy would continue to be bedeviled by people in our own government as well as in other governments who could not free themselves from the belief that all another country had to do, in order to qualify for American aid, was to demonstrate the existence of a Communist threat. Since almost no country was without a Communist minority, this assumption carried very far. And as time went on, the firmness of understanding for these distinctions on the part of our own public and governmental establishment appeared to grow weaker rather than stronger. In the 1960s so absolute would be the value attached, even by people within the government, to the mere existence of a Communist threat, that such a threat would be viewed as calling, in the case of Southeast Asia, for an American response on a tremendous scale, without serious regard even to those main criteria that most of us in 1947 would have thought it natural and essential to apply.

Kennan and some of his associates did succeed in getting Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who testified before Congress on the Greek-Turkish aid request, to state that the Truman doctrine was not applicable to every situation involving a Communist threat, but Acheson also acknowledged, in response to questions from Senator Connally, that although each case would have to be handled individually, "the principle is clear . . . we are concerned where a people already enjoying free institutions are being coerced to give them up." And he agreed with Connally that although the U.S. might react differently in different cases, it would react.⁸³

Moreover, as pointed out by Louis J. Halle, an associate of Kennan's on the Policy Planning Staff, Truman's rhetoric was not the source of the problem. The commitment to provide aid to Greece and Turkey, he said, "made sense only as part of a larger commit-

⁸²George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), p. 322.

⁸³U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearings on S. 338 to Provide for Assistance to Greece and Turkey*, 80th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1947), p. 30.

ment, which was therefore implicit in it. There is no such thing as filling only one corner of a power vacuum. It follows that the Truman doctrine was implicit in aid to Greece and Turkey, rather than being merely the independent consequence of a statement in President Truman's message of March 12. Nothing essential would have been altered by leaving the statement out."⁸⁴

Both Halle and Kennan take exception to what Halle calls the "universalistic disposition of American thinking," which they feel was responsible, at least in part, for the tendency to make general policy out of the Greek-Turkish situation, and to apply the Truman doctrine to situations where it is not relevant or efficacious. Halle cites one episode which he says illustrates this kind of thinking, and which, for present purposes, also bears on the origin of support for anti-Communist regional security pacts such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). At some point in 1948, according to Halle, and he is apparently the only source for this, Dean Rusk, Director of the Office of U.N. Affairs, called a meeting at the request of Secretary Marshall to consider preparing a treaty to include any and all non-Communist countries in the world "disposed to resist the expansion of the Soviet Union." Halle says that this was the first meeting in the chain of events that ultimately produced NATO, but that the original conception was "one arrangement that would embrace, alike, the defense of Japan, of South Asia, of West Europe, and of any other threatened areas of the world."⁸⁵

Some writers have argued that the Truman doctrine was couched in broad terms to ensure public and congressional support; that it was not intended to be "universal doctrine"; and that between 1947 and 1950 the Truman administration continued to make choices, to define the national interest selectively, and to recognize the limits of American interest and power. They conclude, therefore, that it was not a "turning point"; rather, that the fall of China and its effects on American politics, followed by the Korean war, forced the U.S. to take a more general anti-Communist stand, thus universalizing the Truman doctrine.⁸⁶ This analysis, while useful in explaining the disjunction between the development of public support for policy and the carrying out of that policy, is quite wide of the mark in other respects. Although the Truman administration limited U.S. involvement in China, it never retreated from the concept of defending free peoples everywhere. Moreover, the selective application of a general principle does not necessarily vitiate that principle; thus, in 1950, after the Communists became more aggressive, but prior to the Korean war, the Truman administration developed a comprehensive plan—NSC 68—for implementing the containment policy and the Truman doctrine. The application of the Truman doctrine in 1947–50 may not have been a "turning point,"

⁸⁴Louis J. Halle, *The Cold War as History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 123.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 184–185.

⁸⁶See, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, "Was the Truman Doctrine a Real Turning Point?" *Foreign Affairs*, 52 (January 1974), pp. 386–402, and "Containment: A Reassessment," *Foreign Affairs*, 55 (July 1977), pp. 873–887, as well as Gaddis' excellent book, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). For a contrary view see Eduard M. Mark, "The Question of Containment," *Foreign Affairs*, 56 (January 1978), pp. 430–441.

but its formulation and enunciation surely were, as its subsequent application suggests.

This interpretation is supported by the most authoritative account of the development of the Truman doctrine, *The Fifteen Weeks*, by Joseph M. Jones, who was then a public affairs officer in the State Department. As Jones amply demonstrates, those who were involved in the momentous events of that 15-week period were convinced that they were participating in a historic moment; one which would, indeed, be considered a "turning point." Moreover, there was general if not unanimous agreement that, as Jones said, "Greece and Turkey were only the crux of a world problem, and that, although they were in the most urgent need, they were only two of many countries that might require United States support in one form or another."⁸⁷

Dean Rusk, who was made Director of the Office of U.N. Affairs on March 5, 1947, the day after the first draft of Truman's message to Congress had been prepared, and who objected to the lack of reference in the speech to U.S. confidence in the United Nations and the reasons for unilateral action outside the U.N., agrees with those who argue that the language which became known as the Truman doctrine was included in the speech for political reasons: ". . . my own recollection is very clear that what has been called the Truman Doctrine was never intended to be of universal applicability and that the language Mr. Truman used was a part of the rhetoric in getting aid for Greece and Turkey."⁸⁸ Yet, in 1966, in one of his most notable appearances before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the Vietnam war, Rusk began his testimony by quoting the Truman doctrine, saying, "That is the policy we are applying in Vietnam in connection with specific commitments which we have taken in regard to that country."⁸⁹

Although the Greek-Turkish aid bill was presented in response to an alleged "crisis," the executive branch had, indeed, been planning for some months to take such steps, and, as in the case of the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, used a dramatic event as the occasion for action. As early as September of 1946, the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy had agreed that the U.S. should assist other friendly nations "in every way" with economic and military aid.⁹⁰ In February 1947, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Chief of Staff of the Army, sent a memorandum to the Secretary of War suggesting a study of all other countries in addition to Greece and Turkey that were in need of assistance, "with a view to asking for an appropriation to cover the whole."⁹¹ A week before Truman proposed the Greek-Turkish aid program to Congress, Under Secretary of State Acheson ordered similar studies, but decided that future plans should not be made public. "If F.D.R. were alive," he said, "I think I know what he'd do. He would make a statement of

⁸⁷Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, p. 158.

⁸⁸Letter to CRS, Apr. 1, 1983. For Rusk's role in the drafting of the speech in 1947 see Warren I. Cohen, *Dean Rusk*, in Robert H. Ferrell (ed.), *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, vol. XIX (Totowa, N.J.: Cooper Square, 1980), p. 10.

⁸⁹U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Supplemental Foreign Assistance Fiscal year 1966—Vietnam*, 89th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1966), p. 2.

⁹⁰See Walter Millis (ed.), *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), p. 210.

⁹¹Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, p. 137.

global policy but confine his request for money right now to Greece and Turkey."⁹²

In its action on the Greek-Turkish aid request, Congress generally endorsed both the request and the broad commitments contained in the Truman doctrine, although both foreign policy committees, especially the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, cautioned against the general application of the Truman doctrine.

In his opening statement in the Senate's debate on the Greek-Turkish aid bill, Senator Vandenberg, then chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, followed Truman's lead and took a similar position on the responsibility of the United States to assist "free peoples," saying, "... we Americans have an inescapable stake in all human rights and fundamental freedoms." The support of "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation," he said, was not something new, but "a principle long ingrained in the American character." He denied that it represented "a new doctrine," or that the U.S. "... had suddenly resolved to underwrite the earth," but he added that although it might not be new doctrine, "... we must frankly and honestly assess the fact that it has new and broad implications. . . . The truth is . . . that Greece and Turkey are not isolated phenomena. . . . We must face the fact that other situations may arise which clearly involve our own national welfare in their lengthened shadows."

It was "necessary," Vandenberg said, for the U.S. to aid Greece and Turkey. Otherwise there could be a "chain reaction which would threaten peace and security around the globe," and "we would give the green light to aggression everywhere."⁹³

In its report on the Greek-Turkish aid bill, the Foreign Relations Committee, which approved the bill 13-0, took a somewhat more careful stance.⁹⁴ It quoted but did not endorse the President's comments about the responsibility of the United States to assist "free peoples," adding that "... it is not to be assumed that this Government will be called upon, or will attempt, to furnish to other countries assistance identical with or closely similar to that proposed for Turkey and Greece in the present bill. If similar situations should arise in the future they will have to be examined in the light of conditions existing at the time." In the event of future situations in which the U.S. might be faced with such a decision, the report stated, "A number of factors must enter into any particular decision in this regard, among them the question of whether a given country is in really serious straits, whether it genuinely deserves American support, and whether as a practical matter the United States would be able to provide it effective assistance and support."⁹⁵ These, it might be noted, are interesting and significant criteria when viewed against subsequent U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

⁹²Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 159. See also pp. 199-200.

⁹³CR, vol. 93, p. 3195.

⁹⁴For the vote, see the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations *Historical Series*, "Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1973), p. 200 (hereafter this series will be cited as *SFRC His. Ser.*, and the historical series of the House Foreign Affairs Committee as *HFAC His. Ser.*).

⁹⁵S. Rept. 80-90, reprinted in "Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine," pp. 204-224

By contrast, the House Foreign Affairs Committee in its endorsement of the bill reiterated the President's position, declaring that "... the foundations of international peace and the security of the United States are jeopardized whenever totalitarian regimes are imposed on free peoples, whether by direct or indirect aggression." There was, however, the caveat that "Any similar situations that may arise in the future must be considered in the light of conditions existing at the time, and would, necessarily, require consideration and study by the Congress."⁹⁶

The Greek-Turkish aid bill, which was approved by Congress in less than 60 days, was passed by the Senate 67-23 and by the House 287-107. (Voting for it in the House were future presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.) The opposition consisted largely of conservative Democrats and Republicans with a sprinkling of liberal Democrats.

The opposition of liberals to the bill was perhaps best expressed by Senator Edwin C. Johnson (D/Colo.), who said that the U.S. should not intervene in the internal affairs of other countries, especially in a situation involving a civil war in which the existing government did not have public support. He drew up but did not offer an amendment to the bill stating in part that "Nothing in this act shall be construed to imply that the government of the United States has adopted as its policy in international affairs . . . intervention in civil strife, civil war, or political conflict in foreign countries. . . ." ⁹⁷ "Mr. Truman's policy," he said, "if adopted, will lead to American intervention in every country in the world which is in the process of social change either because of political unrest or of actual revolution . . . if the Truman doctrine is adopted by the Congress without corrective and clarifying amendments, we will have radically altered American traditional foreign policy. We will have adopted a policy of aggressive unilateral imperial action in behalf of reactionary governments throughout the world."⁹⁸

Johnson also stressed that the commitment to provide assistance to countries such as Greece and Turkey could lead to additional commitments to the governments being supported, and to increasing U.S. involvement in the conflict, which in turn could prevent Congress from exercising any control over the situation. In a statement that presaged later events in the Vietnam war he said:⁹⁹

Suppose we get our flag over there, and establish our troops over there, and the war clouds begin to roll closer and the threat becomes greater. What can we do? We shall have to go on. Congress will be helpless. Congress cannot do anything about it.

During the last war we voted appropriation after appropriation. We never batted an eye. We voted whatever was asked for. We never turned down any requests. We never restricted those in authority to the extent of a single dollar on any occasion. We never questioned the amount of money asked for. We could not. American youth was in uniform. American youth

⁹⁶H. Rept. 80-314, reprinted in *HFAC His. Ser.*, vol. VI, pp. 421-438.

⁹⁷CR, vol. 93, p. 3752.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 3498.

was facing gunfire. It was no time for us to be quibbling over appropriations. We shall be facing exactly the same situation in this case.¹⁰⁰

Conservative opposition to the bill was probably best represented by Senator Harry F. Byrd (D/Va.), who said that the U.S. was "not only taking over the burdens of the British Empire," but was "extending its commitments." "Approval by Congress of this bill," he said, "will be approval of this new world-wide policy as American doctrine. . . ." and was "certain to open a new, costly, long-range policy with war implications, and later embrace areas of the world far beyond the borders of Greece and Turkey." "I do not say that this expansion will come overnight," he added, "but I do say with all confidence that our foreign commitments and expenditures will grow and grow under this policy, because it is certain that once we begin giving aid to a country we will not dare to withdraw, for then we will admit failure and encourage our enemies."¹⁰¹

Byrd, among many others, including Senator Walter F. George (D/Ga.), the powerful second-ranking Democrat on Foreign Relations, and Vandenberg himself, objected to the "crisis" atmosphere in which the bill was being considered. ". . . the effort to dramatize this as an imminent crisis has been over-emphasized and exaggerated," Byrd said, and he warned that "In the end, this haste and lack of complete candor may defeat its own purpose, for here in America, under our democratic processes of government, a foreign policy is only as strong as an enlightened and supporting public opinion. A policy approved without due consideration by Congress under the stress of emotion and high-powered propaganda may become very distasteful when the financial impact of these new foreign burdens is reflected in increased taxation on an already overburdened people."¹⁰²

In one particularly revealing executive session of the Foreign Relations Committee the members discussed the dilemma of maintaining the legislative-executive consensus needed in foreign affairs while upholding the role of Congress in a time of "crisis." The discussion was touched off by Senator George, who thought that the Greek-Turkish "crisis" had been manufactured, and that the effective date of the legislation should be postponed for 60 days after enactment to give the United Nations time to study the situation. "I do not see any emergency in the Greco-Turkish situation," he said, "except such as Great Britain herself is voluntarily bringing about." Chairman Vandenberg replied, "I totally agree with that statement." Yet, Vandenberg said, "Here we sit, not as free agents, because we have no power to initiate foreign policy. It is like, or almost like a Presidential request for a declaration of war. When that reaches us there is precious little we can do except say 'Yes.'"

¹⁰⁰For a complete statement of Johnson's position see his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee, *SFRS His. Ser.*, "Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine," pp. 101-105, and *CR*, vol. 93, pp. 3760-3762.

¹⁰¹For Byrd's speech, see *CR*, vol. 93, pp. 3773-3775.

¹⁰²For descriptions of the way in which the Greek-Turkish "crisis" was deliberately dramatized by the Truman administration see Truman and Acheson's memoirs, as well as Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, pp. 139, 143, and Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 282-283. Also useful is Thomas G. Paterson, "Presidential Foreign Policy, Public Opinion, and Congress: The Truman Years," *Diplomatic History*, 3 (Winter 1979), pp. 1-18.

In that situation, he added, division between Congress and the President would be very dangerous because of the possibility that the Communists might take it as a sign of weakness and disunity. George agreed, as did the ranking Democrat, Senator Connally, and Senators Alben W. Barkley (D/Ky.) and Wallace H. White (R/Maine). White said, "... we are facing a situation, a situation created in part by our own Government. . . . I do not see how we, without any original sin in connection with the matter, can leave the President in this situation."¹⁰³

Congress Also Approves the Use of Military Advisers

In approving the Greek-Turkish aid program, Congress not only sanctioned the general principle of assisting "free peoples" threatened by communism; it also agreed to the establishment of defense pacts with such countries, and to the dispatch of U.S. military missions and American military personnel as military advisers. This, too, was something that had been requested before. In 1926, an act¹⁰⁴ was passed permitting U.S. military missions to be sent to Latin America, and in 1946 and again in 1947 the Executive, at the urging of the Pentagon, requested general authority to establish such missions in any country. The House passed the legislation both times, but it was not accepted by the Senate. Separate legislation was passed by both Houses in 1946 authorizing a military mission in the Philippines, but the Senate declined to approve continuation of a mission in China that had been established on February 25, 1946, by the President under war powers authority which was claimed to be still in effect. A bill reported by the Naval Affairs Committee was passed, however, which authorized the continuation of the naval advisory unit in China,¹⁰⁵ and the army and air force units were continued under Presidential order without statutory authorization.¹⁰⁶

In the 1946 statute authorizing the naval advisory unit in China, Congress added this proviso: "United States naval or Marine Corps personnel shall not accompany Chinese troops, aircraft, or ships on other than training maneuvers or cruises."¹⁰⁷

In its request for authority to send U.S. military advisers to Greece and Turkey, the executive branch, sensing the mood of Congress, included in its draft of the bill a proviso that these military personnel, "limited in number," would serve "in an advisory capacity only." The reaction of many Members of Congress was very skeptical. Some questioned how "limited" the number would be, and seemed to have their fears confirmed when the administration backed away from an earlier acceptance of a numerical limit and opposed any limitation on numbers. Others doubted whether the advisers would refrain from becoming involved in combat, and were concerned that once the U.S. became involved in the war, and

¹⁰³For the committee's discussion see *SFRC His. Ser.*, "Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine," pp. 128 ff.

¹⁰⁴Public Law 69-247.

¹⁰⁵Public Law 79-512.

¹⁰⁶All U.S. military advisers were withdrawn from China in early 1949.

¹⁰⁷Public Law 79-512, the text of which is included in *HFAC His. Ser.*, vol. VII, pt. 1, p. 151. See also the explanation on pp. 106-108, and see pp. 109-149 for the transcript of the 1946 HFAC hearing and the report on the request for military missions for China.

its prestige was on the line, withdrawal might prove difficult if not impossible.

Opposition to the proposal for military advisers was particularly strong in the House. In the Foreign Affairs Committee's public hearing on the bill, Representative Karl E. Mundt (R/S.D.) asked Secretary of War Patterson whether he would object to having a numerical limit on military advisers. He said he would not object. In a subsequent executive session of the committee, Mundt then proposed limiting the number to 100 in either Greece or Turkey. (Patterson had said that there would be a maximum of 40 in either country.) Supported by Acheson, Patterson objected, saying that he did not think a numerical limit was wise. Representative Jacob K. Javits (R/N.Y.) suggested that instead of a numerical limit the words "in an advisory capacity only" be replaced by the words "in the instruction and training of military personnel, and in the procurement of military equipment and supplies only." "We are worried," he said, "about the undertaking of tactical aid, that is, aid to tactical operations. We are worried that one day an American captain will be found in the mountains advising a Greek officer how to fire on a guerrilla."

Mundt said he could understand why the executive branch wanted maximum administrative flexibility, but that the bill involved a "new type of foreign policy . . . which may have to be extended down through a great many countries," and that Congress had the constitutional responsibility to control the war power. ". . . if we delegate the congressional power of authority over the sword," he said, "we have done something which is precedent-shattering in this country, and then we have vacated, in the final analysis, the authority to declare war."¹⁰⁸

The Foreign Affairs Committee declined, however, to change the proviso on military advisers contained in the administration's bill, and stated in its report:¹⁰⁹

Combat forces are not to be sent to Greece and Turkey. The military assistance provided in the bill is to consist only of arms and other supplies for the armed forces of Greece and Turkey. These supplies are to be provided on the basis of investigations and recommendations by small military missions sent out by the United States in an advisory capacity only.

During House debate on the bill, Mundt offered his amendment to limit military advisers to 100 each in Greece and Turkey. Agreeing with Mundt on the need for congressional control, Representative Walter H. Judd (R/Minn.) said, "I cannot for a moment support the bill if perchance by any stretch of interpretation of language it could permit an expeditionary force, or even a battalion of our armed forces, to go into these countries either in addition to British troops or in substitution for British troops."

After criticism from some Members that the number in Mundt's amendment was too low, Judd offered an amendment raising it to 200. This, too, was said by some to be arbitrary and unnecessary, so Judd and Mundt offered a substitute. They dropped the numerical limitation, and instead proposed adding after the words "in an ad-

¹⁰⁸For the discussion in the committee see *HFAC His. Ser.*, vol. VI, pp. 403-410.

¹⁰⁹H Rept. 80-314, contained in *ibid.*, pp. 421-438.

visory capacity only" the words "and not to include armed organized military units to serve as occupational or combat troops." There was considerable support for this amendment, especially among Republicans. Representative Kenneth B. Keating (R/N.Y.) said, for example, "We must permit no loophole whereby the military minded might, under any circumstances, take a step to involve this Nation so deeply that it could not, with honor, extricate itself short of war."

Among those who supported the Judd-Mundt amendment was Toby Morris (D/Okla.), who said, "... if we send them over there, with unlimited power, and do not reserve the constitutional right to declare war, we do not know what kind of an incident is going to happen, and they could send an army over there and we would be helpless, and we may be catapulted into a war. . . ." Minority Whip John W. McCormack (D/Mass.) replied that the language in the bill was already restrictive enough, and that the remarks of Representative Morris ignored the practical realities of the Communist challenge. "I say it is in our national interest," McCormack declared, "not to let this wave envelop country after country until it envelops all of Europe. If it ever reaches that point, it will overrun all of Asia and thus actually reach our shores."

The Judd-Mundt amendment was defeated on a teller vote, 70-122, but judging by the large number of Members voting for the amendment there was considerable support for the proposal to restrict the role of military advisers.¹¹⁰

In the Senate, the Foreign Relations Committee approved the executive branch language for military advisers, even though some of the members were obviously concerned about the implications of the proposal. Chairman Vandenberg said that this particular provision "is going to raise the most serious questions of all. . . . The 'detailing of officers and enlisted men of the Armed Forces of the United States' seems pretty close to a blank check that comes pretty close to a potential act of war; does it not?" Acheson disagreed.¹¹¹

In testimony in an executive session of the committee, Senator Claude Pepper (D/Fla.) questioned the provisions for military advisers, and pointed out that a Gallup poll published on March 28, 1947, had indicated strong public preference for aid to Greece and Turkey, but also strong opposition to sending military advisers.¹¹² Senator Edwin Johnson (D/Colo.) also testified against the proposal for military advisers, and recommended stripping the bill of all provisions for military assistance. This suggestion was defeated by a voice vote in the committee, and by a vote of 22-68 in action by the Senate on the bill.¹¹³

During Senate debate on the bill there was also considerable criticism of the military advisers provision, but also strong support from senior Members of the Senate, including the Democratic mi-

¹¹⁰For the debate and vote see *CR*, vol. 93, pp. 4816-4822, 4910-4921. In the House of Representatives there are three types of votes in addition to the roll call. These are the voice vote, the division (Members standing and being counted by the Chair), and the teller vote (Members being counted by two other members—tellers—representing each party, as they go up the center aisle).

¹¹¹*SFRC Hrs. Ser.*, "Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine," p. 10.

¹¹²*Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, p. 191, and *CR*, vol. 93, p. 3792.

nority leader, Scott W. Lucas (D/Ill.).¹¹⁴ The Senate joined the House in approving the provision without change, and it became law as it had been drafted by the executive branch.

Before leaving the Greek-Turkish aid bill, one further observation is in order as part of the background for congressional action on Vietnam. This concerns the tendency, as represented by amendments offered in the Senate and the House, to apply American standards to countries being considered for aid, and to propose conditioning such aid on reforms in the direction of greater democracy and more efficient government. These were offered, as they tended also to be in the case of Vietnam, by Members of Congress known for their internationalist viewpoint and for their attachment to the ideals of a democratic social order, predominately liberal Democrats. It should also be noted, however, that there was strong opposition, particularly in the House, to such political conditions, at least in the case of Greece and Turkey, as demonstrated by the votes by which the various amendments were defeated.

One such reform amendment was offered in the House by Representative Mike Mansfield (D/Mont.), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, expressing support for "the political cooperation of all loyal Greek parties for a dynamic program in Greece of amnesty coupled with the disarming of illegal bands, just and vigorous tax forms, modernization of the civil service, realistic financial controls, and even-handed disposition of justice." This was defeated on division, 18-128.¹¹⁵

Another reform amendment was offered by Representative Jacob Javits (R/N.Y.), a liberal internationalist and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, to provide that as a condition for aid the government of the recipient country should have majority support of its public. In his minority report on the bill when it was reported from committee, Javits said, among other things, "If we are seeking to help democracy as contrasted with communism then we must strive for democratic and representative governments in the countries which we assist, and if it is impractical to obtain immediately the reform of existing regimes, at least we must be trying to do so."¹¹⁶ Javits' amendment was defeated by the House on division, 6-104.¹¹⁷

Although the Far East was mentioned in congressional debate on the Greek-Turkish aid bill—Judd, for example, said that although aid for Greece and Turkey was essential for the defense of Europe, the struggle for China was also "crucial," because "As China goes so will go Asia"¹¹⁸—the logical extension of the Truman doctrine to the situation in Asia was argued much more strenuously in conjunction with the proposed Marshall plan.

¹¹⁴See *CR*, vol. 93, pp. 3281, 3337, 3591, 3689, 3761.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 4968-4969. For another good example see the amendment offered in the Senate by Edwin Johnson, *SFRC His. Ser.*, "Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine", pp. 103, 190, and in the House by Representative George H. Bender (R/Ohio), in *CR*, vol. 93, p. 4975.

¹¹⁶*HFAC His. Ser.*, vol. VI, pt. 2, p. 436.

¹¹⁷*CR*, vol. 93, p. 4944.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 4705.

The Debate Over Intervening in China

It was the "loss" of China to the Communists that helped to precipitate the U.S. commitment to defend Indochina. It was also the presence of China, and the experience of Chinese intervention in the Korean war, that had a strong effect on the making of subsequent decisions about the Vietnam war.

China is also interesting as a case in which both the Executive and Congress had to decide what the role of the U.S. should be toward the revolutionary situation prevailing in that country, and the extent to which the U.S. should intervene and involve itself in efforts to suppress the Communist insurgency. In that sense, besides its relevance in other respects, it was a case that bears on subsequent U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and on the making of the commitment or commitments to defend Indochina.

It is useful to look back briefly at the period immediately before and during World War II when the U.S. was heavily involved in China, where there are direct parallels to the later role of the U.S. in Vietnam.

The parallel to Vietnam began in 1940-41, when the U.S. developed an elaborate covert plan to provide China with American planes and pilots (volunteers, who had been permitted to resign from the military for this purpose) through a dummy private corporation for the purpose of conducting air raids over Japan in order to deter the Japanese from further aggression.¹¹⁹ There were vigorous objections to this plan from Secretary of War Stimson and Chief of Staff Gen. George Marshall, as a result of which it was decided that the U.S. would provide fighter planes and pilots rather than bombers. This modified plan, which was being implemented at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, was subsequently carried out by the "Flying Tigers." After World War II, some of those involved in the original scheme, most notably Gen. Clair Chennault, worked with the U.S. Government in establishing the Civil Air Transport (CAT), the parent company for Air America, which operated in Southeast Asia throughout the Vietnam war as an arm of the CIA. Thus, as one scholar suggests, the clandestine operation developed in 1940-41 became a precedent for subsequent operations and "... foreshadowed the style, if not substance, of future policies in Asia and is an important link with policies the United States pursued during the later Indochina War."¹²⁰

U.S. involvement in China during 1943-44 also led to efforts by Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell, Commander of the CBI (China-Burma-India) Theater to "modernize" China along Western, and especially American lines. "Could 'China be the leader in East Asia after the war and through its influence and the threat of its army control the western Pacific,' Stilwell asked himself. 'The answer is an overwhelming YES!' It was imperative, a 'matter of duty,' for America to create the proper kind of postwar China, even if America (or Stilwell himself) had to guide the hand of destiny 'through the fierce use of power politics and a ruthless progressive program.'"¹²¹

¹¹⁹Michael Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), ch. 4.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, p. 130.

Stilwell's zeal for reforming China took a bizarre turn in 1944 when, after he returned to China from a trip to Washington and a meeting with President Roosevelt, plans reportedly were made by some U.S. Government personnel to assassinate Chiang Kai-shek and his wife. Here, too, there may be a possible parallel in the 1963 assassination of Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem, in which the United States, having decided that Vietnam needed new leadership, gave its approval and assistance to a coup d'etat.

This is the account of the 1944 episode by Stilwell's aide, Col. Frank Dorn:¹²²

When Stilwell returned to China he visited Dorn at Y-Force headquarters in Kunming and delivered a top-secret verbal order which he said came from Roosevelt. The order was to prepare a plan to assassinate Chiang Kai-shek. The President, according to Stilwell, was "fed up with Chiang and his tantrums," and said so. In fact, he told me in that olympian manner of his "if you can't get along with Chiang, and can't replace him, get rid of him once and for all. You know what I mean, put in someone you can manage."

Dorn dutifully devised a plan to sabotage Chiang's aircraft while he flew over the Hump to make an inspection tour of Chinese forces in India. When the passengers were forced to bail out, both the generalissimo and Madame Chiang would be given faulty parachutes. According to Dorn, the President never gave final authorization for Stilwell to carry out this assassination. But the very planning for such a contingency, assuming both Stilwell and Dorn had told the truth, revealed that the White House no longer saw China and Chiang as co-terminous.

This is the conclusion of one historian, based on a study of the "American crusade" in China in the period 1938-45, as to the parallel between U.S. policy in China and the subsequent role of the United States in Vietnam:¹²³

In a haunting way Vietnam became the macabre fulfillment of Joseph Stilwell's reform strategy. Advisors attached to the White House, State Department, Pentagon, and CIA did all that was humanly possible to create a pliable government and army in South Vietnam which would form the core of a bona fide nationalist regime. The level of overt and covert manipulation of the client in Saigon surpassed even Stilwell's imagination. When the approach failed, massive and direct applications of American power were rushed into the battle. And in the end, it all went the same way as China for almost the same variety of reasons.

In 1947, there was considerable debate in Congress about the question of intervening in the conflict between the Nationalist government, still led by Chiang Kai-shek, and Communist forces that had steadily increased in size and strength. In May 1947, concurrently with passage of the Greek-Turkish aid program, Congress approved an aid bill¹²⁴ for humanitarian relief to several countries

¹²²Quoted from Schaller, p. 153, based on Dorn's book, *Walkout with Stilwell in Burma* (New York: Crowell, 1971), and comments by Dorn to Schaller.

¹²³Schaller, p. 304.

¹²⁴Public Law 80-84.

devastated by the war—Austria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and, at the insistence of Members of Congress, China. In November 1947 this was augmented and extended by an interim or emergency aid act¹²⁵ for all of Europe, designed to provide assistance until Congress could act on the Marshall plan legislation in 1948. Again, China was added as a recipient by Congress when the Senate yielded in conference to a House amendment making this addition.¹²⁶

These efforts by Congress, led by Representatives Judd and John M. Vorys (R/Ohio), to push the administration toward providing assistance to China, were resisted by the executive branch. Secretary of State Marshall, after his unsuccessful mission in China in 1946–47, was convinced that the only solution to the China problem was, as he stated in a meeting with the Secretaries of War (Patterson) and Navy (Forrestal) on February 12, 1947, “. . . to oust the reactionary clique within the Central Government and replace them by liberals from both the Kuomintang [Nationalist] and Communist parties.”¹²⁷ On February 27, Marshall was asked by President Truman whether the time had come to provide some ammunition to China (military supplies had been banned at Marshall's insistence since the summer of 1946), and Marshall replied that if this were done, “. . . we certainly would be charged with assisting in the civil war.” Such assistance could also “stabilize the Kuomintang Party in its present personnel,” i.e., prevent the formation of the coalition he thought was necessary and had been directed to seek.¹²⁸ In a letter to Secretary of War Patterson, who took the position that the Chinese Government was as liberal as it was going to be in the near future, and that withholding aid would not serve our interests,¹²⁹ Marshall reiterated his position, and said that before giving military aid it would be better “. . . to let the opposing Chinese military forces reach some degree of equilibrium or stalemate without outside interference.”¹³⁰

U.S. officials in Washington, as well as American civilian and military representatives in China, kept pressing, however, for assistance to China, as numerous documents in the State Department's historical series attest. For example, in a major policy memorandum prepared in June 1947 the JCS concluded that “. . . the only Asiatic government at present capable of even a show of resistance to Communist expansion in Asia is the Chinese National Government,” and that it would collapse unless it received military assistance. If the Nationalists were to fall, “the United States must be prepared to accept eventual Soviet hegemony over Asia.” Referring to the Truman doctrine by name, the memorandum stated, “From the military point of view it is believed important that if this policy is to be effective it must be applied with consistency in

¹²⁵Public Law 80–389.

¹²⁶For a good discussion of the role of Congress in the inclusion of China in these transitional aid measures see Charles Wolf, Jr., *Foreign Aid: Theory and Practice in Southern Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 14–26. For Congress' action on China generally, especially the role of party politics, see Westerfield, *Foreign Policy and Party Politics*, chs. 12 and 16. For an analysis of the question of applying containment to China see Thomas G. Patterson, “If Europe, Why Not China? The Containment Doctrine, 1947–49,” *Prologue*, 13 (Spring 1981), pp. 19–38.

¹²⁷*FRUS*, 1947, vol. VII, p. 796.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 804.

¹²⁹See Robert P. Patterson's letter to George C. Marshall in *ibid.*, pp. 799–802.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 806.