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## Presidential Philosophies and American Foreign Policy: From the Long Telegram to the New Look

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PRESIDENTIAL PHILOSOPHIES AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY:  
FROM THE LONG TELEGRAM TO THE NEW LOOK

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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MASTER OF ARTS

HISTORY

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
May, 1995

Approved by:

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Lorraine M. Lees.. (Director)

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## ABSTRACT

### PRESIDENTIAL PHILOSOPHIES AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY: FROM THE LONG TELEGRAM TO THE NEW LOOK

John R. Moore  
Old Dominion University, 1995  
Director: Dr. Lorraine M. Lees

American foreign policy often undergoes alteration as presidential administrations change. After World War II President Harry S. Truman and President Dwight D. Eisenhower both implemented a foreign policy aimed at containing the Soviet Union, but the philosophical underpinnings of their foreign policies differed greatly. While the demands of partisan and international politics account for some of this difference, the impact on foreign policy of the two men's personalities deserves attention and investigation. In other words, how did the individual backgrounds, personal beliefs and world views of Truman and Eisenhower dictate their approach to foreign policy? The sources used in this study include the personal papers, biographies, and public statements of both men, housed in the National Archives and the Truman and Eisenhower Presidential Libraries.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The determination of the forces which shape a country's foreign policy requires the integration of the president's personal philosophy, background, and experience with the needs of the nation and its ongoing policies and obligations. Both President Harry S. Truman and President Dwight D. Eisenhower faced daunting challenges in pursuing the national security interests of the United States. Both men brought the sum of their individual philosophies, experiences, and beliefs to bear upon the unparalleled foreign policy problems of their presidencies.

This thesis examines the way in which each president developed and implemented foreign policy in light of his own personal makeup. Both Truman and Eisenhower identified the foreign policy interests of the United States upon entering office and placed a priority on serving those interests. The priorities they set reflected the background and personal philosophy of each president, with each man's predisposition toward governmental organization, his preferences for strategic action, his willingness to assume risks, and his perception of the threat against the United States shaping his international policies.

The thesis question can be broken down into several sub-questions. What foreign policy did President Truman receive from President Franklin D. Roosevelt? What required Truman to develop a policy of his own? What role did Truman's personal makeup play in determining this policy? In Eisenhower's case similar sub-questions are asked and answered to arrive at a conclusion concerning the role that his personal makeup played in his foreign policy.

During World War II President Roosevelt conducted foreign policy in his own informal and highly personal manner. Roosevelt's chief objectives were to keep the Soviets engaged in the war, to ameliorate the harsher aspects of Soviet rule through increased contacts with the West, and to integrate the Soviet Union into a post-war international organization. Dr. "Win-the-War" used means ranging from compromise to delay to satisfy these objectives and to defeat the Axis Powers. By 1945 FDR's advisors pressed him to be less accommodating to the Soviets, but Roosevelt died before making any permanent changes in policy. Roosevelt's death also prevented any foreign policy discussions with his new Vice-President, Harry S. Truman. Indeed the two men had spoken only six times since the November 1944 election.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>NT to NL Memorandum of 4 November 1963, Harry S. Truman Background, HST Appointments with FDR, 1935-1945, Prepresidential File (PPF), Harry S. Truman Library (HSTL),

On 12 April 1945, Chief Justice Harlan F. Stone swore in Harry S. Truman as President of the United States. Truman decided to retain Roosevelt's cabinet and to continue what he believed was Roosevelt's quid pro quo policy towards the Soviets. Truman came away from the 1945 Potsdam Conference, which was called in part to clear up a number of Soviet-American disagreements emanating from previous meetings, convinced that he could deal personally with Marshall Joseph Stalin. However, differences in the interpretation of wartime agreements continued while Soviet expansionist activities in Europe and the Middle East in 1946 further exacerbated relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. By March, 1947 Truman had developed and implemented a national policy of containment, designed to resist the further spread of Soviet influence. What were the personal factors that caused this former haberdasher and Senator from Missouri with little experience in foreign policy to engage the Soviets in a struggle that came to be known as the Cold War?

Eisenhower, who became president in a more traditional manner, inherited the policy of containment from his predecessor but had to develop his own way of continuing its implementation. Truman saw the need to devise a foreign policy to contain the aggressive actions of the Soviets as demonstrated in Turkey, Iran, and Greece; Eisenhower was

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Independence, Missouri.



equally concerned about Soviet intentions and recognized that he had to continue the implementation of Truman's policy. However, he also had to safeguard the nation's security in a way consistent with the partisan rhetoric of the recent presidential campaign, his own concerns about the United States' economy, and his promise to end the Korean War. What were the personal factors and beliefs that influenced this former five-star general in the continued development and implementation of the policy of containment during his administration?

The answer to the question of the personal factors, beliefs, and motivations Presidents Truman and Eisenhower brought to bear on the problem of developing foreign policy can be found by consulting their personal writings, speeches and documents before and during their terms in office. This study's examination of the public and private papers of President Truman will illuminate the philosophy that led him to implement his foreign policy. Such sources, for example, demonstrate that Truman's simplistic and limited worldview led him to believe that Stalin would honor his wartime agreements. Truman became angry when Stalin did not behave as other politicians in his experience had.

In a similar manner the writings and the public papers of President Eisenhower provide insights into the development and implementation of his administration's foreign policy, the New Look. On a personal level his

correspondence with a life-long friend, Everett (Swede) Hazlett, revealed Eisenhower's thoughts, motivations, and general mindset towards the events that took place from 1941 to 1958. Both public and private documents shed light on Eisenhower's fiscal conservatism and its connection with the development of the policy of massive retaliation and the restraints placed on military budgets during his administration.

How each president approached the foreign policy problems of his administration is a topic which has received little attention by historians, particularly those of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. In a recent study of the Truman Presidency Richard Kirkendall wrote that a better understanding of Truman's pre-presidential development was needed, while Alonzo Hamby lamented that few historians had investigated the first sixty-one years of Truman's life.<sup>2</sup> Richard Immerman in his article "Confessions of an Eisenhower Revisionist: An Agonizing Reappraisal" noted that

a critical unanswered question of the Eisenhower literature is whether policy responded to perceived threats and changes in the international environment, or whether it was largely generated internally by the actors' previously established agendas and

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<sup>2</sup>Alonzo L. Hamby, "The Mind and Character of Harry S. Truman," in The Truman Presidency, ed. Michael J. Lacey, (New York: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Cambridge University Press, 1991), 19.

preconceptions.<sup>3</sup>

Immerman describes his critical question in terms of predispositions, core values, and belief systems. These considerations influenced how each president behaved in a given situation. Truman entered the presidency as the reluctant successor to President Roosevelt. Truman's background as a county administrative judge in rural Missouri and as a senator from the same state gave him a different outlook and parochial view of the world as contrasted with that of the widely travelled Eisenhower.

Eisenhower entered the White House with a highly developed view of the world. His assignments as supreme commander in Europe, Army Chief of Staff, president of Columbia University and supreme allied commander of NATO's forces influenced his outlook and contributed to his perception of the world and its threats.

Both presidents encountered the same problem: how to implement a foreign policy that was consistent with their previous positions and appropriate for the current circumstances. Each president solved the problem through the application of his personal beliefs and philosophy. How each proceeded is the subject of this study.

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<sup>3</sup>Richard Immerman, "Confessions of an Eisenhower Revisionist: An Agonizing Reappraisal," Diplomatic History 14 (Summer 1990): 323.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE SURVEY

American foreign policy, diplomatic history and presidential administrations have been the subject of extensive research and writing by historians. This is particularly true of the years after World War II, the period known as the Cold War. In recent years declassified information from government archives has shed more and more light on the development and execution of foreign policy.

Scholarly writing on the Cold War has gone through three distinct phases - the orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist schools of thought. Most of the writing has centered about the question of how the Cold War began and the role played by the presidential administrations during it.

The orthodox phase contains most of the historical works written between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s on the Cold War. The orthodox historians generally hold the Soviet Union responsible for the Cold War and the breakdown of Soviet-Allied cooperation which caused it. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in "Origins of the Cold War," described the Cold War as the "brave and essential response of free

men to Communist aggression."<sup>1</sup> Herbert Feis's From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950 (1970), Walter W. Rostow's The United States In the World Arena: An Essay In Recent History (1960), George Kennan's American Diplomacy, 1900-1951 (1951), and Hans Morgenthau's In Defense of the National Interest (1951), to name a few, also represent the orthodox position. John W. Spanier provides perhaps the best insight into the orthodox interpretation of these years in his American Foreign Policy Since World War II (1973).<sup>2</sup>

Vietnam marked a watershed in American life which also had its impact upon historical writing. The revisionists who wrote primarily during this period saw the United States as responsible for the way the Cold War developed and in some cases, even responsible for the Cold War itself. As scholars of the "New Left" began to write of the Truman-Eisenhower years, the revisionist school of historians challenged the orthodox historians and held that the Cold

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Origins of the Cold War," Foreign Affairs 46 (October 1967): 22-52.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert Feis, From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950 (New York: Norton, 1970); Walter W. Rostow, The United States In The World Arena: An Essay in Recent History (New York: Harper, 1960); George Kennan, American Diplomacy 1900-1951 (New York: Mentor, 1951); Hans Morgenthau, In Defense of the National Interest (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952); and John W. Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II (New York: Praeger, 1973).

War was an outgrowth of American capitalism.<sup>3</sup> The historian most associated with the "New Left's" theme of revisionism was William A. Williams. In his book, Tragedy of American Diplomacy (1959) Williams argued that "the tragedy of American diplomacy . . . is that it denies and subverts American ideas and ideals." Williams went on to blame "open door expansion" for the failure of American diplomacy.<sup>4</sup>

Williams wrote that the United States could have avoided the Cold War if it had been more sympathetic to the fears and concerns of the Soviet Union. These concerns reflected the basic insecurities of the Soviet Union for a secure western frontier backed up by a guarantee against a resurgent Germany, and a need for assistance in economic recovery. The desire of the American government to maintain its Open Door Policy in Eastern and Western Europe threatened the Soviet Union's goals. The Truman Administration's subsequent use of "atomic diplomacy" and economic coercion were prime examples of the emerging American threat to Soviet security.

In 1961, D.F. Fleming published a two-volume study which provided the detail to substantiate Williams' seminal work. In The Cold War and Its Origins (1961) Fleming

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<sup>3</sup>Joseph Siracusa, The New Left Diplomatic Histories and Historians: The American Revisionists (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1993), 101-15.

<sup>4</sup>William A. Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1959), 292.

contended that Truman's temperament and personal animosity against the Soviet Union led him to adopt the hard-line put forward by advisors such as W. Averell Harriman and Dean Acheson. This started with economic coercion when Truman cut off Lend-Lease at the end of the war and continued with his general reversal of Roosevelt's policies toward the Soviet Union after less than two years in office.<sup>5</sup>

In 1965 another revisionist work appeared: Free World Colossus: A Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War by David Horowitz. Later revised in 1971 at the height of protest against American involvement in the war in Viet Nam, this book was a condensed version of Fleming's work, but levied even harsher charges against Truman and his advisors. Horowitz argued that the United States sought to maintain political oligarchies and military elites in power and to limit democracy outside the United States. Another study, Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam, The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation With Soviet Power (1967) by Gar Alperovitz accused Truman of using the atomic bomb to bully the Soviets after economic coercion didn't alter their behavior. Alperovitz agreed with Fleming's thesis that Truman's reversal of Roosevelt's

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<sup>5</sup>D.F. Fleming, The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917-1960 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961).

policies began the Cold War.<sup>6</sup>

As opposition to the war in Vietnam grew, more historians became receptive to revisionist themes. Racial unrest, poverty, civil rights, intervention in Cuba and opposition to the war shattered the foreign policy consensus of the fifties and caused the intellectual community to revise its assumptions about American virtue. Other works, such as Gabriel Kolko's Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945 (1968); Diane Shaver Clemens' Yalta (1970); and Lloyd C. Gardner's Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941-1949 (1970) echoed Fleming's theme. Kolko stressed the needs of the American economic system, while Clemens emphasized individual personalities rather than economic requirements. Clemens also rejected Fleming's theory that Roosevelt's policies were suddenly reversed by Truman, arguing that Truman's policies were the logical conclusion of Roosevelt's attempt to alter Soviet behavior. Gardner saw Eastern Europe as the cause of conflict over other spheres of influence; it was particularly in Eastern Europe that the Open Door Policy brought the United States into

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<sup>6</sup>David Horowitz, Free World Colossus: A Critique of American Foreign Policy In The Cold War (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965); and Gar Alperovitz, Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam, The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with Soviet Power (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967).



conflict with the security needs of the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

In 1975 Daniel Bell wrote "The End of American Exceptionalism" in which he described how belief in American exceptionalism "had vanished with the end of empire, the weakening of power, the loss of faith in the nation's future."<sup>8</sup> Bell specifically claimed that American exceptionalism, embodied in the idea of the American Century, "foundered on the shoals of Vietnam."<sup>9</sup>

Since the 1970s and early 1980s, historical writing has reflected a mid-point between the orthodox and revisionist schools. This post-revisionist school saw both the United States and the Soviet Union sharing responsibility for the Cold War. The post-revisionists stressed the careful use of archival materials and the importance of personalities in shaping post war relations. They also included revisionists' insights into the self-interested nature of United States' policies.

A critique of the revisionists' methods first emerged in the form of Robert J. Maddox's New Left and the Origins of the Cold War (1973). Maddox questioned the scholarship

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<sup>7</sup>Gabriel Kolko, Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945 (New York: Random House, 1968); Diane Shaver Clemens, Yalta (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); and Lloyd C. Gardner, Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas In American Foreign Policy, 1941-1949 (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970).

<sup>8</sup>Daniel Bell, "The End of American Exceptionalism," The Public Interest 11 (Fall 1975): 197.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 204.

of the revisionists, claiming that they quoted out of context, joined disparate quotes, and altered the meanings of sentences through abbreviation. The revisionists greeted The New Left with disdain, but could not ignore Maddox's work.<sup>10</sup>

The most damaging rebuttal to the revisionists' theme of American perfidy and economic determinism has come with the increasing availability of new primary sources. As early as June 1969, George C. Herring, Jr., writing in the Journal of American History, disputed the revisionist's theory that Truman canceled Lend-Lease in a deliberate attempt to coerce Stalin.<sup>11</sup> In 1978 Wilson D. Miscamble wrote in Diplomatic History that Truman's sudden reversal of Roosevelt's policy grew out of a conversation with British Prime Minister Anthony Eden on 23 April 1945.<sup>12</sup> Eden convinced the less experienced Truman that blunt talk was needed when dealing with the Soviets.

Other authors have disputed the revisionist's theme in detail after detail. In 1983 John Lewis Gaddis, by now the dean of the so-called post-revisionist school, argued that

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<sup>10</sup>Robert J. Maddox, The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

<sup>11</sup>George C. Herring, Jr. "Lend Lease to Russia and The Origins of the Cold War," Journal of American History 56 (June 1969): 93-114.

<sup>12</sup>Wilson D. Miscamble, "Anthony Eden and the Truman-Molotov Conversations, April 1945," Diplomatic History 2 (Spring 1978): 179.

there was no basis to the principal tenets of the revisionists.<sup>13</sup> Post-war American foreign policy did not resemble the Leninist theory of imperialism which the revisionists claimed. United States' foreign policy was not based on the search for new wealth abroad which the American capitalist system needed for its survival. In addition Gaddis used Wojtech Mastny's Russia's Road to the Cold War (1979) to show that Stalin pursued his policies without regard for American sensibilities.<sup>14</sup>

Writing in Diplomatic History, Gaddis provided an excellent description of the elements of a new consensus emerging from the traditionalist and revisionist accounts in his article, "The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War."<sup>15</sup> For Gaddis the major contribution of the post-revisionists to the historiography of the Cold war was to confirm several key arguments put forth by the orthodox traditionalists as well as to recognize the significance of the revisionists' contributions. For Gaddis the difference is the use of systematic archival research.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, "The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War," Diplomatic History 7 (Summer 1983): 172-73.

<sup>14</sup>Wojtech Mastny, Russia's Road to the Cold War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 172-190.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 180.

More recently writers have gone beyond the revisionists' theories while retaining some aspects of revisionism. This synthesis is due partly to the passage of time, but also to the availability of additional materials. Among others, Gaddis himself acknowledges the role of economic pressure in American foreign policy, but notes that economic policy supported political goals. He also joins the revisionists in questioning the intention of the Soviet Union to achieve world-wide dominance, but points out that earlier revisionist accounts failed to perceive that Stalin's defensive goals posed security problems for the West.<sup>17</sup>

The most recent collection of the views of both revisionists and post-revisionists is The End of the Cold War: Its Meaning and Implications (1992) edited by Michael J. Hogan. This work, which revisits most of the arguments about the Cold War, also includes interesting speculation about the future of the world after the end of the Cold War. However, even with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, some revisionists still persist in their view of the United States as the evil genius of the Cold War.<sup>18</sup> A 1994 article by Gar Alperovitz and Kai Bird demonstrates this view. In "The Centrality of the Bomb,"

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 181.

<sup>18</sup>Michael, J. Hogan, ed., The End of the Cold War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

they argue that possession of the bomb was the chief enabler of Truman's postwar strategy.<sup>19</sup>

Included in Hogan's collection of twenty-two essays are those by Bruce Cumings, Ronald Steel and Noam Chomsky. For these writers the Soviet Union was always a second-rate power eventually destined to fall due to internal causes. The United States had magnified the Soviet threat out of proportion in an effort to dominate the Third World. In a similar vein Samuel F. Wells, Jr. argues that President Reagan's defense build-up finally made the Soviets recognize the failure of their economic system and their inability to compete with the United States in the production of modern military systems such as the Strategic Defense Initiative.<sup>20</sup>

A reviewer of Hogan's book, Robert A. Divine, wrote in September 1993 that the end of the Cold War was leading to the same division among scholars as its origins had.<sup>21</sup> Divine closes with the comment that "if the end of the Cold War is bad news for the American economy, it may well prove to be a godsend for historians, or at least those willing to master the Cyrillic alphabet."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Gar Alperovitz and Kai Bird, "The Centrality of the Bomb," Foreign Policy 94 (Spring 94): 4.

<sup>20</sup>Hogan, The End of the Cold War, 5.

<sup>21</sup>Robert A. Divine, "The Cold War as History," Reviews In American History 22 (September 1993): 527.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 532.

American foreign relations in general have also been the subject of orthodox (i.e. nationalist), revisionist and post revisionist writers. After World War I, historians such as Samuel Flagg Bemis and Dexter Perkins described United States' diplomacy in the orthodox terms of the growth of power and the creation of a series of principles such as the Monroe Doctrine. Progressive historians such as Charles Beard challenged this nationalist perspective and sought to discover the intellectual assumptions that governed policy makers and diplomats. Where the nationalists stressed continuity in diplomatic history, the progressive historians saw change as the major feature of American foreign relations.

A few years later, realists such as George Kennan and Hans J. Morgenthau began to question the ability of foreign policy makers to control an increasingly complex and dangerous international system. Pessimism and a critical approach became the hallmarks of the realists who minimized the influence of public opinion and domestic politics on diplomacy and saw the need for policy making by professional elites. The revisionists, as previously noted, concentrated on the motives behind American diplomacy. Postrevisionists such as John Lewis Gaddis redirected attention to the state and its governing elites as the principal foci of foreign relations. Combining elements of the revisionists' approach and the criticism of the realists, the postrevisionists see

foreign relations driven by the geopolitical concerns of the elite, not by domestic pressures.

On the other hand, the 1983 book by Hugh Thomas, Armed Truce: The Beginning of the Cold War 1945-1946 (1987) incorporates evidence from Nikita Khrushchev, Svetlana Alliluyeva, and others to the effect that the Soviet Union aspired to world influence, if not hegemony.<sup>23</sup> The cause of the Cold War for Thomas was the communist ideology which held that conflict between communist and capitalist worlds was inevitable.

Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson have assembled an overview of the current state of scholarship on the history of American foreign relations in their joint work, Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations (1991) which centers on the "fracturing of the Cold War consensus."<sup>24</sup> This collection of essays illustrates the current approaches to the study of American foreign relations. For instance, Thomas J. McCormick describes the world systems approach, while Louis A. Perez, Jr., outlines the dependency theory to describe the relationship between the United States and Latin America. The theory of bureaucratic politics by J. Garry Clifford follows the

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<sup>23</sup>Hugh Thomas, Armed Truce: The Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-1946 (New York: Atheneum, 1987).

<sup>24</sup>Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7.

balance of power approach by Stephen Pelz. Richard H. Immerman's essay explores the relationship between psychology and the history of foreign relations, while Alan K. Henrikson outlines the mental maps or frameworks used by diplomats to orient themselves in the world. Melvin Small writes of the role of public opinion in the development of diplomatic and military strategy in the United States as an approach to the study of foreign relations. Michael Hunt describes the notion of ideology to make historians focus on the cultural values and privilege that shape the consciousness of policymakers. Melvyn P. Leffler provides the national security approach while Hogan himself illustrates how the corporatist analysis deals with the political pressures, bureaucratic rivalries and geopolitical strategy of diplomacy.

Of the approaches offered by Hogan and Paterson, Melvyn Leffler's use of the concept of national security seems the most balanced in its considerations of motives, perceptions and the use of national power. In his essay "National Security," Leffler borrows a definition of national security from a 1966 article: "national security encompasses the decisions and actions deemed imperative to protect domestic core values from external threats".<sup>25</sup> Leffler sees national security as the synthesis of the realist and

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<sup>25</sup>P.G. Bock and Morton Berkowitz, "The Emerging Field of National Security," World Politics 19 (October 1966): 122-36.



revisionist approaches which integrates questions of political economy, military policy, and defense strategy.<sup>26</sup> For Leffler this approach assumes that foreign threats result from both real dangers in the external environment as well as ideological precepts, cultural images and mistaken perceptions.<sup>27</sup> Leffler elaborated on his approach in his seminal work, A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War. Leffler argues that Truman and his advisors sought a "preponderance of power" because of fears and uncertainties about the postwar world. Results were mixed; mistakes were made out of concerns about the correlations of power which far outweighed concerns over the economy of the United States.<sup>28</sup>

Akira Iriye had previously described the intercultural relations approach in his 1979 article, "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," noting "the relationship between a country's cultural system and its behavior in the international system were the most

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<sup>26</sup>Melvyn P. Leffler, "National Security," in Hogan and Patterson, Explaining the History of Foreign Relations, 203.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Idem, A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 15-16.

interesting and fruitful fields of investigation."<sup>29</sup> By comparison Howard Jones and Randall B. Woods in their article "Origins of the Cold War In Europe and the Near East: Recent Historiography and the National Security Imperative"<sup>30</sup> suggest that the national security imperative represents a synthesis and perhaps a dominant approach to the Cold War. For Jones and Woods, the national security imperative integrates the effect of both the domestic and the international forces behind American diplomacy.

The fourth volume of the Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations describes the United States and the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991. The editor, Warren I. Cohen, also sees the security dilemma as the cause of the Cold War, as the Soviets responded to security actions by the United States which the Soviets perceived as threatening. The Soviets also had problems understanding and judging responses to their actions by the United States. Cohen especially sees the Korean War as Stalin's "most disastrous Cold War gamble as it would intensify a confrontation that continued for forty years at enormous cost to the major

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<sup>29</sup>Akira Iriye, "Culture and Power: International Relations As Intercultural Relations," Diplomatic History 3 (Spring 1979), 116.

<sup>30</sup>Howard Jones and Randall B. Woods, "Origins of the Cold War in Europe and the Near East: Recent Historiography and the National Security Imperative," Diplomatic History 17 (Spring 1993): 251.

antagonists and the rest of the world."<sup>31</sup> In his conclusion Cohen writes that Soviet suspicion of the United States' intentions combined with knowledge of the superiority of its weapons and remembrance of Western hostility to the Soviet state drove the Soviets to take steps to increase their security. These steps in turn affected strategic thinking in the United States which was reflected in its rearmament program.<sup>32</sup> That the ensuing competition became hostile and evolved into the Cold War was due to the nature of the Soviet regime - "a powerful and vicious dictatorship, a ruthless totalitarian state."<sup>33</sup>

Just as American foreign policy has been the subject of different views and opinions, historical scholars and other writers have examined and studied Presidents Truman and Eisenhower. Truman does not seem to have been as controversial a subject for revisionist scholars: they cite him as the cause of the Cold War. Most of the newer studies of the Truman Administration demonstrate that the administration sought to spread American economic and political principles overseas but question whether the

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<sup>31</sup>Warren I. Cohen, ed., America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945-1991, vol 4, The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 66.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 250.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 254.

motive was "national self-aggrandizement and whether America's postwar search for security left no room for Soviet security."<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, historical writers in Eisenhower's case initially questioned his skill as a president and saw him as one who accomplished little during his administration. In the 1980s, a new revisionist image of Eisenhower emphasized his skill in dealing with the Congress, in ending the Korean War and avoiding other conflicts, and in balancing defense needs against the necessity of maintaining a limit on military spending. The post revisionists do, however, fault Eisenhower for the failure of most United States' activities in the Third World.

Positive biographies of President Truman include his own two-volume autobiography, Memoirs (1955). Robert H. Ferrell, the dean of Truman scholars, wrote The Autobiography of Harry S. Truman (1980) from Truman's own sketches about himself, Off The Record: The Private Papers of Harry S Truman (1980), Dear Bess: The Letters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1910-1959 (1983), and Harry S. Truman: A Life (1994). Another Truman scholar, Robert J. Donovan, has also written a two-volume study of the Truman Presidency, Crisis and Conflict (1977) and The Tumultuous Years (1982). Truman's daughter, Margaret, wrote about her father in Harry

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<sup>34</sup>Jones and Woods, "Origins of the Cold War," 255.

S. Truman (1973).<sup>35</sup>

Other works on the Truman Presidency include the not impartial The Man of Independence (1950) by Jonathan Daniels, the insightful Truman (1986) by Roy Jenkins, John Hersey's detailed Aspects of the Presidency (1980), and Cabell Phillips' firsthand observations as a reporter in The Truman Presidency, The History of a Triumphant Succession (1966). Merle Miller compiled the reminiscences of the elderly president in Plain Speaking (1974). David McCullough's Truman (1992) is the latest full-scale biography which presents a positive assessment of the president.<sup>36</sup>

Historical writing about the Eisenhower Presidency has changed more over the years. As previously noted, scholars initially questioned his ability as president and came to

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<sup>35</sup>Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Year of Decisions (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955); Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope (New York: Doubleday, 1965); Robert H. Ferrell, ed., The Autobiography of Harry S. Truman (Boulder, CO: Associated University Press, 1980); Robert H. Ferrell, ed., Off The Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman (New York: Harper and Row, 1980); Robert H. Ferrell, ed., Dear Bess: The Letters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1910-1959 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983); and Robert H. Ferrell, Harry S. Truman: A Life (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1984).

<sup>36</sup>Jonathan Daniels, The Man of Independence (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1950); Roy Jenkins, Truman (New York: Harper and Row, 1986); John Hersey, Aspects of the Presidency (New Haven and New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1980); Cabel Phillips, The Truman Presidency, The History of a Triumphant Succession (New York: Macmillan, 1966); Merle Miller, Plain Speaking (New York: Berkeley, 1974); and David McCullough, Truman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

the conclusion that he was beyond his depth in the presidency. In the 1970s revisionist scholars, such as Elmo Richardson who published The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1979, challenged this conclusion. Other important revisionist works include Harbet Parmet's Eisenhower and the American Crusades (1972), Blanche Cook's Dwight David Eisenhower: Antimilitarist in the White House (1974); Peter Lyon's Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero (1974); Charles Alexander's Holding the Line: the Eisenhower Era, 1952-1961 (1975); and Gary Reichard's The Reaffirmation of Republicanism: Eisenhower and the Eighty-Third Congress (1975).<sup>37</sup>

Biographical works include Eisenhower's own Mandate for Change, 1953-1956 (1963) and Waging Peace, 1956-1961 (1965). Ike's Letters To A Friend (1984) contain his views on a variety of topics. Complementary biographies include Stephen Ambrose's two-volumes, Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect 1890-1952 (1983) and The President (1984); Parmet's Eisenhower and the American Crusades (1972), R.

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<sup>37</sup>Elmo Richardson, The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (Lawrence, KS: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979); Herbert Parmet, Eisenhower and the American Crusades (New York: Macmillan, 1972); Blanche Cook, Dwight David Eisenhower: Antimilitarist in the White House (St. Charles, MO: Forums In History, 1974); Peter Lyon, Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974); Charles Alexander, Holding the Line: The Eisenhower Era, 1952-1961 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1975); and Gary Reichard, The Reaffirmation of Republicanism: Eisenhower and the Eighty-Third Congress (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1975).

Alton Lee's Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier and Statesman (1981); and Peter Lyon's critical Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero (1974).<sup>38</sup>

The most valuable primary source on both Truman and Eisenhower is the U.S. Department of State' series, Foreign Relations of the United States. Another exceptional series is the Public Papers of The Presidents. The final authority on each president is of course the materials in his presidential library.

The social upheaval engendered by the Viet Nam War and the changing nature of the inquiry into American history have influenced historical writing about the Cold War, the conduct of foreign relations and the presidencies of Truman and Eisenhower. As time passes the method of inquiry becomes broader and more encompassing. The recent emphasis on the national security imperative provides a glimpse of its ability to tie together the many factors involved in a

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<sup>38</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956 (Garden city, NY: Doubleday, 1963); Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965); Robert W. Griffith, ed., Ike's Letters To A Friend, 1941-1958 (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1984); Stephen Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect 1890-1952 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983); Stephen Ambrose, Eisenhower, The President (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984); Herbert Parmet, Eisenhower and the American Crusades (New York: Macmillan, 1972); R. Alton Lee, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Soldier and Statesman (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981); and Peter Lyon, Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).

study of American foreign relations.

The subsequent sections of this thesis will build upon this literature and will answer the question: What did each president bring to his presidency and its foreign relations?



## CHAPTER 3

### HARRY S. TRUMAN

In March 1941 Harry S. Truman became Chairman of the Senate Special Committee to Investigate the Defense Program. He was fifty-seven years old and little known outside Washington, D.C. and the state of Missouri. He was first elected to the Senate in 1934, but had not noticeably distinguished himself during his first term. He had, however, made inroads among the established members of the Senate and had won high marks in spite of his connections to the infamous Pendergast machine of Kansas City. He was popular with his fellow senators and became a first-rate committee chairman.<sup>1</sup> In a little more than thirty-six months Harry Truman became President of the United States and brought the nation into the unknown territory of World War II's aftermath.

President Truman frequently acknowledged his lack of preparation for his new position, but he is as frequently acknowledged as one of the best of the modern presidents. What did this former haberdasher from Missouri bring to his duties and the "the hardest job in the world" that made him

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<sup>1</sup>Donald H. Riddle, The Truman Committee: A Study in Congressional Responsibility (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 16-17.

as successful as he was? What ideological baggage did Harry S. Truman bring to the White House when he was sworn in as President on 12 April 1945? As the historian Richard Kirkendall wrote: "We need a better understanding of his pre-presidential development."<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will describe the pre-dispositions that Harry Truman brought with him to the White House. It will demonstrate that Truman had already established himself as an internationalist and that he was well-versed in domestic politics at the national level. While Truman had little opportunity to meet with President Roosevelt before his death, Truman had his own ideas about foreign policy and relations with other nations after the war.

Dean Acheson commented that he thought Truman had experienced "the presidency in miniature" during his tenure as a country administrator with foreign affairs reduced to dealing with the sovereign state of Missouri. Truman learned how complicated it was to run government and also gained an understanding of the difficulties of administration. He understood the frustrations of the governmental process in which democracy dilutes the elements of command and authority. He had training in decisiveness

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<sup>2</sup>William F. Levantrosser, ed., Harry S. Truman: The Man from Independence (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 25.

and did not, as General Marshall had said, "fight the problem." He solved it.<sup>3</sup>

As Chairman of the Senate investigating committee, Truman honed the political skills he would later use as President in dealing with foreign leaders. He preferred to use quiet persuasion rather than public confrontation to induce contractors and government agencies to correct abuses uncovered by his committee's investigations. When persuasion failed, Truman "got tough."<sup>4</sup>

No aspect of Truman's attitude and experience was more defining of his approach to foreign affairs than his intuitive grasp of the political center. Just as he disdained the extremism of the left and the right in American politics, he did not distinguish between the totalitarianism of the left and the right in foreign affairs, an attitude which was deeply rooted in his own Midwestern background.<sup>5</sup> He believed in America's mission

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<sup>3</sup>David S. McLellan and David C. Acheson, eds., Among Friends: Personal Letters of Dean Acheson (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1980), 329.

<sup>4</sup>Deborah Welch Larson, "Belief and Inference: The Origins of American Leaders' Cold War Ideology" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1983), 205.

<sup>5</sup>Alonzo L. Hamby, Liberalism and Its Challengers: FDR to Reagan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 71.

in the world and held a conviction that totalitarianism of the Left was as menacing as that of the Right.<sup>6</sup>

### Background

Harry Truman was one of the last presidents born in the nineteenth century, but he was a product of the great tensions of the early twentieth century. His public life was shaped by the increasing gulf between the urban and the rural and the growing conflict between the small-town America of shops and farms and the modern United States of cities and large corporations.<sup>7</sup>

Truman's family was fervently attached to the Democratic Party. Its tenets were even more deeply instilled in him than his Baptist heritage.<sup>8</sup> The life of his grandfather, Solomon Young, provided an example and a definition of personal advancement: economic success was the product of a solitary entrepreneur who risked a small stake, worked hard and eventually prospered.<sup>9</sup> His father defined masculinity for Harry as a simple, rough-and-ready

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<sup>6</sup>Alonzo L. Hamby, "The Mind and Character of Harry S. Truman" in The Truman Presidency, ed. Michael J. Lacey, (New York: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Cambridge University Press, 1991), 52.

<sup>7</sup>Robert Griffith, "Forging America's Postwar Order: Domestic Politics and Political Economy in the Age of Truman," Lacey, 86.

<sup>8</sup>Lacey, The Truman Presidency, 22.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 21.

willingness to speak bluntly and be ready to fight. He passed along to Harry a reputation for honesty and the family way to prosper: taking big risks with small stakes in the hope of big gains.<sup>10</sup> His mother gave Harry a set of values and characteristics that reinforced those of his father, those of the honest, hard-working, plain-speaking rural culture of the Midwest.<sup>11</sup>

Like most Americans of his time, Truman was caught up in the tensions of a nation emerging onto the world scene. Truman's early years mirror the triumph of American nationalism, the decline of rural life and influence, and the rise of a dominant urban culture. He was a firm believer in progress and quickly outgrew the small village of his youth. He embraced the metropolis of Kansas City, but retained his small town roots. He aligned himself with the forces of modernization - the Farm Bureau, the good roads movement, and the advocates of planning and efficiency in government. He also carried a life-long resentment against the large and powerful financial interests and their captive politicians who had kept him from the American dream of fame and wealth because of his failed businesses.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>12</sup>Robert Griffith, "Harry S Truman and the Burden of Modernity," Reviews in American History 9 (September 1981): 303.

Truman's early life as a businessman, civic leader, and county administrator made him a "entrepreneurial liberal." His was the classic experience of the small-town, country businessman, suspicious of big business and its accompanying financial establishment; hopeful of rapid economic growth and development, looking at times to the federal government for help, but resentful of bureaucratic rules and regulations. His future economic policies would reflect this experience.<sup>13</sup>

Truman's life was shaped by politics. He grew up in a time when politics was still linked to the rural networks of family and friends. Loyalty and friendship were the most important values in this highly personalized culture. However, Truman's faith in efficiency and organization and the rush of national and world events pushed him into a new and different world of bureaucratic politics.<sup>14</sup> Truman was also a business manager who saw ordinary partisan politics as a regrettable necessity at the local level. To the greatest extent possible, he sought a reputation as a tight-fisted budget manager, not as a dispenser of favors and social benefits.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Hamby, Liberalism and Its Challengers, 63.

<sup>14</sup>Griffith, "HST and the Burden of Modernity," 305.

<sup>15</sup>Alonzo L. Hamby, "Harry S. Truman: Insecurity and Responsibility," in Fred I. Greenstein, ed., Leadership In the Modern Presidency (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 50.

Harry Truman grew up in a society that venerated masculine strength and leadership. As a boy, he revered Andrew Jackson as one of his heroes. Throughout his life he admired strong presidents. His reading of the Constitution reinforced his belief that the presidency was a position of power. The example of FDR underscored these lessons and left him determined to defend his office against all encroachments, just as he had defended his county's fiscal responsibility against the spoils system of local politics.<sup>16</sup>

Truman believed firmly in the American form of government set up under the Constitution with its separation of powers among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the federal government and its division of powers between the central government and the states. He did not want to encroach on the powers of the other federal branches and, as a border state politician, did not want to interfere with states' rights. He respected the presidency, but did not make it imperial.

On economic questions Truman supported free enterprise, free trade, personal freedom to chose one's own career, and a minimum of governmental regulation. Economic abuses justified corrective legislation, but not interference with individual initiative. He believed in a balanced budget and fiscal responsibility. He preferred to meet economic

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 60.

problems by stimulating the growth of industry. Consistency did not bother him when sometimes his conservative views conflicted with his Fair Deal programs; he tried to meet each problem as it came.<sup>17</sup> Although he was an ardent and partisan Democrat in politics, he was in many ways indistinguishable from the petit bourgeois Republican whom Sinclair Lewis satirized as George F. Babbitt. Like Babbitt, Truman was a small businessman who espoused the idea that business methods were applicable to government.<sup>18</sup>

Harry Truman believed that one of the reasons for the increased cost of local government was the increased demand for public services at the expense of the public treasury. Too much was being asked of the state. "The tendency is toward rather socialistic and paternalistic things. . . . Let people go back to working for themselves and supporting their dependents, rather than expect the state to do it."<sup>19</sup> He believed that it was the nature of governments to expand and wanted to consolidate departments that did the same work and to place the government on an "economic way to make

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<sup>17</sup>Harold F. Gosnell, Truman's Crises: A Political Biography of Harry S. Truman (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 555.

<sup>18</sup>Greenstein, Leadership in the Modern Presidency, 50.

<sup>19</sup>Harry S. Truman's Address to the Club Presidents Round Table, Spring 1931, Personal Correspondence: Harry S. Truman-County Judge, Box 1, Lou E. Holland Papers, HSTL.



government and public service efficient."<sup>20</sup> Truman, however, believed in using the power of the government to advance social causes and human rights.

Truman's experience in Jackson County had convinced him that public contractors were not good spenders of public funds unless they were watched. He remembered too that after World War I nineteen separate committees had been set up to investigate how the country's money had been spent in the war effort. Truman captured Congress' imagination with the idea of a committee to do the watching during the war rather than after the fact. Mr Truman revealed in his management of this committee his political methods. He did not run it as a one-man show; he delegated matters to other members, but when it came to decisions, he made them or others did in accordance with his ideas.<sup>21</sup>

#### Government Efficiency

Early in his political career Truman developed an interest in the size and efficiency of government. In 1930 while he was a Presiding Judge in Missouri, he introduced a bill to eliminate unnecessary duplication of service and division of authority. Later during his term as Presiding

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<sup>20</sup>Harry S Truman's Address to the Real Estate Board of Kansas City, 25 September 1931, Personal Correspondence: Harry S. Truman-County Judge, Box 1, Holland Papers, HSTL.

<sup>21</sup>Luther Huston, "Truman's Record Shows Practical, Prudent Man" New York Times, 15 April 1945, 4b.

Judge, Truman turned more and more to centralization, an experience that would serve him well as a New Deal senator and vice president.<sup>22</sup> Truman was to say later that the federal budget involved much larger funds than that of Jackson County, Missouri, but that the "principles were the same."<sup>23</sup>

Stemming from his investigation of the national defense program, Truman went on record a number of times in opposition to having a number of competing and conflicting agencies charged with similar and overlapping responsibilities. He proposed time and time again the elimination of such duplication and the concentration of responsibility in one administrator.<sup>24</sup>

He attributed responsibility for nearly all the failures and shortcomings which his Senate Committee found to three basic weaknesses in war programs: inadequate initial planning and delay in determining basic policies; second, conflicting authority over and responsibility for various war programs resulting in delays and the avoidance of responsibility; and third, hesitancy to adopt unpopular

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<sup>22</sup>Eugene F. Schmidtlein. "Truman the Senator" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1962), 44.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>24</sup>Resume of Information and Statements Which May Indicate or Suggest Possible Policies of President Truman, n.d., 77, Biographical File, President's Secretary's Files (PSF), Harry S Truman Papers, HSTL. (Hereafter cited as Resume with page number.)

or unpleasant policies long after the facts clearly showed such policies were necessary. He saw a need for clearly defined centralized authority, exercised by a few officials, each solely responsible for the administration of certain activities. These officials should meet frequently to eliminate all conflicts of jurisdiction and be ready to advise the president on important questions of policy while relieving him completely of purely administrative work.<sup>25</sup>

#### World Peace and Collaboration

In a speech before the Women's National Democratic Club on 6 March 1944, Senator Truman declared that the only "logical basis" for a lasting peace was an improved United Nations, headed by Britain, China, Russia and the United States. Only a system of collective defense could ensure lasting peace.<sup>26</sup> On another occasion he said that expanding trade through reciprocal arrangements could forestall the growth of economic dissatisfaction out of which grew world wars.<sup>27</sup>

By 1944 Truman was leader of a group of senators who were generally in agreement on foreign and domestic policy. He designed the Burton, Ball, Hatch Hill (B<sup>2</sup>H<sup>2</sup>) Resolution which favored postwar participation in an international

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 46-47.

body.<sup>28</sup> During the Democratic Convention Truman called upon his party to take part in world affairs after this war and to maintain the peace by using the armed forces, if necessary.<sup>29</sup> He supported Senator Claude Pepper's amendment to the Connally Resolution, which aimed at substantially strengthening the United States' commitment to the establishment of a more positive form of world organization. Truman declared that a few willful senators had prevented the United States from entering the League of Nations in 1919. "Isolationism cannot end and will not end unless the Senate is willing to end it." He was sure that the current world war had resulted from the isolationist posture of the United States. He was equally sure that another war would follow shortly unless the United States and its allies worked together for peace in the same manner they had worked together for victory.<sup>30</sup> Commenting on the 1944 Democratic platform which he helped draft, Senator Truman stated "the United States will take part in world affairs this time and maintain the peace by using the Army and Navy, if necessary."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Lacey, The Truman Presidency, 35.

<sup>29</sup>Robert A. Divine Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 212.

<sup>30</sup>Resume, 45.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 53.

## Foreign Relations and National Security

The new president came into office with little obvious preparation for foreign affairs. He had made a striking comment on relations with the Soviet Union in 1941 when Hitler invaded Russia:

If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstance.<sup>32</sup>

Time magazine characterized Truman as " a man of distinct limitations, especially in high level politics. . . . His knowledge of foreign affairs is limited."<sup>33</sup> However, Truman brought to the White House certain resources which helped him carry out a vigorous, assertive foreign policy: a knowledge of history, political skills, and a characteristic style of leadership.<sup>34</sup>

President Truman was not, however, a complete neophyte in the area of foreign relations. He brought with him to the White House a set of assumptions about the cause of war and the requirements of peace as a result of having lived through a tumultuous period in world politics. Dean Acheson recalled that Truman had experienced the nature, the importance and the limitations of military power and

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<sup>32</sup>Martin Walker. The Cold War: A History (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 16.

<sup>33</sup>Resume, 22.

<sup>34</sup>Larson, "Belief and Inference," 194.

realized that military power was primarily effective in opposing military power or in deterring another's use of it.<sup>35</sup>

The British policy of appeasement in the 1930s had convinced Truman that only the willingness to use preponderant force could deter aggressors. In a 1944 speech, Truman asked: "Who can say what the results would have been if France had prevented Hitler from occupying the Rhineland. Timely action might have deterred Italy's conquest of Ethiopia." Truman also believed that the failure of the Allied Powers to make a lasting peace with Germany planted the seeds of World War II.<sup>36</sup>

President Truman frequently used his knowledge of history to make points about foreign affairs. At Potsdam he declared that he had come to the conclusion after studying history that the wars of the last two hundred years had started in the area from the Black Sea to the Baltic and from the eastern frontier of France to the western frontier of Russia. In the last two instances, Austria and Germany had overturned the peace. He thought it was the purpose of the Potsdam Conference to make sure it did not happen again.

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<sup>35</sup>Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years In The State Department (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 732.

<sup>36</sup>Speech in Toledo, Ohio, 14 June 1944, Address and Statement of Harry S. Truman: A Topical Record from January 1935 to April 1945, United States News, File: Addresses and Statements of Harry S. Truman 1935-1945 (Publication), Biographical File, Box 298, PSF, HSTL.

He did not want to go to war in another twenty-five years.<sup>37</sup>

In a joint statement with Senators Elbert Thomas of Utah and Harley Kilgore of West Virginia on 7 March 1944 Truman declared that the industrial accomplishments of the United States had nominated it as the nation to guide others in the pathway of peaceful production. For Truman: "the future peace depends on the abandonment of political nationalism and economic imperialism and autarchy."<sup>38</sup> Later he said: "We must do our utmost to win the war speedily and also to contribute our full share to a postwar atmosphere that will be conducive to an enduring peace."<sup>39</sup>

Truman based his national defense policy on lessons he learned before the war. He favored a strong mobilization capability over a large standing army because he thought the American people would not tolerate a large defense establishment. He also warned that large defense expenditures would bankrupt the nation. Truman believed

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<sup>37</sup>U.S., Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 2:303-305. (Hereafter cited as FRUS with year and volume number.)

<sup>38</sup>"Addresses and Statements of Harry S. Truman: A Topical Record from January, 1935 to April 1945," United States News, File: Addresses and Statements of Harry S. Truman 1935-1945 (Publication), Biographical File, Box 298, PSF, HSTL.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 4 July 1943.

that the economic capabilities and the postwar prestige of the United States could achieve its security objectives without a large military establishment. He favored universal military training, air power and atomic weapons to reduce manpower costs as much as possible.<sup>40</sup>

#### National Defense Preparedness

I believe in an adequate national defense program. I think that the old Puritan who prayed regularly for protection against the Indians was much safer when, at the same time, he prudently kept his powder dry. Andrew Jackson, the fighting old President from Tennessee, said, "We shall more certainly preserve peace when it is understood that we are prepared for war. The best way to keep from fighting for liberty and honor is to be adequately prepared for all contingencies."<sup>41</sup>

Truman believed in an adequate Navy and an Air Force second to none, and only enough soldiers for training. Since ships and aircraft could not be built overnight, they had to be on hand and prepared. The United States had to be prepared enough to defend itself, but not enough to become an aggressor.<sup>42</sup> He declared in the fall of 1945 that the United States had to shoulder the responsibility of universal military training for "in order to carry out a just decision the courts must have marshals" and "in order

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<sup>40</sup>Robert A. Pollard, "The National Security State Reconsidered: Truman and Economic Containment, 1945-1950" in Lacey, The Truman Presidency, 207.

<sup>41</sup>Resume, 57.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 56.



to collect monies for county government it has been found necessary to employ a sheriff."<sup>43</sup>

Truman was definitely committed to a policy of adequate preparedness as a necessary ingredient in a comprehensive formula for maintaining peace. In this connection he advocated that the United States clarify its rights to the overseas bases it constructed during the war. He also wanted the United States to investigate the possibility of permanently obtaining access to petroleum rights abroad.<sup>44</sup>

Harry Truman was also an extremely strong advocate of unification of the armed forces into a single department of national defense.<sup>45</sup>. "Lack of unity of command was one of the most important circumstances attributing [sic] to the disaster at Pearl Harbor." To Truman only divine providence had protected the United States so far in spite of our "scrambled professional military setup."<sup>46</sup> Harkening back to his days as an active soldier and a presiding judge, Truman saw a requirement to consolidate the Army and the Navy "under one tent and one authoritative, responsible command." Truman believed that Pearl Harbor revealed the

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<sup>43</sup>Thomas G. Paterson. On Every Front: The Making and the Unmaking of the Cold War. rev. ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979), 117.

<sup>44</sup>Resume, 76.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 37.

danger that lies in a division of responsibilities."<sup>47</sup> As late as August 1944 he and his fellow committee members were still "recording a dreary succession of wastes, duplications and ugly conflict."<sup>48</sup>

### Senate Voting Record

During the ten years he spent in the Senate, Harry Truman's voting record reflected his list of priorities on various foreign and domestic policy issues. In foreign affairs he advocated increased American international involvement, enthusiastically supported the United Nations, and advocated freer international trade. In regard to defense preparedness, party loyalty and an orientation to crisis action influenced his votes. In most domestic issues he followed the party line and administration guidance.<sup>49</sup>

In 1935 Senator Truman voted for United States' participation in the World Court. In 1941 he supported proposals requiring Senate ratification of the Roosevelt Administration's Trade Acts and extension of the Selective Service System and the Ship Seizure Bill, both aimed at strengthening the United States' preparation for war. A

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<sup>47</sup>Harry S Truman, "Our Armed Forces MUST Be Unified," Colliers, 214 (26 August 1944): 16.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>49</sup>Gary M. Fink and James W. Hilty, "Prologue: The Senate Voting Record of Harry S. Truman," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 4 (Autumn 1973): 231.

magazine reporter characterized Truman's voting record as follows: "since 1935 his position on foreign relations and international policy has been consistently on the side of F.D.R. and for the fight against Fascism."<sup>50</sup>

### Personal Philosophy

A profile of the new vice-president noted: "It is not opprobrious in Mr. Truman's lexicon to be called a politician. He comes as near as being scornful as his nature permits when he speaks of officeholders who are not politicians." "Government is politics," Truman says, "and government which is not in the hands of skilled and honest politicians is less likely to be good government."<sup>51</sup>

Throughout his political career Harry Truman followed the "code of the politician" which he had learned from Tom Pendergast. The code essentially said that a man who did not keep his word could never be trusted again. Truman always attached great importance to keeping his promises. He had insisted on paying off all his creditors when it would have been easier to declare bankruptcy and walk away from them after his business failed in the 1920s. Truman's experience as a member of the Pendergast machine taught him

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<sup>50</sup> "Compilation of Information and Statements Which May Indicate or Suggest Possible Policies of President Truman," Executive Office of the President, Bureau of the Budget, Washington, D.C., April, 1945, PM Magazine, 15 April 1945, 1-2, Biographical File, Box 298: PSF, HSTL.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 8.

to place the highest importance on the principle of keeping one's word. This came to be the standard that Truman used when he became president to judge all potential political allies, including Soviet leader Josef Stalin.<sup>52</sup>

Truman brought this legalistic view to bear on his foreign relations. Men with whom he could do business, whether political bosses or foreign leaders, had to be honest, at least in the fundamental matter of keeping their word. Honest leaders, therefore, scrupulously observed the agreements they had made with other nations. To Truman wartime agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union made at Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam were crystal clear with no room for different interpretations of their obligations.<sup>53</sup> Truman later found it intolerable that the Russians would disregard the Yalta agreements.<sup>54</sup>

Truman, like Roosevelt, had a tendency to personalize diplomacy and to conceptualize it in terms of his political experience. He was, however, less sophisticated than Roosevelt. Stalin impressed him quite favorably at the Potsdam Conference; affected by Stalin's apparent candor and by the blunt strength of his personality, Truman remarked that the Russian reminded him of Tom Pendergast. "Stalin is

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<sup>52</sup>Deborah Welch Larson, Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 132.

<sup>53</sup>Hamby, Liberalism and Its Challengers, 74.

<sup>54</sup>FRUS, 1945 5:235.

as near like Tom Pendergast as any man I know. He is very fond of classical music. He can see right straight through a question quickly." Stalin gave Truman the impression that, like Pendergast, Stalin meant to stand by his word when he gave it.<sup>55</sup> Truman wrote his wife, Bess, "Stalin felt so friendly that he toasted the pianist. The old boy loves music."<sup>56</sup> On July 29th he wrote "I like Stalin. He is straightforward. Knows what he wants and will compromise when he can't get it. His foreign minister isn't so forthright."<sup>57</sup> Truman also thought he could win him over with frank talk. Truman wrote in his diary that "I can deal with Stalin. He is honest-but smart as hell."<sup>58</sup> Henry A. Wallace wrote on 15 October 1945 that Truman said that Stalin was a fine man who wanted to do the right thing.<sup>59</sup> "It is always easy to understand and to get along with big men."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Research Notes Used In Conjunction With Writing The Man of Independence, Part I, Notes on Interviews, Interview with Harry S. Truman, 30 August 1949, 4, Daniels Papers, HSTL. See also Daniels, The Man of Independence, 23, 278.

<sup>56</sup>Ferrell, Dear Bess, 520.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 522.

<sup>58</sup>Ferrell, Off The Record, 53.

<sup>59</sup>Henry A. Wallace, The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), 490.

<sup>60</sup>Joseph E. Davies Diary, 25 July 1945, Davies Papers, Library of Congress.

For Truman, it had not been easy to get a commitment from Pendergast, but when Pendergast made one, he kept it. Truman felt he could get a division of responsibilities and territory with Stalin much like the one he had arranged with Pendergast a decade before when Truman was presiding judge of Jackson County and Pendergast the Boss of Kansas City. When the hope of a compromise came to an end, Truman felt that it was not Stalin's fault, but the fault of the politburo.<sup>61</sup> Truman later stated that Stalin would "stand by his agreements".<sup>62</sup>

### The Influence of History

President Harry S. Truman made more use of history than most of his predecessors in the White House. The lives of famous men and women intrigued him, but the reading of biography was more than the romance of heroes, for he looked into their background to find an explanation for their success and failure. In public addresses and in his Memoirs he clearly acknowledges how the precedents of former presidents had instructed and encouraged him.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Robert H. Ferrell, "Harry S. Truman: A Chance President and the New World of Superpowers," Prologue (Fall 1994): 161.

<sup>62</sup>Eldorous L. Dayton, Give 'em Hell Harry: An Informal Biography of the Terrible Tempered Mr. T. (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1956), 102.

<sup>63</sup>R.G. Cowherd, "Mr. Truman's Uses of History," The Social Studies, 50 (April 1959): 142.

His Memoirs are filled with references to historical lessons which, he said, guided him in making presidential decisions. He often remembered how Abraham Lincoln dealt with recalcitrant generals; how he tried to avoid President Wilson's errors with Congress; and how he made sure he would not become another Andrew Johnson.<sup>64</sup>

In Truman's own words: "My debt to history is one which cannot be calculated. I know of no other motivation which so accounts for my awakening interest as a young lad in the principles of leadership and government." He was particularly intrigued by past great administrators. He wanted "to know what caused the success or the failures of all the famous leaders of history."<sup>65</sup> The New York Times described Truman's use of history after he became Vice-president: "History is Senator Truman's hobby. The study of it is his chief relaxation. He likes any sort of history, but his favorites are the constitutional history of the United States and military history in any form."<sup>66</sup>

Truman believed in the "great man" theory of history which holds that the actions of leaders explain historic events. In 1939, Truman traced the periodic recurrence of wars to the inability of Caesar, King Henry IV of France,

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<sup>64</sup>J. Garry Clifford, "President Truman and Peter the Great's Will," Diplomatic History 4 (Fall 1980): 371.

<sup>65</sup>Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: Year of Decisions, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), 119.

<sup>66</sup>New York Times Magazine, 21 January 1945, 8.

Napoleon and Woodrow Wilson to carry out their plans for eliminating trade barriers. Caesar and Napoleon wanted to place Europe, Asia and Africa under the control of the same state, but both failed, the former due to assassination, the latter due to an adventure in Russia. King Henry IV looked to unify Europe under one state, but was also assassinated before he could put it together.<sup>67</sup> Truman believed that World War I was caused by Germany's need for raw materials to run her industries and feed her growing population.<sup>68</sup>

As one of his most intimate advisors, Clark Clifford, noted, the knowledge that President Truman had of American history "was second to none." Incident after incident came up which Truman was able to trace back to one that another president had faced during his administration. Truman compared the discussion about the financial and monetary posture of the United States after World War II to that of the conflict between Andrew Jackson and Nicholas Biddle, the leading banker of the day, over the structure of the American banking system. Truman's knowledge of history was "not the kind of knowledge that just depended on dates and

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<sup>67</sup>Congress, Senate. 1939. Speech in Carthersville, MO. 76th Cong., 2nd Sess., Appendix to Congressional Record, (8 October 1939), vol. 85, pt. 2, 202.

<sup>68</sup>Congress, Senate. 1939. Speech before the National Aviation Forum. 76th Cong., 1st Sess., Appendix to Congressional Record (20 February 1939), vol. 84, pt. 11, 642.



events, of 1066 being the Battle of Hastings." For Truman, "American history with him was the development of policy, the manner in which the various presidents had met difficult problems."<sup>69</sup>

The tragedies suffered by the Jewish people during the war reminded Truman of his Missouri-Kansas ancestors who had been displaced by the American Civil War. This led him to play an important role in the postwar history of the Jews. Truman insisted on a Nuremberg Tribunal to record the crimes committed against the Jews by the Nazis. He called upon the British to open Eretz Israel-Palestine to Jewish immigrants and he fought for a revision of American immigration laws. Truman was the first head of state to recognize the new state of Israel when its declared its independence.<sup>70</sup>

Elsewhere in his memoirs, Truman declares that he had trained himself to look back in history for precedents. He later reaffirmed that the lessons of history offered guides to the "right principles of action." Truman was convinced that the League of Nations had acted wrongly in not combining to resist its first challenges by Japan, Germany and Italy. He believed so strongly in these parallels from

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<sup>69</sup>Clark M. Clifford, "The Unique and Inspiring Leadership of President Truman" in Levantrosser, The Man from Independence, 381.

<sup>70</sup>Herbert Druks, "Truman and the Recognition of Israel Reconsidered," Levantrosser, 55.

the 1930s that in 1950 he weighed the North Korean invasion against the balance of these past experiences.<sup>71</sup>

Always self-conscious about his lack of higher education, Truman delighted in impressing others with his knowledge of the past, but his knowledge was neither systematic nor critical. He regarded history as a means of discovering lessons of the past, rather than as a tool of analysis. There are frequent references in his diaries and letters to what anyone from Alexander the Great to Andrew Jackson would have done in a particular circumstance. These lessons tended to reinforce his tendency to emphasize individual conduct rather than historical or cultural factors.<sup>72</sup>

### Leadership Style

When Harry Truman became President, he brought to the White House a characteristic style of leadership acquired through his 61 years of service in war, business bankruptcy and elective office. Truman's experience as a captain of Army artillery in World War I was one of the most formative experiences of his life and helped shape his ideas about leadership. Leadership for Truman was the "ability to get other people to do what they don't want to do and like it."

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<sup>71</sup>Ernest R. May. "Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History In American Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 82-84.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 48.

In a similar vein, when asked how he would behave as the head of the nation, Truman replied, "Just as I did when I was a judge in Jackson County."<sup>73</sup>

The new president was a man of a orderly habits and thought patterns. He was disturbed by the patterns of organizational jurisdiction that he had inherited from Roosevelt. Truman established a greater degree of orderliness than was seen in the Roosevelt White House with its few clear lines of authority and cognizance. Truman's staff organization was one of structured decentralization, unlike the system of unofficial advisors and conflicting and overlapping jurisdictions used by Roosevelt.<sup>74</sup>

His use of the cabinet reflected an almost textbook approach to the workings of government. As a constitutional formalist, he assumed that the president ran the executive branch and that the cabinet officers were his aides.<sup>75</sup> He would later learn that the cabinet officers were executives in their own rights and had to be allowed to run their departments.

He brought to his new position a great sense of loyalty up and down the organizational ladder by virtue of his long service as an organization politician. When Truman became

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<sup>73</sup>S.J. Woolf, "President Truman: A Portrait and Interview," The New York Times Magazine, 14 October 1945, 5.

<sup>74</sup>Hamby, "The Mind and Character of HST," 41.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 42.

the "boss," he expected loyalty and gave an equal loyalty to his followers and subordinates. He did his best to smooth the way for them as they conducted their share of foreign policy. He respected their expertise and willingly made decisions based on their recommendations.<sup>76</sup>

Truman instinctively acted as a presiding judge in the White House. He dealt with issues one after the other, with little thought of those before and the ones coming in the future. He treated matters on a case-by-case basis, and was careful to receive information from a variety of sources. He did not seek to find patterns in pieces of information, or to speculate about their implications. He concentrated on the "here and now," looking for what was to be decided, what bore directly on the case, and tended to dismiss all else as irrelevant.<sup>77</sup>

Truman saw the presidency as the focal point of the government, of the nation and of American history. He would not let personal proclivities or self-interest influence a presidential decision. Separating the presidency between the man and the office, he was conscious of each role he played. He played chief of state like a gracious host, leader of his party like an organization politician, and

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<sup>76</sup>Richard E. Neustadt, Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership from FDR to Carter rev. ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Co., 1980), 127.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 126.

chief of foreign policy as a career official reminding all that politics stops at the water's edge.<sup>78</sup>

Truman brought to the White House a consummate ability as a politician. For Truman the politician was the ablest man in government. Truman had acute political instincts, developed in the election campaigns he had waged for county judge and senator. He recognized that foreign policy had to have the backing of the people. Only by explaining and interpreting isolated actions in terms of a wider vision of the role of the United States could the president gain popular support for a policy. In world affairs Truman conceived of his role as being one of persuading the American people, rather than issuing edicts and proclamations.<sup>79</sup>

Truman saw himself as the heir of FDR, of the New Deal and of internationalism, but he had had only thirty official appointments with President Roosevelt between 1935 and April 1945. Twenty-one of these had occurred before 1943. Four had taken place in 1944 (August 18, September 19, November 10, December 21) and five in 1945 (January 2, 9, and 20; March 8 and 19).<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>79</sup>Alfred Steinberg, The Man from Missouri: The Life and Times of Harry S Truman (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 88-89.

<sup>80</sup>NT to NL Memorandum of 4 November 1963, Harry S. Truman Background, HST Appointments with FDR, 1935-1945, PPF, HSTL.

The contrasts between Harry S Truman and his predecessor made the presidential transition even more shocking. Roosevelt's patrician bearing, his easy confidence, and his eloquence gave him a presence Truman lacked. FDR had been on the national scene for decades as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I, as a vice presidential candidate in 1920 and as governor of New York. Truman, on the other hand, was a smaller personality. He had commanded an artillery battery in World War I, started and lost a business in Kansas City and had served three terms as a county administrative judge before becoming senator in 1935.<sup>81</sup>

The New York Times declared that the way Truman directed his Senate committee afforded the best yardstick by which to appraise the methods he might use in handling the vastly greater responsibilities of his new office. Those who looked for great changes should bear in mind his inherent caution; he might be influenced by a west of the Mississippi ideology. Truman thought that politics was a proper and honorable calling and that government should be in the hands of capable and honest politicians.<sup>82</sup>

President Roosevelt liked the bold stroke. Truman was less audacious, a great deal less of a political showman and

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<sup>81</sup>Robert J. Maddox, From War to Cold War: The Education of Harry S. Truman (London: Westview Press, 1988), 46.

<sup>82</sup>Luther Huston, "Truman's Record Shows Practical, Prudent Man," New York Times, 15 April 1945.

was not by any means as self-assured and self-sufficient as his late chief. Basing their judgment on Truman's personality and on his almost wholly legislative background in national affairs, the Times anticipated that political councils would indeed be councils during the Truman regime.<sup>83</sup>

### Summary

Truman's principal task, which he managed with only occasional errors and considerable aplomb, was to turn the foreign policy of the United States from isolation and occasional intervention in Europe's affairs to a necessary participation in world affairs.<sup>84</sup> A man with less historical knowledge might have put his head in the noose of the isolationists, who quoted Washington's Farewell Address. Truman compared the isolationists to preachers who quoted Bible verses out of context. By relating doctrines to conditions, Truman became convinced that the growth of the United States had long ago invalidated Washington's method of making the United States secure.<sup>85</sup>

According to Leon Keyserling, Vice Chairman of Truman's Council of Economic Advisors, Truman was determined to

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ferrell, "HST: A Chance President," 153.

<sup>85</sup>R.G. Cowherd, "Mr. Truman's Uses of History," The Social Studies, 50 (April 1959): 144.

remain the type of man he was before he became president. The problems which confronted Truman challenged him and enabled him to do many more things than he had ever done before. As president, he acted as he did because he was the kind of man he had always been.

The unimpeachable honesty which resisted political conditions in Missouri was the same quality that was evident in the White House. The loyalty to friends that caused him criticism in the White House was the same loyalty that he had demonstrated earlier in Missouri. As Keyserling put it: "In essence, Harry Truman did not change much as a man during his Presidency; it was merely that the flowering was preceded by the seed and long cultivation." As President, "he surprised others, but never himself."<sup>86</sup> Just as Truman saw himself as a reflection of the American common man, he saw his foreign policy - the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and Point Four - as a reflection of the American character, his character: a generosity combined with a principled toughness.<sup>87</sup> The quickness and the firmness of his foreign policy decisions which were the hallmark of his tenure as Chief Executive were the same as those he had exercised as Presiding Judge back in Jackson County.

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<sup>86</sup>Leon H. Keyserling, "Harry S. Truman: The Man and the President" in Levantrosser, The Man from Independence, 237.

<sup>87</sup>Norman Podhoretz, "Truman and the Idea of the Common Man," Commentary 21 (May 1956): 474.



## CHAPTER 4

### DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

On 20 January 1953, the wartime commander of the Allied Powers, Dwight David Eisenhower, became the thirty-fourth President of the United States. General of the Army Eisenhower brought a unique background and an unusual range of experiences to his new position as he took his place at the pinnacle of American achievement and power. Eisenhower had already made his mark as a military leader, but what predispositions from his past did he bring to his presidency?

Among other character traits, Dwight David Eisenhower brought to the presidency a style of leadership and management that he had used to become one of the most successful military men of the twentieth century. Part and parcel of this style was the abiding sense of duty which had guided and formed his life. His mother, Ida, had continually emphasized the virtues of self-reliance, hard work, and doing one's duty as the most important of personal values. Throughout his life Eisenhower held fast to these

values and remembered that his mother's greatest belief was that of self-discipline.<sup>1</sup>

Early in the twentieth century, Eisenhower was admitted to the United States Military Academy at West Point where he and his fellow cadets were indoctrinated into a Progressive ideal of an efficient, professionalized Army which carried with it an accompanying devotion to an apolitical creed. Politics was seen by the cadets and their superiors as contentious partisanship and divisive clamor. It was the duty of the good officer to avoid the corrupting influence of politics on teamwork and efficiency. The concept of duty was the watchword of the military ideal, the justification for channeled ambition and the preserver of military virtue. This overarching ideal of duty was to carry Eisenhower through the many dry years of Army service.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, he once told his wife, Mamie, "My country comes first. You come second."<sup>3</sup>

Eisenhower always took his responsibilities seriously and worked hard in whatever activity he was assigned, winning a string of plaudits from his commanding officers. General Douglas MacArthur described Eisenhower in an

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<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Gilbert, The Mortal Presidency: Illness and Anguish in the White House (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 75.

<sup>2</sup>Robert F. Burk, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Hero and Politician (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 23.

<sup>3</sup>Michael Beschloss, Eisenhower (New York: Edward Burlingame, 1990), 28.

efficiency report, writing: "This officer has no superior of his time either in command or general staff capacity in the Army."<sup>4</sup>

During his Army career four generals took Eisenhower under their wings and developed mentor or student-teacher relationships with him: Fox Connor, John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur and George C. Marshall. Connor probably had the greatest influence on Eisenhower's early development as a strategic thinker while they were both assigned to the Panama Canal Zone. For three years Connor instructed Eisenhower in the military arts. It was for Eisenhower "a sort of graduate school in military affairs and the humanities. . . ."<sup>5</sup> Connor prepared Eisenhower in classical military strategy, but he also instilled in Eisenhower a principle which became a hallmark of Eisenhower's leadership style and one of the keys to his success, namely the need for allied unity.<sup>6</sup>

His military duties before World War II also gave the future president at least a fringe familiarity with decisions affecting high officials of the executive branch. In 1929 as a major, Eisenhower was appointed personal assistant to the Assistant Secretary of War, and in February

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<sup>4</sup>Efficiency Report dated 30 June 1936 by General Douglas MacArthur, Eisenhower Museum, Abilene, KS.

<sup>5</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, At Ease: Stories I Tell To Friends (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), 178.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 199.

1933 to the Chief of Staff of the Army, Douglas MacArthur. Eisenhower's duties concerned such matters as military budgets, public affairs, and relations between the Executive Branch and the Congress.<sup>7</sup> Eisenhower produced an overall strategy and blueprint for war mobilization; his plan was not adopted, but it gave him a detailed knowledge of what was to become the arsenal of democracy.<sup>8</sup> He later recollected that without the administrative experience he gained while serving under MacArthur he "would not have been ready for the great responsibilities of the war period."<sup>9</sup>

As the war in Europe broke out, Eisenhower began a spectacular rise to the top of the Army. In mid-1941, he was Chief of Staff of the Third Army. Five days after Pearl Harbor he was reassigned to Washington by the Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall.<sup>10</sup> Marshall had been following Eisenhower's career for several years and believed that he had acquired the knowledge and maturity to help shape the strategic plans for the defeat of Germany and Japan. While assigned to the War Department, Eisenhower absorbed Marshall's managerial philosophy, the two most

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<sup>7</sup>David B. Capitanichik, The Eisenhower Presidency and American Foreign Policy (London: Routledge Paul, 1969), 5-6.

<sup>8</sup>Burk, DDE: Hero and Politician, 37.

<sup>9</sup>Kenneth S. Davis, Soldier of Democracy (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1946), 146.

<sup>10</sup>Chester J. Pach, Jr. and Elmo Richardson, eds., The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower rev.ed. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1991), 6.

important tenets of which were: first, the decision-maker must not be distracted by problems that subordinates should resolve for themselves; and second, the assistants must have ready the precise information needed to make decisions.<sup>11</sup>

By 1945 Eisenhower had spent thirteen years overseas in contact with nearly every head of state in Western Europe and had commanded history's largest army. He had spoken with Churchill, Eden, Macmillan, Stalin, Roosevelt and de Gaulle. He had commanded forces from France, America, Britain, the Commonwealth, Poland and Czechoslovakia. He had led the Western Alliance to victory. Never before had a single individual won the trust and confidence of so many people and so many competing national interests. Eisenhower emerged from the war with expertise in many areas: intelligence systems, clandestine operations, calculated risk-taking, censorship, and press conferences. As Truman's Army Chief of Staff and the first commander of NATO, he played a key role in France's eventual decision to join NATO and he had steered that organization through its formative years.<sup>12</sup> After the war Eisenhower became the symbol of the victorious Western democracies. His image was that of the gentle Christian warrior, the noble crusader returned from the war against the Nazi infidels. He inspired immense

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>12</sup>Frederick W. Marks, III, Power and Peace: The Diplomacy of John Foster Dulles (London: Praeger, 1993), 21.

public confidence.<sup>13</sup> Eisenhower derived additional benefit from a term as president of Columbia University from 1948 to 1950.<sup>14</sup>

Eisenhower was a hero seeking national unity and a return to the code of personal responsibility. He became president to change the perception that the state was responsible for taking the individual from the cradle to the grave.<sup>15</sup> The undeniable call of duty<sup>16</sup> and the threat of Senator Robert Taft's isolationism convinced him to run for the presidency.<sup>17</sup> In the final analysis Eisenhower did not know which was worse, the danger of national bankruptcy or isolationism, but he knew he had to stop both.<sup>18</sup> He did not seek the presidency, but managed his public and private life in such a manner that the presidency sought him. His love was not for power, but for duty.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Eisenhower was supremely confident in his sense of his own fitness for the job.

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<sup>13</sup>Burk, DDE: Hero and Politician, 93.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>15</sup>Robert H. Ferrell, ed., The Eisenhower Diaries (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 374.

<sup>16</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1990), 246.

<sup>17</sup>Ferrell, The Eisenhower Diaries, 252.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 264.

<sup>19</sup>Gilbert, The Mortal Presidency, 121.

Eisenhower was unique among American presidents in that he had spent all but two years of his career before election to the presidency in uniform; only Eisenhower among the modern presidents had never held elective office in his pre-presidential career. However, his experience in foreign affairs was without parallel among the presidents of the twentieth century.<sup>20</sup>

### Professional Skills

Eisenhower's military success was due to his ability to plan and to coordinate complex military operations. As Assistant Chief of Staff in charge of war plans under General Marshall, Eisenhower was responsible for the preparation of a plan for the invasion of Europe across the English Channel--in rough outline the same plan he was to follow two years and three months later.<sup>21</sup> Marshall's office also became a school room in which Eisenhower learned many lessons useful to him in the final development of his own command technique. He learned about the most effective melding of military and political leadership on the level of supreme command. Eisenhower also noted how Marshall allowed his subordinates to operate within the limits of their

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<sup>20</sup>Capitanchik, The Eisenhower Presidency, 1.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 6-7.

abilities, limits which Marshall measured with great shrewdness.<sup>22</sup>

Eisenhower saw that Marshall never condescended, never presumed to issue orders to civilians, and never impugned the motives of his opponents on specific issues. Marshall made no grandiose public gestures calculated to inflame prejudices or outrage the convictions of those who distrusted the military. Marshall counted on the truth to win its own points; when he won over a former opponent, he never gloated over it. In his view, such a victory was never personal; it meant simply that his former opponent, like himself, now recognized an objective reality. Eisenhower applied these lessons exceptionally well both as the principal Allied commander in Europe and as President of the United States.<sup>23</sup>

Eisenhower's success as a commander was also due to two factors which were particularly relevant to his presidency. The first was his effort to promote allied unity, teamwork, and harmony. Eisenhower was particularly skillful at finding compromises, sometimes at the expense of weakening overall strategy, but with the knowledge that frequently political as well as military considerations had to be taken into account. The second factor was Eisenhower's grasp of

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<sup>22</sup>Davis, Soldier of Democracy, 294.

<sup>23</sup>Paul G. Munch, "General George C. Marshall and the Army Staff" Military Review 74 (August 1994): 18.



the requirements of a modern executive which led him to a view of institutional leadership which was reflected in his presidency.<sup>24</sup>

Eisenhower's postwar appointment as the military commander of NATO further enhanced his wartime experience. He honed his diplomatic skills by convincing the European governments of the need for unity. At the same time he had to reassure Americans in Congress and the public at large of the need for continued American involvement in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

Eisenhower himself saw a "great carry-over" in the way he acted as Army general and as president. He did not abandon his previous methods of getting information on which he had to make decisions. Eisenhower had become accustomed both as commander and as president to getting essential information from summary sheets or briefings from his staff. He would get the facts and the views from people around him, particularly when they had some expertise in one particular facet of a problem.<sup>26</sup> He continued this practice as president in order to master the essentials quickly and to make a decision. He read portions of books or articles brought to his attention and continued to show a keen ability to cut to the heart of an issue. His extraordinary

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<sup>24</sup>Capitanchik, The Eisenhower Presidency, 9.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>26</sup>Oral History Interview with General Dwight D. Eisenhower by Ed Edwin, 20 July 1967, OH-11, Interview #1: 106, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library (DDEL), Abilene, KS.

involvement in world affairs also provided him with a breadth of knowledge that awed many of his aides.<sup>27</sup>

Eisenhower's respect for experts, however, rarely led him to accept their judgement over his own in the vital areas of foreign policy and military policy where he was himself particularly knowledgeable.<sup>28</sup>

### Leadership Style

During his military career, Eisenhower developed a style of leadership in which smooth running teams posed alternatives for his decision. Policy was made achievable by seeking consensus among all those operationally responsible for implementing an action. He carried over from his military experience these organizational concepts and principles of leadership into his new position as President of the United States. Due to his personality and his experiences as a staff officer, Eisenhower placed a premium on the views of his staff officers and, particularly when they reached agreement, might favor their position over his own. To Eisenhower the duty of a staff was to bring the leader the minimum number of issues for his decision. When the commander's decision was ultimately necessary, the staff was to come with an agreed upon course of action or clear-cut, well-defined alternatives.

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<sup>27</sup>Pach and Richardson, The Presidency of DDE, 40.

<sup>28</sup>Capitanchik, The Eisenhower Presidency, 10.

Writing in 1960, Walt Rostow summed up Eisenhower's leadership principles. First, the leader should provide continuity to an organization or institution by articulating his abiding values and by ensuring that day-to-day decisions maintained this continuity and conformed to his values. Second, the leader should refrain from imposing his own judgements on appropriate courses of action. He should seek to create a consensus through mutual persuasion and negotiation in which the diverse tasks and functions of the organization are brought into harmony.<sup>29</sup>

Third, when the leader is forced to make a decision after the process of persuasion and negotiation are exhausted, he must take final responsibility for the decision but in such away that the conflicting interests and views of the organization are embedded in the decision. Fourth, when a decision is made, the course of action should be followed unless an overwhelming case for change is developed by new circumstances. Fifth, primary responsibility for day-to-day policy rests with those responsible for the particular operational task which had to be accomplished under conditions of maximum mutual accommodation. Finally, the leader must have a strong chief of staff, capable of forcing decisions to be made at the

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<sup>29</sup>Rostow, The United States In the World Arena, 388.

lowest level possible and of screening out issues brought to the leader for action.<sup>30</sup>

Eisenhower implemented this last principle in the White House as soon as he assumed office. He installed a chief of staff for domestic affairs in the person of Sherman Adams. As such, Adams was able to function in the same manner as his military predecessors: Walter Bedell Smith, Lucius Clay, and Alfred Gruenther. As president, Eisenhower also selected men and women for his cabinet who conformed to his conception of able technicians, the equivalent of his commanders during the war. Day-to-day control over routine matters and foreign policy implementation devolved into the hands of these department heads while he retained decision-making power on key issues.<sup>31</sup>

#### Staff Management

Eisenhower was a master executive, confident in his abilities to operate large staff organizations. His command structure was deliberate, complex, and finely tuned to his requirements. He recognized that it was impossible for him to be personally involved in every detail of every issue. In his view effective leadership required managerial skills to sort out decisions requiring the executive's personal attention from matters of lesser importance which could be

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 388.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 190.

handled by subordinates. He himself had filled the staff officer's role enough times to know that no command structure could overcome the problem of the wrong person in a key position. Confident that he had selected the best person, he then delegated maximum responsibility to his subordinates and his appointees.<sup>32</sup>

In dealing with his staff, Eisenhower gave mission orders and made his subordinates fully responsible for their actions and their results. The technique he had learned from Marshall was simple. Marshall's relationship with Eisenhower had been typical of Marshall's mode of leadership and he followed a similar approach with other officers under him. "Army officers are intelligent," General Marshall would say. "Give them the bare tree, let them supply the leaves."<sup>33</sup> Marshall defined the task and his expectations and then ordered the officer to develop a plan. After reviewing the plan, Eisenhower, as Marshall had done with him, directed the officer to execute the plan while Eisenhower monitored his progress. Both Marshall and Eisenhower expected the responsible officer to make timely decisions within the confines of his responsibility. Just as the broad responsibilities given to Eisenhower shortly after Pearl Harbor were the rule rather than the exception

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<sup>32</sup>Davis, Soldier of Democracy, 263.

<sup>33</sup>Edgar F. Puryear, Nineteen Stars (Orange, VA: Green Publishers, Inc., 1971), 81.

on Marshall's staff, Eisenhower gave broad responsibilities to his subordinates when he became a commander in his own right and later as president.<sup>34</sup>

According to one of his speechwriters, Eisenhower knew he wasn't an expert in everything. Bruce Harlow described him as a great commander who would depend on his corps commander to tell him what was going on in the corps. "That's the way he believed, the way he was trained in delegation. It was one of his great skills. That's one of the hardest skills to master --how to delegate."<sup>35</sup>

In numerous interviews and correspondence, Eisenhower's staff officers stated that Eisenhower was the boss, that he was a commander who would listen to all sides of an issue, extract its root element, and work out a solution. General Walter B. Smith, Eisenhower's wartime Chief of Staff, described his ability to delegate authority to his staff as "beautiful." Eisenhower was so gifted that he could literally put his finger quickly and accurately on the crux of the problem under discussion.<sup>36</sup>

Herbert Brownell, Eisenhower's Attorney General, would echo Smith's words in describing Eisenhower years later.

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<sup>34</sup>Munch, "Marshall and the Army Staff," 20.

<sup>35</sup>Bruce Harlow, "The "Compleat" President," in The Eisenhower Presidency: Eleven Intimate Perspectives of Dwight D. Eisenhower, ed. Kenneth W. Thompson, (Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1984), 148.

<sup>36</sup>Puryear, Nineteen Stars, 212.

"He delegated a maximum of authority, keeping an eagle eye on what was going on. He helped me in the selection of associates without interfering."<sup>37</sup>

### Teamwork and Cooperation

More than any other event in his life the Second World War shaped and consolidated Eisenhower's worldview and leadership philosophy. The war was a potent lesson in international relations; the Allies were faced with the choice of cooperation or domination. Eisenhower was the linchpin of the cooperative effort that defeated the Germans. He designed and managed the meeting place between the political and military policies of the United States and Great Britain, and to a lesser degree, that of the Soviet Union and France.<sup>38</sup>

Eisenhower's self-portrait, Crusade in Europe, opened with the theme of cooperation which would run through the entire work. It would be linked with related terms such as unity, teamwork, allies, and partnership. The theme connoted the picture of a leader who believed that the greatest safety lay in numbers and the soundest wisdom in a variety of voices.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Herbert Brownell, "From Campaigning to Governance" in Thompson, Eleven Intimate Perspectives, 168.

<sup>38</sup>Davis, Soldier of Democracy, 131.

<sup>39</sup>Martin J. Medhurst, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Strategic Communicator (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 13.

Eisenhower became increasingly convinced of the need for "this combined stuff."<sup>40</sup> Teamwork to Eisenhower meant subordinating personal, service, and even national interest to a common goal. He often drew analogies from his football coaching days about the need for "team play."<sup>41</sup> The need for teamwork became a permanent addition to Eisenhower's leadership philosophy and it resurfaced in nearly every undertaking. This sense of teamwork enabled him to work with leaders as strong-willed as Douglas MacArthur, Bernard Montgomery, Charles de Gaulle, Admiral Ernest King, and George S. Patton. One of his remarkable talents was the ability to subordinate his personal views to his sense of duty and the need for teamwork.<sup>42</sup>

As early as 1943, Eisenhower spoke of "Allied team play" as one of the greatest gains made from the North African Campaign. "Each man here has come to realize that the greatest patriot, the greatest lover of his country, is one that is the quickest to promote Allied team play and to demand its perfection."<sup>43</sup> The war years consolidated Eisenhower's faith in cooperative approaches to national and

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<sup>40</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary, 8 March 1942, DDEL.

<sup>41</sup>Eisenhower, At Ease, 16.

<sup>42</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary, 20 April 1942, DDEL.

<sup>43</sup>Radio talk by Gen Eisenhower for North African Program of BBC, 24 May 1943. Box 192, Principal File (PF), Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers, Pre-presidential, 1916-52 (PPP), DDEL.



international security. The teamwork concept he applied to his staff operations during the war appealed to him in a much broader sense than as only a mechanism to persuade individuals to work together. If nations could work together in war, why couldn't they in peace?"<sup>44</sup>

Following the war Eisenhower spoke of teamwork as the device to preclude wars of the future. In January 1946, he declared: "nations that joined together to defeat ruthless enemies have even greater reason to remain united for the peaceful settlement of their differences lest new Hitlers rise to throw the world into a chaos more awful than the shattered countries of Europe present today."<sup>45</sup> In April 1946, Eisenhower said "We must remain united in working for security in peace as we did for success in war."<sup>46</sup> In November Eisenhower would plead for cooperation "because only cooperation will make this country great. . . . Guns and tanks are nothing unless there is a solid spirit, a solid heart, and a great productiveness behind it."<sup>47</sup>

Eisenhower saw that cooperation and teamwork were also needed within the Armed Forces. Unlike Truman who wanted to

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<sup>44</sup>Eisenhower, Crusade In Europe (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 486.

<sup>45</sup>Speech before Canadian Club, Ottawa, Canada, 10 January 1946, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>46</sup>Army Day Speech, Chicago, Il., 6 April 1946, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>47</sup>Address before the Economic Club of New York at Dinner Meeting, 20 November 1946, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

unify the Armed Forces to reduce duplication and government spending, Eisenhower wrote on 27 November 1945 that he wanted to foster "the closest possible kind of association among individuals" and to promote a spirit of teamwork among the services that would lead to the "model of unified, integrated and enthusiastic cooperation" he had engendered in Europe during the war.<sup>48</sup>

### Personal Philosophy

Eisenhower's famous address at Guildhall, London, England on 12 June 1945 contained many of the themes and attitudes that would characterize his postwar stances: cooperation, sacrifice, duty and humility.

No petty differences in the worlds of trade, national traditions and pride should ever blind us to these spiritual, priceless values. If we keep our eyes on this guidepost, then never can there be encountered a difficulty in our road of mutual cooperation that will be insurmountable.<sup>49</sup>

While the public only knew Eisenhower through wartime dispatches and occasional human interest stories, Eisenhower would emerge over the next several years in speeches and letters as a special representative of the common man, with a dedication to high ideals, a consideration of others, humility and a special sort of moral vision. This speech provided an initial glimpse into

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<sup>48</sup>Griffith, Ike's Letters To A Friend, 28-29.

<sup>49</sup>Medhurst, DDE: Strategic Communicator, 131.

philosophy and beliefs of this wartime leader and future president.<sup>50</sup>

Eisenhower brought to the presidency a belief that the struggle between the East and the West represented two ideologically opposed systems. To him one system represented statism while the other represented the dignity of the individual, who had a soul and certain inalienable rights that could not be taken away.<sup>51</sup> Human dignity, economic freedom and individual responsibility were the characteristics that distinguished democracy from all other governmental forms devised by humankind.<sup>52</sup>

Eisenhower's concept of this ideological struggle pitted democracy against statism without assuming that the United States and the Soviet Union were necessarily destined to go to war. Armed conflict was not inevitable, but the democracies had to rise to the challenge of the Soviet Union's increased power after the World War II. Isolationism would keep the United States from exerting a positive influence in world politics and would lead to Soviet opportunism in the Third World countries. The ultimate

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>51</sup>Address at Banquet of International Business Machines Corp., 14 July 1948, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>52</sup>West Virginia University Convocation, 23 September 1947, Box 195, PF, PPP, DDEL.

result would be that the United States would be shut out of opportunities for growth and development.<sup>53</sup>

A year later he would complement this theme of struggle with an outline of three fundamental principles of American life. First, "individual freedom is our most precious asset and the chief target of our enemies." Second, these personal, economic, social and political freedoms were bundled together in an inseparable manner. Diminution of one led to the diminution of all. Third, the freedom to compete vigorously and to cooperate wholeheartedly made the American system the most productive on earth.<sup>54</sup>

In a letter to Everett "Swede" Hazlett on 19 July 1947, Eisenhower described his belief in the American form of democracy. This system, Eisenhower wrote

recognizes and protects the rights of the individual. . . only through a system of free enterprise can this type of democracy be preserved. . . world order can be established only by the practice of true cooperation among sovereign nations. . . . American leadership towards this goal depends upon her strength-her strength of will, her moral, social and economic strength and, until an effective world order is achieved, upon her military strength.<sup>55</sup>

Alongside these principles lay Eisenhower's dedication to the "middle way." The path to America's future led down

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<sup>53</sup>Zachery Shands Davis, "Eisenhower's Worldview and Nuclear Strategy" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1989), 5.

<sup>54</sup>Address before the American Bar Association, St. Louis, MO, 5 September 1949, Box 193, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>55</sup>Griffith, Ike's Letters To A Friend, 40.

the "middle of the road between unfettered power of concentrated wealth on one flank, and the unbridled power of statism, or partisan interest on the other." For Eisenhower these principles and adherence to "the middle way" provided the setting to resolve all acute differences.<sup>56</sup>

Eisenhower also believed that intelligent people were not isolationists and that a nation's security demanded participation in the community of nations. Both at home and abroad economic aid was necessary to alleviate suffering.<sup>57</sup> Eisenhower, like George Kennan, believed that America's greatest strength was in its democratic institutions and its economic power and that Communism's greatest ally was poverty. As he wrote in his wartime memoris: "Discontent can be fanned into revolution, and revolution into social chaos. The sequel is dictatorial rule."<sup>58</sup>

Eisenhower also recognized the connection between education and national security. He felt strongly that the greatest strength of the United States lay in the vitality of its democratic institutions. To Eisenhower college students and university faculties represented a great wealth of intellectual power which could be used to generate a greater appreciation for the blessings of democracy and free

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<sup>56</sup>Address before the American Bar Association, St. Louis, MO, 5 September 1949, Box 193, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>57</sup>Allan Taylor, ed., What Eisenhower Thinks (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1952), 142.

<sup>58</sup>Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, 505.

enterprise. To further this belief he played a leading part in the forming of the American Assembly which sponsored community forums and lectures. He viewed the Assembly as the "principal success of his time as university president."<sup>59</sup>

### Defense Policy

Eisenhower envisioned NATO as the key to European unification, which he hoped would go beyond military to economic and political integration. Unity, teamwork, and cooperation also came into play here as well; in this instance Eisenhower saw them as the key elements in building the political, economic, moral and military power required to defend the free world from communist aggression and to prevent the United States from becoming isolated in a world dominated by nations hostile to American interests and values.<sup>60</sup>

Eisenhower also suspected that the Soviets possessed an advantage over the United States in being able to coordinate their global policy and strategy without having to build support for their policies by appealing to a large number of internal factions and constituencies. Only unity and teamwork could put democracy on an equal footing with communism in the execution of foreign policy. Since the

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<sup>59</sup>Eisenhower, At Ease, 350.

<sup>60</sup>Davis, "Eisenhower's Worldview," 159.

United States could not contain the Communist Revolution by bringing an end to poverty everywhere, the best remaining option was to make the most efficient use of every resource, human, material, and moral.<sup>61</sup>

Eisenhower's involvement with nuclear strategy from 1946 to 1952 foreshadowed his personal commitment to implement a coherent and rational nuclear weapons strategy. A unified strategy would control inter-service rivalry, define the roles of each service in regard to nuclear weapons, recognize certain domestic and foreign limitations, and establish a relationship between ends and means. As Chief of Staff, President of Columbia University and Supreme Commander of NATO, Eisenhower came to believe that the most important missing element in the nation's political, military, and atomic strategy was leadership.<sup>62</sup>

In a speech to the American Legion convention in New York in August 1947 Eisenhower described the "forceful imposition of minority dictatorial control" onto critical areas. The security of the United States "depends upon the existence and growth of a free world." The United States must arm itself so that any war would be fought on the territory of the "predatory aggressor." The United States must be ready to endure the first hard blows of the conflict, immediately recover, and then "strike back, to hit

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 210.

harder than he does--to win." Only through genuine preparedness could the United States convince a potential aggressor that war would result in his exhaustion or destruction.<sup>63</sup>

#### Personal Beliefs

Eisenhower believed that public office should not be sought after, but accepted as a solemn responsibility. He refused to affiliate himself with a political party or to become involved in politics "except in such exceptional circumstances where a duty was clearly indicated."<sup>64</sup> Yet according to U.S. News and World Report, Eisenhower's speech before the American Bar Association on 5 September 1951 placed him in the Republican Party even before he won its nomination for president. In this speech Eisenhower again called for a political path down the center, avoiding vested interests and increases in the power of the government. He depicted the center as the ideal political ground, with the government establishing rules to preserve a practical equality of opportunity and acting as a balance between the forces of the right and the left. He called upon all

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<sup>63</sup>Capitanchik, The Eisenhower Presidency, 44.

<sup>64</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary, 10 July 1951, DDEL.



citizens to see that the government did not interfere with Americans' lives more than is necessary.<sup>65</sup>

Eisenhower accepted the nomination to the presidency because he judged it to be "a transcendent duty" from which he could not retreat. He never completely shed his distaste for partisan politics and remained an ardent follower of the "middle way." His idea of teamwork and consensus allowed him to maintain good relations with the Democratic majority in Congress. He found it ironic that the strongest opposition to some of his policies came from his own party.<sup>66</sup> Partisanship was the antithesis of teamwork and the unity that Eisenhower so highly prized.<sup>67</sup>

#### The Economy and National Defense

Eisenhower believed that the United States faced an internal economic threat from the Soviets as well as an external armed threat. He could not foresee the exact influence of the atomic bomb upon military forces, but wrote "no matter what the nature of these forces, we simply cannot afford extravagance. The premiums for safety insurance must

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<sup>65</sup>"Eisenhower is a Republican," U.S. News and World Report, 8 June 1951, 22-3.

<sup>66</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary, 7 Feb 1953, DDEL.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 22 March 1950.

be paid, but they should be accurately gauged to our needs."<sup>68</sup>

At the Air University in April 1947, Eisenhower said that the American way of life could be threatened

from the inside through collapse of the economic system, through tremendous inflation of the currency, through industrial strife, through a number of things that can come about merely from an unbalanced budget."<sup>69</sup>

Eisenhower wrote on 27 April 1949 to Swede Hazlett that "since a democracy must always retain a waiting, strategical [sic] defensive attitude, it is mandatory that some middle line be determined between desirable strength and unbearable cost."<sup>70</sup>

The problem of how much military power the nation could afford before the means of protecting America began to corrupt the "internal arrangement" of American life was a constant source of concern to Eisenhower. As he stated in his diary 22 January 1952,

In time of peace, certain of these controls [censorship, price controls, allocation of materials and commodities] could possibly be applied in unusual and serious circumstances, but only in the event that there are some specific self-limiting provisions included so that shrewd politicians cannot, through the manufacture of continuous emergency, do permanent damage to our system."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Capitanchik, The Eisenhower Presidency, 44.

<sup>69</sup>Speech at the Air university, Maxwell Field, Alabama, 8 April 1947, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>70</sup>Griffith, Ike's Letters To A Friend, 54.

<sup>71</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary, 2 January 1952, DDEL.

For Eisenhower the problem was how to maintain a large armed force without breaking the American economy. He proposed one solution to Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson in July 1950: pay a draftee only nominal pay ("nothing more than cigarette money") and maintain a skeleton cadre who would be remunerated along professional lines.<sup>72</sup>

Eisenhower believed in a strong and united America with unified armed forces. To him, "every consideration of efficiency, economy and progress in research demands the closest possible unity among all our fighting forces, all the way from the bottom to the top."<sup>73</sup> He testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that he had concluded that a unified field command was a vital factor in a speedy and decisive victory in war. Eisenhower believed that if the United States had attempted to fight World War II using the theories and practices of World War I victory would have been delayed, with untold and wasteful losses in men, money and resources. He wholeheartedly supported President Truman's plan to designate a single civilian head of the armed forces.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Letter from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, Correspondence, 31 July 1950, Box 110, Louis Johnson Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.

<sup>73</sup>Speech at American Legion Convention, Chicago, IL, 20 November 1945, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>74</sup>Testimony before the Armed Services Committee, United States Senate, on a Bill Proposing "The National Security Act of 1947", 25 March 1947, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

### International Outlook

Dwight D. Eisenhower came to the presidency with a unique blend of military, diplomatic and foreign policy experience. He brought with him an understanding that total war in an atomic age as an instrument of policy was unthinkable, that an alternative to war had to be found, and that only a system of international alliances could provide buffers against Soviet intransigence and expansionism.<sup>75</sup>

Eisenhower spoke about peace, promoted it and believed in peaceful co-existence with adversaries, but he saw peace as a direct result of military, economic, and spiritual strength. Military strength preserved democracy; economic strength preserved free trade and its open markets; and spiritual strength preserved freedom of belief and worship.<sup>76</sup>

Eisenhower thought it particularly important to provide the public the truth about basic factors, especially the economic dependence of the United States upon other regions and other nations for certain types of indispensable materials. In December 1950, he wrote to General Lawton Collins that the public also needed to know the great advantage that would accrue to the Communists if they successfully invaded Western Europe. Eisenhower pointed out the strength that was implicit in unity and the need for

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<sup>75</sup>Medhurst, DDE: Strategic Communicator, 71.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 86.

establishing priorities in essential tasks, since the strength of the United States could not "carry on her back all the rest of the world." He went on to describe to General Collins the relationship between national security and the "problems at home of preparation, maintenance, taxes, use of manpower, and production and so on."<sup>77</sup>

### Prepresidential Positions

Eisenhower's prepresidential thinking on the four specific issues of internationalism, unity, atomic weapons, and the economy were clear. "Intelligent people are not isolationists." "A nation's security in war and peace demands participation in the community of nations." In regard to the atomic bomb, "every invention of mankind has been capable of two uses, good and evil. It is up to mankind to decide to which use an invention is put. But I do not believe we should bury our heads in the sand." Of the need to help people recover from the war he said "It is possible, even probable, that hopelessness among a people can be a far more potent cause of war than greed."<sup>78</sup>

Foreign policy was clearly Eisenhower's first priority. His commitment to internationalist principles was the driving force behind his decision to seek the presidency,

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<sup>77</sup>Letter to Lt. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of the Army, 30 December 1950, Box 25, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>78</sup>Taylor, What Eisenhower Thinks, 127.

and it remained the logical justification behind many of his policies. His brand of internationalism combined the dominant view of containment held by the foreign policy establishment in Washington with his own geopolitical outlook.<sup>79</sup> This outlook and his ideas on foreign policy grew out of his belief in the efficacy of his own personal creed of "Americanism." This creed essentially posited freedom as the main product of cooperation among people of good will who sought to protect themselves from a common danger or to achieve a common good.<sup>80</sup>

Eisenhower saw internationalism as a counter to the advance of communism. As he said in June 1945 in a speech in Kansas City, "the problems of Europe and the world are our problems, whether we like it or not." In July 1946 in an address at Amherst College before the American Alumni Council Eisenhower declared "Every nation is neighbor to all mankind. The need for international teamwork is no less than for that among ourselves." In 1946 he said "a nation's success in war and in peace demands participation in the community of nations. . . . More than this, no nation can. .

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<sup>79</sup>Richard Melanson, "The Foundations of Eisenhower's Foreign Policy: Continuity, Community, and Consensus," in Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the Fifties, eds. Richard A. Melanson and David Mayers, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 31.

<sup>80</sup>Taylor, What Eisenhower Thinks, 127.

. . attain by itself even physical security.<sup>81</sup> In his last remarks as Army Chief of Staff he reiterated that he firmly believed:

the only prescription for absolute security for any nation. . .is international understanding and cooperation. A shining example is the international boundary between us and our neighbors, north and south....But we must face the hard fact that, during the two years since the war, the cooperative spirit has lost ground. The world comprises two great camps, grouped on the one side around dictatorships which subject the individual to absolute control and, on the other, democracy which provides him a free and unlimited horizon....We must so gird ourselves that a predatory aggressor will be aware of the risks he runs, should he provoke war, it will likely be fought over his territory.<sup>82</sup>

Eisenhower believed in the truth of Franklin's words:

"We must all hang together, or we shall assuredly hang separately." For him this truth was sharply underlined on the international scene "where the future of the democracies is dependent on their willingness to recognize their community of interests, to assist each other to live by their common faith in the wisdom of cooperative effort."<sup>83</sup> On 1 February 1951, Eisenhower again said to an informal joint session of Congress: "standing alone and isolated in a world otherwise completely dominated by communism, our

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<sup>81</sup>4th of July Address, Vicksburg, Mississippi, 4 July 1946, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>82</sup>Speech at American Legion Convention, New York, NY, 29 August 1947, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

<sup>83</sup>Speech Accepting the "Poor Richard Club Gold Medal of Achievement", Philadelphia, PA, 17 January 1948, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.

system would have to wither away. We would suffer economic atrophy and then finally collapse."<sup>84</sup>

The United Nations was the means for nations to get along with one another. In his address at the State Fair at Lincoln, Nebraska in September 1946, he compared the United Nations to the Midwestern neighborhoods of his youth. "The increase of the quality of neighborliness among nations is as essential to national security as is an adequate defense."<sup>85</sup>

These beliefs in internationalism were further developed by his membership from January 1949 to December 1950 in a Council on Foreign Relations Group that studied the military and political implications of the Marshall Plan. The council's members supported an internationalist and an anti-isolationist position toward foreign affairs. Eisenhower was sympathetic to the philosophy of the council and agreed to lead the study group. Believing that the United States had committed a grave error by refraining from joining the League of Nations after World war I, the Group argued that NATO should be only one of a whole system of American worldwide military alliances. The study group not only contributed to the economic and foreign policy knowledge of the future president, but it also continued to

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<sup>84</sup>Taylor, What Eisenhower Thinks, 127.

<sup>85</sup>Address at the State Fair, Lincoln, NE, n.d. September 1946, Box 192, PF, PPP, DDEL.



expose him to the thinking of an elite body of internationalists who directly influenced the conduct of foreign affairs. Indeed, the Foreign Relations Council itself had grown into a renowned forum for high-level, expert discussions on international matters.<sup>86</sup>

After World War II Eisenhower participated in the major decisions and actions that made up American foreign policy. He approved of Truman's initial decision to continue Roosevelt's policy of attempting to get along with the Soviets. When successive stages of disillusionment required acceptance of the fact that only a determined stand against Soviet intransigence would cope with Soviet imperialism, Eisenhower returned to active service and spurred on the defensive efforts of the Western allies.<sup>87</sup>

However, Eisenhower did not abandon the hope of negotiating with the Soviets because of three elements from his past. The first was his service with the Control Council in Berlin in 1945-46 which left him with a different impression of the Soviet officials than he had expected; he had even struck up a warm friendship with Soviet Marshall Grigori Zhukov during a conference in Berlin.<sup>88</sup> The second

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<sup>86</sup>Michael Wala, "An 'Education in Foreign Affairs for the Future President': the Council on Foreign Relations and Dwight D. Eisenhower" in Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency, ed. Shirley Anne Warshaw, (London: Greenwood Press, 1993), 2-11.

<sup>87</sup>Taylor, What Eisenhower Thinks, 128.

<sup>88</sup>Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President, 217.

element was his realistic appreciation for the destructive potential of nuclear weapons as compared with the conventional weapons of World War II. For Eisenhower, this made war not only irrational, but also unthinkable. The third factor was his commitment to a major reduction in defense expenditures.<sup>89</sup>

On 21 June 1951 while assigned as commander of Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), Eisenhower described for Swede Hazlett his insistence on a system of collective security in which he saw Europe providing in the long run for its own defense. The United States would help the Europeans produce arms and units for its own defense, with the United States providing psychological, intellectual and material leadership.<sup>90</sup> On 4 September 1951 Eisenhower outlined a requirement for a "broad and intelligent program of loans, trade, technical assistance and mutual guarantees of security."<sup>91</sup>

Unless we are careful to build up and to maintain a great group of international friends ready to trade with us, where do we hope to get the materials that we will one day need as our rate of consumption continues and accelerates?<sup>92</sup>

Eisenhower's internationalist position was reflected in his choice of business and social associates. Between 1945

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<sup>89</sup>Capitanchik, The Eisenhower Presidency, 56.

<sup>90</sup>Griffith, Ike's Letters To A Friend, 85.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 167.

and 1952, almost without exception Eisenhower's business companions were internationalists, who advocated an expanded global political, economic and military role for the United States, and conservatives who desired to rein in the growing power and activism of the state. His own version of patriotic nationalism and his distaste for divisive class and partisan warfare blended well with their convictions. He would increasingly call upon them for counsel and political support.<sup>93</sup>

Attorney General Herbert Brownell later wrote that Eisenhower's entire career prepared him for the presidency. He had developed a detailed knowledge of the Far East under MacArthur; he developed the Army budget and presented it to Congress. He had learned the relationship between the Pentagon budget and the general economic welfare of the United States. Eisenhower knew on a first name basis most of the leaders of the legislative branch who carried over into his own administration. Eisenhower, moreover, had helped develop postwar policy toward Europe. As a presidential candidate, he was not handicapped by a strong partisan background, nor was he brought up in the log-rolling atmosphere of Congress or in any State House.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Burk, DDE: Hero and Politician, 102-103.

<sup>94</sup>Thompson, Eleven Intimate Perspectives, 165-6.

### Summary

Eisenhower brought to the presidency certain intangible but crucial assets. A lifetime soldier, he was no militarist. The leader of a victorious coalition in the greatest war in history, he was genuinely a man of peace. His own high rank and long military experience made it impossible for the Pentagon brass to overshadow him; he handled them as no big business man, corporate executive or politician could. He had justifiable confidence in his one great gift--a gift of getting along with people, of solving and smoothing over organizational problems. Though his faith in the idea that he could sit down and talk with Soviet leaders reflected an overestimation of his skills in dealing with people, it indicated a willingness to assume that there were human beings with similar problems on the other side. For the first time since FDR, America had a leader who was not afraid to negotiate.<sup>95</sup>

In foreign affairs, Eisenhower believed that he was the only person who could continue the national consensus established by Roosevelt on domestic and foreign policy. American involvement in Korea endangered this consensus as the war became the chief symbol of an increasingly frustrating Cold War.<sup>96</sup> He accepted the support of the

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<sup>95</sup>I.F. Stone, The Haunted Fifties (Boston, Little, Brown, 1963), 105.

<sup>96</sup>Capitanchik, The Eisenhower Presidency, 16.

Republican Party's internationalist wing in a contest against Senator Robert A. Taft, the favorite of the isolationist wing. The more moderate Republicans interested in preserving the foreign policy consensus convinced him that he would be carrying out his NATO assignment in a different way, since only he could forestall the nomination of Senator Taft and the coming to power of his neo-isolationist backers. Eisenhower also saw his role as president as the continuation of his roles at SHAEF and at NATO as the great unifier and as the leader of the Western democracies in war and peace.<sup>97</sup>

The American public identified Eisenhower as a successful military leader, a common, down-to-earth individual, and a humble, non-political man. This picture merged with that of the peaceful warrior and duty-bound seeker of consensus. He became a hero because he was one; he became a hero because he was not a warrior or a pacifist, a leader or a common man, a candidate or a politician, but because he was all of these things. He offered an insecure people experience, strength, and confidence.<sup>98</sup>

General Eisenhower approached the presidency of Columbia University in June 1947, his appointment as NATO commander in December 1950, and his drive for the Republican

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>98</sup>Richard E. Crable, "Ike: Identification, Argument, and Paradoxical Appeal," Quarterly Journal of Speech 63 (1977), 195.

presidential nomination in January 1952 in the same manner. He had been called to duty; his position was clear: he expected full support and he would continue to keep his options open. He had convinced himself that "acceptance was a duty."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Travis Beal Jacobs, "Eisenhower, the American Assembly, and the 1952 Elections," in Warshaw, Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency, 18-19.

## CHAPTER 5

### FROM A LONG TELEGRAM TO A NEW LOOK

The previous chapters in this study examined the pre-presidential dispositions of both Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. This chapter will consider the impact of their character traits, personal beliefs and backgrounds on the foreign policy and national security problems of their respective administrations. Each man faced the same essential dilemma: how to counter the Soviet threat while meeting the domestic and political demands of his era. Each president modified the foreign policy of his predecessor in order to meet the demands of the unique situation confronting his administration. The major documents which resulted from the presidential reviews of national security and foreign policy, Truman's NSC 68 and Eisenhower's NSC 162, show how each president altered foreign and national security policy to meet the demands of his philosophy during his time in the arena.

#### President Harry S. Truman

During World War II President Franklin D. Roosevelt minimized disagreements between the United States and the Soviet Union and emphasized cooperation. Roosevelt was

convinced that his primary obligation was to focus the attention of the American people upon winning the war and to avoid controversies which might jeopardize national unity.<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt wanted to keep the Soviets involved in the war effort and to prevent a negotiated peace at the war's end which might replicate the problems which had followed World War I. Roosevelt dispatched a personal emissary, W. Averell Harriman, to the Soviet Union soon after it entered the war to resolve some early misunderstandings.<sup>2</sup>

During the war itself Roosevelt implemented a strategy of co-opting the Soviets by involving them in a series of conferences and in the development of an organization to maintain peace in the post-war world. Roosevelt believed that these joint planning activities would build a cooperative relationship between the two powers, would assure the Soviets of security and acceptability in the international arena, and would place moral pressures on the Soviets to live by the rules of the organization which they helped to create.<sup>3</sup> This strategy of co-opting the Soviets also involved postponing discussion of any issues which might be potentially divisive.

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<sup>1</sup>Sumner Welles, Where Are We Heading? (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), 18.

<sup>2</sup>W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin (New York: Random House, 1975), 268.

<sup>3</sup>Richard M. Freeland, The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 38.



Divisions eventually surfaced, however, and President Roosevelt's last days in office were marked by almost open disagreements with the Soviets. The question was whether these disagreements would become permanent after the war. President Harry S Truman, realizing the importance of domestic political considerations and desirous of continuing Roosevelt's co-operative policies, did not rush into a protracted confrontation with the Soviets while he and his country were preoccupied with demobilization and returning the nation to peacetime.<sup>4</sup> As president, Truman would frequently rely upon his reservoir of historical knowledge as a guide to action in areas in which he had little experience, such as foreign affairs. He saw the 1940s as a potential replay of the 1930s - depression, aggression, totalitarianism, and war.<sup>5</sup> For Truman the 1930s taught a plain and unmistakable lesson: appeasement did not eliminate the possibility of war. Other periods taught similar lessons. The withdrawal of American troops from Korea in 1949 suggested to Truman the eagerness of his Southern ancestors for the end of Reconstruction. The 1950 North Korean invasion of South Korea brought to Truman's mind not only America's rescue of the Allies in 1917, but also Washington's recovery in Valley Forge.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ferrell, "HST: A Chance President," 160.

<sup>5</sup>Paterson, On Every Front, 128.

<sup>6</sup>May, "Lessons" of the Past, 80.

But which analogy provided the best guide for relations with the USSR? Truman's advisors urged the president to be as firm as possible in his dealings with the Soviets. Ambassador W. Averell Harriman was convinced that the United States should indicate its displeasure in ways that affected the Soviet interest in each case in which they failed to take the interests of the United States into consideration.<sup>7</sup> The State Department agreed, writing that the United States should make it "patently clear" that cooperation and aid depended on the Soviet's conformity to the principles agreed upon at the Moscow and Teheran Conferences and that "firmness, friendliness and positive action" may be able to make them drop "at least the most odious methods of interference in the internal affairs of other countries."<sup>8</sup>

President Truman, who most admired the tough, plain-speaking leaders of America's past, implemented this advice when he met with V. I. Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, on 22 and 23 April 22 1945. This meeting had been arranged to demonstrate the continued cooperative spirit between the two governments and to reduce the disturbances which had been caused by the death of President Roosevelt.<sup>9</sup> Mr. Truman began the meeting by saying that he stood squarely

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<sup>7</sup>FRUS, 1945 5:822.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 1944 4:817.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 1945 5:828.

behind President Roosevelt's commitments and agreements and brought the Soviets to task for not carrying out their portion of the agreement made in the Crimea. Truman believed that the agreements made at Yalta for free elections were in fact contracts and resolved to hold the Soviets to their word. According to Charles E. Bohlen, Assistant to the Secretary of State, Mr Truman declared "with great firmness" that the Soviets had reached an agreement on Poland and that it only remained for Marshall Stalin to carry it out in accordance with his word.<sup>10</sup> When Molotov complained of his treatment, Truman countered, "Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that."<sup>11</sup> President Truman was getting tough with the Soviets just as Senator Truman had gotten tough with contractors and government agencies who had failed to live up to agreements. This firm, judicial tone, reflecting Truman's belief in the sanctity of previously made agreements and the necessity of keeping one's word, made it known to the Soviets that United States-Soviet relations were now to be conducted in a different manner.

President Truman had his first meeting with Stalin at the Potsdam Conference and was to come away from it convinced that "force is the only thing the Russians

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 257.

<sup>11</sup>Maddox, From War to Cold War, 55.

understand."<sup>12</sup> The conference settled some issues, but the chief significance for Truman was the opportunity to meet with Stalin and the Soviets and to see what the West had to face in the future. Events of the succeeding months, which saw continuing disagreements between the two countries, only reinforced Truman's belief that a more confrontational policy was necessary.

At the same time, policy makers in the State Department perceived that Eastern Europe was coming more and more under the influence of the Soviets. Harriman viewed the Soviets' plans to establish satellite states in the region as a threat to the world and the United States.<sup>13</sup> Recent Soviet successes in the Balkans, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania seemed to be aimed at the Mediterranean and the oil-rich Middle East. Truman's foreign policy planners saw only Greece, Turkey and Iran separating the Soviets from these resources. United States' planners also knew that each of these nations was extremely susceptible to the Soviet tactics of subversion and espionage.<sup>14</sup>

In his first State of the Union Address on 21 January 1946, President Truman declared that his postwar foreign policy sought to build a peace based on the tenets of

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<sup>12</sup>Truman, Memoirs, 1:412.

<sup>13</sup>FRUS, 1945 5:843.

<sup>14</sup>Joseph M. Jones, The Fifteen Weeks (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), 68.

understanding and justice. This was not a break with the policies of the Roosevelt administration, nor was it a new policy. Clearly Truman, always the centrist, had grasped the political mean between repudiation and accommodation. Truman's rather understated position was followed in February by Stalin's political address to the Supreme Soviet in which he defined Communist postwar goals and strategies for the Soviet Union. For Stalin there could be no long-range cooperation between communism and capitalism. The war itself had been the result of convulsions in the capitalist system. As a pro forma candidate for election to the Supreme Soviet, Stalin declared that the world revolution would continue and that the Soviet Union would embark on a series of five-year plans to press on with the revolutionary program.<sup>15</sup>

Stalin's speech was at first greeted with little surprise and without much concern by Secretary of State James F. Byrnes who had, at the Moscow meetings in October 1945, continued to look for common ground between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup> Truman's other advisors who had consistently argued for a harder line vis-à-vis the Soviets had a different reaction. The speech convinced Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal that there was no way

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<sup>15</sup>New York Times, 10 February 1946, 4:24.

<sup>16</sup>Phillips, The Truman Presidency, 258.

in which democracy and communism could co-exist.<sup>17</sup>

Ambassador Averell Harriman also saw Stalin's words as the emergence of a hard, new party line that proved the futility of counting upon Soviet cooperation in settling the political affairs of postwar Europe.<sup>18</sup> Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson viewed the speech as an affirmation of a Soviet offensive against the West which Stalin had started in Poland in 1945.<sup>19</sup> Later Secretary Byrnes himself was to use Stalin's words in his own speeches calling for a firmer attitude toward the Soviets.<sup>20</sup>

In February 1946 George Kennan, the chargé d'affaires in Moscow, in response to a Washington query, described the expansionist intentions of the Soviet Union in his now famous "Long Telegram."<sup>21</sup> Kennan, the State Department's foremost Soviet expert, warned that the Soviet Union constituted a political force "committed fanatically" to the belief that there could be no modus vivendi with the United States. The Soviets believed that they had to destroy the internal harmony and stability of the United States and that

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<sup>17</sup>Walter Millis and E.S. Duffield, eds., The Forrestal Diaries (New York: Viking, 1951), 135.

<sup>18</sup>Harriman and Abel, Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 547.

<sup>19</sup>Acheson, Present At The Creation, 194.

<sup>20</sup>James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 255.

<sup>21</sup>FRUS, 1946 6:696-709.

they had to break its international authority.<sup>22</sup> Kennan predicted that the Soviets would use every possible means to infiltrate, divide and weaken the West. Seeking a modus vivendi with the Soviets would only lead to political warfare. Later in March Kennan characterized the belief, held by some prominent Americans, that Soviet suspicions of the formation of an anti-Soviet bloc could be ameliorated as a serious misunderstanding about Soviet realities. This constituted the "most insidious and dangerous single error Americans could make thinking about by the Soviet Union."<sup>23</sup>

President Truman had been inching to the same position, complaining to Secretary Byrnes on 5 January 1946 that "I'm tired of babying the Soviets."<sup>24</sup> Truman and the foreign policy establishment seized upon Kennan's message. The United States at large slowly responded to Kennan's recommendations.<sup>25</sup> Truman's approach was later dubbed the strategy of containment after Kennan's recommendation that the growth of Soviet influence had to be contained.

Later during 1946, controversies over Soviet activities in Iran, Greece and Turkey broke out between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviets, attempting to wring oil concessions from the Iranians, armed and supported

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 704.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 710.

<sup>24</sup>Truman, Memoirs, 1:552.

<sup>25</sup>Acheson, Present At The Creation, 151.

a revolutionary government in the northern Iranian province of Azerbaijan. In Turkey Stalin demanded the return of three border provinces which Russia had lost after World War I. He also demanded bases on the Dardanelles and in Greek Thrace and the revision of the international convention which governed passage of ships through the Black Sea Straits. The War Department characterized these activities and incidents as evidence of the determination of the Soviets to dominate the eastern Mediterranean. In June the Soviet Union launched a propaganda offensive against the United States to convince the world that the United States had deserted Roosevelt's foreign policy in favor of a militarist, imperialist and expansionist foreign policy.<sup>26</sup>

In August 1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed their concern over the world situation. If the Soviets succeeded in dominating Turkey and controlling the Turkish Straits, the military situation in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean could become untenable for the other nations. The Joint Chiefs saw a calculated Soviet policy of expanding Soviet "de facto geographical and political control."<sup>27</sup>

Signs of increased Communist assistance to Greek leftists continued to appear and, in the eyes of the West, continued to threaten the stability of that country. In

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<sup>26</sup>FRUS, 1946 6:768-69.

<sup>27</sup>FRUS, 1946 7:857-8.



October 1946, the American Military Attaché in Greece, Lieutenant Colonel Alan C. Miller reported that "movement of Left Wing bands across the frontier is given the tacit approval of Yugoslav and Albanian authorities."<sup>28</sup> The State Department believed that "there can be no question that the U.S.S.R. is providing military assistance to elements seeking to cause the fall of the Greek Government."<sup>29</sup> A 1947 United Nations Security Council investigation confirmed suspicions that Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia had previously supported guerrilla warfare in Greece in 1945 and 1946.<sup>30</sup> Great Britain meanwhile was becoming increasingly concerned over her ability to maintain financial support of the beleaguered Greeks.<sup>31</sup> Truman with his historical perspective must have seen all of this as a variation of the totalitarian aggression of the 1930s.

Meanwhile foreign affairs appeared to be of little concern to the Republicans. In a radio address on 3 January 1947, Senator Taft, a leading isolationist, devoted only three paragraphs to foreign affairs. In these paragraphs he specifically predicted congressional resistance to foreign aid and tariff reductions. Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg,

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 230-2.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 243.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 1947 5:850.

<sup>31</sup>Lawrence S. Wittner, American Intervention in Greece, 1943-49 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 64.

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a convert to internationalism, promised not only continued support of the Administration's foreign policy program, but also close examination of any proposed legislation dealing with international trade and reductions in tariffs.<sup>32</sup>

Truman would have to battle isolationism again, just as he had while a member of the Senate. In addition, increasing inflation, high unemployment and an economy looking to expand confronted the president. In 1946, the consumer price index had increased from 129.6 to 153.3 while the wholesale price index rose from 107.1 to 140.9.<sup>33</sup> Truman's background as a county administrator and politician, as well as his experience with balanced budgets, made it hard for him to justify increased spending on assistance to foreign countries while constituents faced economic difficulties at home.

Nonetheless, in his State of the Union Address on 6 January 1947 President Truman remained true to both reform and internationalism. He outlined his legislative program, warning against the complete dismantling of the New Deal, stressing a balanced budget and a large-scale housing program. In the area of foreign affairs he expressed his confidence that a bipartisan approach to foreign policy

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<sup>32</sup>New York Times, 20 January 1947, 1.

<sup>33</sup>Susan Hartman, Truman and the 80th Congress (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1971), 4.

would continue, and he advocated the same free trade position he had embraced as a senator.<sup>34</sup>

Six weeks later Great Britain officially notified the United States that she would pull out of Greece by 1 April 1947. Recent dispatches from Greece stressed the urgency of the situation: Greece needed substantial aid quickly if the communist rebels were not to take her over. If the West lost Greece, then Turkey's position would become untenable.<sup>35</sup>

President Truman decided that the United States had only one real alternative in the matter. If Greece and Turkey were to fall under the control of the Soviet Union, communist domination threatened freedom and liberty throughout the world. Realizing that he faced a Republican-controlled Congress and fearing a revival of isolationism, Truman determined to use the spirit of bipartisan support of foreign policy which Senator Vandenberg had pledged in January to support aid to Greece.

On the morning of February 27, President Truman held a meeting with Senators Styles Bridges, Arthur Vandenberg, Alben Barkley and Tom Connally and Congressmen Joseph Martin, Charles Eaton, Sol Bloom and Sam Rayburn. Truman

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<sup>34</sup>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, 1963), Harry S. Truman, 1947, 9-12. (Hereafter cited as Public Papers, Truman.)

<sup>35</sup>FRUS, 1947 5:56.

explained to them the position in which the British withdrawal had placed the United States. Secretary of State George C. Marshall reviewed the details of the situation and made it clear that the United States faced the choice of taking action to prevent a communist takeover in Greece or losing Greece and Turkey by doing nothing.<sup>36</sup> After Dean Acheson made an impassioned plea for congressional support, to the effect that the United States had arrived at a position "without parallel since ancient history," the leading legislators finally appreciated the threat.<sup>37</sup> Senator Vandenberg urged the president to make a personal appearance before Congress and "scare hell" out of the country. "If you will say that to the Congress and the country, I will support you and I believe that most of the members will do the same."<sup>38</sup>

At one o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, 12 March 1947 President Truman addressed a joint session of Congress on what he described as an extremely critical situation. As recalled by Eben A. Ayers<sup>39</sup>,

the President went before Congress at one o'clock today and delivered. . . an address calling for \$400 million to be provided for aid to Greece and for authority to furnish civilian and military personnel. The great importance and significance of the speech lies less in

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<sup>36</sup>Jones, The Fifteen Weeks, 139.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 142.

<sup>38</sup>Acheson, Present At The Creation, 219.

<sup>39</sup>Eben A. Ayers was Truman's Assistant Press Secretary.

the recommendations than in the break which it marks in U. S. foreign policy and in its attack upon the communist policy of political infiltration in foreign countries and its sharp and clear references to Russia. The president did not name "Russia" or the Soviets at any point but his words were clear. They marked the end of appeasement of Russia.<sup>40</sup>

The president, without mentioning the Soviet Union, referred to the struggle between two systems of government, one advocating self-determination and the other advocating totalitarian rule. He saw Greece and Turkey standing in the front line of the democracies; their fall would be devastating to the cause of freedom. "I believe 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."<sup>41</sup>

The president's address initially met with immediate criticism from a broad spectrum of public opinion. Columnist Walter Lippman wrote that the United States was not rich enough or strong enough to subsidize reaction to communist advances all over the world. Liberals were especially hostile as they saw the address as an invitation to war. Public opinion polls revealed that 56% of the public favored aid to Greece, but only 45% favored sending military advisors or bypassing the United Nations. Bernard

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<sup>40</sup>Eben A. Ayers, Truman In The White House (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 170.

<sup>41</sup>Public Papers, Truman, 176-179.

Baruch noted that the address was almost a declaration of ideological war.<sup>42</sup>

The New Republic maintained that the United States would justify its use of a system of unholy alliances on the basis that the end justified the means. President Truman has "summoned in a century of fear."<sup>43</sup> The immediate effect was to divide Europe into "irreconcilable camps of good and evil" and to establish the United States as the guardian of the status quo.<sup>44</sup> A positive reaction to the speech was evident, however. The New York Times declared on 12 March 1947 that a new chapter in foreign policy more appropriate to the position of the United States was being opened, and that the "epoch of isolation and occasional intervention is ended" and is "being replaced by an epoch of responsibility."<sup>45</sup> On the 13th the New York Times would follow up by stating that it believed that "there can be no doubt that the American people stand behind this warning."<sup>46</sup> President Truman in his Memoirs wrote that it was a turning point in American foreign policy.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>New Republic, 31 March 1947, 5.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 24 March 1947, 13.

<sup>44</sup>Public Papers, Truman, 176-79.

<sup>45</sup>New York Times, 12 March 1947.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid, 13 March 1947.

<sup>47</sup>Truman, Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope, 230.

Deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union caused two strains of opinion to develop about the long term response of the United States. These strains mirrored Truman's own struggle with the primacy of strength and preparedness versus the importance of economic development in world affairs. Secretary of Defense James Forrestal recommended a stronger national defense to thwart an armed confrontation with the Soviets. Secretary of State George C. Marshall, on the other hand, favored concentrating on the problems of Europe's economic recovery. Forrestal saw the United States's monopoly of the atomic bomb as the key to its postwar security, while Marshall saw the restoration of the European balance of power as the guarantor of American security.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, in June 1947 President Truman attempted to satisfy both sets of demands by launching the European Recovery Plan, better known as the Marshall Plan, shortly after the Truman Doctrine was announced to counter a shift in the correlation of power from the United States towards the Soviet Union. These measures were followed by the National Defense Act of 1947. This act created a host of new agencies, including the National Security Council (NSC) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). While these agencies reflected Truman's sense of efficiency and order,

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<sup>48</sup>Steven L. Rearden, The Evolution of American Strategic Doctrine: Paul H. Nitze and the Soviet Challenge (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 9-10.

the newly created Department of Defense (DOD) demonstrated the President's thoughts on unifying the military services to reduce duplication and division of authority. Additionally the creation of the NSC unified and integrated defense and foreign policy, matching military capabilities with diplomatic commitments, and reconciling national security requirements with the needs of the domestic economy.<sup>49</sup> The creation of the NSC reflects Truman's desire to overcome the inadequacies of initial planning and the delay in determining basic policy he had seen in the Executive Branch as a senator.

Yet the influence of the Soviet Union and its ability to threaten the West continued. More ominously, in September 1949 an Air Force intelligence aircraft brought back evidence that the Soviet Union had successfully detonated an atomic device.<sup>50</sup> President Truman had previously decided that balancing the budget was his primary concern in the face of postwar inflation and a swollen budget. While he authorized a request for a \$3 billion supplemental military appropriation for Fiscal Year 1949, Truman's budgets gave priority to domestic obligations and left the remainder to the Department of Defense in keeping with his belief that large defense expenditures would

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<sup>49</sup>Leffler, A Preponderance of Power, 176.

<sup>50</sup>Rearden, The Evolution of Strategic Doctrine, 14.



bankrupt the nation.<sup>51</sup> In early December 1948 Truman approved a defense budget of \$14.4 billion for FY 1950. Secretary Forrestall and the Joint Chiefs, unable to convince Truman of the need for additional resources, argued that only nuclear weapons would combine a frugal approach to defense expenditures with a credible military stance.

Before committing himself to this program Truman ordered his secretaries of State and Defense to "undertake a re-examination of our objectives in peace and war and of the effect of these objectives on our strategic plans, in light of the probable fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear bomb capability of the Soviet Union."<sup>52</sup> This review would result in a significant change in the United States' policy of containment.

United States officials, operating under the philosophy of the "Long Telegram," had previously seen the chief threat to the balance of power as political and economic, not military; wartime devastation and natural calamities had so disrupted life in Europe that Communist parties in France, Italy, Greece and elsewhere were thought to have excellent opportunities of coming to power through coups or even through free elections. United States policy from 1947 to 1949 attempted to revive faith in democratic institutions and procedures in order to preempt further expansion by

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>52</sup>FRUS, 1950 1:141-42.

communist parties. However, fears of inflation and the effect of unbalanced budgets limited the primary application of American power to Europe while attempts were made to minimize involvement in other areas like China and Palestine.<sup>53</sup>

The Administration had relied on its monopoly of atomic weapons to keep the defense budget under \$15 billion while it countered Soviet advances with economic aid. The administration had assumed that the threat to use atomic weapons would be sufficient to keep the Soviets from overrunning Western Europe. News that the Soviets had detonated their own bomb in August 1949 signalled that the United States atomic deterrent would not last. Truman's contemplation of the development of the hydrogen bomb was an attempt to regain nuclear superiority in order to avoid having to match Soviet troop levels in Europe. Economic aid without military involvement would no longer suffice to contain Soviet advances.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the decision required a general examination of the country's "strategic plans and its objectives in peace and war."<sup>55</sup>

On 12 April 1950 Truman referred the results of this policy review by the Departments of State and Defense

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<sup>53</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, "Was The Truman Doctrine A Real Turning Point?" Foreign Affairs 53 (January 1974), 391-2.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 393-4.

<sup>55</sup>FRUS, 1950 1:236.

Department to the National Security Council for consideration and a determination of its implications. The final document, NSC 68, was to provide the basis for increasing the defense budget, and the producing and stockpiling thermonuclear weapons.<sup>56</sup>

This improvement of the country's defenses under NSC 68 was aimed at achieving the fundamental objective of assuring the survival of the United States under a non-totalitarian form of government. The chief function served by NSC 68 was to give the national defense a claim on resources equal to or greater than that of all other competing government programs. This was a complete break with the past policy and was necessitated by the administration's understanding of the Soviet threat and the role of the United States as world leader.<sup>57</sup>

The justification for higher defense expenditures was needed as Truman Administration planners had become increasingly concerned over the strategic implications of the Soviet atomic bomb. NSC 68 was the nation's first formal statement of national security policy. It assumed that the Soviets aspired to worldwide hegemony, did not rule out the possibility of war, and showed how a global policy

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<sup>56</sup>John M. Siracusa, "NSC 68: A Reappraisal," Naval War College Review 33 (June 1980), 4-5.

<sup>57</sup>Rearden, The Evolution of Strategic Doctrine, 34.

of resisting communism could be implemented without bankrupting the United States.<sup>58</sup>

NSC 68 estimated that the U.S.S.R. would attain a first strike capability which could seriously damage vital centers in the United States by 1954, unless faced by a more effective level of opposition.<sup>59</sup> The paper contained four possible courses of action, the first of which was staying the present course and continuing present policies. The other three courses included a return to isolation, a preventive war and a rapid buildup of political, economic, and military strength in the Free World. The Truman Administration chose the fourth course of action and placed the United States firmly on the road of active military opposition to Soviet military advances.<sup>60</sup>

NSC 68 asserted that the American people would support national security demands upon scarce economic and social resources where traditionally it had placed domestic needs and interests before those of national security. NSC 68 also ushered in an era in which the United States departed from previous practice and maintained sizable military forces, placing an increased reliance upon military power as an element of foreign policy.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Gaddis, "The Truman Doctrine A Turning Point?" 395-6.

<sup>59</sup>FRUS, 1950 1:251.

<sup>60</sup>Siracusa, "NSC 68: A Reappraisal," 10-11.

<sup>61</sup>Rearden, The Evolution of Strategic Doctrine, 4.

This change in American foreign policy occurred because the Truman Administration went beyond the basic tenets of Kennan's "Long Telegram," which saw the Soviet threat as one chiefly economic and political in nature. Up to this time the Truman Administration had counted upon its atomic monopoly to counter the Soviet manpower advantage in Europe. With the detonation of the Soviet's own atomic bomb, the Administration believed a new approach to containment was required. Where Kennan assumed that containment of the Soviet Union in time would produce internal changes that would eventually alter Soviet behavior,<sup>62</sup> Truman and his advisors now saw an almost interminable military threat from an implacable enemy armed with atomic weapons. NSC 68 described the Cold War as a more or less permanent state of relations between the United States and the Soviets.<sup>63</sup> NSC 68 also provided a statement of goals and methods to insure that the United States and its allies could withstand the Soviet Union.<sup>64</sup>

NSC 68 reaffirmed the contention of the "Long Telegram" that the Soviet Union aspired to global hegemony.<sup>65</sup> The United States faced an unavoidable conflict with the Soviet

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<sup>62</sup>X, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs 25 (July 1947): 574-76.

<sup>63</sup>Rearden, The Evolution of Strategic Doctrine, 21.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>65</sup>FRUS, 1946 6:696-709.

Union, because it opposed the Soviet Union and its objective of world domination. NSC 68 also estimated that the Soviet Union would have the hydrogen bomb and a delivery means by 1954, thus significantly offsetting US nuclear capability. It also ruled out the prospect of arms control and negotiations with the Soviet Union from anything except a position of strength. NSC 68 finished with a strong call for a much greater commitment of United States resources to national security in order to overcome the chief limitations of American power, a lack of conventional military forces and the military and economic weaknesses of Europe.<sup>66</sup>

When the attack on Korea came a few months later, Truman, seeing the events of the 1930s repeating themselves in the North Korean invasion of South Korea, rallied the United Nations, endorsed NSC 68 and asked the services to tell him what they needed from Congress in the way of supplemental appropriations. With the country at war and almost everyone assuming that the Russians were the puppet-masters of the North Koreans, congressmen of both parties voted to give the president whatever he asked.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Douglas Kinnard, President Eisenhower and Strategy Management: A study in Defense Politics (Lexington, KE.: The University of Kentucky Press, 1977), 6-7.

<sup>67</sup>Ernest R. May, "The American Commitment to Germany, 1949-1955," in American Historians and the Atlantic Alliance, ed. Lawrence S. Kaplan, (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1991), 61.

On 30 September 1950, President Truman signed NSC 68 as the feeling developed in the administration that the Soviet Union was behind the war. The growing unpopularity of the war, however, and the expense of the buildup cost Truman and his party the White House as the country elected a successor who promised to "go to Korea."<sup>68</sup>

Harry Truman made a difference as President of the United States because he brought the clear, simple black-and-white view of a judge to bear upon international politics. Where Roosevelt put off decisions, Truman relished the opportunity to make them just as he had as a presiding judge in Jackson County. For Truman the code of the politician was at the bottom of personal relations: one honored previously made agreements or one was not worthy of trust in the future. For a president unskilled in foreign affairs, history provided a guide to the future. Truman's ancestors taught him that no half-hearted measures would suffice in defense of hearth and home. A threat either existed at a fairly specific time or one did not exist. Moreover, NSC 68 had the appearance of a legal brief to obtain a decision from a former county judge.

#### The Transition from Truman to Eisenhower

By the time Dwight D. Eisenhower succeeded Truman in the presidency, the first practitioners of the containment

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<sup>68</sup>Rearden, The Evolution of Strategic Doctrine, 30.

policy could point to both successes and failures. The Soviets had not expanded any further in Europe, but a war, supported by both the Soviets and the Chinese Communists, was underway in Korea. On 18 November 1952 when Truman and his staff briefed General Eisenhower on the state of the military and foreign affairs the new administration would face, an array of problems greeted the new administration:

- Korea: the achievement of a truce depended upon resolving the issue of forcible repatriation of prisoners-of-war.
- Iran: the Communists threatened to exploit a crisis over Iranian confiscation of British oil properties.
- Indochina: the United States was financially supporting a colonialist French government whose policies made it impossible to rally the local population to oppose communist forces effectively.
- Foreign aid: the question concerned how much aid, how should it be allocated between military and economic aid, and to whom should it be given.<sup>69</sup>

When Truman had measured the extent of the Soviet-American problem in 1947, he had been able to do it with the knowledge of American superiority. He was able to counterbalance the Soviet superiority in ground forces with the American monopoly in atomic weapons and delivery systems. Truman was certain that this approach had

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<sup>69</sup>Rostow. The United States In the World Arena, 263.



prevented the disintegration of Western Europe and its subsequent passage into the Communist sphere and allowed him to establish his "Fair Deal" while keeping the Soviets at bay. Six years later, however, the Communists had emerged as the strongest military power in Asia. Nationalism had spread throughout Asia and the Middle East, creating problems difficult in their own right, but of great effect on the Western Alliance. The United States and the Soviet Union now opposed each other with both the weapons of mass destruction on the one hand and the techniques of propaganda, economic aid and nonmilitary influence on the other.<sup>70</sup>

#### President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Eisenhower, who came to the presidency with a wealth of foreign policy and administrative experience, brought with him an understanding that total war in an atomic age was unthinkable, that an alternative to war had to found, and that only a system of international alliances could provide buffers against Soviet intransigence and expansionism.<sup>71</sup>

Eisenhower saw the re-establishment of fiscal responsibility as an essential prerequisite to a sound defense. He saw big government as a threat to free enterprise and individual endeavor, which his value system

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 264.

<sup>71</sup>Medhurst, DDE: Strategic Communicator, 71.

regarded as the core elements of American democracy. He feared that a constantly expanding military budget would eventually lead to an excessive level of federal intervention to channel national resources into defense. The result would be a garrison state in which high taxes, monetary restrictions and economic controls would cripple private enterprise.<sup>72</sup> This concern for the ability of the United States to sustain the Cold War was at the root of his concern about the nation's economic health. The nation could only combat communism if it were economically healthy.<sup>73</sup>

As president, Eisenhower was as convinced in 1953 as he had been in the late 40s that the United States had to stand as the bulwark against Soviet expansionism and the establishment of new Soviet regimes. During his years with NATO he had refined his commitment to the fundamentals of containment, adding to his geopolitical analysis a new emphasis on the United States' need for trading partners. The United States' economy could not succeed if it became isolated from the foreign markets and raw materials it required overseas.<sup>74</sup> These questions of economic health

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<sup>72</sup>Iwan W. Morgan, "Eisenhower and the Balanced Budget," in Warshaw, Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency, 121-122.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>74</sup>Louis Galambos, "Forward" in Warshaw, Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency, viii.

were always interwoven closely with the central elements of United States foreign policy.<sup>75</sup>

Eisenhower had little training in domestic affairs, but he possessed a broad background in international matters. World War II served as his point of reference in world affairs. He derived his rejection of postwar isolationism and appeasement from his experience during the war. His basic principles for conducting United States' foreign policy grew out of his wartime experience: the United States must make no major move without the support of key allies, and the President must undertake no major initiative overseas without the explicit support of Congress.<sup>76</sup>

Eisenhower's self-portrait, Crusade in Europe (1948), opened with the theme of cooperation which would run through the entire work and which would characterize his administration. This theme would be linked with related terms such as unity, teamwork, allies, and partnership. The picture which emerged was that of a leader who believed that the greatest safety lay in numbers and the soundest wisdom in a variety of voices.<sup>77</sup> In Eisenhower's view the very reason for being a military officer was to preserve, protect and defend the United States and its values. For him the

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid., x.

<sup>76</sup>Anthony James Joes, "Eisenhower Revisionism: The Tide Comes In." Presidential Studies Quarterly, 15 (Summer 1985): 567.

<sup>77</sup>Medhurst, DDE: Strategic Communicator, 13.

defense of his country assumed an almost religious nature. In his moral scheme, the ends counted; words and actions were means only. He would take any measure to defeat the enemy or to protect his country.<sup>78</sup> These sentiments would be visible in his foreign policy and in the activities of his administration, particularly in his use of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Eisenhower spoke about peace, promoted it and believed in peaceful co-existence with adversaries, but he saw peace as a direct result of military, economic, and spiritual strength. Military strength preserved democracy; economic strength preserved free trade and its open markets; spiritual strength preserved freedom of belief and worship.<sup>79</sup> He was constantly aware of the link between political and economic vitality and the costs of military commitments overseas and the expense of maintaining a large peacetime military establishment.<sup>80</sup>

The newly elected president considered himself an expert in national security affairs and brought definite ideas on the management of national security to his presidency, chief of which was the necessity of aligning the defense budget to the well-being of the country's economy. To this end he intended to limit defense spending based on a

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>80</sup>Davis, Soldier of Democracy, 204.

realistic appraisal of the cost of maintaining an adequate, but not extravagant national defense over an extended period of time. Eisenhower developed this "new look" at security policy in order to construct a viable alternative strategy to what he saw as Truman's too costly method of implementing the national policy of containment.<sup>81</sup>

One of Eisenhower's first steps in this "new look" was to reorganize the presidency based on his experiences as a military planner and organizer. For years he had been in contact with the White House and had certain ideas about the "system, or lack of system, under which it operated." He was almost affronted by its lack of organization. "With my training in problems involving organization, it was inconceivable that the work of the White House could not be better systemized [sic]." Eisenhower worked through three principal agencies: the Cabinet, the National Security Council, and the Office of Budget. While he used these agencies to plan and execute his policies, he retained ultimate responsibility and remained fully in charge.<sup>82</sup> His acceptance of this principle harkens back to when he was

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<sup>81</sup>Cole Christian Kingseed, "Eisenhower and Suez: A Reappraisal of Presidential Activism and Crisis Management" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1983), 13.

<sup>82</sup>Kingseed, "Eisenhower and Suez," 589.

prepared to bear full responsibility if the D-Day landings in Europe had failed.<sup>83</sup>

Eisenhower was in broad agreement with the policy of containment, but not at the expense of the economic health of the United States. If the United States spent itself into insolvency, the Soviets would win the war without firing a shot. Eisenhower, as president, could have concluded that the United States could not afford the forces and the commitments for which Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander, had been partly responsible. Nuclear weapons saved Eisenhower from such a choice.<sup>84</sup>

After a visit to the Sixth Fleet in 1951, General Eisenhower had called for a reexamination of United States' defense and foreign policy. President Eisenhower thought that the militarization of containment and the vast expansion of America's military might called for by NSC 68 carried with it the seeds of a great irony - the United States could lose the Cold war by becoming too heavily armed.<sup>85</sup>

Prior to his election, Eisenhower had spoken of the importance of preserving the economic solvency of the United

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<sup>83</sup>R. Gordon Hoxie, "Eisenhower and Presidential Leadership," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 13 (Fall 1983): 589.

<sup>84</sup>Kaplan, American Historians and the Atlantic Alliance, 65.

<sup>85</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary, 18 October 1951, DDEL.

States based on convictions that went back to his assignment as Army Chief of Staff and Supreme Allied Commander. During a meeting with Senator Robert A. Taft following his nomination, Eisenhower agreed with Taft that overall government spending, including defense spending, could be drastically reduced.<sup>86</sup> Eisenhower repeated this theme throughout the campaign, stressing that the largest savings in government expenditures could be made in the defense budget, but without any reduction in national security.<sup>87</sup>

In 1953 Eisenhower took office deeply convinced that the United States needed a national strategy for the Cold War, a strategy which would require the selection of broad national purposes to bring all the agencies of the government under the control of a single national strategy. Under Eisenhower the National Security Council became the principal vehicle for formulating and promulgating this strategy.<sup>88</sup>

The national defense policy the Eisenhower Administration inherited from the Truman Administration came in the form of NSC 68 and the budget for Fiscal Year 1954.

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<sup>86</sup>New York Times, September 13, 1952.

<sup>87</sup>Glenn H. Snyder, "The "New Look" of 1953," in Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets, Warner R. Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond and Glenn H. Snyder, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 389.

<sup>88</sup>Keith C. Clark and Laurence J. Legere, eds., The President and the Management of National Security (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 60.

Eisenhower was thus presented with what he called "the great question," that is, how to maintain an adequate defense policy, meet domestic requirements, and still obtain the budgetary and tax reductions inherent in Republican views on managing the economy. Eisenhower determined that he would plan for the "long haul" rather than the year of maximum danger espoused by Truman's planners in NSC 68.<sup>89</sup> As he said in his first inaugural address, he saw a sustained and uncompromising conflict ahead with the Soviets.

We must be ready to dare all for our country for history does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or timid. We must acquire proficiency in defense and display stamina in purpose.<sup>90</sup>

Eisenhower's criticism of NSC 68 was that it ignored the connection between national security and fiscal responsibility. His April 1953 cut in military appropriations was a gesture aimed at pacifying Senator Taft, but real reductions demanded new concepts to replace those inherited from the Truman Administration. The Truman Administration had aimed its planning at a selected year of crisis - 1954 when it was said that the Soviet Union would be capable of and most likely to attack the West. This concept would result in a stockpile of weapons that would quickly become obsolete. The Eisenhower Administration's

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<sup>89</sup>Kinnard, Eisenhower and Strategy Management, 8.

<sup>90</sup>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, 1958), Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1958, 7.



policy, the "New Look," called instead for the development and maintenance of a strong military posture emphasizing the capability of "inflicting massive retaliatory damage" by offensive weapons and the need for a "sound, strong and growing economy."<sup>91</sup>

Harkening back to his military organizational experience, Eisenhower used a collegial approach to examining defense doctrine. In June 1953 he directed that three teams of experts investigate the three alternatives of foreign policy open to the administration. George Kennan, the former Director of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, led the first group, Task Force A, while Major General James McCormack, U.S. Air Force, led Task Force B. General McCormack was a military and political planner as well as an atomic weapons expert. Admiral Richard Conolly, President of the Naval War College, led the final group, Task Force C. The Directing Panel of Project Solarium required each group to write a strategy directive that reflected the administration's perceptions about the range of capabilities and actions that the Soviet Union might take in the years ahead.<sup>92</sup>

Kennan's group studied a continuation of the policy of containment as inherited from the Truman Administration which assumed that the Soviet Union posed a long-term

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<sup>91</sup>FRUS, 1952-54 2:577-597

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 392

political, economic, and ideological threat to the United States. McCormack's group assumed that the Soviets were militarily aggressive, but still cautious and unwilling to risk a general war or move against interests protected by a resolute United States which would use nuclear weapons to punish Soviet aggression. The last group, led by Conolly, assumed that the Soviet Union wanted to expand its territory and influence, and that it was increasing its military strength and political activity to that end. The Lymnitzer group examined the substitution of a policy of liberation for that of containment to roll back Communist borders.<sup>93</sup>

On 16 July 1953 the Project Solarium Task Forces presented their alternative basic national security policies. President Eisenhower spoke at length after the presentations and offered a synthesis of the three views.<sup>94</sup> While George Kennan had most heavily influenced the conclusions and recommendations that came out of the Solarium Project and foresaw a long-term rather than a short-term threat and a political rather than a military threat, Eisenhower proposed an essentially military strategy for the "long haul," but one which would remove the urgency behind defense appropriations and enable his administration

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<sup>93</sup>Snyder et al, Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets, 408.

<sup>94</sup>FRUS, 1954-1954 2:397.

to spread out expenses.<sup>95</sup> Once again Eisenhower had found the middle road which would enable him to continue to oppose the Communists yet at the same time to preserve the United States' democratic institutions and way of life.

Approved on 30 October 1953, the NSC 162 series of National Security Council papers spelled out the strategy behind the "New Look." The armed forces could count on using nuclear weapons when required. Force levels were to be planned on the fundamental national security objective of deterring Soviet aggression, primarily by means of massive nuclear retaliation. Greater reliance would be placed on indigenous forces to counter local aggressions. As these local forces were built up, American ground forces would eventually be reduced. The United States would participate in local actions mainly through tactical sea and air power and quickly deployable mobile ground units, presumably using tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>96</sup>

NSC 162 determined that the Soviet threat as a total threat would continue indefinitely. The Soviets currently had the capacity to make an effective nuclear attack on the United States, but did not seem likely to launch an attack through mid-1955. The security of the United States required the "development and maintenance of a strong

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<sup>95</sup>William B. Pickett, "The Eisenhower Solarium Notes," The Society for Historians of Foreign Relations Newsletter 16 (June 1985): 4.

<sup>96</sup>Capitanchik, The Eisenhower Presidency, 42.

military posture . . . and the maintenance of a sound, strong and growing economy."<sup>97</sup>

Other provisions of NSC 162 called for the maintenance of an atomic capability to counterbalance Soviet atomic power, the support of overseas bases and allies, and the maintenance of a sound economy as a basis for high defense productivity and free institutions. In the face of the Soviet military threat and the economic threat of a continued build-up as in NSC 68,

the United States must develop and maintain, at the lowest feasible cost, requisite military and nonmilitary strength to deter and, if necessary, to counter Soviet military aggression against the United States or other areas vital to its security.<sup>98</sup>

Eisenhower's strategic concept can be summarized as an increased reliance on nuclear deterrence and a rejection of preventive war. He stressed the new technology of nuclear weapons and placed heavy reliance on the use of allied land forces around the Soviet periphery. Economic strength was to be achieved through reduced defense budgets. The United States and the Free World had to be prepared to continue the struggle with communism over the coming decades.<sup>99</sup>

Eisenhower, consistent with his own philosophy of fiscal conservatism, imposed new budget restraints on defense spending and looked to nuclear weapons to fill the

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<sup>97</sup>FRUS, 1952-1954 2:582.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 591.

<sup>99</sup>Kinnard, Eisenhower and Strategy Management, 10.

gap. Eisenhower saw a strong national defense and a strong economy as the twin pillars of national security, but he faulted Truman for allowing the rapid pace of the buildup to jeopardize the economy.

Eisenhower established the basic outlines of his administration's national security policy during the second half of 1953. The New Look came to embody a new grand strategy of diplomatic, military, and economic doctrines and concepts. It governed the mobilization, deployment and use of force as both a deterrent and a defense; it also included a set of changes in the military establishment aimed at striking a balance between national security and economic welfare.<sup>100</sup> Eisenhower used his experience in handling large bureaucracies and his great rapport with the American people to sell his new and more economical strategy to the Allies and to his countrymen.<sup>101</sup>

The military application of the New Look was the doctrine of massive retaliation which emphasized deterrence through the threat of nuclear punishment at a time and place of the United States' choosing. This restored the initiative to the United States rather than having it only respond to the moves or intent of the Soviets. The reliance on nuclear weapons also allowed a reduction in military

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<sup>100</sup>Snyder et al, Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets, 383.

<sup>101</sup>Kinnard, Eisenhower and Strategy Management, 14.

manpower, thus achieving a reduction in overall defense costs.<sup>102</sup> Eisenhower, when institutionalizing the New Look, avoided exacerbating interservice military rivalries by reallocating resources among the five categories of forces and by placing greater emphasis than formerly on the deterrent and destructive power of improved nuclear weapons, better means of delivery, and more effective air defense capability.<sup>103</sup>

Although the New Look can also be seen as the "middle way" between an all-nuclear strategy on the one hand and a strategy based solely on conventional forces on the other, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles portrayed it differently. In a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations on 12 January 1954 entitled "Collective Security," Dulles spoke of the quest for a maximum deterrent at a bearable cost. Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power. The way for a free community to deter aggression was to be willing and able to respond vigorously and at places and with means of its own choosing. The basic decision was made to depend primarily on a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our choosing.<sup>104</sup> Eisenhower himself

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<sup>102</sup>Synder et al, Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets, 384-5.

<sup>103</sup>Kingseed, "Eisenhower and Suez," 13.

<sup>104</sup>Kinnard, Eisenhower and Strategy Management, 26.

approved Dulles' draft of the speech after making a few crucial modifications to the remarks. Eisenhower, ever the political animal, must have allowed Dulles to enunciate the new policy in order to maintain his own freedom of movement as well as to convince critics that defense cuts resulting from the new policy did not lessen overall strength or indicate a faltering resolve.

The New Look amounted to a gamble that the Administration could deter the Soviets through the threat of nuclear retaliation. This gamble would save defense costs and keep the economy strong if it succeeded. If it failed, civilization might be trampled by the Soviets in their rush to take over the West. Ike, who relished the game of bridge, held a nuclear trump card which he hoped never to have to play.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Robert L. Ivie, "Eisenhower as Cold Warrior," in Eisenhower's War of Words ed. Martin J. Medhurst, (East Lansing MI: Michigan State University, 1994), 9.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Both postwar presidents dealt with the foreign policy and national security issues that faced them from the depths of their prepresidential experiences and worldviews. One president launched the United States on a course of confrontation with a hostile power. The other president applied a correction to that course that aimed the United States in the direction of eventual victory. The backgrounds and worldviews of both presidents significantly influenced the lives of their countrymen and the outcome of the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

Harry Truman became president at a time of great flux in the United States as it emerged from the longest war of its history. As the principal power in the West, the United States came to oppose an aggressive Eurasian power which it saw as determined to dominate the world. Through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, Harry Truman, an acknowledged neophyte in foreign affairs, placed the United States directly in the path of the Soviet Union.

Harry Truman was a professional politician, but a man who believed in himself, kept his word, and expected others to do the same. Relying upon a sense and an understanding



of history as a guide to action, Truman brought a plain-spoken, common sense approach to foreign affairs. Arriving at a critical intersection of historical courses, President Truman brought the clear-sighted, black-and-white view of Middle America to bear upon international problems. If there were a threat, then all measures possible must be taken to counter that threat. History taught that half-hearted measures led to future problems.

In 1953 the country acquired another president, but one who considered himself an expert in national security affairs. Operating from a deeper base of experience and more secure sense of himself, Eisenhower brought definite ideas on the management of national security to the presidency, chief of which was the necessity of aligning the defense budget to the well-being of the country's economy. To this end he limited defense spending and re-oriented national security policy. From his desire to make a realistic appraisal of what the maintenance of an adequate, but not extravagant national defense would cost over an extended period of time, Eisenhower developed a "new look" security policy aimed at constructing a viable national strategy.<sup>1</sup>

The intent of this national security and foreign policy initiative was to maintain a military establishment at a more or less steady level, regardless of short-term changes

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<sup>1</sup>Kingseed, "Eisenhower and Suez," 13.

in Soviet intentions and capabilities. This was a change from the previous policy which responded to Communist initiatives rather than basing its actions on a long-range plan. Reduced defense budgets enabled President Eisenhower to live up to his campaign promise of reductions in government spending as well as the reorientation of defense and foreign policy for the long haul. This set the United States on a foreign policy course maintained by succeeding presidents - a course which eventually parted the Iron Curtain and broke up the Soviet Union, though not without exceeding the costs deemed prudent by Eisenhower. The Long Telegram had indeed grown into a New Look at foreign policy.

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