A Tenuous Alliance: Domestic Politics and the Russian-American Alliance, May 1945- March 1946

James Pyle

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Written under the supervision of Professor David Foglesong

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Introduction

The question of how the deep, persistent tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union developed after Japan’s surrender in August 1945 has intrigued generations of historians. Why did this conflict between East and West come about? Who was responsible for it? What, if anything, could have been done to prevent it? These questions and similar ones have profoundly influenced Americans’ lives and their society and have shaped the world to the present day.

I will examine American foreign policy towards the Soviet Union and American domestic politics from May 1945 to March 1946. A critical time period for the deteriorating relations between the two powers, May 1945 to March 1946 saw Americans’ opinions shift from sympathy for the Soviet Union after Germany’s surrender to suspicion after Japan’s surrender and finally to hostility after the first General Assembly of the United Nations. The Iranian Crisis beginning in early March 1946 and ending with the Soviet decision to withdraw their troops from Azerbaijan marked the first American success in a typical Cold-War style confrontation in a pre-brinkmanship political era. I will investigate how President Truman could have better handled international politics with Premier Stalin and the Soviet government in the fall and winter of 1945, determine some degree of responsibility for the Administration’s sad lack of diplomatic energy in the fall, and explore alternative solutions that were available. The period from September 1945 to late December 1945 was particularly important for American-Soviet diplomacy because it forced Truman and Secretary of State James Byrnes to formulate a clear foreign policy and decide who was ultimately in charge of foreign-policymaking. Truman’s policy reorientation from January to March 1946 hinged upon the State Department's languid formulation of foreign policy from September to November and partisan backlash to Byrnes’
preparation for his December meeting with Foreign Minister Molotov and Premier Stalin. I will closely examine this critical period, explore alternative solutions, and discuss how they may have altered the unfortunate outcome of American-Soviet relations.

In order to examine domestic politics, I will carefully study the enigma of public opinion. I will examine the interaction between the press engaged in foreign policy, and Congress, and the policymaking elites in order to understand the interplay of domestic politics and determine its effect on policymaking. The loose hierarchy by which I will examine public opinion will be, in ascending order, the press, Congress, and the Administration.¹ In his 1979 Diplomatic History article, Thomas G. Paterson classified the more informed public as those who studied foreign news, had knowledge of foreign affairs, and spoke out about them. They included individuals with authority and influence, such as “journalists, businessmen, labor leaders, intellectuals, and members of various interest and citizen groups”.² Paterson argued that President Truman mainly targeted this segment of the public during the late 1940s in a more sophisticated attempt to garner support for his Soviet-related foreign policies. Therefore, this segment of the public likely received more information about America’s foreign policy regarding the Soviet Union than ordinary Americans in the mid-1940s and can be useful for studying domestic constraints upon the Truman Administration. However, the information they received was framed to accommodate the Truman’s vision, so the elite circles of his Administration maintained its traditional monopoly over information. I will also focus on the interaction between the policymaking elites, such as prominent Congressmen, the President’s Cabinet, and the broader

¹ There will be an overlap between public opinion polls and the press because a fair amount of Gallup polls were cited in the various newspaper sources that I accessed
It is important to consider domestic politics during Truman’s Administration because Truman and key members of his Cabinet were sensitive to the political climate and the policymaking elite’s mood quite early on in his presidency. They oftentimes shaped their foreign policy accordingly, especially during the fall of 1945. Truman, for example, conducted several public news conferences from Germany’s surrender in May to Japan’s surrender in September during which he answered any questions the public had for him; they usually ranged from his administrative appointees—he was forced to reappoint several key diplomatic positions in the early months of his presidency—to his policy in postwar Europe. By the fall, Truman worked closely with leading Congressmen such as Senator Arthur Vandenberg and Tom Connally to maintain support for his policies on atomic energy, which would factor significantly into his abrupt but forceful foreign policy reorientation from January to March. Secretary of State James Byrnes, who was appointed by Truman in July 1945 and resigned in January 1947, changed his handling of the Soviets significantly in 1946 as Truman grew tired of “babying the Soviets” and Congress pushed for a stronger foreign policy against the Soviet Union without appeasement. I will attempt to comprehensively gauge the interplay of domestic politics, particularly between the national press and Congress, and develop an independent understanding of a broader segment of the public’s role in foreign-policymaking regarding the Soviet Union from 1945-1953.

**Historiography**

Two basic scholarly schools emerged after the end of World War II: the orthodox school and the revisionist school. Orthodox scholars led postwar scholarship during the 1950s. They
argued that the United States was largely responsible for ending the Pacific War and that the Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe in the immediate postwar years precipitated the decline in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The works of policymakers such as George F. Kennan, an adviser to President Truman in 1946, influenced the original orthodox scholars. Kennan wrote the famous “Long Telegram” in February 1946 while stationed in Moscow, arguing that the Soviet state system and political system could not coexist with Western democracy. Therefore, communism was a threat to US national security and had to be contained in Europe or it would overwhelm the West.\(^3\) It is notable that, while the Soviet Union had not physically or militarily expanded in Eastern Europe since the end of the war, Kennan perceived the Soviet Union had exerted its political influence in Eastern Europe enough to threaten Western Europe’s stability, a region deemed critical to American interests.

With a new wave of sympathy to the Soviet Union, revisionist scholars led postwar scholarship during the 1960s and early 1970s. They argued that the United States engaged in atomic diplomacy against the Soviet Union since the summer of 1945 and conducted an imperialist foreign policy against the Soviet Union. They also argued that the US government conducted its foreign policy against the will of the American people as well as its allies in Western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Near East. Historian Gar Alperovitz led revisionist scholarship with his 1965 book *Atomic Diplomacy*. Atomic diplomacy was the understanding that the United States used the atomic weapons as a means to establish its power over the Soviet Union during negotiations over important postwar issues. Territorial disputes in Eastern Europe, for example, were sensitive at the time but disputes in the Far East, such as in Korea and Japan, were included in the umbrella of atomic diplomacy as well. Thus, the revisionist scholarly

\(^3\) Kennan, George F. “Long Telegram”. Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers.
understanding of the decline in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union challenged the official understanding. Neither orthodox scholars nor revisionist scholars, however, adequately addressed the American mass public’s understanding of the Soviet Union and communism. Although revisionist scholars began to scratch the surface of the question by challenging the orthodox understanding and questioning the American government’s, neither school conducted sufficient research on the role of domestic politics in decision-making during the Truman Presidency. It would require another few generations of scholarly work before the materials necessary to address the question of domestic politics and the mass public’s role in it were available.

More recent scholars have attempted to understand the decline in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union from the Soviet perspective. The post-revisionist school, for example, led scholarship during the 1970s and part of the 1980s. Post-revisionist scholars argued that the Soviet Union and the United States shared the responsibility for the deterioration in their relations. Historian John Gaddis led this school with his 1972 book *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, in which he argued that internal influences both in the United States and the Soviet Union prevented their leaders from avoiding conflict. Gaddis argued that an increased sense of suspicion towards Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe starting to take hold in the spring of 1945 among Truman’s close advisors, especially Ambassador to the Soviet Union Averell Harriman and Secretary of Navy James Forrestal, and among prominent congressmen, such as Republican Senator of Michigan Arthur Vandenberg, prompted the gradual development of an uncompromising, hostile policy towards the Soviet Union.¹ He also argued that, while Truman initially intended to continue his predecessor’s policy of cooperation

with the Soviets, the misunderstandings inherited by the remaining advisers and the public consensus against further compromises during the fall pressured him and his administration to implement a firmer policy. Americans’ sense of omnipotence coupled with the fear of communism made the resulting confrontations between the United States and the Soviet Union, such as in Iran in the fall of 1946, hostile and difficult to prevent. Therefore, Gaddis in 1972 opens the way for a more comprehensive analysis than his predecessors of the role of domestic politics in foreign policymaking during the Truman Administration.

In a response to Gaddis, Ralph Levering argued in his 1976 book *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance* that the public and the administration that Truman inherited from his predecessor fundamentally misunderstood President Roosevelt’s delicate handling of the Soviets since Yalta and the agreements that preceded it. He asserted that the confrontation between the Soviets and the Americans might have been avoided if “most people in between [the President and his colleagues] had been better informed about the realities of international politics and the limits as well as the strengths of American power”. Levering may be seen as moving beyond Gaddis’ claim four years earlier by indirectly claiming that Roosevelt had, in some way, misled the public on American-Soviet relations and, thus, caused a troubling rift in America’s public and private understanding of American-Soviet relations for his predecessor’s term. Thomas Paterson similarly argued in his 1979 article “Presidential Foreign Policy, Public Opinion, and Congress: The Truman Years”, that President Truman simply accomplished his foreign policy initiatives by more unilateral means if he could not secure public support, as he did in April 1950 by signing NSC 68, which authorized a huge increase in military expenditures compared to GNP that intended to support US military “policing” overseas, and in June 1950 by committing troops

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to Korea without obtaining formal authorization from Congress. Thus, Paterson contended that Truman was willing to resolve important political issues unilaterally if need be, which is similar to Levering’s analysis of Roosevelt’s political tactics during the war.

Robert Messer advanced Gaddis and Levering’s research of the Truman Administration’s elites in his 1982 book *The End of an Alliance: James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt, Truman, and the Origins of the Cold War*. He argues that President Truman and Secretary of State James Byrnes played an important role in engendering the public’s hostility towards the Soviet Union from the summer of 1945 to the spring of 1946. He contended that they often misled the public regarding important international developments, such as the Potsdam agreements and the London Council of Foreign Ministers, in the hopes of garnering support for their Soviet policies. Thus, Messer enriched the study of domestic politics and its constraints on the Truman Administration by honing in on the elite policymakers’ perspective (the President and his Secretary of State) and their responses to domestic pressures. However, the greater public is still downplayed by the new set of post-revisionist scholars despite an increased focus on domestic politics and, in turn, public opinion. The focus is placed on political leaders, such as the President and the Secretary of State, by Gaddis, Levering, and Messer and the more elite segment of the public, such as journalists and businessmen, by Paterson.

Some more recent scholars have focused even more intensively on the interplay between public opinion and US foreign policy-makers. George Sirgiovanni, for example, argued in his 1990 book *An Undercurrent of Suspicion* that the right-wing press—including the Hearst-

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McCormick newspaper chain and the leaders of the Catholic Church—and left-wing leaders of powerful labor unions—such as the liberal United Automobile Workers’ union leader Walter Reuther and more conservative American Federation of Labor (AFL) union leader George Meany—and the American Socialist Party joined against the Soviet Union and communism soon after the end of the Second World War. Sirgiovanni referred to this new activist group as the “Cold War Liberals”. He argued that both groups shared an opposition to American Communists in labor, in part, because of opposition to communist principles, such as the reduction of freedoms relative to a liberal democracy.\(^8\) Arnold Offner argued in his 2002 book *Another Such Victory* that Truman was a parochial nationalist, repeatedly ignoring suggestions from his advisers for more careful, diplomatic policies during international crises, such as the question of the unification of Germany in 1948 and 1949, in the interest of maintaining a position of strength over the Soviets that would preclude disagreement. In most cases, he “narrowed rather than broadened the options that he presented to the American citizenry, the environment of American politics, and the channels through which Cold War politics flowed.”\(^9\)

Therefore, Truman’s personal limitations in understanding and reasonably reacting to developments in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, Offner argued, played an important role in shaping an antipathy towards the Soviet Union in the postwar American public’s conscience and prolonging the persistent strategy of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union for the two generations of Americans that followed his final term. However, neither Sirgiovanni nor Offner fully analyze the mass public’s perception of foreign affairs. Sirgiovanni made perhaps the most significant progress in studying grassroots politics from Roosevelt to

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Truman by intensively studying the role of the right-wing press, the left-wing labor movement, and Socialist-intellectuals; all of these social groups were profoundly influential to the masses.

I will examine the gradual development in the minds of many Americans from sentiments of sympathy to Russia in May 1945 to suspicion in the fall and outright hostility by March 1946. I will also explore examine, critique, and explore possible alternatives to Truman’s policy-making from September to December 1945 in the context of the American public’s gradual development from feelings of sympathy towards Russia in May 1945 to suspicion and hostility by March 1946. The outstanding question of reorganizing Germany’s former satellite states, a lynchpin to international negotiations since the Crimean Conference in February but particularly at Potsdam in July and the London Council of Foreign Ministers in September, increasingly threatened international unity after Japan surrendered. The London Council of Foreign Ministers from late September to early October made the world painfully aware of the possibility that the nascent United Nations Organization could break down. It also forced Truman and his Administration to re-evaluate America’s foreign policy during a time in which Congress was re-establishing its control over the conduct foreign affairs. Thus, there was considerable political maneuvering occurring at this time that constrained Truman in a manner that simply did not exist during the war. The political divisions in the press, Congress, and the Administration played an important role in Truman’s decision to reassert his authority over foreign policymaking in late December and reorient his foreign policy.

I will focus on a critical period in the Administration’s foreign policymaking—September to December—because it is the time in which Truman and the State Department determined the Soviet policy. Truman forcefully reasserted his authority over foreign policymaking in late December, so I will consider questions such as the manner by which
Truman handled the political divisions within the government over foreign policy towards the Soviet Union. How did Americans believe Truman should have handled domestic politics and the Soviet Union? Examination of statements made by Congressmen, editors, State Department officials, and other relevant government officials proposing solutions to the political divisions in this period has led me to conclusions that diverge from previous scholars’ views. Thus, I will use the opinions written by editors in prominent newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Chicago Tribune*, to explore alternatives that may have eased or prevented the deterioration in relations between the United States and Russia.\(^\text{10}\) I will also use public opinion polls from the fall of 1945 to survey the prevailing mood and draw links to the opinions expressed in the press and decisions made by the Administration.\(^\text{11}\)

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\(^{10}\) Government sources will include Record Group 59 of the State Department Files dating from May 8, 1945 to March 26, 1946 in the National Archives at College Park, Maryland; the State Department’s Press Releases from May 8, 1945 to March 26, 1946 in Alexander Library; President Truman’s Public Papers dating from May 8, 1945 to March 26, 1946; the Congressional Record Set from May 8, 1945 to March 26, 1946.


\(^{11}\) Refer to “Online Sources” in footnote 1
Chapter 1: Change and Continuity

The abrupt death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on April 12, 1945 prompted no small degree of uncertainty and apprehension in the minds of Americans and their allies. His closest advisers and colleagues in the Capitol had then lost their herculean leader, the one who had forged a bipartisan alliance between the diametrically opposed Republicans and Democrats despite differences in economic and social policies and maintained the Allies’ unity in the raging war against Germany. Some of his chief allies, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Premier Joseph Stalin, had lost a close friend that had secured billions of dollars in loans for their part in the war effort, an arduous political endeavor that had begun with Stalin’s request for a second front in early 1942. They also lost one of the leading statesmen responsible for the new world order under the United Nations Organization, or UNO, the charter of which was scheduled to be drafted in in the next few weeks at San Francisco. Many of the agreements made at Yalta in February, particularly the organization of Germany’s former satellite states, had yet to be fulfilled and would be deliberated upon before the international audience in San Francisco. As far as the public was concerned, the building blocks for a benevolent, mutually beneficial wartime and postwar alliance were, thus, masterfully laid by President Roosevelt.

The abrupt transition to then Vice President Truman’s presidency significantly altered the equation of current international relations. After all, Truman had to work out many of Roosevelt’s largely secret arrangements with Churchill and Stalin. Churchill, Stalin, and their chief advisers now had to contend with a new, untried executive who had to lead the Grand Alliance and help defeat Germany. Stalin and his Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, had notable reasons for concern with the new president because so many of their shared interests depended upon Roosevelt’s vision and magnanimity. It was important for President Truman to
develop a level of trust that could live up to his predecessor’s. After all, the seeds of discontent had been sown over the administration of Poland’s national government, a hot political issue among Americans, at Yalta; Roosevelt was forced to postpone the question until after the formal organization of the United Nations in San Francisco because he could not persuade Stalin to consider the Declaration on Liberated Europe, which ensured democratic elections in Poland and Germany’s other eastern satellites. Russia’s paramount concern in this regard was security in its border states with Germany, having been invaded twice through these avenues in Stalin’s lifetime. Truman and his Administration had to make Stalin and Molotov trust them if the United States and the Soviet Union were to continue cooperating as Roosevelt had envisioned.

Moreover, Roosevelt’s advisers then faced a change in management at an important moment in America’s domestic political discourse over the course of the war and the new United Nations Organization. Underlying discontent with Russia’s behavior in Eastern Europe, which some considered to be contrary to agreements made at Yalta, and their failure to draw adequate concessions galvanized the majority of President Truman’s closest advisers in the interim between Roosevelt’s presidency and Truman’s presidency. Once he consulted them in April to prepare for his first contacts with the Russians, the majority of his advisers urged a firmer policy towards the Soviet Union. Perhaps his most influential adviser in the early days of his presidency, Ambassador to the Soviet Union Averell Harriman, returned to Washington from Moscow and privately advised Truman to reconsider America’s policy towards the Soviet Union in light of its recent management of sensitive territories in Eastern Europe, particularly Poland. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, General John Deane, and Chief of Staff William Leahy supported Harriman’s sentiments. Secretary of War Henry Stimson, however, firmly opposed a tougher policy with the Soviet Union, in part, because he sympathized with its creation of buffer
states in Eastern Europe. Supported by only General George Marshall, Stimson was worried by the bitter anti-Russian sentiments shared by the President’s other advisers and its implications for public support for the alliance with Russia. Truman followed the advice of the majority of his advisers, however, and sharply reprimanded Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov on April 23 for the Soviet Union’s behavior in Poland during a private meeting in Washington. Thus, Truman was pressured early on to develop a tougher policy against the Soviet Union because of pent-up frustration and discontent by many of his senior advisers.

Nonetheless, Truman exerted considerable effort to preserve relations with the Soviet Union for the duration of the war in Europe as part of a conscious strategy to continue his predecessor’s foreign policy to defeat Germany. He resisted Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s persistent urges in early May to capture Berlin before the Red Army because it would violate the agreements made at Yalta regarding the quadripartite division of Germany. He also supported the Joint Chief of Staffs’ interest in the Soviet Union’s entry into the war against Japan because the agreements were made between Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta. The new chief executive probably agreed with his predecessor’s strategic considerations—that the Red Army be used to pin down the un-touched Kwantung Army in Manchuria while the United States attacked mainland Japan—for the same reasons that most military advisers supported it: it would probably hasten Japan’s surrender. In the realm of economic affairs, President Truman and Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew pushed hard to continue the shipment of lend-lease aid to the Soviet Union despite backlash from anti-administration members of the Senate in mid-May. Truman and Grew considered the aid essential to defeating Japan. Harry Hopkins, former ambassador to the Soviet Union, and Joseph Davies were sent to Moscow during the debate in order to confirm the Soviet Union’s commitment to the Pacific War and cooperation in Poland.
and Germany’s other eastern satellites. Stalin reassured the envoys of his commitment to the Pacific and to cooperation during a direct conversation on May 28, which pleased Truman enough to instruct Patrick Hurley, Ambassador to China, on June 9 to reveal Yalta’s Far Eastern agreement to Chiang Kai-shek. President Truman clearly planned to closely follow the decisions his predecessor’s made at Yalta from May to June, well beyond Germany’s surrender, and carefully exhausted most avenues for compromise in light of internal tensions over foreign economic policy.
Chapter 2: The Shift to the Pacific

In general, the public’s perception of the Soviet Union gradually developed from sympathy to suspicion from May through July 1945. America’s shift in focus to the Pacific War played an important role in this phenomenon. Most Americans agreed in May that the Soviet Union was primarily responsible for Germany’s surrender and the cessation of hostilities in Europe but several Americans appeared to harbor reservations of our ally. 75% of adult interviewees in a May 31 poll, for example, responded that it would be difficult to cooperate with Russia while 71% of similar respondents for a different poll blamed Russia for the unsatisfactory manner by which the Big Three had been cooperating of late; these Americans’ responses indicate an underlying distrust of Russia and, possibly, her motives. Public opinion of Russia was restless from May to June, however, and varied considerably according to the questions asked. The majority of respondents in a June 1 poll wanted to see Russia join in the war against Japan but other polls from the same day indicated a definite split over Russia’s intentions in Eastern Europe or her proclivities to peace or aggression. A sizeable proportion of the respondents answered in uncertain terms that they did not know what Russia’s intentions were. It appears, then, that many Americans seemed to distrust Russia’s behavior in the Big Three and her motives in Eastern Europe even though it was generally accepted in May that Russia was indispensable to defeating Germany.

Moreover, the shift to the Pacific War and the dizzying events leading to the Japanese government’s abrupt surrender in mid-August significantly complicated Americans’

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understandings of their country’s role in international affairs. The use of the atomic bombs against Japan, of course, played a very important role in this new sense of omnipotence. Underlying elements in the public began to question the roles America’s allies played in the Second World War because certain politicians and editors now believed that America played the primary role in defeating Japan and ending the Second World War overall. The Soviet Union’s role in Germany’s surrender was marginalized and almost forgotten by these politicians and editors after the shift to the Pacific War. Most Americans also felt tremendously empowered by their country’s monopoly over atomic weapons, so the temperament of dissident factions in the press and Congress toward America’s wartime allies was quite different in August than it was in the previous few months. Congress’ and the public’s opinions may be linked to the noticeable shift in political opinion against international cooperation in the immediate months following Japan’s surrender while the United Nations addressed the question of reorganizing Germany’s satellite territories in Eastern Europe and Japan’s satellite territories in East Asia.

Congressmen debated the role of America’s allies in the Pacific War even upon the day that Germany’s surrender was announced. In the afternoon of May 8, House Majority Leader John McCormack from Massachusetts, a staunch New Deal Democrat, joined his many colleagues and recited a stirring, eloquent speech that proclaimed Germany’s defeat and praised the Grand Alliance’s outstanding leadership in securing the surrender. The “hardest part of the war is over”, he argued, and the war against Japan would not be as severe “so far as its consequences are concerned” as the war with Germany had been. “We could have licked Japan 1 or 2 years ago and might not have won the war, but with the defeat of Germany there is no question, no matter how long Japan may fight on, but that the war is won by our country and our
allies,” he proclaimed. McCormack affirms the Allies’ joint efforts in Germany’s defeat and smoothly introduced an optimistic transition into the war with Japan. There appears to be little skepticism of our allies’ commitment to our shared cause against the Axis in his mind. On the other hand, Republican Representative Robert Rich from Pennsylvania, an outspoken opponent of New Deal politics, appeared to harbor considerable skepticism of our allies’ willingness to contribute in the Pacific War, querying after McCormack’s speech, “Can we count on England and Russia as allies to help us fight Japan as we as allies helped them defeat Germany?” He was doubtful that cooperation could be secured after Germany’s defeat and the war effort shifts to the Pacific, explicitly warning that we “watch out” if we are later forced to “give our all on promises of future cooperation” with Russia and Britain. Thus, opinion was split along partisan lines as early as May 8 over our Allies’ intentions in the final months of the war against Japan. Engulfed in the shift to the war against Japan, disgruntled conservative politicians and later editors began as early as May to express a growing dissatisfaction and disregard to Russia’s primary role in defeating Germany.

The reorganization of Poland’s government, perhaps the most divisive political wedge to the Russo-American Alliance, raised suspicions against the Soviet Union in Congress, the press, and the Administration quite soon after Germany’s defeat. The political dimensions of the issue also highlighted deep anti-administration, anti-communist, and anti-Soviet tensions within Congress. The General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, for example, on May 9 sent to its representative in Congress, Joesph Ryter, Joint Resolution No. 316, “memorializing Congress for

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16 Ibid.
reaffirmation of the tenets of the Atlantic Charter in regard to Poland”. The resolution was promptly designated to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. In citing the tenets of the Atlantic Charter, the General Assembly of Connecticut implied that the new Polish government should be constructed in light of the principles of self-determination. The Polish American Congress—of which the President was Charles Rozmarek, Vice-President was Frank Januszewski, and Director was Ignatius Nurkiewicz—similarly sent a volatile memorandum to Representative John Dingell from Michigan, a staunch New Deal Democrat, on May 17. Dingell proclaimed that the “challenging” memorandum “defies the appeasers of Joseph Stalin” and confounds the “pro-Russians, Communists, and errant anti-Polish elements here and abroad.” The lengthy document, which was dated from May 11, urged Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, who was engaged in talks with the new United Nations in San Francisco, to insist upon a true delegation of the legal representatives of Poland at the San Francisco Conference. It proceeded to virulently attack the Soviet Union’s occupation of Poland and, by extension, President Roosevelt’s “Yalta compromise”, which the Polish American Congress believed permitted the occupation, as responsible for the “tragedy now being enacted in Poland”. The document was not only fiercely anti-Soviet but also anti-administration, rooting itself in the previous administration’s misconduct, and suggests a connection between the Polish-American Congress and Dingell. The memorandum and Dingell’s speech both highlight an aggressive anti-administration, anti-communist, and anti-Soviet sentiment in Congress with roots from the early war years that played an important role in chipping away at the Grand Alliance less than two weeks after Germany’s surrender.

17 Congressional Record, Volume 91-Part 4. p. 4369. May 9, 1945.
19 Ibid.
The Senate also saw strong opposition to the Soviet Union because of a longstanding, partisan disapproval of the Administration’s management of lend-lease to Britain and the Soviet Union. Senator Harry Styles Bridges from New Hampshire, former Republican governor of his home state, asserted heatedly during a debate on the Senate floor on May 17 that the Soviet Union had no rights to America’s treasure after Germany surrendered and Americans were still dying in the Pacific. Disconcerted with the Administration’s persistent efforts to circumvent the Senate over the extension of lend-lease aid to Russia, Bridges argued that Germany’s surrender necessitated the cessation of lend-lease aid as Congress intended it during the Act’s inception. “It is not within the intent of the act to extend lend-lease aid to nations merely because they can be connected in some remote relation to the war in the Pacific,” Bridges argued before the Senate. “The act is designated to promote the defense of the United States, and at this moment the most important thing to the defense of the United States and in the mind of the American people is the speedy defeat of Japan and nothing else.”20 The debate occurred at a time during which lend-lease to Russia was under review by the Department of State in light of Germany’s surrender. His speech may be considered one of the opening volleys against a sensitive foreign economic policy. Perhaps the most striking element of his argument is the fact that he believes Russia’s part in the Pacific War is “remote”; it suggests a critical misunderstanding of Russia’s political influence over East Asia and a striking ignorance of the then strong support for Russian intervention within the highest military circles. Most top military commanders in May, including General Douglas MacArthur and the Joint Chiefs, did, in fact, consider a Soviet entry into the Pacific War to be highly desirable because it would likely ensure Japan’s “speedy” defeat. Bridges’ hyper-nationalistic degradation of Russia during a high point in public trust of Russia is

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an ominous trend that foreshadows the shift in the public’s perceptions of Russia by Japan’s surrender in August.

The Chicago Tribune covered the debate in detail on the day that it occurred and shed light on its wider implications. Philip Dodd closely covered Senator Bridges’ remarks insinuating the State Department’s “subtle evasion” of Congress by extending lend-lease beyond its intended purpose. Acting Secretary of State Joseph Grew had stated that the President was authorized to continue lend-lease aid to Europe even though the war on the continent was over, which violated Bridges’ interpretation of the act nullification after hostilities in Europe ceased. “This is a studied attempt,” Bridges declared, “to continue lend-lease on pretext of a military situation no longer directly connected with the war in Europe.” He was interrupted by Senator Robert Taft from Ohio, a Republican, who observed that an amendment that he proposed in April, which blocked the extension of lend-lease, was prevented only because of senators’ confidence in Lend-Lease Administrator Leo T. Crowley. Another Republican colleague, Senator Harlan Bushfield from South Dakota, asked Bridges if the State Department had reversed Mr. Crowley’s recent statements that lend-lease to Russia was being terminated. Bridges responded in the affirmative, sealing his blistering attack upon the State Department’s foreign policy. The final section of Dodd’s article—Will Insist on Law—includes direct quotations made by Senator Bridges that aggressively upheld America’s role in the Pacific War and indirectly questioned Russia’s participation in it. “We cannot have any diversions of lend-lease…except to those countries which are vigorously and openly working with us to defeat Japan…Any country not actively and vigorously and directly aiding the United States in…the Pacific has…only a secondary claim on our economic resources.” Again, Bridges reiterates a

fundamentally flawed understanding of our military situation against Japan, implying that Russia is not “vigorously and openly” working with the United States in the Pacific. It also implies the United States’ sole monopoly over the Pacific War. His support by Dodd in the Chicago Tribune, a bastion of conservative sentiment, indicates partisan support for his foreign economic policy.

Latent, divisive fears also arose in May over the prospect of ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Representative John Rankin from Mississippi, a leading Republican in the House Un-American Activities Committee and vigorous critic of communist sympathizers in the United States, expressed before the House a fear of an impending clash between the Soviet Union and the United States on May 30. He depicted the conflict on a primarily ideological basis, as a war between “the ideology of Karl Marx, based upon atheism and infidelity” and “the doctrine of Christianity…that has raised the world from the depths…to the highest pinnacle civilization has ever known”.22 He then asserts that the United States had, in fact, won the war in Europe, that everyone knew that “had it not been for American men and materials this war would not have been won.”23 Rankin’s argument—that America won the war in Europe because it was fundamental to Russia’s industrial capacity against Germany—arose in Congress and in the press from the conclusion of the war with Germany through January 1946. While perhaps defensible, it confuses causation for the sake of over-simplification; Russia was still responsible for prosecuting and winning its military campaigns against Germany’s eastern satellites even though its allies had provided substantial military aid. It is also interesting that he emphasizes a religious demarcation between the United States and Russia. In portraying an impending conflict between the US and Russia, Rankin judges the causes of conflict largely

23 Ibid.
upon moral and religious values and upholds Western Christianity, with its ties to the United States, as superior. He had a history of defending powerful evangelical movements’ opposition to suspected communists in the United States while on the Record, so it is imaginable that he had influence from such sectors of society. Rankin’s experience suggests, at least in his case, a religious link for his dissidence against Allied unity during a time in which the majority of public opinion supported Russia’s responsibility for Germany’s defeat.

In spite of the considerable Congressional backlash against the Soviet Union in May, Representative Adolph Sabath from Illinois, a staunch New Deal Democrat, criticized Americans’ attacks on the Soviet Union as unnecessary and unfounded on June 5. He claimed that “most of the isolationists find fault with Russia’s contribution to the [lend-lease] fund as not being as great as ours or that she will derive certain advantages.”24 He argued that, if they had the “best interests of the country at heart”, these gentlemen would cease in their disruptive behavior, for Russia, after all, was indispensable to Hitler’s defeat without claiming the “lives of 1,000,000 of our boys”.25 The United States should assume its role as leader of the new world but while maintaining its allies’ support and trust.26 Sabath, thus, firmly rejects the excesses of some of his colleagues, such as Rankin, against the Soviet Union while maintaining the United States’ position of leadership in the world. Sabath and Rankin had a particularly acerbic history in the House; Sabath frequently attacked the House Un-American Activities Committee for its partisan purges and Rankin was a staunch anti-Semite and accustomed to publicly denigrating his Jewish colleagues in the House. He deemed critics of the Soviet Union “isolationists”, a term which had strong negative connotations as responsible for the defeat of the world organization

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
during the pre-war years that played a role in the outbreak of the Second World War. At this point in the war, it was wholly inappropriate to sow such discord after Germany’s surrender had been successfully concluded and Japan had yet to be defeated. Sabath was part of a strong reaction in the House to the excesses of a vocal anti-communist, anti-Soviet, and anti-administration minority movement.

A notable editorial responded to the *Chicago Tribune*’s attacks upon the Administration and the Soviet Union with sympathy for our ally. Editor-in-chief of the *Atlanta Constitution* Ralph McGill, for example, argued in the midst of the Lend-lease dispute that the halting did not indicate a break in relations with Russia. He judged that Russia was probably informed of the agreement to review lend-lease shipments after Germany surrendered and implied that Russia’s agreement to invade Manchuria precluded doubts of a cessation of aid. Lend-lease to Russia was going to continue because Russia had already committed to the Asian war, so there was no break in relations. Editor of a moderate, Democratic newspaper source, McGill generally urged for reason and restraint in his editorials in light of troubling international developments and he was usually well informed. His persistent arguments regarding Russia’s commitment to the war with Japan were uncannily accurate and other newspaper commentators at that time did not appear to be aware of the military agreement. Even insiders such as Senator Bridges from New Hampshire did not appear to be aware of the agreement. McGill’s May 10 article entitled “Russia and War with the Japs” criticized the disturbances “in and out of the press of America” to sow discord between the US and Russia, likening them to the Nazis; “Nothing more tragic could happen than to have a split come between Russia and either of the two great powers which

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have fought and won, with her, a war against Germany.” He also argued that Russia could not reasonably attack Japan at the moment or in the near future because it currently lacked the military capacity to do so. “Our staff knows what she next plans,” he commented ominously. “It is a well-kept secret. And should be.” He was probably alluding to the agreement made between Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta by which the Soviet Union agreed to attack Japan three months after Germany’s surrender. That time period was necessary to consolidate Russia’s industrial capacity in order to use it against Japan, which was an important motivation for the continuation of lend-lease to Russia, and to move troops to the Far East. All of this suggests that McGill had sound military contacts and that he was intelligent and compelling enough to have a lasting impact on people. He finally urged on May 10 that we think “clearly and unemotionally about Russia” despite our differences. On the whole, Mr. McGill was an interesting editorial counter-weight to the raging press debate over Russian relations, urging restraint and rationality in a manner similar to Representative Sabath.

State Department officials provided an official analysis of public divisions over U.S.-Soviet relations in a May report entitled “Public Views of U.S. Soviet relations as expressed by Editors and Radio Commentators”. The Division of Public Studies reported on May 30 that, while “growing concern over U.S.-Soviet relations has been expressed by a great majority of press and radio commentators”, most wanted cooperation between the two nations. Their positions diverge on the appropriate policy, such as the necessity to be firm but patient with Russia, and they occasionally question Russia’s qualifications for cooperation but most of them

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 “Current Views on US-Soviet Relations (As Expressed by Editors and Radio Commentators)”. Division of Public Studies’ Reports on Public Attitudes Toward Foreign Policy, 1943-65, Class 7.61, Box 45. pg. 1.
desire to sustain the Russian Alliance. However, a “substantial and very vocal minority” that had long been hostile to Russia exists in the press world that does not want cooperation and “seizes every opportunity to attack Russian moves and motives.”\textsuperscript{32} The most out-spoken press sources include the Hearst, McCormick, and Patterson papers, which were virulently anti-administration and anti-communist newspaper chains, some of which dated back to the to the late 19\textsuperscript{th} Century. They were a particularly vocal conservative opposition to Roosevelt’s wartime administration, an interesting wedge in the carefully constructed bipartisan alliance in the government at the time. This minority group, it argued, arose from a cacophony of protest responding to the recent revelation of Russia’s arrest of 16 democratic Polish leaders. Its response differed from the generally temperate tenor of other commentators in its unabashedly hostile and divisive tone against the Soviet Union. The Hearst press produced the most violently anti-Russian attacks; special writers such as Karl von Wiegand reported from Madrid that all of Europe was engulfed in a “Red Flood” and Paul Mallon was reported to have habitually assumed that a war with Russia was inevitable.\textsuperscript{33} It is interesting that Mallon’s comments are similar in tone and purpose to Representative Rankin’s oration on May 30, the same day that the report was issued; this suggests shared interests. The McCormick press criticized Russia through news stories and front-page cartoons but the Patterson press followed a more devious method by taking considerable efforts to make future diplomatic conferences appear either “ridiculous or futile.”\textsuperscript{34} It then advocated a position shared by the three press sources of the sanctity of the Monroe Doctrine, which highlights a preoccupation with our own affairs and our military strength instead of disruptive international forces. The tone of the report is mixed in light of the

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} “Current Views on US-Soviet Relations (As Expressed by Editors and Radio Commentators)”. Division of Public Studies’ Reports on Public Attitudes Toward Foreign Policy, 1943-65, Class 7.61, Box 45. pg. 3.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
considerable number of temperate commentaries of the Soviet Union but there is concern, nonetheless, of the persistent minority group within the press that seized sensitive opportunities to attack Russia and dishevel opportunities to reach an accord.

Truman’s reactions to the mounting political opposition clearly indicate his intentions to continue his predecessor’s policies. In response to questions regarding the status of lend-lease to Russia, Truman responded under pressure during a May 23 news conference, “Russia is getting the lend-lease that she has contracted to receive during the month of May.”35 He was subsequently questioned whether the law allows lend-lease to be shipped to Russia or to any country that was not engaged in the war against Japan, which was clearly linked to the press and congressional uproar the week before. He responded that lend-lease could be sent to Russia even though it was not engaged in the war against Japan because it had been allocated to Russia “by protocol and treaty” and “we have to carry out our commitments.”36 Truman’s sure response to that sharp debate indicated his intent to continue his predecessor’s famous economic policy, which was fundamental to maintaining the Grand Alliance, and his capacity to resolve the issue at least temporarily. He had already decided with his advisers that the continuation of lend-lease was fundamental to continuing our alliance with Russia despite the end of the war against Germany. He also decided to send Harry Hopkins, a particularly close adviser of Roosevelt, and Joseph Davies, another close adviser of Roosevelt and popular public figure, to Moscow in June to negotiate an understanding between the two nations over postwar Europe. They successfully reassured Stalin but could not address and were quite surprised by the Premier’s marked interest in the joint-occupation of Japan. It appears, then, that the President exhausted most avenues at

36 Ibid.
his disposal to reach a diplomatic accord with Stalin in June despite significant domestic political discord.

President Truman also forcefully addressed public discontent over the creation of the new Polish government. Many Americans, the Polish American Congress among them, supported the creation of a government under the London Poles, which was a group of Polish leaders that were exiled from Poland after Germany and Russia’s joint occupation of the country in 1941, because they viewed it to be representative of the Polish people. Russian Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and Stalin himself, however, had consistently insisted upon the legitimacy of the Lublin Poles, which established itself after its liberation from Germany by Russia. Press commentators in June were, thus, quite concerned with the unfolding events in the coming Big Three meeting that was designed to settle these and other territorial questions over Germany’s former satellite states. One of the biggest questions at the time was whether or not the London Poles would be invited to the Big Three meeting. Truman exasperatedly addressed the Polish question at a news conference on June 13, urging the audience not to “upset the applecart.”

“What we are trying to do is to get the situation worked out that has been causing us a lot of embarrassment,” he exclaimed. “And for God’s sake, don’t you go muddying it all up so as to make it worse!” Arrangements had been made so that the London Poles and other factions could meet and a government could be made that will be “satisfactory to Poland.” The meeting did not need public condemnation before it had even had a chance to convene. Thus, Truman urged that commentators report that “we have made some progress” and asserted that “we can get results

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
that will do what we want”. It is clear from his tone that he is perturbed by the public backlash against Russia and he had every right to be. His response, while emotional, was also reassuring of his intent to uphold Big Three unity and capacity to assert his authority in spite of considerable pressure. It is difficult to argue with his statements. Occasions such as these are a sound testament to Truman’s persuasive and executive skills early on in his presidency.

For all intent and purposes, the two months after Germany’s surrender saw considerable domestic disturbances but the Russian alliance was maintained for the time being by the efforts of the Truman Administration and coolheaded segments of the public. Truman did a masterful job of managing the politics of Russian relations in America, especially in light of the fervent opposition to the organization of the Polish government, and proved capable of maintaining his predecessor’s course while under public pressure. He also handled the extension of lend-lease aid, which was crucial to Russo-American cooperation in the Asian theater, well. The general public support of the Russian cause that reigned from May to roughly late September was also quite beneficial in counteracting the boisterous dissidents within the government and the press. However, there were still questions left unanswered that became rather important at the international conferences that were designated to settle territorial matters in Europe during the mid-summer and fall of 1945. Reactionary elements in Congress and the press that bitterly resented the administration, communism in general, and the Soviet state system did not disappear, either, and plagued Truman’s Administration and the nascent United Nations Organization.

40 Ibid.
Chapter 3: The Great Test at Potsdam

The final few months of the Pacific War saw many important international and domestic political developments that fundamentally shaped the tenuous alliance between the United States and Russia. The final Big Three meeting before Japan’s surrender and the definitive conclusion of the Second World War convened at Potsdam, in the suburbs of Berlin, in mid-July. The Potsdam conference was of paramount importance, in part, because of its mixed results in settling issues over the division of Germany, especially regarding reparations, and the organization of Poland’s boundaries. The Russians pushed hard to effect a steep bill from Germany—$20 billion, half of which Russia hoped to receive—and only accepted the Americans’ percentage-based deal after Truman and Byrnes offered to accept the Oder-Western Neisse boundary in return. Truman and Byrnes were so adamant about the reparations because one of their primary objectives was to secure agreements that required the minimum number of troops or taxpayer’s money to Europe; they did not want to be forced to patrol Germany for an indefinite period and manage the country’s destroyed economy. Military considerations also factored into the decision to reduce the reparations because the American delegation feared that Germany’s economy could collapse, forcing taxpayers to contribute to paying for its economy. However, the conference produced mixed results on important issues such as the political disposition of Germany’s former satellite states. The Russians, for example, refused to commit more closely to the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe but Stalin crucially renewed his promise to enter the war against Japan and provided Americans with news of peace feelers from Tokyo. Molotov also readily agreed to a Council of Foreign Ministers tasked with drafting the peace treaties with former Axis satellites. The American delegation left the meeting uneasy with
the prospects of Russia’s cooperation, which was fuelled by Molotov’s tough bargaining, and faced considerable unease back in the US as well.

Certain press commentators, for example, expressed concern with the strict level of secrecy maintained during the conference. Foreign news correspondent Anne O’Hare McCormick for the *New York Times* argued on July 21 that the restriction on foreign correspondents in Potsdam’s vicinity was a grave impediment to American-Soviet relations. The necessity for privacy at such conferences hardly justifies “the extreme closed-to-the-public policy adopted at Potsdam.”41 The news blackout, she argued, forced even the informed public to only speculate on issues of critical importance to the world’s security and the postwar order. “Nothing could do more to strain confidence in Russian-America partnership…than the feeling that to move with Russia we should have to move backward,” she concluded.42 Moving backward meant to submit to Russia’s system of secrecy and suspicion, so McCormick blamed the Soviet system of government for overwhelming secrecy and, by extension, problems that may arise once the decisions are publicized. National correspondent of the Times, Turner Catledge, responded more than a week later by questioning the government’s utilization of its press facilities and the free press’ fulfilment of its obligations to the public. He agreed that the restrictions were disappointing but the speculation arising out of most other national news sources had not been beneficial to international relations, either. He then ironically asserted that democracy played a role in the secrecy because, as he quoted from Associated Press correspondent Kenneth Dixon, there would be secrecy at Potsdam “if it took secrecy to get a Big

42 Ibid.
Three conference, with Stalin present and cooperating”. Thus, the press should be held more accountable to report international events accurately if amity is to be maintained between the US and Russia.

While the press debate occurred, suspicions of communism reached a head in Congress. The controversy transcended partisan boundaries but the inflammatory political tactics of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), for example, strained earnest efforts for a bipartisan front by repeatedly attacking Democrats and other progressives. Representative Jerry Voorhis from California, a devoted Democrat and advocate of the New Deal, on July 19 denounced accusations made by other Congressmen regarding Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Under-Secretary of War Robert Patterson’s communist sympathies as “perfectly fantastic”. He expressed deep concern with communism in the United States but rejected sustained efforts to root it out nation-wide because they were too often used for partisan purposes, or to defame members of opposing parties. Communists to Voorhis were “people under the discipline of an international organization and whose very movements and thoughts are directed and controlled by that international organization”, not “people who are progressives or are devoted to the welfare of the common people.” He argued that committees designed to protect the United States from subversion should root out true communists and fascists alike. Voorhis sheds light on the polarized reactions of certain elements of Congress to communism in the United States as the focus shifted from Europe to the Far East. That political trend highlighted the growing sense

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of suspicion and concern over Russia’s ambitions and its willingness to cooperate with the US, which many Americans felt from July to roughly September.

Representative Adolph Sabath made similar remarks the following day, attacking Representative John Rankin’s loyalty to the country and accusing the HUAC of over-stepping its original intentions and abetting “Nazi-fascist ideologists”.46 Denouncing recent claims by the committee that certain Army officers were communists, Sabath proceeded to question Rankin’s loyalty to the United States and to Allied unity. “If the gentleman from Mississippi [Rankin] is such a loyal American and has the interests of America at heart,” he remarked, “I feel that he should realize and recognize that he is not promoting harmony either here or among those of the other Allied Nations.”47 By extension, his remarks implicate that Rankin’s partisan tactics constituted an obstruction to the war effort and the successful prosecution of the war against Japan, which was an issue of paramount importance to the United States at the time. He also questioned the HUAC’s ability to complete its original mission: to protect the United States from subversive actors. “It was the original intent of the House to investigate solely the un-American activities in which the Nazi and Fascist organizations were engaged,” he exclaimed, “not to go witch hunting, not to unfairly smear the innocent simply to acquire big headlines in the public press…”48 His interpretation of the HUAC’s mission strongly implies that he believed that the committee transformed well beyond its original intentions and should be re-shaped to its original model. He even insinuated that the committee’s practices played into the hands of Nazis and Fascists, perhaps even abetted them: “During this war the Nazi ideologists have sought in every way to charge all progressives…with having communistic leanings, or even with being

47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
Communists, all for the purpose of creating a smokescreen to hide real Nazi and Fascist activities.” He alludes here to the long, sad history of red-baiting by virulently anti-communist, anti-Soviet, and anti-administration newspaper chains such as the Hearst and McCormick press during the early war years. While then President Roosevelt largely contained their political havoc, they did a great deal to frustrate Roosevelt’s earnest attempts to prosecute a successful, organized war against Germany that had the support of the American people. Sabath directly related these past events to the current political climate and implied that it could frustrate the end of the final war against Japan. Thus, Sabath mirrored Voorhis’ comments against the rampant suspicions of communist agitation that were manifested by the HUAC’s smear campaigns and cautioned against its implications to Allied unity and the war effort against Japan.

An interesting oration occurred around the same time in the Senate regarding Russia’s entry into the Pacific War. Wisconsin Senator Alexander Wiley, a staunch Republican, on July 25 strongly urged the Administration to pressure Russia to enter the war. “There has been widespread, spineless reluctance to express American opinion that Russia should enter the war against Japan…this hush-hush policy of relating our deepest convictions is ridiculous,” he exclaimed. He argued that not only did the American people desire it because it could shorten Japan’s defeat but also that it should be required of our ally in light of our efforts in the Pacific. This issue was an important national political issue at the time because the public’s attention shifted to the Pacific but few were aware of agreements made between Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta regarding Japan. The issue, of course, was renewed at Potsdam. Wiley upheld Russia’s bravery against the German Armies but now demanded that it aid us in our war, for “we will not easily forget Russia’s contribution in the Far East if she pitches in with us and will not easily

49 Ibid.
50 Congressional Record, Volume 91-Part 6. pg. 8007. Dated July 25.
forgive her shirking of her responsibility if she remains on the sidelines." Thus, Wiley encapsulates a complex public consciousness of their role in the Pacific War but also their allies’ obligations to their aid in the final months of the Second World War.

The month of July was, thus, an important prelude to the momentous events of August that rapidly concluded the war against Japan and ushered in the postwar order. Crucial agreements were made between the American and Russian delegations at Potsdam that set the stage for Japan’s defeat (by Russia’s intervention), the subsequent struggle to reorganize Europe and East Asia in London, and the first true tests of the Russo-American alliance after the end of the final defeat of the Axis powers. Congress and the press also struggled with a growing sense of suspicion of communism that only divided politicians along partisan lines and editors along similar lines and strained public support for Russia during a time that required Allied military cooperation. One of the common threads that tied the sentiments of disparate commentators, such as Turner Catledge of the *New York Times* and Representative Adolph Sabath, was the idea that Allied unity was essential to Japan’s speedy defeat. Suspicions of communism only hindered that goal and complicated other equally important objectives, such as the protection against subversion during wartime and the dissemination of accurate news to the people, because of its tangled, sensitive history in American politics. Support for our Russian ally experienced another upheaval in July as part of a chronic dilemma of episodic vacillation towards Russia and only complicated American-Russian relations as the war against Japan drew to a close.

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Chapter 4: Who Won the War?

The late summer’s momentous events, beginning with Russia’s invasion of Manchuria on August 8 and ending with Japan’s unconditional surrender in Tokyo Bay on September 2, critically complicated the United States and Russia’s sensitive relationship. America’s assertion of unprecedented destruction through the atomic bombs, which was closely juxtaposed to Russia’s entry into the war, played an important role in initiating a wild international scramble for Japan’s satellite territories. This time there were quite different political implications than the yet unsettled reorganization of Eastern Europe because America’s political climate was far less accommodating to the Soviet Union in the Far East than it had been in Europe. Powerful congressmen long felt that the United States played the primary role in the war against Japan and freely voiced their concerns, some of which included hostility to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Roosevelt and Truman deliberately prevented press leaks on agreements made with Stalin over territories in the Asian-Pacific Rim, such as the Kurile Islands, because of military necessity and its political sensitivity. The question of who won the Second World War had been profoundly blurred in the minds of many Americans by the rapid events of early to late August 1945. This skepticism also strained the American-Soviet alliance; Americans accepted in May that Russia bore the brunt of the victory against Germany but by August several Congressmen and editors increasingly asserted that the United States played the primary role in forcing Japan’s surrender. Underlying suspicions of the Soviet Union’s intentions in the Far East that were held by potent editors and Congressmen culminated after the atomic attacks in early August and Japan’s surrender as Americans across the nation felt an overwhelming and awesome power over the rest of the world. These whirlwind events made it quite easy for Americans to forget Russia’s role in Europe and instead eye it suspiciously.
Reports of Russia’s invasion of Manchuria on August 2 and the dropping of the atomic bombs on August 6 and 9 rapidly circulated in the national press but their interpretations notably differed according to region. Most praised Russia’s entry as beneficial to expediting Japan’s surrender. The Boston Globe, for example, reported on August 8 that the Red Army had pinned down the Kwantung Army for the past five years and significantly downplayed Russia’s invasion in the past week according to that context. “Russia’s entry into the war is not expected to speed the Japanese retreat from South Chinese coastal areas,” it argued, because, according to an anonymous military expert, “they are moving out as fast as they can now.”\(^52\) This report implies that Russia’s assault was only one of many along the fringes of Japan’s empire and is, therefore, marginal. The following day, the Globe recorded the comments of various Massachusetts leaders regarding Russia’s entry, all of which praised it but paid little more tribute. Congressman James M. Curley remarked, “The atomic bomb, dropped by the United States, gave Russia the opportunity she has so long been waiting for.”\(^53\) This particular report clearly triumphed America as the primary belligerent in the war against Japan and strongly implied duplicity, perhaps even cowardice, from Russia. It also implies America’s supremacy over the Pacific War, which is a trend that has already been seen by dissidents such as Senator Bridges and Representative Rankin in the previous months. Thus, early reports of the crucial events leading to Japan’s surrender by staunchly conservative press notably marginalized Russia’s role in the enterprise.

On the other hand, Gladstone Williams, a columnist for the Atlanta Constitution, extended Russia’s entry as a crucial impetus for Japan’s imminent surrender. He noted the close


timing between the momentous events and speculated that it had been coordinated at Potsdam by Truman. “There is every reason to believe that the Potsdam conference…worked out the timing of these developments,” he wrote on August 10. “Each was so spaced as to give the Japanese time to comprehend their full meaning.”\(^5^4\) Of course, his analysis was accurate and uncannily anticipated Truman and Stalin’s probable motivations. Ralph McGill firmly asserted four days later that Russia had cooperated well with the US throughout the war in Europe. In a bitingly sardonic language, McGill bitterly assailed the Hearst and McCormick press’ attempts to discredit Russia’s cooperation with us during the European War by noting General Eisenhower’s comments on our ally’s contributions. “In view of all of the charges, largely in the Hearst and McCormick press, that the Soviet high command did not cooperate,” he wrote, “it is highly important we know from the supreme Allied commander they did cooperate fully and without restraint.”\(^5^5\) General Eisenhower had recently visited Moscow and met Stalin, making various comments supporting Russia’s cooperation with the United States in light of the politically charged occupation of Berlin. McGill used General Eisenhower, a man of great esteem and popularity to many Americans at the time, to discredit partisan attacks on Russia’s intentions in Europe. Moreover, here is a studied attempt by a minority opposition political faction to disrepute Russia’s responsibility for Germany’s surrender in May, a more or less accepted fact at that time, several months later on the day that Japan surrendered. It is not necessarily clear that the Hearst and McCormick papers knew that news of Japan’s surrender reached the White House that day but they nonetheless blur the chronology between the Axis’ surrender (Germany first, Japan second) in a deliberate attempt to sow disunity with our ally, Russia.

Other regional newspapers showed a mixture of opinions on Russia’s involvement in the war against Japan. The *Los Angeles Times* reflected similar views to Williams and McGill but focused more on the strategic implications of Russia’s entry into Manchuria. “Russia’s declaration of war against Japan…unquestionably will accomplish that purpose,” it argued on August 9. “It may have as much effect in Tokyo as the dropping of another atomic bomb.” It delineated Russia’s contributions to the war against Japan, including Molotov’s declaration of war against Japan, and asserted that her influence over Japan was indispensable to forcing Japan’s surrender. Another article from the same day, however, focused on the views of American soldiers stationed in the Pacific, painting a very different picture. It observed that many were preoccupied by the dropping of the atomic bombs. “I only hope we can get a lot of them and use them quick,” said Cpl. Clifford Miller, 25, of 809 S. Highland Ave., Los Angeles, spokesman for a big group of Southern Californians. “These people who are raising objections because of the destructive power don’t know what is going on in the world.” Japan’s crimes against American soldiers justified the use of atomic weapons in the eyes of these soldiers.

Similarly, Raymond Daniell from the *New York Times* compared Russian perspectives to American perspectives of the news on the same day as the *Los Angeles Times* article. A Red Army captain remarked that it would not be long before Japan was “kaput” like Germany while a Red Army sergeant asserted that it was only right that Russia help her allies end the war against Japan just as Western allies helped defeat Germany. The tone is unmistakably benevolent and cooperative. American soldiers, on the other hand, did not appear to be very interested in the

matter and many doubted that it would end the war and bring them home.\(^{59}\) “We could have finished it alone,” an enlisted man remarked, “and this way it means Russia will have to be cut in on the peace.”\(^{60}\) The stark difference between these accounts is very intriguing; it reflects an interesting element of staunch nationalism in the mundane ranks of the military and cynicism directed against the Soviet Union. Many Americans from May to August had a high level of respect for Americans soldiers, so the stories of the anonymous enlisted man could have been quite influential to ordinary Americans.

The tense weeks leading to the Japanese government’s surrender on August 14 and demobilization three days later helped initiate a scramble for territory in mainland Asia and the Asia-Pacific Rim. British and French forces raced to reclaim their lost territories throughout Southeast Asia while Truman rushed troops to capture strategic ports on mainland China and Korea before the Soviets occupied them. Truman was forced to withdraw plans to occupy the port of Dairen, for example, in light of the Red Army’s rapid advance from Manchuria but he disputed occupation rights in the Kurile Islands and Japan’s northernmost islands. He agreed on August 15 to Soviet troops occupying the Kurile Islands but rebuffed Stalin’s attempts to claim northern Hokkaido based on prior agreements stipulating that the Supreme Allied Commander, an American, supervised Allied forces in Japan. Stalin had doggedly asserted the Soviet Union’s right to an occupation zone in Japan since the Potsdam conference, so it is not entirely unexpected that a sharp exchange ensued during which Stalin claimed to be insulted by Truman’s high handedness. Truman, however, was likely responding to Congress’ strong push to recognize America’s rights in Japan’s occupation and the growing consensus that the United States had single-handedly defeated Japan. The struggle over spheres of influence in the Far

\(^{59}\) Ibid.
\(^{60}\) Ibid.
East became uniquely problematic to US-Russian cooperation from the summer through the winter of 1945, culminating in the London Council of Foreign Ministers in September, and resolving unsatisfactorily for Truman after Byrnes’ December meeting with Stalin in Moscow.

Early tremors of the confusion, anxiety, and nationalism that gripped the nation in August were seen in the unfolding national press debate over the public’s response to Japan’s surrender. The New York Times, reporting on the day of the surrender, declared the event a triumph over tyranny. Subsuming to the United Nation’s “overwhelming might” that spearheaded America’s struggle since Guadalcanal, it argued that Japan’s empire disintegrated as Germany’s had months before. The Times considered it to be a victory for democracy and a satisfying revenge for the attack on Pearl Harbor but reminded that a long road lay ahead before acceptable spheres of influence were established in the Far East. The Chicago Tribune, on the other hand, detected a vague response to the surrender by ordinary Americans that emphasized America’s role in the war. While noting that local Russians received the news exuberantly, columnist Eddy Gilmore observed on August 15 that Americans accepted the victory just as they accepted Russia’s declaration of war against Japan: “without outward demonstration.” Colonel Conrad Lanza, another Tribune columnist, within days surmised that the general consensus appeared to be that “Japan’s surrender was due to the surprising effects of the atomic bomb” coupled with Russia’s entry into the war. Both Gilmore and Lanza, thus, indicated a mixed, perhaps confused public response to Japan’s surrender that is closely fused with a thorny question: did the atomic bombs prompt the decision to surrender or did Russia’s entry? According to their accounts, it is not clear that ordinary Americans knew exactly what to think about Japan’s surrender and

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emphasized their country’s role in the war. They were probably much more comfortable with
the knowledge of their sons’ and brothers’ fighting in the Pacific, so they probably because they
were more aware of it then of the Truman Administration’s international agreements.

More interestingly yet, the Boston Globe on August 19 presented a strong counter-
perspective to prior military accounts of Russo-American relations. Colonel Baldrige, a native
of Omaha and graduate of Yale University, tried to reverse popular trends against cooperation
with Russia. Russians admire us, he argued, and appreciate what we have done for them, so
there are solid foundations for a long period of “mutual understanding and friendship” beyond
the war’s conclusion.63 “On my return from overseas,” he recalled, “the one thing that surprised
and disturbed me was the jittery attitude of the great majority of my friends in regard to
Russia.”64 It is a terrible mistake to test Russia’s trust on based on our distrusts because, while
Russians respect Americans for their support during the war, Russia does not appreciate the
“value of public relations” or “good publicity” in the Western tradition. Therefore, our demands
will remain unanswered.65 We must simply trust the Russians to carry out their agreements or at
least cease our persistent interference into Russia’s political policies if we hope to work with her
in the future. His is a very insightful and professional interpretation of Russia’s perceived
intransigence, as manifested in public denunciations of the soviet governments in Eastern Europe
since Potsdam, that sheds considerable light on the tenuous Russian Alliance. It may prove to be
quiet useful in understanding Stalin and Molotov’s interactions with Truman and Byrnes at
Potsdam and after the London Council of Foreign Ministers. Balridge was attached to the
Russian Army in the Balkans for six months, so he had considerable experience with the

63 Baldrige, H. “Army Observer Says: Our Relations with Russia Should Be Good”. Daily Boston Globe (1928-1960);
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
Russians and appears to be a trustworthy source. As a clearly well informed observer, he represented an interesting counterpoint to the observations made by the American enlisted man in Germany and the officer in the Pacific.

However, the Christian Science Monitor in the final days of August focused on the international community’s larger political problems resulting from Japan’s abrupt surrender. The French and British struggled to reclaim territories in Indochina, the British and Chinese argued over rights to Hong Kong, the US and Britain disputed Germany’s satellite states in the Balkans with Russia, and the Big Three engaged in the fight between Chinese nationalists and Chinese communists. “As the Council of Foreign Ministers prepares for its first meeting,” the Monitor observed on August 25, “it faces the problem of substituting a United Nations view of all these questions for the narrower views which have marked this week’s headlines.”

The week’s “narrower views” was probably an allusion to the debates over Japan’s motivation for surrendering and the implications of Russia’s declaration of war against Russia. It is heartening to see a prominent, moderate conservative newspaper urge Americans to contemplate the East Asia’s reconstruction from a broader perspective. While it did not directly address growing dissatisfactions with Russia, the Monitor clearly urged fellow Americans to focus on the big picture: the political mess looming over Japan’s former empire. The link drawn between the Council of Foreign Ministers and East Asia’s reorganization is important because it indicates an awareness of the international conference assigned to handle the issue and an analytical capability to infer the conference’s approach; the Tribune and Globe’s samples of public opinion did not indicate an awareness of the international bodies entitled to handle the Far East’s political concerns. Japan’s abrupt surrender only exacerbated matters because it forced immediate, hasty

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reactions: “The Council’s first meeting would have been more comfortable if Japan’s collapse had not occurred so suddenly.” The Christian Science Monitor provided not only an accurate political analysis of the Far East but also a refreshing awareness of the international struggle to reconstruct the Far East. The joint occupation of Japan was one of many unresolved stalemates the American delegation and the Soviet delegation experienced in London. The timing of Japan’s surrender was probably an important factor to the outcome. However, the Monitor does not present a solution; Byrnes was forced to find his own solution by December and execute it during his meeting with Stalin because Japan’s occupation proved to be quite important to Stalin and to his trust of Truman. Americans were not yet ready to concede with Stalin over Japan, though, and Byrnes had to adjust his policies to their mood in January and February. Thus, American-Soviet disagreements over Japan’s occupation were settled before the UN’s first General Assembly in 1946 but not to the satisfaction of the American people.

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Chapter 5: Peacetime Politics

The fall of 1945 saw the tumultuous journey of settling the war’s outstanding disputes and solidifying the foundations of the United Nations Organization (UNO). Congress had more or less allowed the Administration a free hand in the realm of foreign policy since it declared war on Japan because it was considered necessary to advance the war effort. However, widening partisan rifts and the accession of powerful Republican leaders, such as Senators Arthur Vandenberg and Tom Connally, prompted a reassertion of the Senate’s traditional advise and consent power over foreign policy. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, for example, intervened quite a bit with Byrnes and Truman over sensitive issues such as atomic energy and the prospect of Russia’s cooperation in the UNO. So, the Committee on Foreign Relations more or less tried to force the President and his Secretary of State to seek its consent on important foreign matters but still faced resistance from the executives; Byrnes did not collaborate very closely with Senators Vandenberg or Connally in November and after Byrnes departed for Moscow in December, Truman only deferred to his foreign chief’s judgment when the two Senate leaders privately requested a revision of Byrnes’ policy on the international control of atomic energy. Neither senator quite forgot this rift in the coming months but it particularly damaged Vandenberg’s relationship with Byrnes because the senator valued close collaboration on foreign policy initiatives. The House Un-American Activities Committee’s questionable activities continued in October and November and periodic fits of public hysteria were not uncommon.

Truman and Byrnes were, thus, constrained by heightened Congressional scrutiny from September to December, to an extent unseen since the pre-war years, as well as a growing suspicion of communism in the press. Byrnes had to contend with the Soviets in London for
weeks more or less on his own because Truman simply did not protest, thereby allowing him a free hand with Molotov and Stalin. This type of indecision exemplified the Administration’s current state of obscurity on foreign policy for Russia and played an important role in the degenerating state of international politics over the governments of Eastern Europe from roughly October through January, disagreements that had plagued the Grand Alliance since Germany’s surrender. Byrnes independently advocated a compromising policy with the Soviets in the following weeks, which culminated in his December conference with Stalin in Moscow, but it so strayed from the public’s mood that he was forced to reverse his policy and yield to a considerably more assertive Truman in late December. The President was aggravated that his chief of foreign policy had not maintained adequate communication with him; Congress and the press generally opposed any compromise with the Soviets any longer. Consequently, Truman’s tough Soviet policy was born by the beginning of 1946.

While predictably divided in interpretation, editorial reactions to the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in September generally expressed disillusionment over our relations with Russia and the larger question of global cooperation. On September 2, Boston Globe columnist James Morgan expressed optimism over Russia’s treaty with China over Manchuria but there existed deeper suspicions. He argued that Russia’s agreement to withdraw from Manchuria in three months and support Chiang Kai-shek’s government disappointed “the fears born of a mutual suspicion” and renewed some degree of trust with the “enigmatic” Kremlin. While appearing to be sanguine at the surface, Morgan’s depiction of the Kremlin as unpredictable implies an underlying suspicion of its motives. These subtle but pertinent suspicions are

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manifested later in the article as he eloquently describes Russia’s history as primarily expansionist, similar to America’s history of manifest destiny, and in conflict with the West. He also remarked on the United States’ supply of lend-lease aid to Russia and its disproportionate part in the “common defense against Hitler”, for which we lost numerous ships in the Baltic providing aid; he was, of course, alluding to Russia’s pact with Hitler and implying that her part in the Allied war effort in Europe was therefore lopsided despite her role in bearing the brunt of the German war machine.\textsuperscript{69} Thus, Morgan’s analysis of the Soviet Union is optimistic at face value but still deeply discontent with her recent role in international affairs. The \textit{Chicago Tribune}, on the other hand, responded to the Council of Foreign Ministers with explicit pessimism on the prospects of international cooperation. It asserted on September 25 that it would, “in the interest of truth,” refuse to refer to the five permanent members of the “San Francisco security conference” as the Big Five; “They aren’t.”\textsuperscript{70} Britain, France, and China are unquestionably inferior to the “Big Two”—the US and Russia—and should not be a part of our considerations or our support. This characterization is dangerous not only to the Council’s mission and the spirit of the United Nations but also to the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union; it implies an impending conflict between the two emerging superpowers without any consideration of available mediating influences, our allies. The mixed reactions by these two conservative press sources imply limited support for Russia and considerable distrust and resentment.

October and November were, more or less, transitional months during which the Truman Administration attempted to formulate foreign policy while addressing scrutiny from the Senate.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} “What Big Five?” \textit{Chicago Daily Tribune} (1923-1963); September 25, 1945; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune (1849-1990). pg. 10.
Discontent with the state of international affairs grew and public suspicions of communism swelled in November. Truman and Byrnes made their first major postwar speeches on foreign policy in late October, within days of each other, both of which left observers confused. Seemingly contradictory to each other, Truman’s belligerent Navy Day speech in New York City implied a firm line with the Soviets while Byrnes’ speech before the *New York Herald Tribune* four days later expressed more empathy for Russia. Byrnes emphasized a healthy diplomatic relationship between the US and the USSR embedded in his policy of “intelligent compromise”, which demanded negotiation with the Soviets instead of confrontation at the bargaining table.

Truman also announced a future conference in Washington during which he, Prime Minister Clement Attlee of Britain, and Prime Minister Mackenzie King of Canada planned to set the framework for international control of atomic energy; it occurred on November 15 and became known as the Truman-Attlee-King Conference. Soon thereafter, powerful Republican leaders such as Senator Arthur Vandenberg, Tom Connally, and their colleagues confronted Byrnes over his plans for international control of atomic policy. They believed that it conceded too much to the Soviets but Byrnes brushed them off. Unfortunately for Byrnes, Vandenberg proved to be quite difficult to avoid and privately expressed his misgivings with the President himself, who deferred to his secretary’s judgment when he departed for Moscow. Vandenberg’s relationship with Byrnes did not recover from this incident—Averell Harriman noted that the Senator was easier to deal with if he was consulted for important business matters. Truman and the State Department struggled to formulate a policy for Russia in October and November in light of the setback at London and the generally negative publicity it generated.

The countervailing similarities and differences between Truman’s Navy Day speech and Byrnes’ speech indicated the complexity of their worldviews over foreign policy matters. Both,
for example, asserted that differences with Russia were not irreconcilable and that she and the United States are both interested in international stability. They also noted the importance of the atomic bomb and the threat of atomic war in the event that an accord is not reached and relations are exacerbated, which was probably meant to temper dissidents in Congress, the press, and the public. However, they crucially differed over the means of securing cooperation. Truman claimed that we seek to use “our military strength solely to preserve the peace of the world” while Byrnes asserted that “International cooperation must…depend upon intelligent compromise.” One strategy seemed to focus on the military in tandem with diplomacy while the other primarily relied on diplomacy. It was probably not encouraging to contemporary observers that the President’s statements on foreign policy differed so markedly from his foreign policy chief’s statements.

However, it should be noted that Truman spoke at a different time and before a very different audience than did Byrnes: Truman faced a crowd celebrating Navy Day less than two months after Japan’s surrender while Byrnes spoke four days later during an annual forum for the New York Herald Tribune. The President had to frame his speech to accommodate a crowd that was celebrating the American Navy’s finest military campaign in its history and arguably the world’s history; they probably would not have been very receptive to a compliant foreign policy that restricted the use of the military. Indeed, John Gaddis in his 1972 book The United States and the Origins of the Cold War argued that Congressional leaders and most military officials had begun to advocate a firmer approach to Moscow at this time and that Navy Secretary James

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Forrestal advised the President to publicly speak out against the Russians in order to counterbalance mounting pressure for demobilization. On the other hand, Byrnes spoke on October 31 before a crowd that likely consisted of an audience of primarily journalists and businessmen, so the tone of their speeches had to be constructed differently. Nonetheless, the fact that the resulting miscommunication between the two executives and with the public was not later addressed is an important factor in the turbulent formulation of a Soviet policy. Byrnes acted independently from the White House, the State Department, and even Congress from November to the end of December and Truman’s deference to his judgment allowed confusions to persist. While it is understandable that leaks to the press were unwanted from Byrnes’ point of view, miscommunication and deference played an important role in the Truman Administration’s vague foreign policy in the immediate months after Japan’s surrender and contributed to Truman’s bungled attempt to maintain cooperation with Russia in the fall of 1945.

The press was not silent over these landmark speeches, either. Managing Editor of the New York Times Edwin James, for example, commented on Truman’s speech and our relations with Russia on the day after the speech’s presentation. While conflicted over Russia’s secrecy and unilateralism in Europe since Germany’s surrender, James argued that open discussion would best address our disagreements with the Russians. “There are differences between the United States and Russia,” he conceded, “[but] none of them is insoluble.” Moreover, the Russian government had shown that it was willing to compromise when it was necessary to achieve one of its interests, which is encouraging to those interested in mutual cooperation. That

is one of the reasons that the “fruitless” Council of Foreign Ministers in London was not “a total loss.” James here assumes the centrist approach between Truman’s Navy Day policies and Byrnes’ policies; he affirmed Truman’s firm sentiments but clearly favored the Secretary of State’s diplomatic route with the Soviets. At the end of the article, James claimed that the true solution to our problems with Russia was an end to suspicion “on both sides.” Thus, he attributed blame equitably between the United States and Russia but advocated a diplomatic solution that paralleled James Byrnes’ New York speech.

On the other hand, the Chicago Tribune and Christian Science Monitor focused primarily on Byrnes’ speech. The Tribune on November 1 noted that Byrnes’ speech was conciliatory to Russia and advocated a “world-wide system of allied nations” but also that he opposed the “forceful imposition” of the Soviet system on other countries. America’s advocacy of democratic elections in Eastern Europe was likened to a sort of “Monroe Doctrine arrangement” in Eastern Europe that intended to maintain our interests in Europe. The Tribune is interpreting America’s interest in democratic elections in Eastern Europe as an attempt to establish its sphere of influence, which is grounded in America’s 19th Century expansionist experience. The Monroe Doctrine was an aggressive policy, threatening intervention in any territory within the United States’ sphere of influence (which was the Western Hemisphere under Monroe’s Administration), so the comparison implies aggression in Europe if an agreement could not be made on democratic elections. This message is quite different from James’ advocacy of mutual cooperation and, moreover, neglects Byrnes’ consistent mention of “intelligent compromise”,

75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
which was one of the cruxes of his policies, for a firm line with the Soviet Union in Europe. The Tribune, then, may be confused with Byrnes’ speech because it appears to imply aggression but also diplomacy.

Similarly, the Monitor observed on November 2 that Byrnes’ speech empathized with Russia but the article strongly implied suspicions of his stated policies. The article framed the speech within criticisms of the Truman Administration’s foreign policy as “ineffective, inconclusive, and drifting” and argued that Byrnes’ remarks were “widely read” as an attempt to “redefine the American position in more generous terms” according to Wendell Wilkie’s “one-world thesis”. Wilkie was a Republican nominee for president in 1940 who had lost support because of his liberal views, which included a book called One World that imagined a world free from imperialism and colonialism. The Monitor claimed that Truman and Byrnes supported this policy in an interesting framing technique, probably intended to transcend partisan boundaries, that was likely intended to attract certain Republican viewers. A centrist liberal newspaper at the time, the Monitor generally compared the Administration’s policies to contemporary Republican ideals after Germany’s surrender. It also noted that the speech included a “blunt warning” against ploys by powerful nations to “divide the world among themselves”, which is contradictory to Byrnes’ generally conciliatory tenor, but expressed definite reassurance that the Administration still has “an eye on the one-world target.” There is a clear cognitive bias linked to these statements that favors an aggressive foreign policy and sphere of influence politics. Thus, this mix of centrist liberal and steadfastly conservative newspaper focused on the tough

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80 Ibid.
language in Byrnes’ New York speech and upheld spheres of influence in Europe but appeared to be confused with Byrnes’ contradictory initiatives.

The Truman-Attlee-King Conference on November 15 was arguably the next milestone United Nations event since the London Council of Foreign Ministers and an important moment in the formulation of America’s foreign policy in the fall of 1945. The three heads of state, representing the United States, Britain, and Canada, met in Washington to discuss the international control of atomic energy and develop a framework for it before the first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in January. However, the Administration’s relationship with Congress was significantly strained by the haphazard manner by which the State Department constructed a plan. Byrnes surprisingly asked Vannevar Bush, director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, to formulate a plan with little more than a week’s time before the meeting.\footnote{Gaddis, 270.} Truman probably supported Bush’s proposals on November 7 because it constituted the only plan the Administration had at the time, but the hasty means by which they were drawn prevented adequate consultation with Congressional leaders and provoked considerable resentment. Senator Robert La Follette warned Admiral Leahy two days before the meeting that the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee resented their exclusion from the policy-making process and the leaders of the committee, Connally and Vandenberg, were so irritated that they refused to pose for pictures with Truman, Attlee, and King.\footnote{Gaddis, 272.} Gaddis argued that the incident illustrated the confused state of policy-making in Washington.\footnote{Gaddis, 273.} It also demonstrated Truman’s incompetent leadership over foreign policymaking during the fall and
constituted an example in which his indecision played a key role in frustrating an important summit meeting.

The political ramifications of Byrnes’ meeting with Stalin in December forced Truman to assert his authority over foreign policymaking and implement a policy that more closely acknowledged the current political climate. At the time, there was growing discontent in Congress and the Department of State with America’s allies overseas. Staff Correspondent Richard Strout from the Christian Science Monitor argued on November 28 that Major General Patrick Hurley’s resignation from the post of Ambassador to China in late November, a sign of his opposition to Russia’s and Great Britain’s “imperialism,” and Senator Burton Wheeler’s long, bitter speech against the United States’ two former war allies represented “an important segment of minority American postwar thinking” during a time in which international unity was vital to the world’s survival.\(^{84}\) This suggests that minority elements in the Senate and the State Department vocally opposed Russia and our allies not long before Byrnes prepared to travel to Moscow and negotiate with Stalin. It also foreshadowed Truman’s heated argument with Byrnes on the presidential yacht Williamsburg on December 29 that prompted his policy reorientation.

Additionally, Truman is cited in the Los Angeles Times on November 30 as commenting that “there will be no more Big Three meetings” and that no meetings will be necessary “if the United Nations organization functions as it should”.\(^{85}\) The statement raised questions over Truman’s management of foreign policy and the article probed its intelligence; to the general public, “it seems that situations are developing in which delay is dangerous and the United

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\(^{85}\) “No More Big Three Meetings, President Thinks”. Los Angeles Times (1923-Current file); November 30, 1945; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times (1881-1990). pg. A4.
Nations organization has not yet begun to function.” Issues such as the atomic bomb and rising fears of an impending clash with Russia, for example, could be an important subject of discussion between the Big Three. It is very interesting that the *Los Angeles Times*, a leading Republican newspaper at the time, had the foresight to recommend a summit level meeting during that this critical period for US diplomacy. While likely motivated by opposition sentiments, the Times’ argument is reasonable and difficult to dispute. Moreover, it mentions offhand that other sources reflecting similar views, which suggests that there may have been a wider acceptance to a meeting between the heads of state in the press. Truman did not appear to heed this advice through the month of December; he seemed to allow Byrnes’ meeting with Molotov and Stalin, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and weather the political retribution in the following year. If he had heeded this advice, Truman may have been able to settle the United States’ problems with Russia himself in November or December and prevented an abrupt reorientation to a firm policy in 1946.

Moreover, various newspapers closely followed the Foreign Ministers of the US, Britain, and Russia’s meeting in Moscow. Edwin James on December 9 speculated on the prospect of the meeting’s ability to settle the war’s outstanding territorial problems, especially over the fates of Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania, and the looming question of control of atomic energy. Claiming that the Council of Foreign Ministers had settled “little or nothing concrete,” he argued that the meeting in Moscow brightened the future because it presented the opportunity to settle “the political mess in Eastern Europe” at the bargaining table in the future, if it achieved real

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86 Ibid.
results. Thus, James saw the meeting as an opportunity to reverse the setback at London in September and resolve many political problems arising from the war over time. He also postulated that it eased the fears of “a good many people” over Truman’s statements on November 29 regarding another Big Three meeting; a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Big Three may substitute for a meeting of the heads of the Big Three for the time being. In contrast to the Los Angeles Times’ urgency less than two weeks ago, James complacently accepted Byrnes’ initiative to meet with Molotov in Moscow.

Nine days after James’ article, the Chicago Tribune reported that the third meeting between James Byrnes, Ernest Bevin, and Vyacheslav Molotov had occurred and appeared to have been productive. It observed that the Russians indicated that they favored continued meetings between the three powers “in the interests of world collaboration”; the Moscow newspaper New Times brushed aside disagreements over veto rights in the UN and the atomic bomb as an obstruction to collaboration. The atmosphere for observers was described as “cordial” and the ministers were said to be “well along” in their discussions of the “main issues that brought them together” by the conclusion of the session that night. In reality, Byrnes made little progress with Molotov over matters in Eastern Europe and he anticipated a meeting with Stalin. The idea of a fruitful meeting, however, benefited the council’s public image, so it was useful for the Tribune to notice it to that extent. The Tribune also observed that Stalin had returned to the Kremlin from a vacation on the Black Sea; Byrnes met with him soon thereafter.

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88 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
The *Chicago Tribune* provided the final details of the ministers’ meeting on December 23. Maintaining the event’s outwardly pleasant and productive atmosphere, it reported that no atomic secrets had been given away and that the ministers shook hands in the spotlights of the Bolshol Theater that night.91 Byrnes had apparently come to the theater after meeting with Stalin in the Kremlin for two hours, his second meeting with the leader within five days.92 The Tribune focused on the agreements made over the control of atomic energy because of their political significance but the most important agreements transpired between Byrnes and Stalin. Byrnes had managed to draw a concession from Stalin for governments slightly more representative of the people in Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria in exchange for arranging a Soviet representative to consult Supreme General Douglas MacArthur over the administration of Japan. His victory was no small one—it temporarily resolved some of the most contentious transnational political issues between the US and Russia since Yalta—but it occurred at the wrong time and by the wrong means. James F. Byrnes was not the President of the United States; that was Harry Truman. Robert Messer in his 1982 book *End of Alliance* argued that point but he did not adequately address Truman’s responsibility for the whole affair in Moscow; Truman allowed Byrnes to formulate his own policies without adequately overseeing him—ensuring that Byrnes satisfactorily consulted Senator Vandenberg, Connally, and their staff—thus allowing him to negotiate a settlement over Japan’s occupation that the Senate and opposition elements in the press were not likely to accept.

It is debatable whether or not Truman could have predicted the political reaction to such a settlement because he likely was not aware of Byrnes’ intentions until after the fact.

92 Ibid.
Nonetheless, his deference clearly cost him. Truman ignored pressures from elements of the press such as the *Los Angeles Times* in late November to meet with Stalin and, by his deference, unexpectedly gave Byrnes the opportunity to usurp his boss’ power as head of state in Moscow and conclude a deal that was unacceptable to the Senate. Consequently, the Truman Administration had to face an ever more dissatisfied Congress and press in 1946 while leading the new United Nations organization.

Thus, the fall to winter of 1945 saw considerable turbulence over political questions important to the United Nations. The Senate’s reassertion of its authority over foreign policymaking after Japan’s surrender in September coincided with a period of lethargy by policymakers and growing discontent with Russia in the public. The enormous task of reconstructing Europe, governing Japan and its former satellites, and managing an international control mechanism over atomic energy strained domestic and international political divisions almost to a breaking point by December. It was indeed a trying time for Truman but his lack of strong leadership over his Administration and Congress played an important role in the Moscow meeting’s negative political fallout and his subsequent reorientation of foreign policy. Columnists from prominent press sources, such as the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*, in November and December criticized his statements during a press conference in November denying the necessity for another meeting between the heads of the Big Three; they slightly eased their complaints after Byrnes announced the coming meeting of foreign ministers but their arguments were still potent. It appears that Truman had yielded to Byrnes’ suggestion.

However, Truman’s sharp reprimand of his foreign policy chief on December 29 and reassertion of his authority over foreign policy-making thereafter implies that he realized the costs of his deference. He likely realized the extent by which US foreign policy had strayed
from the current political climate and reacted quickly and surely. Of course, one may sympathize with his decision to allow his foreign minister to meet with the Soviets in his stead; perhaps presidential intervention should be a last resort. The evidence, nonetheless, indicates that his decision to yield to Byrnes was misplaced, which suggests that conflict in early 1946 may have been avoided if Truman had heeded the advice of editors such as Edwin James, exerted his authority earlier, and settled his political disputes with Stalin himself.
Chapter 6: The Drift to Cold War

The United States’ foreign policy regarding the Soviet Union was profoundly reoriented from January to March 1946. Truman’s December 29 exchange with Byrnes on the presidential yacht Williamsburg opened the way for an aggressive foreign policy—one predicated upon a position of strength—that Truman’s top advisors and leading Congressmen had been pressuring for quite some time. The press’ suspicions and disillusionments reached a head in January as news broke of the Yalta agreements granting the Kuriles to Russia and their implementation after Potsdam. The editorial backlash by conservative newspapers, such as the Chicago Tribune, and centrist-liberal newspapers, such as the Christian Science Monitor, seriously undermined what remained of a bipartisan alliance; the Administration remained under persistent attack from elements of the conservative and centrist press on one side and Congressmen on another side for its management of foreign affairs since the transition from Roosevelt’s Administration. Nonetheless, Byrnes adjusted to the prevailing mood towards the Soviet Union and began confronting them over sensitive issues such as the occupation of Azerbaijan, which was tied to the sensitive strategic issue of Iran. The Soviet delegation and American delegation clashed at the General Assembly of the United Nations in January but the first definitively Cold War confrontation occurred in March over Soviet troops stationed in Azerbaijan.

Fears of communists in the government were renewed in Congress in January. Republican Representative Clare Hoffman from Michigan, for example, on January 28 requested that reports made by the Senate and the House on the motivations for the widespread labor strikes be printed in the Record. The reports he provided served as a background to current labor disputes that were probably meant to shed light on their motivations. The first report came from the Senate during from the Sixty-eighth Congress, First session (1923-4). It was compiled under
the direction of John L. Lewis, then the President of the United Mine Workers of America, and asserted that communists under the command of the Communist International were attempting to prompt a revolution “at the door” of the United Mine Workers of America and the American people.\footnote{Proceedings and Debates of the 79\textsuperscript{th} Congress: Volume 92, Part 9 (Appendix-January 14, 1946 to March 8, 1946). United States Government Printing Office, Washington. pg. A265. Dated January 28, 1946.} The overthrow and destruction of the government, coupled with the creation of an “absolute and arbitrary dictatorship” was taking place in America on a scale larger, craftier, and more resolute than has been seen “at any time in the history of this Nation.”\footnote{Congressional Record Appendix: Volume 92-Part 9. pg. A266.} Hoffman then provided statements made on the current day by Republican Representative Hamilton Fish from New York, a critic of President Roosevelt and foreign intervention, regarding Communist subversion to date. He argued that Communists in the labor industry posed a grave economic and political threat to the country as a whole because they can paralyze the economy. The CIO, to him, was infested with sly, aggressive agents of the Communist international that hoped to gradually undermine the American system of government, impose a revolution, and dominate it; these motivations explained the debilitating strikes in the steel, automobile, and electricity industries.\footnote{Ibid.} He further urged the American people to be more aware of these foreign influences and to fight them in the political and social realms. Hoffman clearly intended to portray the current labor strikes as part of a long, dirty history of political and social agitation within the ranks of America’s organized labor. There is also a clear sense of anxiety in these reports manifested in a fear of swift, unexpected revolution. Thus, a deep, underlying fear of Communist agitation appeared to be in the minds of Hoffman and Fish by the turn of 1946.

Senator Burton Wheeler, an Independent Democrat from Montana, on the same day as Hoffman remarked on “leftist” elements in the State Department and their role in allowing
communism to flourish around the world. In light of recent charges by the Russian news agency Tass charging the US military with “inciting reactionary Korean protests against the recent Moscow agreement”, Wheeler renewed his opposition to a “left wing” element in the State Department led by Secretary Byrnes and Undersecretary Dean Acheson because of their violations of the Potsdam agreements. He argued that Byrnes’ commitments made at Moscow restricted General MacArthur and the US military in the Southwest Pacific and implied that both he and his undersecretary created a “background of chaos” in the world “upon which communism is now thriving.” Thus, Wheeler aggressively charged Byrnes with over-stepping his authority in the Far East at Moscow and sowing chaos in the region. He was probably alluding to Byrnes’ agreement with Stalin to allow a Soviet representative to consult General MacArthur on administrative matters of Japan. His passionate reaction, however, misunderstands Byrnes’ agreement because he did not appear to be aware of the fact that Byrnes maintained MacArthur’s status as the Supreme Commander of the Pacific; he had only to consider the Soviet representative’s recommendations. Nonetheless, Wheeler tainted the State Department’s image as an inept institution connected to the spread of communism around the world.

The nation’s newspapers primarily commented on developments at the General Assembly in London and the “secret” Yalta agreements. The United States and Russia were depicted as trying to cooperate in London despite expected disagreements. William Fulton from the Chicago Tribune, for example, reported on January 10 that Byrnes cast his vote in support of Russian Ambassador Andrei Gromyko’s candidate, the foreign minister of Norway Mr. Lie, as president

97 Ibid.
of the General Assembly. While Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak was elected president, Byrnes’ honorable mention implied that he intended to extend some degree of cooperation to Russia. Fulton also mentioned British Prime Minister Clement Attlee’s speech that welcomed all nations to the new world organization and expressed his delight that the world had been united “as never before” by the inclusion of the United States and Russia. The *New York Times* similarly observed more than a week later that the opportunity was available for the US and Russia to settle their differences. “A little over six years have passed since Russia was expelled from the League of Nations because of her attack on Finland,” it observed. Neither Europe’s powers nor the United States were blameless in the “tangle of errors and betrayals from Munich to the invasion of Poland” or in the failed security of isolationism. The opportunity to maintain a stable new world order should be seized instead of revising the Charter before it had even been tested; Mr. Gromyko commented on this point and the Times cited a “solid body of American opinion” that supported it. It appears, then, that a type of optimism tinged with realism influenced the *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Times*’ interpretation of the first General Assembly of the UN.

However, the prospect of conflict with Russia was a real possibility in the minds of some Americans. Raymond G. KcKervey, associate Professor of political science at Occidental College, expressed grave misgivings of our relationship with Russia at a January 21 luncheon meeting of Town Hall at the Biltmore, North Carolina. He claimed that we should consider

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99 Ibid.


101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.
fighting Russia now instead of later, if that contingency arose. Foreign policy should be expressed clearly and for self-interest and common sense instead of unsuccessful negotiations. “We should seek positive self-interest in this generation of vipers,” he argued.\textsuperscript{103}

Moreover, there existed considerable discontent over agreements made at Yalta and the prospect of conflict with Russia. The \textit{Chicago Tribune} on January 29, for example, printed a particularly acerbic article on the cession of the Kuriles to Russia. Citing statements made by the Russian government stating that they had received the Kurile Islands since the Yalta conference, the Tribune proceeded to launch a blistering attack against President Roosevelt’s moral character. He had claimed almost upon arriving home from the Crimean peninsula that the conference focused mainly on the European war instead of the Pacific war, so the \textit{Tribune} believed him to be intent on deceiving the American people.\textsuperscript{104} Its next question was what else had been agreed at Yalta, a cry that was echoed by another leading Republican newspaper. The \textit{Los Angeles Times} a few days later examined the secrecy surrounding the United States’ military agreements over the Pacific with Russia. Byrnes recently stated that the Yalta agreement to grant the Kurile chain to Russia could not be mentioned in July because it would have exposed Russia’s invasion of Manchuria to Japan. “That is a good reason,” the LA Times acknowledged. “But the Pacific war ended months ago. We could have been told about it at the war’s end.”\textsuperscript{105} Roosevelt’s statements on secret agreements after returning from Yalta were again questioned as well as high officials in the State Department’s knowledge of similar agreements. Ultimately, it was implied that an atmosphere of subtlety, confusion, and deception reigned in the State

\textsuperscript{103} “If We Must Fight Russia, Do It Now, Says Professor”. \textit{Los Angeles Times (1923-Current file)}; January 22, 1946; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times (1881-1990). pg. 4.
Department and consequently prevented the American people from understanding important international developments. “A lot of people are discouraged from following the march of events,” it argued, “because they suspect that what they see is not what it seems to be.” This explanation implies that a dangerous level of ignorance could develop in the minds of many Americans because of the duplicitous manner by which information was relayed to them. That is not a healthy climate for a people preparing to contribute to leading a new world organization. Thus, the widespread distrust in conservative and more moderate press sources was a sad byproduct of the Kurile agreement’s leak to the press. An acute distrust persisted well into the Iranian Crisis in March and highlighted underlying anti-administration tensions that threatened to undermine support for the UN.

February not only saw sustained attacks on the Kurile agreements and on the Administration’s foreign policy in general but also the origins of what became an international crisis over Iran. The issue was presented in the General Assembly by Iran; it asked for the removal of Soviet troops from modern-day Azerbaijan because it feared that the Soviet troops would be tempted to invade Iran in the future. The United States and Britain shared the Iranian government’s fear and Stalin’s failure to reassure against an invasion exacerbated the dilemma.

The New York Times on February 1 followed the Security Council’s management of the issue. It affirmed the Council’s unanimous agreement to settle the case by direct negotiation and considered it to be the Council’s first major test in which it proved its mettle; however, it also warned against using blunt diplomacy with the Russians and hoped that the UNO would not be forced to enforce its newly established authority. That, interestingly enough, became the central

106 Ibid.
question of the ensuing confrontation between the United States and Russia; how would the Security Council respond?

The *Chicago Tribune* approached the UN from a different angle, maintaining its attacks on the Roosevelt and Truman Administration for their roles in the current deadlock between the US and Russia in the organization. It argued within days after the *New York Times*’ previous article that the Russians appeared to be willing to cooperate only when it fits their interests; Mr. Vishinsky’s comment that Russia’s interference in Iran was “none of the united nations’ business” was a case in point. Furthermore, it claimed that Russia’s “blackmail” in the UN was only made possible by the Roosevelt-Truman Administration’s gross overselling of the UNO to the American people. They were willing to “grasp at any straw that promises to help maintain peace” without adequately preparing the American people for it or acknowledging that Russia may not always be willing to comply. While perhaps excessively exuberant, this cynicism against Roosevelt is reflected by Ralph Levering, a scholar of public opinion and international relations. The Truman Administration’s secrecy over agreements with the Soviets, in continuation of its predecessor’s policy, and unilateralism during foreign conferences did irreparably divide the public and doom the remnants of Roosevelt’s bipartisan alliance; the Kurile fiasco is a case in point of the Administration’s inadequacy to manage Congress, the press, and the public as Roosevelt had done before them. But in this historical moment, when the United Nations Security Council was faced with its first major crisis, it is not clear that the *Tribune*’s obstructive behavior was necessary. Was it truly necessary to impede the United Nations now that it was addressing an international crisis, for which it was designed? Why not

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109 Ibid.
allow it to settle the issue? Truman and Byrnes are perhaps to blame for failing to relay the agreements to the public but it is not clear that these attacks were clearly partisan and anti-UN. Several other elements of the press expressed similar disillusionment and distrust over Russia from February through March 1946.

The final days of February saw a crescendo in outcry occur over the UN and the eve of the confrontation in Iran. Chesly Manly from the Chicago Tribune on the 27th focused on Vandenberg’s long speech before the Senate on the same day recounting the General Assembly meeting. He noted that the senator returned with mixed feelings, perceiving American policy to be weak and the Soviets as aggressive and untrustworthy. The question of what Russia is up to was the looming element of the article. It indicated considerable anxiety and fear of Russia’s foreign policy, which was likely focused on the time in the Middle East, and played an important role in the now, more or less, galvanized opinion advocating a firm policy with Russia.

The dispute reached a crisis-level after the Soviet Union missed its deadline to withdraw its troops from Iran. The United Nations Security Council issued a deadline in the beginning of March by which time the Soviet Union was expected to withdraw its troops and, upon discovering their intransigence, Byrnes promptly confronted the Soviets. Senator Connally was mentioned in a March 2 article in the Chicago Tribune as advocating a tough policy with Russia in light of its behavior in Iran. He supported Byrnes’ strong statements and claimed that the administration’s foreign policy was “firm and consistent”. Thus, Byrnes appeared to have had powerful support for his policy with the Soviet Union and he seized the opportunity to force it to

bend to the United States’ will. The month of March was very tense indeed while Americans watched the State Department challenge the Soviet Union in a very public display; the State Department and the Russian press exchanged claims and counter-claims as the two superpowers’ militaries prepared for conflict. By this point, most Americans were hostile to the Soviets but that did not mean that most Americans supported a direct war. Headline after headline expressed a fear of conflict but the extensive press coverage reinforced resentments of Russia’s motives. Fortunately for them and probably for the greater world, war was avoided after the Soviets withdrew from Iran at the end of the month. With the conclusion of the earliest superpower stand-off, the United States nominally won and it clearly drifted into Cold War style politics with the Soviet Union. The Grand Alliance finally dissolved and Roosevelt’s hopes for a benevolent postwar alliance were dashed.
Conclusion

The period from Germany’s defeat in May 1945 to the Iranian Crisis in March 1946 was the defining moment during which Franklin D. Roosevelt’s great vision of cooperation and global security crumbled. Americans’ sympathies for Russia’s contributions to Germany’s defeat shifted to suspicion and then outright hostility. It also highlighted the sensitivity with which the American people seemed to view the Soviet Union during the 1940s; latent fears of communism and distrust of foreign influences, which dated long before the outbreak of war in Europe, linked to partisan divisions are some of many of the reasons for this phenomenon. Over Europe’s reconstruction, many Americans were divided over how the governments of Poland, Hungary, Austria, Rumania, and Bulgaria should be organized. Certain reactionaries in Congress harbored bitter misgivings over our alliance with Russia—including our lend-lease aid to it during the war and its management of Germany’s eastern satellites after their occupation—and seized opportunities to criticize the Roosevelt Administration and the Truman Administration for neglecting their views. In the Far East, the Red Army’s invasion of Manchuria in early August, the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan, and the whirlwind of events leading to the Japanese government’s surrender on August 14 gravely confused many Americans. Many felt profoundly empowered by being the sole possessors of the atomic bomb and were not aware of Stalin’s agreements with Roosevelt in February and Truman in July to invade Manchuria three months after Germany’s surrender. Consequently, the idea that the United States had won the Second World War became increasingly pervasive in the minds of many Americans in August and gradually influenced politicians throughout the fall to assume a position of power over the new United Nations Organization.
Truman handled political dissent from May to August adequately but his inconsistency with the Soviets—sometimes conciliatory and other times adamant—played an important role in the public’s gradual shift from sympathy to hostility against the Soviets. While he did attempt to continue his predecessor’s cooperation with the Soviets until Japan’s surrender, he frequently changed tactics with the Soviets and only confused the Kremlin, his administration, Congress, and the American people. Moreover, his procrastination in formulating a clear foreign policy with the State Department from September to December seriously constrained him from settling outstanding disputes with Russia: ensuring democratic elections in Finland, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria. This was a serious detriment for the United Nations the following year because it failed to secure mutual cooperation with Russia after the war. He consistently deferred to Secretary Byrnes’ judgment without adequately addressing or perhaps even realizing Byrnes’ favored policies with the Soviets, which at the time centered on “intelligent compromise”. Byrnes’ ostracism of important senators such as Arthur Vandenberg and Tom Connally, leading Republicans in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who became vocal critics of his policies, may have been prevented or contained if Truman had adequately coordinated the affair. Instead, Truman in late December was forced to abruptly reassert his authority over foreign-policymaking and reorient US policy with the Soviets to ameliorate the Senate’s negative reaction to Byrnes’ meeting with Stalin in Moscow. His tough policy was born.

It is interesting and telling that Truman on November 28 publicly denied the necessity to convene another meeting between the heads of the Big Three. It appears that the widely accepted failure of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London suggested that perhaps a higher level meeting to resolve issues over Europe’s reconstruction was necessary. Various elements of
the press, such as the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, reflected this view and closely questioned his statements, noting the unresolved disputes over the governments of Austria and Rumania. However, Truman ignored this eventuality and Byrnes a few days later announced his intention to meet with Molotov instead of having a meeting between the heads of state.

Had Truman met with Stalin in November or December, he may have been able to secure agreements that satisfied Stalin and Congress. He may have also avoided conflict with the Soviet Union in the following months and maintained a cooperative relationship with the Soviet Union if he had been able to quell dissidents at home after his meeting. Closer analysis of leading newspapers, especially those dissident with mainstream Democratic policies, could shed light on the alternatives Truman could have taken; this paper focused on centrist and right-wing newspapers but future research could focus on left-wing news publications. Moreover, a closer analysis of public polls could shed light on opinions about a meeting between the two heads of state and US policy towards Russia in general. On the other hand, it is worth noting that Stalin in the fall had not extended an invitation to conduct a meeting with Truman and Clement Attlee. Stalin, then, deserves a share in responsibility for the affair.

Ultimately, a series of grave miscommunications between Truman and Stalin between Japan’s surrender and the first General Assembly was critical to misunderstandings that promulgated a formal policy of confrontation towards the Soviet Union. Truman did not secure sufficient cooperation from the Senate with his Administration’s policies during the fall and winter of 1945 and was forced to reorient his foreign policy to accommodate their views. Facing the consequences of his ineptitude, Truman had to expose his Administration to criticism by abruptly changing the United States’ policy from one searching for common ground to one seeking to contain the Soviets. It was probably difficult for politicians and editors to remain in
touch with Truman’s web of policy reorientations; he tried to appease each layer of the domestic political sphere (the Administration, Congress, the press, and the public) but probably only managed to confuse them with a matrix of agreements and counter-agreements.

Now, this massive foreign policy complex was not entirely of Truman’s making. The unfortunate president inherited it from his predecessor’s attempt to create a precarious public alliance with the Soviets. Roosevelt only truly kept his agreements with Stalin to himself but maintained a public image of cooperation with masterful marketing ploys and political maneuvers; he assigned Byrnes to address Congress and the public about Yalta so that they could support cooperation and out-maneuvered his closest party members in order to ensure his vision. A tenuous alliance indeed; President Roosevelt, however, was never truly able to work out an acceptable agreement with Stalin and left his predecessor hopelessly mired in a dense, political quagmire for which he could not have been more unprepared. It is true that Truman did not extend an invitation to meet with Stalin in the fall to winter of 1945, despite editorial pressure to do so, and it did cost him politically but his vacillation can be better understood by his circumstances under Roosevelt’s shadow.

President Truman was unpredictable from the late spring of 1945 to the late winter of 1946, playing a difficult political game to garner support for his policies, and he could not secure the necessary support from the public to continue his predecessor’s vision. He had an opportunity to mitigate his differences with Stalin face-to-face but did not take advantage of it. Instead, the aggressive mechanism that he set into motion in late December entered international politics in February over the occupation of Iran and incited the first Cold War style stand-off over Azerbaijan. The Russian-American Alliance was ended permanently and Franklin D.
Roosevelt’s vision of mutual cooperation and global security collapsed under the weight of its obligations.
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