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During the Truman era, according to this specialist, United States military policy broke sharply with tradition: "The North Atlantic Treaty was the first treaty of its kind signed by the United States in time of peace."

The Truman Doctrine and NATO

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IN THE FINAL days of Franklin Roosevelt's administration, United States relations with the Soviet Union, a wartime ally, were deteriorating. During World War II, Roosevelt had insisted that the Western Allies confine negotiations with the Russians largely to military affairs; therefore divisive issues were postponed. In effect, Roosevelt maintained a superficial harmony during the war, but he passed a full plate of problems to his successor. The process of worsening relations with the U.S.S.R. continued and deepened following Harry S. Truman's assumption of the presidency.

From the first until the last day of its duration, the Truman administration never enjoyed a period of serenity in its relations with the Soviet Union. When Truman came into office in April, 1945, the United States and the U.S.S.R. were in controversy over the establishment of a government of Poland representative of the people. At the San Francisco Conference of 1945 to organize the United Nations, there was more controversy over the seating of Argentina, the meaning of the veto, and other issues. In early 1946, the U.S.S.R. refused to remove its troops from Iran; the dispute went to the U.N. Security Council, and the first of many vetoes was cast.

Only after bitter protracted negotiations was agreement reached on a peace treaty for Italy and lesser allies of Germany. Profound disagreement within the Allied Control Council led finally to the abandonment of four-power rule of Germany.

In the United Nations, United States proposals for the international control of atomic energy were opposed by the Soviet Union. The Soviets also rejected American proposals for disarmament and for the admission of various new members. In 1950, the Soviet Union opposed U.N. action to halt aggression in Korea.

In quick steps, the Soviet Union built up a ring of satellites—Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Poland and East Germany. The pattern of aggrandizement was always the same: occupation by Soviet armies, acquisition by the Communists of key posts in the Cabinet, control of the police and armies, dominance of the media of mass communications and subversion of the judiciary. In almost every month of the Truman administration, the Communists were engaged in contests of military strength somewhere in the world—guerrilla warfare in Greece, the great logistic test of the Berlin blockade and full-scale strife in Korea and Indochina.

Against this background of continuously boiling trouble, Truman followed several principles. He did not want the United States ever to show weakness in dealing with the Soviet Union. He put a special premium on blunt candor in his own discussions with Soviet representatives and took care that the U.S.S.R. was accurately apprised of United States intentions. Above all, he valued swift, resolute action in response to Soviet thrusts.

The first of the huge foreign assistance programs of the Truman administration was

focused on Greece and Turkey. It was also the first major application of what soon became known as the policy of "containment."

Affairs in Greece had been in varying states of crisis since the country's liberation in 1944. Civil war raged and inflation soared. The British, whose forces had entered Greece when the Germans moved out, had labored for three years to restore stability and had lent support to the "rightist" government in its civil war with well equipped Communist forces. In February, 1947, the overburdened British shocked the United States by announcing that they no longer could carry their responsibilities in Greece.

The United States feared that the Communist guerrillas, who were believed to be receiving help from their Communist neighbors, would probably seize control of Greece when the British withdrew. Thus Greece would fall within the Soviet orbit. Although Turkey, unlike Greece, had no serious internal difficulties, it was keeping a large army mobilized at great expense because of the threatening proximity of Soviet forces. If Greece passed under Soviet domination, the position of Turkey would become untenable. Then the strategically vital eastern Mediterranean would fall into Communist hands, with enormous consequences for the West.

On March 12, 1947, Truman appeared before Congress to make the epochal pronouncement of what became known as the "Truman Doctrine."* A primary objective of United States foreign policy, he said, was the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. . . . We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes.

He added that the direct or indirect aggression of totalitarian regimes against "free peoples . . . undermines the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States." Truman requested an appropriation of \$400 million for military

and economic aid for both Greece and Turkey.

In Congress and outside its halls there was much criticism that the President was bypassing the United Nations. The administration answered that the United Nations lacked the means to extend the aid that was required. The veto "of certain members" might block action, and in any case the United Nations would have to turn to the United States for funds and material and technical aid, with much loss of time. Eventually, Congress acquiesced fully to the President's request. A face-saving amendment provided that whenever the United Nations was prepared to take over the burden, the United States would lay it down.

The final legislation provided for aid in the form of loans or grants. United States civilian and military advisers were to assist Greece and Turkey to make effective use of the aid. The President was required to withdraw any or all aid if requested to do so by either the Greek or the Turkish governments. The recipient governments were required to give free access to United States officials and to the American press to see how the aid was being used. In each country, full publicity was to be given to the aid programs.

Although faced with numerous and formidable difficulties, the Truman Doctrine achieved its fundamental aim; it kept Greece and Turkey out of the Soviet orbit. The severity of the Greek civil war necessitated an unforeseen enlargement of the Greek army; it required the transfer of sizeable funds from the economic side of the program to the military. At the request of the Greek government, United States military advisers went into the field to "advise directly." Funds were also used for such military support purposes as improving port facilities, roads and highways; and long-range agricultural and health projects were launched. Toward the end of 1949, hostilities came to an end in Greece and attention shifted to the country's serious economic problems—to inflation and unemployment. Although the United States sought to broaden the "rightist" government, it could not escape the

* Ed Note: For excerpts see p. 49 of this issue.

criticism heard in domestic debate that it was violating its democratic traditions by supporting reactionary government abroad.

United States aid to Turkey, 90 per cent of which was military, succeeded in scaling down Turkish forces to a size more nearly within the capabilities of the Turkish economy. Democracy gained in Turkey to the point that the established People's party, founded by the dictator Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was voted out at the polls in 1950 and was replaced by a new government organized by the opposition.

The Truman Doctrine was of enormous significance. It enabled the United States to undertake a bold initiative in the cold war. Framed in broad terms, it moved from the limited base of Greece and Turkey to the far more ambitious and important Marshall Plan and Atlantic Pact.

THE POLICY OF CONTAINMENT

The policy of containment was expressed in the Truman Doctrine and in other subsequent statements. It received its most extensive theoretical analysis and exposition not in presidential pronouncements but in the writings of George F. Kennan. Early in 1946, when a reassessment of United States foreign policy toward the Soviet Union was well under way, Kennan, a scholarly career officer of the Foreign Service, was chargé d'affaires in Moscow. On February 22, he dispatched what became a famous and influential cable to the State Department, seeking to explain Soviet behavior and proposing a suitable United States and Western response. The cable was the basis for Kennan's anonymous article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in July, 1947. In the spring of 1947, Kennan was appointed director of the State Department's newly created Policy Planning Staff; thereafter he enjoyed an effective vantage point from which to influence United States policy.

The nature of Soviet power, Kennan observed, was the product of ideology and circumstance. The ideology, which was inherited, held that capitalist production was inefficient, exploitative of the working class,

and bearing the seeds of its own destruction. Soviet leaders, eager to achieve the speedy industrialization of their own country, were insecure. In Soviet society they shared power with no one; they had no tradition of compromise like the tradition of Anglo-American political systems. Even within the party, the center of power, the struggle was continuous to cause

the membership to be animated not by their own individual wills but by the awesome breadth of the party leadership and the overbrooding presence of the "word."

As Kennan described the situation, the efforts of Soviet leaders to consolidate their power were directed not only against forces at home, but also against the outside world. Indeed, the stereotype of an outside world bent upon destroying communism was a staple of party doctrine, providing necessity and justification for sacrifice, unity and belligerency. Moscow's fear of foreign hostility was not founded in fact, but sprang from the necessity of explaining the maintenance of dictatorial authority at home. Against such a background, Kennan felt, Moscow could never sincerely accept a community of aims between the Soviet Union and the powers which it regarded as capitalist. In Moscow, the unvarying assumption was that the aims of the capitalist world were antagonistic to the Soviet regime. If the Soviet government came on occasion to agreement with a capitalist government,

this is to be regarded as a tactical maneuver permissible in dealing with the enemy and should be taken in the spirit of *caveat emptor*.

The Kremlin was under no compulsion to hurry, nor did it have any compunction about retreating in the face of superior force.

Having described the Soviet condition, Kennan offered a specific prescription for dealing with it.

. . . the Soviet pressure [he wrote] against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy. . . .

In the foreseeable future, the United States must not expect to enjoy political intimacy with the Russians but must bear with them as rivals rather than as partners. The United States must continue to expect that

Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability . . . but rather a cautious, persistent pressure toward the disrupting and weakening of all rival influence and rival power.

THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

In practical terms, containment meant the throwing of political, economic and even military roadblocks across the paths of Soviet thrusts. A massive program of economic assistance, known as the Marshall Plan or the European Recovery Program, had its origins in speeches in May and June, 1947, by Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Secretary of State George C. Marshall. Although United States aid to restore the Western European economies had been generous since the latter stages of World War II, the economies of countries such as Italy, Germany and Austria had been slow to recover from the war. Because of West Europe's economic interdependence, a retarded Germany threatened to nullify the progress made by other nations. In addition, strong local Communist parties were pressing hard in France and Italy in 1947.

The Marshall Plan was a combination of European self-help and massive American expenditures. The Soviet Union was invited to join the effort to aid European recovery, but after some hesitation it declined. In 1948 and 1949, a miraculous transformation occurred in West Europe: war-damaged economies recovered and production levels rose to points exceeding pre-World War II outputs.

But economic assistance from the United States was not enough. In February, 1948, a Communist coup in Czechoslovakia appalled the Western world. Russia seemed to be embarked on a deliberate course of aggres-

sion, taking over the nations of central and West Europe, one by one. One month later at Brussels, five alarmed West European nations—Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg—signed a 50-year defense pact, by which they agreed to aid one another should an aggressor attack. The United States, already the economic partner and underwriter of these nations, was drawn into their military alliance. In an address to Congress the day the pact was signed, President Truman expressed confidence that the United States would “by appropriate means, extend to the free nations the support which the situation requires.”

In June, 1948, the United States Senate, by overwhelming vote, adopted the Vandenberg resolution,¹ framed in close collaboration with the administration. This affirmed United States support for such regional security pacts as that adopted at Brussels. The State Department moved ahead with negotiations to include the United States within the framework set up by the Brussels powers. Eventually, on April 4, 1949, 12 nations signed what became known as the North Atlantic Treaty.² In addition to the United States and the Brussels powers, the signatories included Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Portugal and Italy. The treaty committed the United States and its fellow powers to develop by self-help and mutual aid their individual and collective capacity to resist attack; to consult together about any threat to the territorial integrity, independence or security of any of the parties; to consider an attack upon any one of the parties in the North Atlantic area as an attack against them all; to assist the attacked party

by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed forces to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

The North Atlantic Treaty was the first treaty of its kind signed by the United States in time of peace. It abandoned the traditional policy of avoiding entangling alliances. Wide public support for the treaty was indicative of the growing fear of the Soviet

¹ Named for Michigan Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg.

² For excerpts from this treaty see p. 50 of this issue.

Union. On the whole, Americans seemed to believe that if another world war broke out the United States would be involved in it from the beginning. Consequently, it was felt, the United States might be able to prevent a war (as it had failed to do in 1914 and 1939) by giving prior notice to potential aggressors that they would have to face the United States.

The progress of the North Atlantic Treaty in the Senate was speeded by the Berlin crisis, precipitated when Russian authorities shut off non-Russian traffic to Berlin, except by air.³ The Soviet Union evidently assumed that the Western powers, unable to supply the population and the military forces in their sectors of the city, would abandon Berlin. The United States and Great Britain faced up to the challenge by commencing the Berlin airlift, by means of which they undertook the prodigious task of supplying their sectors of the beleaguered city.

MUTUAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Promptly after Senate approval of NATO, President Truman asked Congress for legislation to provide "military aid to free nations," with an expenditure of \$1.45 billion in the fiscal year 1949-1950. The administration contemplated a program of arms aid to the NATO countries as well as to Greece, Turkey and the Philippines.

Our objective [said the President] is to see to it that these nations are equipped, in the shortest possible time, with compact and efficiently trained forces capable of maintaining internal order and resisting the initial phases of external aggression.

Legislative debate was sharp. The powerful Senate Republican leaders, Robert Taft of Ohio and Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, argued that arms aid was unnecessary, that the mere existence of the treaty would deter the Soviet Union. The eventual passage of the aid bill was considerably eased by the President's announcement of an atomic explosion in the Soviet Union.

³ On June 24, 1948.

⁴ For the text of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, see *Current History*, December, 1949, pp. 359ff.

In the following months, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created as the international organization to give effect to the treaty. In addition to its participation in NATO, the United States concluded bilateral agreements with the NATO member countries, governing the provision of United States military aid, under the Mutual Defense Assistance Acts.⁴ In addition, the administration took three major steps to make NATO an effective deterrent force. It won acceptance from the NATO nations of the principle of contributions to a united defense force with German participation. Initially, the participating nations planned to maintain only their own forces and make their own defense plans. After much effort, the administration persuaded the Western allies that the NATO power would be strongest if there were a single NATO defense force "to which each country would contribute its share." At best, the principle was accorded limited and grudging acceptance.

In a second major move, the Truman administration induced General Dwight D. Eisenhower to serve as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Europe. The appointment was extremely popular with the NATO nations. A third major move was the commitment of United States troops to Europe as part of the NATO forces. The step touched off an acrimonious Senate debate. Senators Taft and Kenneth Wherry (R., Nebraska) challenged the President's power to send United States troops abroad in peacetime, and a resolution was introduced to prevent the President from taking such action without congressional consent. The administration fought back vigorously and eventually a substitute resolution was passed, permitting four United States divisions to be sent to NATO, but advising the President to ask for the approval of Congress before sending more.

The administration also faced the reluctance of some NATO countries to improve their military strength and to contribute to an integrated NATO force. Some of these countries were anxious to keep the door open for negotiations with the Soviet Union, and

to enter into an armament race seemed to shut it. Outlays for armaments also had domestic repercussions which dimmed the enthusiasm of certain NATO governments. Rearmament meant cutbacks in the standard of living and gave aid and comfort to such critics of NATO as Aneurin Bevan in Great Britain and General Charles de Gaulle in France.

Yet for all its difficulties, NATO made such progress that its Council meeting in Lisbon in February, 1952, dared to plan for a level of some 50 army divisions—half of them on active duty—and some 4,000 aircraft by the end of 1952. A further build-up was planned for 1953 and 1954, supplemented by the forces of Greece and Turkey and the expected inclusion of West Germany in the European Defense Community. Thus, as President Truman described it in a message to Congress on March 6, 1952, the program would “bring within measurable distance the time when even the most foolhardy man in the Kremlin will not dare risk open attack.” The President’s statement must be read in conjunction with the observation by United States General Matthew Ridgeway, then the NATO Supreme Commander, on October 14, 1952, that

Although our forces today are far stronger than they were two years ago . . . we are still far from the minimum we need to deal with an all-out surprise attack. . . .

In terms of its dominant purpose, NATO was an unqualified success in the Truman era. Although it did not and probably could not achieve the kind of integrated military force capable, in itself, of repelling a determined invasion of Western Europe, it did create the deterrent that prevented an invasion. The solid historical fact is that no boundary in Europe has changed since 1948; the ominous advance of the Iron Curtain was halted.

THE MIDDLE EAST

The Truman era was one of rapid United States involvement in the Middle East. As early as 1946, pressures upon Iran by the Soviet Union brought United States support

for prompt action by the United Nations Security Council. Turkey, the beneficiary of the Truman Doctrine beginning in 1947, was brought into the NATO system in 1952. As a leading supporter of the establishment of the new state of Israel, the United States faced continuing and difficult problems in its relations with the conglomerate of hyper-sensitive, incompatible states of the Middle East. In its initial years, the Truman administration worked to prop up British power in the Middle East, but turned down repeated British invitations to share military responsibilities in Palestine. The United States sold its wartime air base in Cairo to Egypt and acquired a three-year lease to another base in Saudi Arabia. To beleaguered Iran, the United States sent a military mission and issued credit for the purchase of war-surplus equipment. In 1951, along with France, Turkey and the United Kingdom, the United States proposed to Egypt the establishment of a Middle East Command with Egypt as an equal partner, but the Egyptians rejected the proposal.

Following their establishment in Western Europe, the mutual assistance programs were extended to the Middle East. Eventually, Iran, Israel and the seven Arab states of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen shared in the programs. The Truman administration pursued vigorously a plan to bring these countries into the NATO framework to achieve a unified defense of the area. This failing, the United

(Continued on page 53)

Louis W. Koenig served in the State Department during the Truman administration and was a member of the foreign affairs task force of the first Hoover Commission. Among his numerous books are *The Truman Administration* (New York: New York University Press, 1956), *The Invisible Presidency* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), *The Chief Executive* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), and *Official Makers of Public Policy: Congress and the President* (Chicago: Scott Foresman, 1965).

THE INTERWAR YEARS

(Continued from page 12)

thorized to help protect convoys bound for England. Enemy ships were seized in United States ports; German and Italian assets were frozen and their consulates were closed.

Hitler changed the nature of the war in July, 1941, by invading Russia; thus an enemy became an ally. Division in the United States was intensified by this act; isolationists advocated letting the two nations exhaust themselves against each other. At this time the Selective Service Act came up for renewal in Congress and, despite the need for training men, tremendous opposition arose. The act was renewed by the margin of a single vote.

In August, Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met off the coast of Newfoundland and issued the Atlantic Charter for the postwar world. The Charter pledged liberation of oppressed peoples, freer trade, economic collaboration, peace with justice for all, disarmament and a "wide and more permanent system of general security."

There seems little doubt that Roosevelt wanted the United States to enter the war against Germany by the fall of 1941, because he believed that Germany and Italy could not be overcome by the Allies without United States participation. This was the situation when the Japanese struck in December.

THE EISENHOWER ERA

(Continued from page 30)

ably was suffering a severe jolt at home by the revelation of the penetration of Soviet space, demanded an apology. Eisenhower refused, and the conference fell through.

These had been years of crisis, of thaw and chill in the cold war. War, and even a serious confrontation, had been avoided. The military commitments of the United States within Europe remained as firm as ever, although a "new look" had given rather more emphasis to nuclear retaliation and defense than to reliance on conventional forces. Military commitments in the Middle East in-

creased. On the other hand, Hungary had shown some weakness in United States commitments—or some lack of wisdom in holding out false hopes. And Suez had raised doubts about the efficacy of NATO and the United States willingness to counter threats of nuclear attack against Europe.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE AND NATO

(Continued from page 23)

States continued to pursue bilateral military aid programs.

Throughout the Truman administration, the Soviet Union and the United States were rivals for ascendancy in the Middle East as dwindling British and French power in the area created a vacuum. The record of the Truman years reveals that the immediate gains of the United States outweighed those of the Soviet Union. The United States and its Western allies succeeded in keeping the Soviets physically out of the Middle East by frustrating Soviet designs on Turkey and Iran. In addition, local Communist movements in the Middle Eastern countries remained weak—a remarkable circumstance for an area close to the U.S.S.R. and burdened with depressed conditions and general instability. In contrast to its policy in West Europe, the United States did not try to build up an on-site force capable of preventing the Soviet Union from overrunning the Middle East in the event of war.

The military policies of the Truman administration involved sharp breaks with the American past. Its response to militant Russian communism brought about a major revolution in United States foreign and military policies. In the Truman Doctrine and subsequent policies, nonintervention and the tradition of avoiding entangling alliances were abandoned. New paths were broken with the adoption of peacetime conscription and a wartime military budget, without which the administration's foreign military commitments could not have been honored. The military policies rested upon a solid foundation of party and public support.