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Out in the Cold: How Truman Killed Roosevelt's Vision for the United Nations

Nicholas Dwyer

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OUT IN THE COLD:
HOW TRUMAN KILLED ROOSEVELT'S VISION FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

An Undergraduate Honors Project Presented

By

Nicholas Dwyer

To

The Department of History

Approved:



Erik Christiansen
Project Advisor

May 6, 2020

Date



Quenby Hughes
Chair, Department Honors Committee

5/6/2020

Date



Karl P. Benziger (May 6, 2020)

Karl Benziger
Committee Member

May 6, 2020

Date

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Introduction

The United Nations (UN) was founded at the end of World War II in an effort to create an international organization capable of addressing crises before they became wars. After the First World War the same effort resulted in the League of Nations; its failure eminently visible in the Second World War which followed just two decades later. There has yet to be another world war since the United Nations' founding, but it has not prevented countless smaller conflicts during the Cold War and after.

The ideal for what the United Nations would be was slowly built by President Franklin D. Roosevelt over the course of his administration. His vision, originally for “four policemen” ensuring peace around the world, grew to become one based around the “four freedoms” instead: freedom of religion and speech, and freedom from want and fear. Alongside a belief that these four freedoms were for all people around the globe, was a related faith that it must be achieved multilaterally. On the international stage the United States (US) was certainly powerful, but so were Great Britain and the Soviet Union (USSR), as well as the many smaller states if they acted together. Thus Roosevelt's vision came to encompass a world free of conflict, with nations working together to sustain that vision. However, soon after Roosevelt's death, President Harry Truman would turn the United States away from the organization, and its internationalist vision, toward an increasingly unilateral and confrontational foreign policy towards world crises. This shift ultimately ended any hope that the United Nations would be an effective organization at confronting a large-scale international crisis.

Truman, although supportive of an international activist foreign policy, did not share Roosevelt's ideals. The United Nations would be left behind as many officials within the administration who believed in the organization left. Beginning with the San Francisco

Conference that established the United Nations, and continuing through his nearly two full terms in office, Truman would place the organization outside of the decision-making process with regards to international incidents. For Truman, the UN would simply be a rubber stamp on decisions the United States had already made. Truman's clearest choices in this matter surrounded the Truman Doctrine, formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Korean War. While reacting to domestic and international circumstances outside his direct control, with each incident, Truman pushed the organization aside in favor of unilateral US action and confrontation. In 1947 the Truman Doctrine committed American funding to all "free peoples" fighting external forces, making it clear that it was not the UN's role to support endangered nations, but the United States'. In NATO the United States created a new organization, separate from the UN, to confront the Soviet Union. For Truman, the UN was not the forum for addressing crises, a military alliance was. Finally, in the Korean War the United States committed military forces prior to UN authorization for military action. Internally Truman went so far as to state the US would have headed into the conflict without UN approval. His administration would foil multiple attempts by the organization to negotiate peace over the course of the war. The administration's decisions left the multilateral organization without a place in addressing a major global crisis.

The multilateral system envisioned by Roosevelt was left behind by Truman, while the American people and Congress followed along after years of being pushed by Roosevelt to accept an international role for the United States. Most members of Congress came to share Truman's view that the United States should act alone on the global stage, and while there was some dissent around many of his decisions, the administration always received the funding it was looking for. The American people initially supported the United Nations wholeheartedly, but

overtime their support was shown to be more temperamental, and any ire at the UN being ignored was weakly expressed.

Much of the writing surrounding the transition from Roosevelt's to Truman's presidency has focused on the development of the Cold War, and less so on the United Nations. Alonzo Hamby opens his work, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry Truman and American Liberalism*, by examining what Truman's rise meant for liberalism and the Democratic party moving forward. With the death of Roosevelt, Hamby contends that liberalism no longer knew where it was going. Over the years of his presidency, Roosevelt's personal politics had slowly come to be liberal politics and the politics of the Democratic party. Hamby asserts that Truman was a poor replacement for the leadership of Roosevelt. Liberalism's foreign policy had consistently oscillated between being isolationist and internationalist based on the most recent failure, as seen in the internationalism of Wilson fading with his failure to convince the United States to join the League of Nations. Hamby argues that Truman was an explicit change from both Roosevelt and the Democratic party under his leadership. Under Truman, liberalism moved from its alliance with the popular front against fascism to the "vital center" against communism. The Soviet Union had to be confronted and the bipartisan consensus against communism included Truman. Hamby concludes that with the end of the Second World War relations between the Soviet Union fell apart and required a change. Truman was dragged along by this change but also helped shape the response to it. The new face of liberalism, Truman reinforced that it was no longer for cooperation with the Soviet Union. Hamby shows that while Truman still supported domestic reform in the mold of Roosevelt with his "Fair Deal" programs, foreign policy was different.

Liberalism led by Truman had joined a consensus that the Soviet Union was a threat to be confronted, and no longer the ally of years before.¹

While Hamby addresses the political shift Truman oversaw, Gar Alperovitz addresses the foreign policy shift more explicitly in *Atomic Diplomacy*. Alperovitz suggests that from the moment Truman took office he began a shift towards confronting the Soviet Union, but that this change escalated with the testing and use of the atomic bomb. He argues that Truman's overarching goal was to decrease the influence of the Soviet Union in Europe. With Truman and his advisors internally accepting that Roosevelt's policy of cooperation must be reconsidered, Truman broke with the prevailing consensus before the war was even over. Truman cut off Lend-Lease support for the Soviet Union, and altered or broke the previous deals made between Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta. The United States having the bomb, and the Soviet Union not, gave Truman the confidence to "re-negotiate" with Stalin at Potsdam. Alperovitz implies that the use of the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was in an effort to force the Soviet Union to back down following the conference. Alperovitz's work, first published in 1965, was a stark change from the conventional thinking about the Cold War. In arguing that Truman's decisions pushed the United States towards confrontation, instead of Soviet action demanding it, Alperovitz's work opens up a different angle on the conflict, one where Truman's decisions were intentional driving factors in arriving at the Cold War.²

Although Hamby's and Alperovitz's works provide many details, neither has the scope of Robert Donovan's two volume series, *Conflict and Crisis*³ and *Tumultuous Years*.⁴ While

¹ Alonzo L. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism*, Contemporary American History Series (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1973).

² Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam: The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with Soviet Power*, Expanded and Updated ed. (New York, NY: Penguin, 1985).

³ Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977).

published five years apart, the two volumes are decidedly one work. Donovan covers Truman's entire presidency, recounting his foreign policy decisions and dedicating ample time to the domestic sphere. Donovan's interpretation of Truman's policies is that while he had a history of anti-communism prior to ascending to the presidency, Truman was leading a consensus, not forging a totally new path alone. Truman's attitude toward the Soviet Union was a break from Roosevelt's, a more hardline approach for the new president. Donovan's work portrays Truman in part as fully aware of his turn away from the United Nations, observing the public backlash to the Truman Doctrine at first and the administration's effort to quell public criticism, but Donovan also displays him as a man oblivious to his decisions' effect on the organization. Truman and his administration believed that NATO, even though a new structure outside the UN, was in line with the principles of its Charter. Donovan is consistently sympathetic to this dichotomy in Truman between his supposedly intentional and unintentional decisions. He portrays Truman as a "realist" president, confronting the Soviet Union with the backing of a Cold War consensus. While he occasionally criticizes Truman for decisions like his loyalty program in the spring of 1947, Donovan largely argues Truman was placed upon a path towards conflict with the Soviet Union and was unable to avoid the decisions surrounding the Truman Doctrine and Korean War he ultimately made.

Lawrence Kaplan's *The United States and NATO: The Formative Years* walks through how NATO came to be, and the first challenges it faced in the late 1940s. He argues that the alliance was the centerpiece of the United States' policy to confront the Soviet Union but also that the emphasis by contemporaries of the threat the Soviet Union presented was overblown. Kaplan summarizes the establishment of the organization as a push from Europe to counter the

⁴ Robert J. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1949-1953* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982).

perceived Soviet aggression towards their occupations in West Germany. The argument in founding the alliance was not an easy one. Criticism came from those in favor of the United Nations, isolationists, and a fear that an alliance would pull American resources to Europe in the event of a war. Kaplan closes out the work by connecting it to the Korean War. NATO's large involvement in the conflict sealed its role as the military response to communism aggression. While the author does occasionally touch on the alliance's relationship towards the UN, it is a secondary concern of the work. Kaplan's analysis of the alliance is thorough and places it firmly at the heart of Truman's foreign policy following its establishment. In the author's eyes the alliance is indicative of the Cold War as the new reality, and the response created out of joint American and European fears of Soviet aggression and anti-communism following the Second World War.⁵

Lastly is John Spanier's *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War*. While the work obviously spends a significant amount of time on the relationship between Truman and General MacArthur leading up to and during the Korean War, Spanier also addresses how the United States entered the war in Korea, and how it interacted with the UN. Spanier's main focus when referring to the United Nations is its role in negotiations between Communist China and the United States. He argues that the efforts by the United Nations to find a peaceful solution after China's entry into the war were repeatedly shot down by the United States, even though they had popular international support. The United States was determined that Communist China would not receive the Security Council seat then held by Nationalist China in exile, however this determination extended to any favorable deal towards the Chinese. When the United Nations was able to find deals supported by both neutral, communist, and

⁵ Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The United States and NATO: The Formative Years* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), Accessed April 4, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central.

democratic nations, some of whom were NATO members, the United States repeatedly demanded items China had expressly refused to consider therefore killing the deals. Spanier shows that the United States was willfully harming the organization's main mission of ensuring peace out of a desire to confront China. While not alone in this desire, the Truman administration led the country towards continued combat, even when the international majority wanted otherwise.⁶

Although existing interpretations of Truman's foreign policy and presidency following Roosevelt's death touch upon the United Nations, it is often in a secondary capacity. The Cold War framing is consistent in viewing Truman's actions towards the Soviet Union, however it ignores the impact these actions had on the United Nations' effectiveness. Kaplan, Alperovitz, and Donovan all note that Truman's foreign policy shift away from Roosevelt was intentional, but focus on the effects for Cold War diplomacy outside of the United Nations, not how the organization's role was affected. Ultimately the United Nations' role is left to the wayside as it became increasingly unimportant for how the United States and Soviet Union confronted one another following Truman's initial decisions to push the organization out of the process, leaving a lasting impact on the Cold War.

Roosevelt's vision for the United Nations was distinct from Truman's, as seen in the latter's foreign policy decisions over the course of his presidency. Truman's decisions were purposeful, leading to an organization precluded from addressing a crisis. The first section covers the development of Roosevelt's vision. The second, third, and fourth sections move on to Truman. It starts with his ascension to the presidency following Roosevelt's death, and the vitally important San Francisco Conference just two weeks later, and analyzes his major foreign

⁶ John W. Spanier *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1959).

policy choices through the end of his presidency. Section Five focuses on public and congressional reaction to Roosevelt's initial vision and Truman's decisions to change it. Although Truman claimed the mantle of Roosevelt's legacy, his decisions in foreign policy were a marked shift from Roosevelt, placing the UN outside the new framework emerging during the Cold War and leaving it as either a rubber stamp for prior choices, or a stage for lending unilateral action a multilateral image. Truman took the legacy created by Roosevelt, and manifested in the United Nations, and while promising to maintain it, did the opposite. Instead, he intentionally went around the organization to create a foreign policy based on unilateral action by the United States. The United Nations was Roosevelt's solution to the failures of the League of Nations. Truman's actions ensured that in its earliest years it did not have a chance to stand before being pushed to the side and left in the cold for eight years, to waste away into an ineffective and secondary role.

Section I. Roosevelt's Vision

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's vision for the United Nations did not appear in isolation. Its framework and founding principles are outlined in Roosevelt's 'Four Freedoms' speech and the Atlantic Charter, but it can also be found in his choice of advisors and early political life. The idea of a world organization was one Roosevelt considered across his time in politics, tempering his vision with the whims of public and congressional support. Eventually the Second World War offered an environment in need of the vision, an environment which changed in the year after Roosevelt's death.

Roosevelt first ran for office in 1910 at twenty-eight years old; he won and became a state senator in New York. However, he would not remain in that office for long. Having been an avid supporter of Woodrow Wilson, whose internationalist streak he emulated, Roosevelt was offered a position as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. He accepted the role, and over the course of the Wilson administration became well known within Washington DC, which, alongside his household name as the cousin of a former president, propelled him to the vice presidential nomination in 1920. After the election loss, Roosevelt withdrew from public life for much of the next decade as a result of his polio diagnosis and ensuing efforts to keep the illness hidden. By 1928 he had returned to politics, becoming the governor of New York from 1929-1933, followed by the presidency from 1933 until his death in 1945. While in his early presidency the Great Depression and economy were the central issues, the man who had defended the League of Nations while running for Vice President in 1920, and admired Wilson for his internationalism, was still present.⁷

⁷ Alan Brinkley, "Roosevelt, Franklin Delano (30 January 1882–12 April 1945), thirty-second president of the United States." *American National Biography*. 1 Feb. 2000. Accessed 12 Mar 2020. <https://www-anb-org.lic.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.001.0001/anb-9780198606697-e-0600567>.

Roosevelt's first term was almost solely dedicated to the New Deal and addressing the Great Depression, however the growing tension in both Asia and Europe weighed heavily on his mind. By his second term, while Roosevelt had always wanted to push the United States towards a more internationalist foreign policy, public concern was also increasing. Roosevelt's desire to prepare the United States for a possible war forced him to make concessions in his domestic policy. In 1938 and 1939 he began advocating a larger military budget in the name of defense, careful not to propose an active foreign policy. In order to pass such legislation Roosevelt had to allow cuts to the New Deal programs in return. Many members of both parties were staunchly isolationist, others still anti-New Deal, thus Roosevelt was forced to choose. Ultimately he decided that preparing for war was more important than leaving his domestic program completely intact.⁸ As his second term came to a close, and France and Great Britain actively fought Nazi Germany, Roosevelt began pushing the United States more and more towards intervention. By early 1940 the United States had instituted its first peacetime draft, traded destroyers for bases with Great Britain, and set the Army and Navy to vastly expand.⁹ The United States was on a path to war, and while Roosevelt tried to downplay his internationalism in the 1940 election, he knew the country would need to play a larger role going forward.

The first clear articulation of Roosevelt's ideals for a post-war order came in the closing of his 1941 State of the Union. The 'Four Freedoms' he outlined were the backbone of his international future. In the speech Roosevelt was explicit that freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from want and fear, was not just for the United States, but for anywhere in the world. It was the goal for his new international system. Roosevelt believed, "That [the Four Freedoms] is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable

⁸ Tugwell, Rexford G. Tugwell, *F.D.R.: Architect of an Era* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1967), 184-185.

⁹ Tugwell, 196-197.

in our own time and generation.”¹⁰ The idea of the ‘Four Freedoms’ was Roosevelt’s. At a press conference six months prior he mentioned them in passing as his vision for long-term peace, although they were the five freedoms at the time, having included freedom of the press. Just as the idea was his, so was the speech. Roosevelt’s speechwriter, Robert Sherwood, comments in his history of the relationship between close advisor Harry Hopkins and Roosevelt that the three of them worked on the speech together in December of 1940 but, “Nobody ghost wrote those.”¹¹ The ideas in the 1941 State of the Union were dictated by Roosevelt, he constructed the speech and the vision it outlined. Roosevelt meant to act on that vision, to take the United States from an isolationist nation to a global leader. Consequently, it was his battle to fight, and not one to be left to another politician.

Within his administration Roosevelt’s belief in the ‘Four Freedoms’ was a central ideological tenant shared by his advisors, such as Harry Hopkins. Hopkins, who consulted with Roosevelt on almost everything including foreign policy, argued that the ‘real’ Roosevelt was seen in the ‘Four Freedoms’, not in his comments often tamping down an internationalist bent.¹² Behind the experienced politician was an idealist who believed such a future was possible for the United States, as long as someone was there to make it. As 1941 progressed, Roosevelt further understood that the United States’ position as the ‘Arsenal of Democracy’ gave him unique leverage to shape the international system. With Great Britain turning to the United States to join in the war, Roosevelt resolved that, “he would only urge American participation in the war if the Allies would agree to a world organization projected beyond the war into a new kind of peace –

¹⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Annual Message to Congress January 6, 1941” in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 9, ed. Samuel I. Rosenman. (New York, NY: Macmillian 1941), 672.

¹¹ Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Harper, 1950) 230-231.

¹² Sherwood, 266.

one made secure by an organization to ensure it.”¹³ Thus Roosevelt turned to the leader of the United States’ closest and most dependent ally, Winston Churchill, to build the foundation for his “new kind of peace.”

Churchill and Roosevelt signed the Atlantic Charter off the coast of Newfoundland in August of 1941. Although the United States was not yet in World War II, Roosevelt was exercising the influence of the American economy and lend-lease program to create a shared vision for the post-war world. Churchill, because of the weakened position of Great Britain, almost unconditionally signed on to Roosevelt’s ideas expressed in the charter. Just as with the Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter was based upon Roosevelt’s vision for a post-war peace. Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles helped write the charter that Roosevelt and Churchill would later sign, but Roosevelt himself personally edited the document along the way, ensuring it represented his view for long-term peace.¹⁴ As an empire, it was particularly challenging for Great Britain to accept free trade on the oceans, undercutting its monopoly of colonial markets, and self-determination, which could lead to the dissolution of the British Empire. However, Churchill had little choice on the matter, given his nation’s dependence on American support.

On the point of an international organization, Roosevelt had less convincing to do, and instead was pressured by Secretary of State Cordell Hull toward making the future organization a truly global one. Roosevelt’s first plan of ‘Four Policemen’ ensuring tranquility in different regions was flawed. It would have operated without input from the countless smaller nations who later supported the Allied war effort against Germany. Hull had been Roosevelt’s Secretary of State since his first term, and had taken the lead on foreign policy while Roosevelt focused on his domestic agenda. Even as Roosevelt turned his attention to the war and international stage, Hull

¹³ Tugwell, 212.

¹⁴ Sherwood, 359.

still took a leading role in pushing Roosevelt to fulfill the ideals he set out in the Four Freedoms.¹⁵ Roosevelt's internationalism was not always consistent. At times he leaned towards a future foreign policy built around great power leadership, without other nations' input, as seen in his idea for the 'Four Policemen'. An international presence did not always mean cooperation with other states, but activism on the international stage, engaging with political crises the United States previously had not. However the international activism could have been achieved without an international organization. At the Atlantic Conference itself it was Churchill and Hopkins who urged Roosevelt to go farther and explicitly mention an international organization, making it a cooperative vision, rather than a unilateral one. Roosevelt was still wary of isolationists in the US and did not want to overreach only to have his vision undone. The American public seemed to be in favor of international activism, but an internationalist, and thus multilateral, policy would still be a push. However, for Churchill an international organization represented a needed commitment on the part of the United States to show it would participate in the war. In the end the charter refers to a 'permanent system' instead of an organization, but it was taken by all involved to mean the same thing.¹⁶ Roosevelt's vision struck a balance between the extremes. On one side not committing the United States to a completely internationalist and cooperative world the isolationists would oppose, but still going beyond an international activism that would see the US act alone. This balance would pervade Roosevelt's future choices, and be in stark contrast to Truman's activism policy just under five years later.

Roosevelt's concern about the isolationists was warranted. The text of the charter released at the conference unintentionally left out freedom of religion. Sherwood later wrote that it was simply an oversight, and the proper text was included when the Atlantic Charter language

¹⁵ Amry Vandenbosch, "Cordell Hull: Father of the United Nations," *World Affairs* 136, no. 2 (1973): 99-120, accessed March 11, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/20671507, 111.

¹⁶ Tugwell, 360.

was used in the first UN declaration on January 1st, 1942. However, isolationists jumped on the incident arguing it was, “proof of the subservience of the cynical Roosevelt and Churchill to the godless Soviet Union.”¹⁷ While clearly an overreaction, the incident showed the isolationists still held sway with the American public. Opinion was shifting, but not yet enough. The Atlantic Charter, even with some domestic backlash, was still a breakthrough in American foreign policy, distinguishing Roosevelt’s administration from the isolationism of the previous three presidents. The United States was now ready, “to place its leadership and strength on the scales . . . in a supreme effort to bring into being a decent and peaceful post-war world.”¹⁸ Although the Atlantic Charter only explicitly mentions Great Britain and United States, Roosevelt saw it as a framework applying to all peoples, stating, “The Atlantic Charter applies not only to the parts of the world that border the Atlantic but to the whole world; disarmament of aggressors, self-determination of Nations and peoples, and the four freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.”¹⁹ Roosevelt conflated the two documents as a unified vision for the world, one meant to create a lasting peace, shaped by the United States. The freedoms outlined in both were the foundation for a post-war system Roosevelt personally believed in.

With the ‘Four Freedoms’ and Atlantic Charter, Roosevelt was pushing against American opinion public out of a belief in internationalism as necessary for the future and for American victory in the Second World War. While Roosevelt wanted to see his ideals become reality, and believed he could attain them in his lifetime, the path was difficult. In 1942, Roosevelt’s progress

¹⁷ Sherwood, 361.

¹⁸ Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 41.

¹⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Fireside Chat on Progress of the War, Washington’s Birthday February 23, 1942” in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 11, ed. Samuel I. Rosenman. (New York, NY: Harper 1950), 115.

suffered a setback. Less than a year after the official formation of the United Nations as an alliance against the Axis powers, Roosevelt and the Democratic Party lost the midterms. Wendell Willkie, the Republican nominee in 1940, had even pushed his party to become more internationalist, but in the end the isolationists largely held their seats in the House of Representatives and Senate in the 1942 election. But, the results also showed Republicans would be open to internationalist policy. Thomas Dewey, who would face Roosevelt in the presidential election two years later, was elected to the Governorship of New York alongside a class of Republican internationalists, spreading the influence of Roosevelt's new future across party lines.²⁰

Although the League of Nations technically still existed, there was little appetite to return to that failed institution, particularly since the Soviet Union had been expelled from the organization and the United States had never joined. Starting with the conference at Dumbarton Oaks, and later at Yalta, Roosevelt and his advisors began to put his vision into action, laying the foundation for the United Nations. The first steps were taken by Hull prior to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. Hull, through a group of Republican and Democratic party leaders that he was advising on the administration's foreign policy, got both parties to place a commitment to a post-war international institution as part of their respective party platforms.²¹ Hull's goal was to remove from debate the future of foreign policy by forcing the both parties' leaders to publicly state their support. Even as the conference continued into late summer and early winter, Hull still kept the party leaders informed in order to ensure their support for Roosevelt's vision.

²⁰ Hoopes and Brinkley, 62-63.

²¹ While Hull may have wanted to make Stettinius represent Roosevelt's legacy within the Truman Administration, by the time his memoirs were published in 1948 Stettinius had left the administration and would soon die in October of 1949. Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, 2 vols. (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1948), 1670.

Before the conference began in late August, each of the powers sent their proposed charters for study. With Soviet and Chinese tensions high, Stalin refused to allow all four nations—the United States, Soviet Union, China, and Great Britain—to meet at the same time, splitting the conference into two phases; one without China and one without the USSR. Undersecretary of State Edward Stettinius was chosen to lead the American delegation at Dumbarton Oaks. Stettinius was a personal favorite of Hull in part because of “his belief in the principles and policies President Roosevelt and I were supporting.”²² He was not a politician and instead was seen as a true believer in Roosevelt's vision of a postwar world. He constantly conferred with Hull and Roosevelt after each day of the conference, developing a deeper connection with the President and his vision. By the time of the conference Hull and Roosevelt had already convinced the Soviets to put the economic and social role for the UN on the discussion table. Previously the Soviet Union considered an organization solely for peacekeeping military purposes, but the two were able to convince the Soviets that the future did not need merely military security, but financial and social support as well.²³ Heading into the conference everything was on the table. Roosevelt, via Stettinius’ wholehearted belief in his vision, had the opportunity to start from anywhere with this new institution and shape it to his ideal. While initially the three major powers seemed in agreement based on the draft charters they sent one another, the conference would test Stettinius’, and thus Roosevelt’s, ability to keep both the British and Soviets on the path to a stable, international, peace.

By the time the conference came to a close it had taken almost two months to establish a framework for the United Nations, with many of the more difficult issues being left for the leaders of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union to address personally at Yalta.

²² Hull, 1256.

²³ Hull, 1673.

Early in the conference the first of two impasses emerged. Andrei Gromyko, Soviet ambassador to the United States, requested that all 16 Soviet Republics be considered original members of the United Nations and have the same voting rights as any other state.²⁴ Stettinius and British Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Alexander Cadogan, the British representative to the conference, were shocked at the demand. Gromyko and the Soviet leaders were extremely concerned that the Soviet Union could be pushed out of decision making without the extra votes, fearful that Great Britain, with the support of her dominions, and the United States with the support of the Latin American republics would be able to ignore the Soviet Union. The evening after the Soviet demand was made Stettinius recounts in his diary that, “The president said, ‘my God,’ and went on to instruct me to explain to Gromyko privately and personally and immediately that we could never accept this proposal. He said to tell the ambassador this might ruin the chance of getting an international organization approved by the United States Senate and accepted publicly in this country.”²⁵

The press had been kept out of the conference out of a belief that it would hinder the diplomats' work to be under public scrutiny. The concern that knowledge of the Soviet request could kill the United Nations with the American public was so strong that the State Department referred to it as the “x-matter” in all documents to be doubly sure it did not leak. Secretary Hull went and spoke with Gromyko in an effort to convince him that the larger nations would not need extra votes, given they would have the military and economic power to be heard.²⁶ Hull's effort to convince the Soviets to drop the issue failed, leaving the issue in limbo for the remainder of the conference. All parties involved agreed to focus on other issues until everything

²⁴ Hull, 1679-1680.

²⁵ Stettinius, Edward R. Stettinius, *The Diaries of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., 1943-1946*, ed Thomas M Campbell and George C Herring, (New York, NY: New Viewpoints, 1975), 113.

²⁶ Hull, 1680.

else was addressed, but this only meant the second impasse of the conference could rise to the fore instead.

The second stumbling block for the Dumbarton Oaks Conference was the veto. Roosevelt felt that the nations with a veto on the Security Council should be forbidden from using it on a matter that concerned their interests. Great Britain felt similarly but less strongly, however the Soviet Union was again worried that without a veto in any possible situation other powers could outvote the country for their own gain. The conference again could not move forward, Roosevelt's disagreement on the veto was just as fundamental as 16 extra Soviet votes. After another unproductive meeting Stettinius attempted to force a resolution with Cadogan and Gromyko. Cadogan was despondent, stating that Great Britain, "would not attend a general conference [on the United Nations] until the four powers participating at Dumbarton Oaks were in full agreement on all basic issues."²⁷ This stance put the whole idea of the UN on hold until something changed in the Soviet position. Stettinius then went to challenge Gromyko reiterating that, as with extra Soviet votes, the Soviet's view of the veto could kill American public support of an international organization, even mentioning that the smaller nations would see it as a threat to their independence.²⁸ Gromyko still refused to budge, retorting, "You can't have an international organization without us. We can't have one without you."²⁹ Thus, putting an end to the hope of a swift resolution to the veto issue. With the British and Americans on one end and the Soviets on the other, neither was willing to change their position and the problems were postponed to Yalta instead. It would be for Roosevelt personally to save the United Nations from what he saw as two deadly demands by the Soviet Union.

²⁷ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 138.

²⁸ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 138.

²⁹ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 139.

Although Dumbarton Oaks did not address every issue brought forward, 1944 was still a resounding success for the future of the United Nations. The conference established the fundamental framework for the organization, a scope including economic and social branches, alongside the voting structure for the General Assembly, and the limits of the Security Council on all issues except the veto. The agreement, while revised at Yalta on the issues of Soviet votes and the veto, became the basis for the San Francisco Conference in April of 1945. Hull's efforts to remove the issue of a future international organization from the 1944 election were similarly successful. While Republican presidential nominee Thomas Dewey did object to the lack of representation for smaller nations at Dumbarton Oaks, Hull consulted with John Foster Dulles, Dewey's foreign policy advisor during the campaign, to lay out the role for smaller nations within the greater framework. Dewey then left the issue alone for the remainder of the election.³⁰ In the 1944 election Roosevelt won an electoral college landslide, with Democrats gaining over 30 seats in the House and internationalist senators in both parties defeating isolationists. It was a clear mandate for American participation in the future world organization, popular will was turning and Roosevelt had the support he needed to ensure his vision, if he could save it from the Soviet demands at Yalta.³¹

In February 1945, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt met for what would be the last time. The conference would resolve the issues surrounding the future United Nations and World War II as best it could. Heading into the conference Roosevelt had two main objectives: "the speedy and unconditional surrender of the Axis powers . . . [and] the establishment of a world organization for peace and security."³² While difficulties followed Yalta, without the conference

³⁰ Hull, 1688-1691.

³¹ Hoopes and Brinkley 164.

³² Sherwood, 321.

the United Nations would have never made it to San Francisco. Both issues of the extra Soviet votes and use of the veto were resolved with relative ease after Roosevelt and Stalin spoke face to face. Roosevelt and Stalin compromised at Yalta. Stalin had no illusions that the many Soviet states he claimed to be independent were not, it was simply a method of canceling out American and British influence in the rest of the globe.³³ Roosevelt agreed to add two Soviet republics, instead of all 16, mitigating the damage to the institution's image in America while still giving Stalin something. With the atomic bomb not fully developed, the United States was still counting on Soviet support against Japan. Even though Roosevelt was committed to a post-war organization, making it through the war was the first priority.³⁴ Similarly, the end result of the Security Council veto, was also a compromise. While the powers could not veto a discussion or resolution being put forth, they could veto the final action of the Security Council, which provided the check Stalin desperately wanted.

While both of the road blocks from Dumbarton Oaks had been addressed, the agreement at Yalta was not perfect. Roosevelt's small compromises for the sake of the United Nations ended with a larger one, leaving Poland to fall under Soviet control. Although the Russians committed to allow free elections there, Roosevelt had no leverage on the issue, thus he could not push Stalin, and Stalin could stand his ground on it. Roosevelt acknowledged the agreement was not perfect, simply the best he could do.³⁵ By the Yalta Conference, Stettinius had been made Secretary of State due to Hull's failing health. He attended the conference with Roosevelt and continued his role as the chief negotiator on the United Nations, helping make Roosevelt's vision, which he shared, into reality. In 1949, the year of his death, Stettinius published a book

³³ H. W. Brands, *Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt*. (New York, NY: Doubleday Publishing Group, 2008), 799-800.

³⁴ Brands, 803.

³⁵ Hoopes and Brinkley, 178.

on Roosevelt's time at Yalta in which he commented, "From my close association with Franklin D. Roosevelt, I know that he was primarily motivated by the great ideal of friendly co-operation among nations he knew that winning of Russian confidence in a world organization would be difficult, and would take time and patience, peace was too vital a necessity not to make a supreme effort toward achieving this goal."³⁶

As Roosevelt returned to the United States he went to his home in Warm Springs, Georgia to rest and prepare for the San Francisco Conference to found the United Nations. He died there on April 12th, 1945, leaving the culmination of his vision in San Francisco in the hands of Harry Truman. While he promised to continue Roosevelt's vision, Truman's treatment of the UN and significant shift in American foreign policy stifled the organization before it had a chance to become what Franklin Delano Roosevelt had set out over the previous five years, and had believed in for decades before.

³⁶ While obviously biased towards Roosevelt, Stettinius' had witnessed the breakdown of relations between the US and USSR that followed Roosevelt's death. He was clearly aware of the new difficulties present between the countries, yet still believed that Roosevelt's vision was the best path forward at the time of Yalta given the new peace's importance. Stettinius, Edward R. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1949), 322.

Section II. Truman Takes Over

Truman's nomination to the vice presidency in 1944 was a surprise, both to himself and to many within the Democratic party. Henry Wallace, Roosevelt's second vice president, was out of favor with the more conservative wing of the Democratic Party. Wallace was to the left of much of the party and strongly supported by labor unions. That, alongside his support for desegregation, and the general fear that Roosevelt could die during his fourth term caused Southern Democrats to push for someone else on the party ticket. Roosevelt acquiesced and stated he would accept either Harry Truman or William Douglas, a justice on the Supreme Court. The convention itself was a mess. James Byrnes, then Director of the Office of War Mobilization, was upset that he had been passed over in favor of Truman and sought to be nominated as well. Similarly, Henry Wallace attempted to fight for the nomination and put himself forward as a candidate. Further complicating the affair was a letter sent by Roosevelt to Henry Wallace stating that if the president was a delegate at the convention he would support Wallace, a statement that only increased confusion about Roosevelt's wishes.³⁷ Although Truman was nominated in the end, the chaos surrounding the process was indicative of the political nature of his selection. Truman, from his first step into the Roosevelt administration was not an ideological choice, but a political one, and his worldview never fully aligned with Roosevelt's.

As vice president, Truman's role within the Roosevelt administration was in support of a one-man presidency. Roosevelt consistently made decisions without consulting advisors in the State Department or other war-time departments. Instead he sent aides, such as Harry Hopkins, to meet with leaders and enact policies, through informal channels. Truman's role was largely overseeing the Senate, as is the official job of the vice president, and little else. While he did

³⁷ Truman, Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955), 190-194.

attend Cabinet meetings, seldom was anything decided there as Roosevelt preferred individual conferences with advisors.³⁸ In part because of the Yalta Conference, and compounded by Roosevelt's failing health, Truman and Roosevelt did not spend great amounts of time together. Consequently he was unaware of much of the federal government's efforts concerning the war and foreign policy. Truman was thus in the *extremely* difficult position of a man lacking information upon his ascension to the presidency. Having been vice president for under three months it fell to Truman to continue an administration he knew little about. Truman thus began a balancing act between claiming the legacy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt on one side, and his own visions for American domestic and foreign policy on the other.

Truman and Roosevelt's presidential styles were bound to be different. In his memoirs Truman comments that Roosevelt was a president focused on ideas and a vision of the world, but lacking in administering these plans.³⁹ Conversely, Truman's experience was based around the logistics of passing legislation in the Senate, from both his time as vice president and a senator. Despite these general differences in style, Truman, on the night he was sworn in stated that it was his intention, "to continue both the foreign and domestic policies of the Roosevelt administration."⁴⁰ However, he immediately followed this statement by saying, "I made it clear, however, that I would be President in my own right . . ." in abrupt contrast to his previous statement.⁴¹ However, Congress was not sure what type of 'President in his own right' Truman would be. Some members were concerned that Truman would be more internationalist than Roosevelt, others were concerned that he would become an isolationist. While Truman was on the internationalist side, as he notes in his memoir after observing congress's concerns about his

³⁸ Truman, *Memoirs*, 55.

³⁹ Truman, *Memoirs*, 12-13.

⁴⁰ Truman, *Memoirs*, 9.

⁴¹ Truman, *Memoirs*, 9.

positions, he was also out of his depth on foreign policy and lacked a record on such issues, making congress's confusion understandable.⁴² Truman's wartime experience in the Senate was focused on the domestic side of the war effort. He led the Truman Committee, established to investigate corruption in defense contracts. While the effort greatly improved his image, it was not the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or involved in diplomatic decision making.⁴³

Truman needed to be brought up to speed concerning the war effort and foreign policy in his first days in office. This largely fell to Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, from a foreign policy perspective, and Secretary of War Henry Stimson, regarding the atomic bomb and broader war plans. Stettinius provided Truman with a document outlining the State Departments views on United States relations with other states, focused on those involved in the United Nations at the San Francisco Conference, but including all other topics considered important to foreign policy.⁴⁴ Stimson met with Truman in the following days and informed him about the Manhattan Project and the general status of the war.⁴⁵ While Truman was still learning the existing commitments of the United States' foreign policy, and having just promised to continue Roosevelt's policies, he began to make changes to the government.

When later writing his memoirs Truman mused that even on his first day in office he knew he was going to make changes.⁴⁶ The first of many was Truman's desire to replace Secretary Stettinius with James Byrnes. Although policy disagreements pushed Stettinius and

⁴² Truman, *Memoirs*, 21.

⁴³ Senate Historical Office, "The Truman Committee," Historical Highlights, 1941-1963, Accessed February 17th, 2020, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/The_Truman_Committee.htm .

⁴⁴ Truman, *Memoirs*, 14-17.

⁴⁵ Interestingly, Truman almost found out about the Manhattan Project in his time leading the Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program (aka the Truman Committee), having sent investigators to some of the government facilities in Tennessee and Washington. Secretary Stimson came to his office and told Senator Truman that they were of great importance and to call-off the investigators which he did keeping the project under wraps. Truman, *Memoirs*, 10-11.

⁴⁶ Truman, *Memoirs*, 12-13.

Truman apart in later years, it was not the goal of Truman's initial plan. Stettinius had never held elected office during his career, as a lifelong elected official this bothered Truman, particularly as without a vice president Stettinius was next in line for the presidency. He was also driven by a desire to make up with Byrnes, a career elected public official, following the rift at the 1944 Democratic Convention.⁴⁷ Truman made this decision on his first day in office, but did not inform Stettinius until the end of the San Francisco Conference months later. On the policy front, Truman was equally swift in making changes. While he made public pledges to uphold Roosevelt's agreement with the Soviet Union, specialists in Soviet affairs began arguing for a change in relations towards the country. They were less optimistic about Stalin's cooperation moving forward, and concerned about relying on the Soviet Union in a war with Japan imperiling the United States' position in Asia.⁴⁸ As Gar Alperovitz argues in his book *Atomic Diplomacy* Truman was quickly making changes, "By the third week of April 1945 he [Truman] and most of his senior advisors had agreed that Roosevelt's policy of 'cooperation' [toward the Soviet Union] had to be reconsidered and that it would now be a wise strategy to face the Russians with a firm negotiating position and strong language."⁴⁹

These policy changes came within weeks of Truman ascending to a job he was not prepared to hold, reversing his intention to continue Roosevelt's policies. While campaigning in support of President Roosevelt in the 1944 general election with regards to the coming challenges of ending the Second World War Truman stated that,

Even in peacetime it is well recognized that it takes a new President at least a year to learn the fundamentals of his job. / We cannot expect any man wholly inexperienced

⁴⁷ Truman, *Memoirs*, 22-23.

⁴⁸ Alperovitz, 141-142.

⁴⁹ Alperovitz, 68.

in national and international affairs to readily learn the view, the objectives and the inner thoughts of such divergent personalities as those dominant leaders who have guided the destinies of our courageous allies. There will be no time to learn, and mistakes once made cannot be unmade.⁵⁰

Truman acknowledges the irony of his comments about Governor Dewey in his memoirs applying to himself; nevertheless, whether referring to Governor Dewey or Vice President Truman the sentiment was still true. President Truman was inexperienced in international affairs, having been on the job only three weeks, and yet was changing US foreign policy, in opposition to his prior commitment to enact Roosevelt's vision. While inevitably a different president results in different policies, Truman was not walking the path Roosevelt had cleared; instead he was claiming Roosevelt's legacy in order to enact his own vision.

⁵⁰ Truman, *Memoirs*, 194.

Section III. San Francisco

The San Francisco Conference was the successor to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference just under a year before. However, unlike Dumbarton Oaks, which only included the “major powers” (The United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China), the San Francisco Conference included all existing members of the United Nations that joined in defeating Nazi Germany. The hope was to finalize the charter begun by the four major powers at Dumbarton Oaks and send it for ratification among the member states to officially create the United Nations. President Truman addressed the opening of the conference via wire from the White House, proclaiming his faith in the delegation appointed by Roosevelt to represent the United States and that, “You members of this Conference are to be the architects of the better world. In your hands rests our future. By your labors . . . we shall know if suffering humanity is to achieve a just and lasting peace.”⁵¹

Secretary Stettinius arrived at his position after filling multiple and disparate roles within the Roosevelt administration. Beginning life as a businessman, he was first on the War Production Board (1940-1941) then in the Office of Production Management (1941-1942), then became the administrator in charge of the Lend-Lease Program (1942-1943) and later an Under-Secretary of State (1943-1944). At the State Department his initial main role was to reorganize the department into a more efficient institution, and improve its image amongst the United States public by doing interviews and public service films about its function. Stettinius was then named head of the United States delegation at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference and later Yalta. After Secretary of State Cordell Hull’s worsening health forced him to resign, Stettinius was swiftly

⁵¹ Harry S. Truman, “Address to United Nations Conference in San Francisco April 25, 1945” in *The Public Papers of Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, April 12, 1945 - January 20, 1953*, Vol. 1, ed. Warren R. Reid, Mildred B. Berry, and Dorothy M. Jacobson (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O 1961), 20.

selected to replace him in late November of 1944.⁵² At first glance Stettinius is an odd choice, as a non-politician and public servant for less than five years, to replace Hull, the secretary for over a decade and a politician for decades more. However, for Roosevelt, Stettinius appeared a desirable choice *because of* his lack of political connections. As Walter Johnson argues in Norman Graebner's collection on Secretaries of State, "Since Roosevelt was advocating American entrance into a world organization as a non-partisan issue, Republican opposition to a Democrat could have precipitated a fight like that of 1919-1920 over the League of Nations."⁵³ Roosevelt's support of Stettinius extended beyond political calculus and Stettinius was personally liked by the president. Upon learning of Roosevelt's death Stettinius later recalled, "that I had lost one of the best and closest friends I had ever had in the world."⁵⁴ Roosevelt frequently made his own foreign policy, acting without the State Department, and while he continued to do so in many areas the United Nations was an exception with Roosevelt accepting the Department's recommendations in their entirety.⁵⁵ Stettinius and Roosevelt enjoyed a very close working relationship, particularly concerning the United Nations, both sharing an expansive vision of what the organization could do moving forward. But, with his mentor throughout all his public service gone, Stettinius was left alone to carry their original vision for the United Nations.

Following his role at Dumbarton Oaks, and as the now Secretary of State, Stettinius was the clear choice to lead the United States' delegation at the San Francisco Conference. In the

⁵² Michael J. Devine and Nathan Giles, "Stettinius, Edward Reilly, Jr. (1900-1949), business executive, U.S. secretary of state, and U.S. delegate to the United Nations," *American National Biography*, 1 Feb. 2000; Accessed 16 Feb. 2020. <https://www-anb-org.lic.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.001.0001/anb-9780198606697-e-0700286>.

⁵³ Norman A. Graebner, *An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century*, McGraw-Hill Series in American History New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 215.

⁵⁴ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 313.

⁵⁵ Graebner, 216.

same vein he represented continuity between President Roosevelt and President Truman, ensuring stability in the near term, even if Truman wanted to make changes going forward. Removing the Secretary of State most experienced with the United Nations two weeks before the final conference would have sent the entire project into disarray and significantly weakened an already difficult United States' position in negotiating with a semi-colonialist Great Britain and communist Soviet Union.

Within five days of Roosevelt's death rumors began to circulate that Stettinius was to be replaced, not only in the long run but possibly even before the San Francisco Conference. On April 16th, 1945, Senator Tom Connally, a member of the United States delegation to the San Francisco Conference, called and told him that if James Byrnes came to the conference their actions would be discredited. Stettinius responded he would immediately speak with Truman about the topic.⁵⁶ Stettinius and Byrnes did not have a particular animosity toward one another, but Roosevelt had passed over Byrnes for Stettinius when Cordell Hull resigned, desiring someone, "who could work harmoniously with him . . . [thus] he had discarded James F. Byrnes as a possibility."⁵⁷ As Truman would discover later in his presidency, Byrnes would act without direction, implementing policy without full consultation with the president. Although Truman reassured Stettinius he was not sending Byrnes to San Francisco, the rumors surrounding Stettinius' replacement continued throughout the entire conference, and while he still dedicated himself to the task of negotiating the United Nations Charter he questioned his standing within the new administration throughout the process.

Throughout the conference Secretary Stettinius sent frequent reports to President Truman outlining the negotiations and meetings that had taken place that day. The San Francisco

⁵⁶ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 322.

⁵⁷ Graebner, 215.

Conference resulted in increased tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union in particular. The debate surrounding the veto, which had been settled between Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta returned. The Soviet Union once again argued that the veto should be allowed on all issues before the Security Council, including any discussion or debate. Eventually, Truman sent Harry Hopkins to meet personally with Joseph Stalin. Hopkins and Stalin knew each other well from Hopkins' close relationship with Roosevelt, and as administrator of the Lend-Lease program on which the Soviet Union relied. The veto was thus resolved with Stalin ordering Gromyko to back down, but not without weeks of negotiation and frustration.

The San Francisco Conference finally concluded on June 26th, 1945 with the signing of the United Nations Charter by all 50 participating nations. Five days prior, Stettinius learned from President Truman's aide George Allen that the president did intend to replace him with James Byrnes and offer Stettinius the role of US Ambassador to the UN instead. Stettinius responded that he was open to taking the position but was growing weary of public life.⁵⁸ The night before the signing of the UN Charter Stettinius and Truman talked privately. Truman informed Stettinius that he intended to replace him with James Byrnes and offered him the role of United States representative to the United Nations. Stettinius was wary of accepting the role. His relationship with Byrnes had grown tense and he was concerned the change would be seen as a demotion; similarly he was unwilling to commit to remain until the end of Truman's term, instead stating he would only stay until the organization was on its feet. Truman accepted Stettinius' terms and told him that he truly believed it could be presented in such a way that it would not be a public "kick in the pants" for Stettinius.⁵⁹ Regardless of the internal administration politics Stettinius was the most logical choice for the position and he expected to

⁵⁸ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 399-401.

⁵⁹ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 403-404.

remain in the inner circle of foreign policy within the Truman administration. In Truman's words, "There are only two people in the country for this job — you and Mr. Hull, and he can't do it. You know all the international personalities and circumstances from Dumbarton Oaks on as no other American."⁶⁰

By the end of July the Senate had ratified the UN Charter. With ratifications in 29 nations the United Nations came into being on October 24th, 1945, finally concluding the years of negotiations. However, while tensions between the member states of the United Nations had been resolved over the preceding few months, those between now-former Secretary of State Stettinius and President Truman were experiencing a revival.

As 1946 began Stettinius grew more and more disillusioned with President Truman and Secretary Byrnes. In February 1946 one of the first crises to be handled by the United Nations broke out, when Soviet troops refused to leave Iran as those of the United States and Great Britain had done in order to return control of the country to the Iranians. Early in the crisis Stettinius was on vacation for two weeks, and during that time Truman made two appointments to the American UN staff without consulting Stettinius, something he had promised to do weeks earlier.⁶¹ In addition the new appointments would report to Byrnes, not Stettinius, even though they were under the US delegation to the UN, not outside positions. Upon his return in mid-March Stettinius went to Byrnes and learned this information. At the same meeting Stettinius also learned that Byrnes, rather than himself, would address the UN concerning the United States position on the crisis, further frustrating Stettinius.⁶² On May 30th, as the crisis was winding down, with Soviet troops departing Iran, Stettinius submitted his letter of resignation to Truman.

⁶⁰ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 403-404.

⁶¹ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 454.

⁶² Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 456-458.

Stettinius felt that Truman was unwilling to put the United Nations at the center of his foreign policy (the approach that Stettinius favored), and he was convinced that if the US did not provide the organization with leadership its chances of success were low.⁶³ Having expressed this view to Truman, and still experiencing a lack of the support Truman had promised when Stettinius first took the position, combined with the slights caused by a larger role for Byrnes and the appointments made without his consultation, Stettinius sent the letter.⁶⁴

In a press conference the next day Truman stated he had not expected Stettinius' resignation and that both he and Secretary Byrnes wished for him to stay. Both statements were true, even after the tensions between the three men.⁶⁵ On June 4th Stettinius met in person with Byrnes and told him that he, "felt it was best for him [Byrnes] and best for the United Nations and best for me [Stettinius] that he make a change, that I did not feel that I was on the inner circle, so to speak, and being a part of the policy-making group, and that I had done what I had promised Truman to do"⁶⁶ Later that day Stettinius spoke to Truman with Byrnes and conveyed the same message. Truman was unhappy at the news and attempted to convince Stettinius to remain, but failed. Stettinius took this final opportunity to articulate his belief in the UN, that, "unless the driving leadership is continued by the United States . . . the United Nations is not going to be successful."⁶⁷ Stettinius was unable to convey the importance of American leadership at the United Nations, and Truman became more and more committed to going around the organization to achieve his goals.

⁶³ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 454.

⁶⁴ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 470.

⁶⁵ Harry S. Truman, "The President's New Conference of May 31, 1946" in *The Public Papers of Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, April 12, 1945 - January 20, 1953*, vol. 2, ed. Warren R. Reid and Mildred B. Berry (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O 1962), 280-281.

⁶⁶ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 472.

⁶⁷ Stettinius, *Diaries of Stettinius*, 474.

After Stettinius' departure, some of Roosevelt's advisors, such as James Byrnes and Dean Acheson remained in government, but by this time any who remained were squarely aligned with Truman's more confrontational foreign policy towards the Soviet Union and a lack of focus on the UN. The future of the world organization envisioned by Roosevelt was squarely in the hands of Truman. Stettinius had been ambassador to the United Nations for under a year, however his impact on the creation of the organization was vast. From his presence at Yalta, Dumbarton Oaks, and San Francisco, Stettinius shared Roosevelt's vision for a world organization, and gave life to the idea. After Roosevelt's death, Stettinius' loyalty to the ideal and the man, 'provided him with the drive and energy to carry through at San Francisco after his mentor had died and after he knew Soviet leaders were willing always to treat idealism such as his with cynicism and disdain.'⁶⁸ Stettinius' departure signified the end of the time of idealism surrounding the United Nations, by the end of 1946 the institution's fate would be sealed, it was a stage for the coming Cold War, not one for world peace.

⁶⁸ Richard L. Walker, "Edward R. Stettinius, Jr." in *American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, vol. 14, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York, NY: Cooper Square, 1963), 82.

Section IV. Truman's Foreign Policy

The United Nations was established. The organization would not falter before its Charter could be signed, but it could still be ignored. Truman's foreign policy and attitude to the organization over the nearly two terms of his presidency turned the United Nations into an afterthought in decision making. While Stalin and the Soviet Union certainly helped the organization falter, creating domestic and international pressures on the United States to respond which Truman could not ignore, Truman consistently turned the US, which had initially put forth the United Nations' ideal, away from the organization in major decisions. With the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, the formation of the North American Treaty Organization in 1949, and the beginning of the Korean War in 1950 Truman sidestepped the United Nations in each instance, using the UN as a stage and a stamp, instead of as an international organization created to solve global problems. Pulled together these three events set the tone for the United Nations moving forward.

After Roosevelt's death Truman proclaimed he was following Roosevelt's legacy, but instead his foreign policy took on a confrontational, and unilateral, role toward the Soviet Union and was, "less internationalist than nationalistic."⁶⁹ He would be an activist, not an internationalist, president, abandoning the balance Roosevelt had curated over his presidency. This shift to a more confrontational role began as soon as Truman was in office. Before the San Francisco Conference Truman berated Foreign Minister Molotov in the Oval Office about Poland and the Yalta agreements, so much so that then Army Chief of Staff George Marshall and other members of the cabinet were concerned Stalin would not join the war against Japan.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Athan Theoharis, "The Truman Presidency: Trial and Error," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 55, no. 1 (1971): 49-58, accessed March 24, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/4634671, 50.

⁷⁰ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 40-41.

While the atomic bomb later removed the need for significant Soviet support, it also helped push Truman into becoming more confrontational with the Soviet Union. Instead of following Roosevelt, Truman relied on, “military strength, not the development of mutual trust of a policy based on accommodation.”⁷¹ Secretary of State James Byrnes, under pressure from Truman and Republicans outside the administration to be more confrontational with the Soviet Union, gave a speech on February 28th, 1946 giving a public voice to the administration's stance.⁷² In it Byrnes praises the Soviet Union, stating, “Only an inexcusable tragedy of errors could cause serious conflict between us in the future.”⁷³ However in the next paragraph Byrnes promises the United States will defend the UN Charter if it comes under threat, implying the Soviet Union was the threat, further raising tensions

While the hardened anti-Soviet stance was spreading, Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace was still one of the few dissenters within the administration, and Wallace expressed his dissent within the administration. He sent Truman memos on foreign policy, used to a greater degree of latitude as Roosevelt's vice president. However in late September of 1946 he gave a speech on foreign policy at Madison Square Garden, arguing for a friendly relationship with the Soviet Union. Truman saw the speech as an affront to his policy, and in opposition to what Byrnes and others had been saying for months, ‘catching hell’ for it as he wrote in his diary from the press and within the administration. Within a week Truman asked Wallace to resign, stating “Well now he’s out and the crackpots are having conniption fits. I’m glad they are. It convinces

⁷¹ Theoharis, 55.

⁷² Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 189.

⁷³ Address by the Secretary of State James F. Byrnes to the Overseas Press Club in New York, NY February 28th, 1946, “. . . we have pinned our hopes to the banner of the United Nations,” in *The Department of State Bulletin* 14, no. 349 (1946): 353-400, accessed March 24, 2020, *HeinOnline*, 358.

me I'm right."⁷⁴ Those who did not support Truman's antagonistic and confrontational tone towards the Soviet Union were considered insane. Truman believed that only the 'crackpots' could disagree with his new policy and that they had reinforced his belief. The Democratic Party was to be one of 'cold warriors'. Wallace and the 'crackpots' were no longer in the party Truman envisioned, and seemingly neither was anyone associated with the Roosevelt administration. With Wallace gone, Secretary of Defense Forrestal was the only member of Roosevelt's cabinet still within the Truman administration, though he would depart before the next election. The Truman administration had been remade, and those who publicly dissented with the new confrontational policy were pushed out. By 1946 the Truman Doctrine was forming and confrontation and containment, was the official policy, whether or not it accorded with the United Nations ideal.

In February of 1946 Stalin released the Soviet Union's next five-year plan, calling for an expanded Soviet military. This was taken by those in the United States as a threat against them in Truman's confrontational paradigm. Later that month George Kennan, then stationed in the State Department in Moscow, sent the Truman administration the 'Long Telegram' outlining the Soviet Union's intention as he saw them. The telegram, "crystaliz[ed] the changing attitude of the administration" with Kennan regarding any hope for American collaboration with Stalin as a "pipe dream."⁷⁵ Kennan argued that Soviet participation in the UN was dependent on what they could get out of it, thus it necessitated a defense by the United States to protect the organization that represented "our way of thinking."⁷⁶ His solution to the problem was one of confrontation

⁷⁴ Harry S. Truman, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, ed. Robert H Ferrell (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 97.

⁷⁵ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 187-188.

⁷⁶ George Kennan, "Moscow Embassy Telegram #511, 'The Long Telegram' February 22, 1946," in *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, ed. Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1978), 56.

that Truman had already been supporting, however not confrontation within the UN framework as intended, but outside it. Kennan states that the Soviet Union only responds to force, not logic. “For this reason it can easily withdraw—and usually does— when strong resistance is encountered at any point. Thus, if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it he rarely has to do so. If situations are properly handled there need be no prestige-ending showdowns.”⁷⁷ Kennan put into words the policy already developing, force was the way to deal with the Soviet Union and so the United Nations no longer had a purpose. It was a stage to threaten on as Byrnes would do when Soviet troops were in Iran later that year, but never the means to the solution of a world crisis.

While internally Truman was moving towards a forceful confrontation with the Soviet Union the public side of the policy did not shine through until the Truman Doctrine. In August of 1946 the Soviet Union put forward a plan to jointly guard the Dardanelle Straits with Turkey. Truman and Dean Acheson, his closest foreign policy advisor with Byrnes or George Marshall often away from Washington, were surprised by the suggestion, seeing it as a possible route for communist expansion. They began considering aid to Greece and Turkey in order to box the Soviet Union out.⁷⁸ Great Britain meanwhile had been supporting Greece monetarily for some time, but by March of 1947 the economic problems of rebuilding a destroyed Britain meant they could no longer support them. The British turned to the US asking Truman to take over, and providing him with the impetus for the Truman Doctrine. The Truman administration had no money to direct to Greece and Turkey without congressional approval, leading to Truman’s speech to Congress which became the Truman Doctrine. It outlined what he saw as the threat

⁷⁷ Kennan, 61.

⁷⁸ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 251.

posed by the Soviet Union toward Greece and Turkey, and why it was the United States' job to support them and not the United Nations' to offer aid or address the issue.⁷⁹

The speech Truman gave was not solely his doing. Although Truman was very active in directing foreign policy, Dean Acheson played a large role. As Undersecretary of State during both Byrnes and Marshall's time as Secretary, Acheson frequently was Acting Secretary of State while they were away, standing in at countless White House meetings with Truman. In the case of the Truman Doctrine, while Truman himself edited the speech, the initial drafts came from Acheson and the State Department staff under him.⁸⁰ On March 12th Truman appeared before a special session of Congress in order to deliver the speech, arguing that if the United States does not respond they may, "endanger the peace of the world"⁸¹ Even in the speech Truman is aware of removing the United Nations from the issue, declaring that the UN is not in a position to help, without even consulting the organization beforehand. Instead it must be the United States that acts to help Greece and Turkey. Truman states the US will, "be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations" thus claiming the ideal and support of the United Nations' mission, but leaving the organization itself to the side.⁸² Truman uses the organization's name as a stamp, instead of channeling the issue through it.

By removing the UN from the crisis, he sets a precedent within his own administration that the United Nations is simply a figurehead for whatever the US wants to do. In closing the speech Truman shows that the policy put forth that day is not just for one situation, instead that, "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted

⁷⁹ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 277-279.

⁸⁰ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 281-282.

⁸¹ Harry S. Truman, "Special Message to Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine March 12, 1947." In *The Public Papers of Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, April 12, 1945 - January 20, 1953*, vol. 3, ed. Warren R. Reid and Mildred B. Berry (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O 1963), 180.

⁸² Truman, *Public Papers of the President*, 3:177, 179.

subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”⁸³ Truman places the United States as the primary response to aggression around the world, not the United Nations. This sentiment is not specific to Greece and Turkey in 1947, but all situations involving ‘free peoples’, the United States must confront those situations, without the organization intended to handle them.

In the days following Truman’s speech himself and Acheson moved to get the entire administration and Congress in line with the new official policy operating outside of the United Nations and on their own. Acheson went before Congress and argued that discussion with the Soviets was not an option, pushing for containment via supporting Greece and Turkey without using the word. As Robert Donovan says in his first book on the Truman administration, “the Truman Doctrine lent a rigidity to foreign policy that for a generation inhibited a turn from the Cold War.”⁸⁴ Truman was locked in on the Cold War, and was set out to ensure his administration and those to come were as well, leaving the collective United Nations for the United States’ own individual security interests instead.⁸⁵ Support of the speech within the administration was almost unanimous, with one important exception: Eleanor Roosevelt.

After Franklin D. Roosevelt's death, Eleanor Roosevelt disappeared from public life until coming back as the United States’ representative to the UN Commission on Human Rights in April of 1946. Now within the Truman administration and a member of its delegation to the United Nations, she was often one of the only advocates for the organization. Upon hearing the Truman Doctrine, Eleanor Roosevelt complained, first to Acheson and later Truman himself, that it was going around the UN. She was similarly concerned that the military nature of the United States’ support for Greece and Turkey was going to be an unpopular escalation of the situation.

⁸³ Truman, *Public Papers of the President*, 3:178-179.

⁸⁴ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 285.

⁸⁵ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 283.

Eleanor's criticism made few waves in the administration, and unlike Henry Wallace she was unwilling to publicly criticize the administration over the issue. For Truman this was a lucky break, while Wallace was popular with the labor movement and left side of the Democratic party, Eleanor Roosevelt's word, as former first-lady and now a representative to the organization Franklin D. Roosevelt envisioned (a vision that she shared), could have turned at least some members of the public against Truman's actions.⁸⁶

Although it was not public, Eleanor's internal criticism illustrated the degree to which Truman was breaking with the United Nations. Going forward, he was determined to confront the Soviet Union, and to do that with unilateral force, rather than diplomacy. That force, seen in the military support for Greece and Turkey promised to all 'free people' who needed it, became even more explicit two years later when the United States signed a military treaty, something the United States had not done since the American Revolution.

Just as the United States was preparing to take on the 'Soviet threat' so was Western Europe. In March of 1948 Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, and Great Britain signed the Brussels Pact, forming a defensive agreement between the five countries. By April of the same year the US internally began showing interest in approaching the pact about a broader Atlantic agreement to confront the Soviet Union.⁸⁷ While the US was the first to express interest in the treaty, it was also pushed by Europe. The fall of Czechoslovakia to communism in February 1948 and the Berlin Blockade in June of 1948 through May 1949, increased concern about the westward expansion of communism in Europe. The treaty took a significant political lift in the United States and France in particular. In the US Acheson worked to assuage congressional concerns that the United States would end up in war without congressional

⁸⁶ Jason Berger, *A New Deal for the World: Eleanor Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, Atlantic Studies, no. 23 (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1981), 60-61.

⁸⁷ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 365-366.

approval, eventually getting Republican Senator Vandenberg on board, ensuring bipartisan support for the treaty even with the inclusion of Article Five, the mutual defense portion of the treaty. France meanwhile was incensed over the inclusion of Italy in the treaty, distrustful of the country's role in the Second World War, however American pressure on the importance of a Mediterranean presence, and needing to ensure Italy did not fall to communism, eventually achieved French support.⁸⁸

Domestically the treaty lived in a complicated place. At the same time the Truman administration was pushing a military aid package for many of the soon to be NATO members. By almost immediately following the Marshall Plan, there was concern that the new military aid, on top of NATO, would siphon money meant for peaceful reconstruction to the military instead.⁸⁹ The NATO treaty was also seen as increasing tensions without benefit, since few thought the Soviet Union had immediate military desires for Western Europe, and the existence of Article 51 in the UN Charter, including the principles of self-defense and UN intervention, meant that the treaty was 'fixing' a working system.⁹⁰ NATO formalized the United States' military commitments in Western Europe. Having already sent billions of dollars to the region in the Marshall plan, and the Truman Doctrine's promise of protecting all 'free people', with American support the treaty was simply reinforcing the move to an independent American foreign policy. The Truman administration argued that NATO was just an extension of the self-defense already included in the United Nations, but in creating it went around the original institution.⁹¹ Although the treaty itself was supposedly in line with the UN according to Truman, it signified the United States moving farther and farther from the organization to implement any

⁸⁸ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 46-49.

⁸⁹ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 49-52.

⁹⁰ Hamby, 357-358.

⁹¹ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 45.

policy. The protection of peace was further a military, rather than diplomatic affair. Truman set up the country to confront the Soviet Union, and any other crises that arose outside of the United Nations, thereby choosing a military alliance as the best system to ensure not peace, but the defeat of the Soviet Union.

The United States' involvement in Korea began following the Second World War when the country was made a UN trusteeship. When Korea was conquered by the Japanese in 1910, it existed as one nation. However, just as Germany was split between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies, Korea was split between a Soviet north and American south. Containment had enveloped American policy in Europe, so too did it in Asia. The United States' strong role in supporting the nations of Japan, the Philippines, and Korea lead to Truman's policy of confrontation being laid out specifically toward Asia. In a January 1950 speech by Dean Acheson, now Secretary of State, to the National Press Club in Washington D.C., Acheson outlined the American 'defensive perimeter' in Asia. It started in the Aleutians off the coast of Alaska before continuing down to Japan, the Ryukyu islands, and the Philippines. Noticeably absent from the perimeter was Korea. While few took notice at the time, the omission led to an uproar when war broke out on the Korean peninsula in June. Unlike in Europe or with the Truman Doctrine, Acheson's speech did not eliminate the UN from participation, stating, "Should such an [armed] attack occur . . . the initial reliance must be upon the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations"⁹² This left the door open for the UN to take a leading role in Asia or a possible crisis after closing it in Europe with the formation of NATO. But, the Truman Doctrine had already moved the administration away from the organization and Acheson's speech did nothing

⁹² Address by the Secretary of State Dean Acheson to the National Press Club in Washington D.C. January 12th, 1950, "Crisis in Asia—An Examination of U.S. Policy," in *The Department of State Bulletin* 22, no. 551 (1950): 109-148, accessed March 24, 2020, *HeinOnline*, 116-117.

material to stop the administration from sidelining the UN once war broke out, solidifying Truman's choices to remove the United Nations from global peace in favor of containing communism alone.

The Korean War began on June 25th. Truman, out of Washington at the time, flew back and immediately began meetings with Acheson and the cabinet on the developing crisis. The next day Truman committed both the air force and navy to support the South Korean army, moved the 7th Fleet between China and Taiwan, and provided aid to the Philippines and France in Vietnam. Within the span of 24 hours Truman was mobilizing the United States to support its 'defensive perimeter' in Asia. At the same time Truman sent General MacArthur to Korea in order to supervise American forces there and report back.⁹³ On June 30th he added the army to the slate of forces operating in Korea, fully committing the US to the situation.⁹⁴ In the meetings surrounding the United States' escalation Truman was positive about a role for the UN in Korea, but just as he had bypassed them with the Truman Doctrine in providing aid to Greece and Turkey, so did he in Korea.

While there was a UN resolution on June 25 ordering North Korean troops to withdraw it did not authorize intervention in the country. Nevertheless, American forces were sent into South Korea before the June 27th UN resolution asking for military action in Korea. As such the Security Council's decision was, "merely a retroactive approval of a *fait accompli*", something that has already happened with no option but to accept it.⁹⁵ In the meeting during which Truman decided to commit the military to Korea he went even further, telling Acheson if the United Nations did not go in, the US would alone, acting without any input from the organization at all.

⁹³ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 206-207, 194-199.

⁹⁴ Spanier, 30-31.

⁹⁵ Spanier, 35-36.

As Donovan comments on the situation in his book, acting with the United Nations was not out of the importance of the organization but for, “the advantage of sanctioning whatever military measures the United States might decide to take in Korea.”⁹⁶ By using the UN flag the United States could move without restraint. There was no need for consensus, the United States was now the embodiment of the United Nations’ will and thus did not need to consult it in decision making. Of the nations that joined the United States in Korea, ten out of the fourteen were NATO members and supplied the vast majority of troops on the peninsula.⁹⁷ The independent military organization that had been created was now being used to confront the Soviet Union, simply under the banner of the UN as cover. As the conflict progressed the military operations fell further under American control. American-led forces crossed the 38th parallel and headed into North Korea without UN approval, and in defiance of the organization's goal of returning to the old border. Yet, the United States received no reprimand.⁹⁸ The Truman administration's takeover of foreign policy was complete, and the United States was free to act alone without the organization it helped create explicitly for this purpose just five years earlier.

The United States not only removed the UN from military considerations in Korea, but also sought to remove it from peace negotiations. Following China’s entrance into the war after the United States went above the 38th parallel, other countries began trying to use the organization as it was intended: to negotiate peace. Led by India, the effort included offering Communist China a permanent seat on the Security Council, something the Nationalist government in exile still held. The United States refused, contending that the Security Council seat was a completely separate issue. After initially rebuffing this attempt India, along with Great

⁹⁶ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 200.

⁹⁷ Spanier, 37-39.

⁹⁸ Spanier, 88-89.

Britain, many European NATO allies, and American supported states in Asia and the Middle East tried again. China refused their terms but responded that it was the ceasefire while having any negotiation, which China believed would weaken their position, that was the issue. The member states who pushed for these terms found China's clarifications acceptable and were ready to begin negotiating before the United States once again intervened. The US was unwilling to accept any negotiation terms that included the Security Council seat or a ceasefire during negotiations.⁹⁹ Truman and his administration were willing to accept negotiations, just not on these terms. By including terms in each peace effort they now knew China would not accept, terms their own allies were not in favor of, Truman could continue confronting China without repercussions or the threat of peace on global, as opposed to American terms.¹⁰⁰

While the United States got what it wanted it came at a cost. By going against many of their NATO allies Truman's administration had to fight to hold the organization together moving forward, promising to increase their support for the organization in the process.¹⁰¹ The United States maintained a form of unity amongst nation members but, "at the cost of the substance of action."¹⁰² Nothing was to be accomplished. Negotiations would not begin, the war would not end. Although domestic and congressional anti-communism pushed Truman to remain in the war, he rarely consulted Congress and largely ignored them in Korea. The United States would continue on the path set out when Truman became president; one of confrontation alone. While the war in Korea did not end until after Truman was out of office, the conflict cemented his administration's commitment to military confrontation. NATO received a new arms deal and the promise of an additional four American divisions, bolstering Truman's separate system of

⁹⁹ Spanier, 179-185.

¹⁰⁰ Spanier, 193.

¹⁰¹ Spanier, 186.

¹⁰² Spanier, 197.

confrontation in Europe.¹⁰³ Truman's commitment was so strong that he and Acheson pushed for and received a re-armament deal for Western Germany, one which was vehemently opposed by the French. At the same time the United States' military budget tripled from 1950 to 1951 from 17 billion to 53 billion, indicating the massive monetary commitment Truman was able to secure for his position.¹⁰⁴ However the expansion of Truman's confrontational policies was not solely a result of the Korean War. While the conflict did help him pass expansive military proposals to expand the separate foreign policy system, the administration had already internally agreed upon their necessity.

National Security Council paper number 68 set the stage for what was to come, not only for Truman, but for the Cold War. Written in April of 1950 before the Korean War began the document declares that the United States must be prepared for the Cold war, and to do so on its own concluding,

. . . we must, by means of a rapid and sustained build-up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world, and by means of an affirmative program intend to wrest the initiative from the Soviet Union, confront it with convincing evidence of the determination and ability of the free world to frustrate Kremlin design of a world domination by its will . . . / The whole success of the proposed program hangs ultimately on recognition by this Government, the American people, and all free peoples, that the cold war is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Spanier, 202.

¹⁰⁴ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 244-247.

¹⁰⁵ "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security April 14, 1950," in *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, ed. Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1978), 442.

The 'free peoples' having been those who were established in the Truman Doctrine as the United States' to protect, were in need. The Truman administration believed that only by overwhelming mobilization and acceptance of the Cold War, and a need to confront it, would world domination be stopped. There was no other option, it was up to the United States to lead, without the United Nations, using the framework it had created in NATO and the Truman Doctrine, practiced in Korea, and expanded once again afterwards, to defeat communism. It was a mobilization of the United States, and the people the country was now meant to protect, not a mobilization of the United Nations, which would solve the coming crisis. The purpose of the UN in the coming crisis was to confer, "its blessing on their undertaking . . . allowing the United States and her allies to justify their policy in terms of the organization's global symbols."¹⁰⁶ The United Nations was nothing but a stage for the United States, and the new framework Truman had created around it to confront global problems without consideration for the UN organization created to do so.

James Byrnes, in his speech to the Overseas Press Corps in 1946 stated, "The United Nations got off to a good start. However that does not mean it is an assured success. It simply means that the Charter will work if the peoples of the United Nations are determined to make it work."¹⁰⁷ The United States was not determined to make it work. Truman was determined to create his own structure, one that allowed for American leadership without questions, and confrontation at its center. Via Roosevelt's efforts to make his vision of world peace in the United Nations the organization got off to a good start. But Truman slowly and systematically pushed the organization to the side. Beginning with the Truman Doctrine in 1947 concluding

¹⁰⁶ Spanier, 40.

¹⁰⁷ Byrnes, 356.

with the Korean War three years later, Truman's decisions eliminated any hope for the organization's good start to become an assured success, or a part of American foreign policy.

Section V. The Reaction

Congressional support and public opinion usually operate in tandem. It is difficult to sustain a foreign policy for a long period of time without both on one's side. Over the course of his presidency, Roosevelt slowly but steadily steered the American public, and politicians they elected, towards his balance of multilateral internationalism and support for his vision of the United Nations. While it required constantly cajoling senators such as Arthur Vandenberg, de-facto leader of the Republican Party on foreign policy, Roosevelt was successful. Truman needed that same political and public support for his goals, and received it, while consistently making foreign policy decisions that would eventually exclude the UN. Although Truman received more criticism in Congress and the press than Roosevelt, both presidents were able to garner and maintain popular support for their respective foreign policies.

Roosevelt's path in many ways was easier than Truman's. While he initially struggled to convince Congress and the public of the need for re-armament, the rising threat of Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany helped push Americans toward an international outlook, accepting an activist international policy but not yet a multilateral one. As Schuyler Foster notes in his book on the replacement of the United States' isolationist foreign policy with an activist one, "Pearl Harbor evidently brought a national realization that, no matter how hard America tried to keep out of a major war, this aim could not succeed, and that we might better 'take an active part in world affairs' in the hope of thereby minimizing our involvement in war."¹⁰⁸ As a participant in the Second World War, the United States naturally was invested in its outcome, and interested in the prevention of war going forward. However, the US could not just return to the League of Nations it had never joined. Having failed to stop the current conflict, and with Roosevelt presiding over

¹⁰⁸ H. Schuyler Foster, *Activism Replaces Isolationism: U.S. Public Attitudes, 1940-1975*, (Washington, D.C.: Foxhall Press, 1983), 19.

a complete reversal from isolationism to internationalism, “many Americans would find it easier to support a new world organization than the ill-fated League.”¹⁰⁹ A fresh start with the United Nations also meant a fresh start for Roosevelt in convincing Congress and the public the organization was necessary.

Roosevelt’s vision took a back seat to winning the war until the 1944 election cycle. In the lead up to the presidential election, Cordell Hull began his own campaign. Hull spoke with the Senators of the Foreign Relations Committee in both parties, arguing the United Nations was too important to be left to chance. Eventually, Hull got both the Democratic and Republican party platforms to include the goal of an international organization, with American membership.¹¹⁰ While some of Hull’s success can be attributed to him personally, by 1944 public support, and thus congressional support along with it, was at around 70% for an international organization with the United States as a member.¹¹¹ The move by both parties to support the United Nations in 1944 foreshadowed the election itself. Roosevelt was re-elected for a fourth term with internationalists in both parties defeating isolationists. The election, “was a clear-cut mandate for American participation in the United Nations.”¹¹² The UN became a foregone conclusion, both in the minds of the American public and Congress.

Although the parties and public mostly had united around the idea of an international organization, its specifics were still unknown to both. Roosevelt had outlined his vision for a post-war world in the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms speech, but the details of the plan were still kept internal to the administration. Republican senators, even during the ‘truce’ leading up to the 1944 election began pressing Roosevelt for details. Hull, at the same time as convincing

¹⁰⁹ Vandebosch, 110.

¹¹⁰ Hull, 1670.

¹¹¹ William A. Scott and Stephen B Withey, *The United States and the United Nations: The Public View, 1945-1955* (New York, NY: Manhattan Publishing Co., 1958), accessed April 4, 2020, *HeinOnline*, 13.

¹¹² Hoopes and Brinkley, 164.

both the Democratic and Republican parties to commit to an international organization, also began convincing Republican senators of the organization Roosevelt envisioned. Vandenberg, as the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was seen as the leader on Republican foreign policy following Dewey's defeat in 1944. Over the summer Hull worked with him, updating Vandenberg prior to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the administration's goals, and even giving him briefings during the conference. While initially wary of the United Nations superseding the Senate on foreign policy and possibly dragging the United States into war without congressional approval, Vandenberg, and all but two Republican senators, came to support the organization wholeheartedly by the time of a vote on the Charter.¹¹³ Hull's substantial efforts at inclusiveness led directly to the overwhelming bipartisan support. Vandenberg went so far as to publicly praise Hull for the way he handled the Senate during the time.¹¹⁴ Roosevelt needed Vandenberg's support so much that he became a member of the American delegation to the San Francisco Conference.

After the 1944 election, Roosevelt's efforts to convince the public and Congress to support his vision slowed. At Yalta his focus was getting Great Britain and the Soviet Union to support the UN. With his worsening health Roosevelt faded out of public life, retreating to Warm Springs in order to rest and prepare for San Francisco. His death, on April 12th, 1945, left behind a public and congressional consensus in support of the United Nations. However, it fell to Truman to sustain that consensus and see the vision through. Instead, Truman barely saw the consensus through San Francisco. He took the lesson regarding the importance of Vandenberg in leading Senate Republicans, and the importance of the idea of the UN as Roosevelt's legacy, and

¹¹³ Hull, 1695-1697.

¹¹⁴ Hoopes and Brinkley, 165.

used them to push Congress and the public towards a confrontational and unilateral foreign policy.

By the time of the San Francisco Conference, public support for the United Nations was just as high as before: still over 70%.¹¹⁵ However, while the public's support for the UN remained after Roosevelt's death, Congress' was harder to come by. Truman was personally popular with the Congress; having spent years in the body prior to his ascension to the vice presidency, most members knew him personally.¹¹⁶ However, while Truman had personal connections he did not immediately command the same presence and leadership of Roosevelt. Over the course of his presidency Truman clashed with the Republicans, particularly in the Senate. Days before Roosevelt's death, Vandenberg and Senator Robert Taft, the Republican leader on domestic policy (similar to Vandenberg on foreign policy), called for the end of the Lend-Lease Act following the Second World War. Both supported the UN, but wanted Congress to control the money headed for the United Nations, instead of the executive as under Lend-Lease.¹¹⁷ The conflict went nowhere, with Roosevelt's death stalling the process, but it demonstrated to Truman that even with the revered former president almost every point with Congress could become a fight. The next one would be coming soon, but now with Truman in the presidency.

The San Francisco Conference became the first real test of Truman's ability to fight with Congress. While Vandenberg and other Republican representatives were members of the

¹¹⁵ Scott and Withey, 15.

¹¹⁶ James B. Reston, "Orders 'No Change In Foreign Policy: President Promises There Will 'Be No Break Of Continuity' –Stettinius Issues Views," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, April 14, 1945. <http://ric.idm.oclc.org/login?url=search.proquest.com/?url=https://search-proquest-com.ric.idm.oclc.org/docview/107237031?accountid=13507>.

¹¹⁷ William S. White, "Republicans Ask Preview Of Help We Plan For World," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, April 10, 1945. <http://ric.idm.oclc.org/login?url=search.proquest.com/?url=https://search-proquest-com.ric.idm.oclc.org/docview/107226444?accountid=13507>.

delegation, it did not stop them from actively criticizing the administration. When the conference came to the veto crisis (described in Section III. San Francisco), Vandenberg went to Stettinius and threatened to end all Republican support for the United Nations if the Soviet Union did not back down on the issue of vetoing Security Council decisions involving themselves.¹¹⁸ Stettinius proceeded to tell Vandenberg about Hopkins' secret mission in Moscow to convince Stalin to support the United States, and tensions were relieved.¹¹⁹ But at a key moment the bipartisan consensus Hull and Roosevelt had created just a year before was almost lost. While Vandenberg's threat to pull Republican support was not public at the time, even if it had been, the public may not have taken notice. Americans broadly supported the UN, but when polled on what the San Francisco Conference was doing in April of 1945 only around 30% knew it was for the international organization.¹²⁰ The American public understood the simplest form of the idea for the UN, but the specifics were left to Congress and the administration. Truman, while he acted to sideline the United Nations, merely had to pay lip service to the institution in order to maintain public support.

Once the San Francisco Conference ended, passing the UN Charter in the United States was easy. With the organization part of both parties' platforms it was expected to be ratified without incident. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on the treaty and although many witnesses came to express their distaste for the treaty, with some calling it unconstitutional and others an alliance with communism, the committee and those in the gallery laughed at much of their testimony. In support of the treaty, both Anna Strauss, leader of the

¹¹⁸ For Stettinius it was not his first run in with Vandenberg. Stettinius frequently complained about dealing with the Congressional Representatives in the American delegation to San Francisco. Overtime, Stettinius reigned them in, but initially he was unable to get them to agree to a press release without each one of them wanting to be the one to give it. Graebner, 219-220.

¹¹⁹ Hoopes and Brinkley, 201.

¹²⁰ Scott and Withey, 30-31.

League of Women Voters, and W.E.B. Dubois for the NAACP, came and voiced their support.¹²¹ Both endorsements indicate the broad public support that accompanied the treaty. Just as a large portion of the American public supported the future United Nations, so did broad political organizations such as the League of Women Voters and NAACP. While neither represent monolithic or unified groups by any means, their public statements show that a broad cross-section of the public was in favor of the organization. Within two weeks of the hearings the Senate was voting on the treaty. It was ratified, 89-2, on July 28th, 1945.¹²² The consensus that Roosevelt had created, in both Congress and the American public, sustained itself long enough to see his vision brought into existence.

However, soon after its ratification, Truman and his administration began to shift away from the United Nations, favoring confrontation and unilateral action outside of the more multilateral organization instead, as seen through the Truman Doctrine, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Korean War. In each case Truman was able to gain support in Congress, often via Vandenberg and Tom Connally, ranking members for the Republican and Democratic parties on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee respectively. While there was frequently some dissension, both from Democrats and Republicans, it was never to the point of truly disrupting Truman's shift from Roosevelt's foreign policy. The American public also did not stand in the way of Truman's changes. Although they overwhelmingly supported membership in the UN, Truman was able to simply acknowledge the organization's existence, and then ignore it with

¹²¹ Dubois and the NAACP supported the UNs Charter but were also rightly concerned that it did not have extensive protections for the rights for those under colonial rule, as seen in Truman's presidency with his support of the French re-conquest of Vietnam following the war. In one exchange in the hearings Democratic Senator Tom Connally from Texas got into a shouting match with one witness. He went so far as to place his microphone next to his gavel in order to drown her out after she attacked Stettinius as a banker in collusion with the Soviet Union. James B. Reston, "Charter Attacked By 16 Opponents At Lively Hearing," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Jul 12, 1945. <http://ric.idm.oclc.org/login?url=search.proquest.com/?url=https://search-proquest-com.ric.idm.oclc.org/docview/107099532?accountid=13507>.

¹²² United States Congress, *Congressional Record*, 79th Congress, 1st Session, 1945, vol 91, pt. 6, *HeinOnline*, 8190.

little harm. Thus, with little consideration given to either the Congress or the American public, Truman was able to cripple Roosevelt's vision before it had a chance to stand.

The Truman Doctrine in March of 1947 was the first true test of the Truman administration's changes to foreign policy. With Great Britain unable to maintain its support for Greece and Turkey going forward, Truman had to turn to Congress for support. There was no money ready to give to the two countries without congressional approval, as had been the case with the Lend-Lease act.¹²³ In order to garner support, Truman first went to Vandenberg and both party's leaders to explain the situation. Vandenberg suggested the tactic that Truman would ultimately use over and over to gain Congress's support: use communism to get around any complaints about spending.¹²⁴ Republicans in Congress wanted to cut the budget significantly, but by emphasizing communism as the threat that needed to be stopped in his address to Congress Truman was able to gain their support. No members wanted to seem "soft" on communism with the House Un-American Activities Committee having been made permanent that year and Truman's 'loyalty boards' established just over a week after his speech.

The effort initially worked on Congress, pushing the United Nations out of the policy process, but the American public was not so easily convinced. When polled about whether the UN should have a larger role in Greece and Turkey, 56% supported it over unilateral American action. Truman and his administration had not been prepared for the public's response.¹²⁵ Congress acted quickly; following the criticism, Vandenberg and Connally co-sponsored an amendment to the aid bill. It included a preamble to the bill, stating that the United States was only acting because the United Nations was unable to respond. The amendment also committed

¹²³ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 277-279.

¹²⁴ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 281.

¹²⁵ Kaplan, 35.

the United States to immediately end its support for Greece and Turkey if the United Nations called for it.¹²⁶ While the public's concerns were tempered by the amendment, some critics in Congress still saw the bill as an affront to the United Nations. Senator Harry Byrd, a Democrat from Virginia, spoke immediately after Vandenberg proposed the amendment and argued that no one in the UN would step up to stop the United States action in Greece since many nations also wanted American aid. He continued on to say, "After introducing the bill providing for the intervention in Greece and Turkey, the Senator from Michigan [Vandenberg] has proposed a preamble, denying that the United States intended to bypass the United Nations organization. This is merely a lot of pious words and one can imagine that when the officials of other governments read this language they will surely think he 'doth protest too much.'"¹²⁷

As Senator Byrd shows, it was not lost on Congress that the Truman Doctrine went around the United Nations, offering only a fig leaf in the form of Vandenberg's amendment for the organization. Nevertheless, much of Congress did not care, the Truman Doctrine easily passed the Senate and House, allowing Truman to take his first step toward a policy confrontation with congressional support, but without structural multilateral support from the United Nations. The public was also aware that the US was going around the United Nations. In August of 1947 Thomas Hamilton wrote for the *New York Times* that, "As many of them [the United Nations Secretariat and Delegations] see it, the Truman Doctrine not only rejected any use of the United Nations in extending help to Greece and Turkey, but laid down a program of American support for any government in any part of the world that said it was fighting communism." He closed the article by wondering if the United Nations had a bright future if the

¹²⁶ Kaplan, 36.

¹²⁷ United States Congress, *Congressional Record*, 80th Congress, 1st Session, 1947, vol 93, pt. 3, *HeinOnline*, 2951.

US and Soviet Union continued to fight and confront one another.¹²⁸ The public was not wholly unaware the Truman administration was changing its foreign policy away from the United Nations Roosevelt had envisioned, but it did not care. When polled in the spring of the next year 62% thought the United States had done all it could to make the United Nations successful. In the same poll almost none thought the US should bypass the organization in its policy, yet the United States did without much fanfare or public pushback¹²⁹ With Vandenberg's preamble, the UN had received due respect in the eyes of Truman, and the American public generally agreed with him. While they supported the organization, the specifics of the Truman Doctrine did not raise their ire, leaving him to move on to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization two years later as the next step taken outside of the UN.

Congress's acceptance of a military alliance began in the summer of 1948. The Berlin Blockade was about to begin and tensions were high in Europe. Vandenberg brought forth the 'Vandenberg Resolution', which called for the United States to enter a military alliance against communism. Connally, who also was part of the American delegation to the San Francisco Conference, went on the Senate floor to offer support for the resolution stating that, "Many of us have been somewhat disappointed in the activities, or the lack of activities, of the United Nations Organization with regard to many international questions."¹³⁰ Connally's comments display that even those present at the negotiations to form the UN in San Francisco, as he was, had begun to question the effectiveness of the organization. The United Nations was disappointing because it was not acting with Truman's framework of unilateral action. Thus support for a military

¹²⁸ Thomas J. Hamilton, "Split Of Big Powers Clouds U.N.'s Future," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, August 10, 1947. <http://ric.idm.oclc.org/login?url=search.proquest.com/?url=https://search-proquest-com.ric.idm.oclc.org/docview/107819418?accountid=13507>.

¹²⁹ Foster, 82.

¹³⁰ United States Congress, *Congressional Record*, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, 1948, vol 94, pt. 6, *HeinOnline*, 7819-7820.

alliance was high in Congress with the resolution passing the Senate 64-4, almost the same level of consensus as when the UN Charter had passed.¹³¹ It would be almost a year until the notion of an alliance came to Congress again. In spring of 1949, Dean Acheson began working with Connally and Vandenberg to grow congressional support for what would become the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.¹³² While support for an alliance was strong, the effort was hampered by the possibility of the USs being dragged into war without Congress' consent, and by the opposition of Robert Taft. Taft normally stayed out of foreign policy, leaving it to Vandenberg, but in the case of NATO, and later the Korean War, he took the opportunity to attack Truman for reckless spending and leading the United States toward war.¹³³ However, as much as Taft complained, he was not seen as the leader on foreign policy. His outburst did little to stop Republican support or NATO.

The general public was similarly supportive of NATO as Congress, while there was some dissent the sentiment was largely in favor of the treaty. One *New York Times* article went so far as to claim the 'Atlantic Pact' made the United Nations stronger as a result.¹³⁴ The only solid opposition to the threat came from Henry Wallace, now leader of the Progressive Party. He charged that NATO was not only a violation of the UN Charter but also Roosevelt's vision for the future.¹³⁵ His criticism fell on deaf ears; while he still had a base of support, Wallace was no longer seen as inside the Democratic party, thus allowing his attack to be written off. Truman's

¹³¹ Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis*, 365-366.

¹³² Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 46-49.

¹³³ Another problem for the Truman administration concerning NATO was the relationship between Connally and Vandenberg. Coming from opposite parties there was some animosity between the two, although they largely agreed on foreign policy. However Connally was extremely jealous of the attention Vandenberg received from Truman in order to gain Republican support for his foreign policy. At one point Connally threatened to have an usher fired for placing Vandenberg ahead of him in line at a White House dinner. His return to Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee following the 1948 did little to help his ego. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 52.

¹³⁴ "The U.N. And The Pact," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, April 6, 1949. <http://ric.idm.oclc.org/login?url=search.proquest.com/?url=https://search-proquest-com.ric.idm.oclc.org/docview/105664401?accountid=13507>.

¹³⁵ Kaplan, 45.

administration paid the same lip service it had to the United Nations with the Truman Doctrine with NATO, arguing it was allowed within Article 51 of the Charter outlining self-defense. But, as Kaplan notes in his book on the United States and NATO, “There was no avoidance of a direct conflict between a treaty of military alliances and a charter of collective security. To accept one meant to deny the other. The administration tried to keep the facade. It failed, but by 1949, when the alliance was made, the country had been sufficiently prepared to pay a price it might not have paid in 1947 or 1948”: the end of the United Nations as a truly functional organization.¹³⁶

Surprisingly, 1949 saw public satisfaction with the United Nations improve and a majority of Americans approved of it for the first time since its founding. While the American public had always supported the organization, they had not always been happy with it. Scott and Withney note in their work on public opinion towards the UN that, “As dramatic world conflicts tended more and more to take place outside the framework of the United Nations, the inevitable frustrations of world entanglements were not so readily associated with it.”¹³⁷ In turning his back on the organization, Truman had made it more popular; but even this change did not result in a revival of the organization. By 1949 both Congress and the American public supported Truman’s confrontational policy. The Soviet Union was the enemy and communism must be stopped and it must be done with military force, rather than through diplomacy. Truman put his policy into action the next summer when the Korean War began.

When the Korean War broke out Truman bypassed both the United Nations and Congress, committing military support before the UN authorized it and without congressional approval. While Congress eventually pushed back on Truman’s authority to conduct a war, the

¹³⁶ Kaplan, 40.

¹³⁷ Scott and Withey, 46.

United Nations never did. The UN guidelines for the peace, including stopping at the 38th parallel, were ignored and Truman saw no repercussions. With his announcement on June 27th committing American air and naval power in Korea, the House of Representatives paused and read the statement to cheers. Governor Dewey even publicly announced his support for Truman's decision to commit the military.¹³⁸ However the next day Taft leaned into Truman about the war. He argued that Truman was overstepping his role as Commander in Chief without congressional approval, leaving out Republicans in his decision making, and went so far as to accuse the administration of inviting attack with the omission of Korea from Acheson's defense perimeter in his speech to the National Press Club earlier that year.¹³⁹ Unlike Taft's speech on NATO, this one gained traction, leading to further calls amongst Republicans that Truman come and address Congress and ask for its support. Truman considered the idea. Acheson in particular was supportive, hoping it would quell any domestic issues for a time. But Truman never addressed Congress and instead waited almost a month before asking for legislation in support of his decisions. While Taft had questioned the legality of Truman's actions, the political aspect is what cost him congressional support over time, limiting what he could get through Congress in support of the war after ignoring it in the beginning.¹⁴⁰ However no one was willing to push Truman to pull out of Korea. He had successfully pushed both the American public and Congress to accept his confrontation with communism and the Soviet Union without the UN. Neither group cared that he had initiated military support prior to UN approval, only that he had done it without congressional approval, firmly cementing American foreign policy in a realm outside of the United Nations.

¹³⁸ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 208-209.

¹³⁹ United States Congress, *Congressional Record*, 81st Congress, 2nd Session, 1950, vol 96, pt. 7, *HeinOnline*, 9320-9321.

¹⁴⁰ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 223-224.

The people of the United States never turned their back on the United Nations, at least in their own view. Throughout the Korean War (and earlier), support for the United States to remain a member of the organization remained above 70%.¹⁴¹ While each new policy the Truman administration pushed maintained a ceremonial place for the United Nations, ultimately neither Congress nor the American public cared that it had been reduced to a figurehead and nothing more. Truman successfully placed the organization out of consideration, taking the popular support for internationalism built by Roosevelt and using it to pursue a foreign policy that more or less ignored the organization he had envisioned. In 1954 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reviewed the UN Charter. Part of the effort was to determine if any changes needed to be made to make the organization more effective. After talking to countless witnesses, and receiving hundreds of pages of written testimony the committee stated, “The principal consensus of opinion was that the world is in trouble and something needs to be done. There was no agreement as to what to do, who should do it, what the results of specific proposals would be; nor was there evidence that the American people are aware of the full implications of the various proposals.”¹⁴² The path forward Roosevelt had envisioned and championed nearly a decade prior was gone. The Senate, and the members of the public that they interviewed thought the world was in trouble. But no one knew what to do about that. The United Nations was meant to be a place for finding consensus and proposing solutions, instead it had become a system in need of repair after almost eight years under Truman’s watch. His presidency left the UN with no path forward. Truman had taken the consensus, built over Roosevelt’s four terms, around working toward an international organization, and twisted it into a policy of confrontation that

¹⁴¹ Scott and Withey, 16.

¹⁴² United States Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on the United Nations Charter, *Review of the United Nations Charter: Compilation of Staff Studies Prepared for the Use of the Subcommittee on the United Nations Charter of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Pursuant to S. Res. 126, Eighty-Third Congress, 83rd Congress, 2nd Session, 1954, HeinOnline, 820.*

left the UN without a place in American foreign policy. The United States was supposed to act, the Congress and American people were supposed to support it, and the United Nations was supposed to approve the decisions after the fact—and it did.

Conclusion

The United Nations barely had a chance to stand before it was pushed aside by Harry Truman. Although Truman saw through the creation of Roosevelt's vision, it was soon left out in the cold; the United States would confront global crises alone. Roosevelt had intended for the United Nations to be the central force for peace in foreign policy after its creation. It was meant to protect and uphold his deeply held ideals set out in the Four Freedoms speech and the Atlantic Charter. Instead, Truman established the organization at San Francisco, but then began slowly and purposefully moving the United States away from the UN, all while claiming Roosevelt's legacy to it.

After San Francisco, Truman began pushing out those who supported Roosevelt's vision. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius was asked to resign and become the first American representative to the United Nations. Expecting to still be a central part of the administration's foreign policy in the role, as Roosevelt intended, Stettinius accepted. However, he, like the UN, was slowly pushed out of the decision making process. Stettinius eventually resigned after repeatedly disagreeing with how Truman interacted with the UN and treated him. Stettinius' departure is indicative of Truman's administration as a whole, aides and cabinet members steadily left as Truman created his own administration, all while arguing it was the same vision Roosevelt proclaimed. With Henry Wallace's removal as Secretary of Commerce in September of 1946, who Roosevelt stated he would prefer to be his vice president in 1944, only one cabinet member from Roosevelt's administration remained. Truman went so far as to label those defending Wallace and his more cooperative policy toward the Soviet Union as 'crackpots.'¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Truman, *Off the Record*, 97.

Those aides still in the administration, such as Dean Acheson, were firmly with Truman that the Cold War meant confronting the Soviet Union unilaterally, leaving the United Nations aside.

Truman proceeded to create his foreign policy divorced from the UN. In March of 1947, with Great Britain no longer able to support Greece, Truman proclaimed that it now fell to the United States to support them, and all free peoples around the world. The United Nations was completely left aside in the process, not even consulted before Truman made his speech. The American peoples expressed outrage at the administration for going around the UN, but it was quelled when Senator Vandenberg added a preamble detailing that the United States was only acting because the United Nations could not. However, this announcement did not stop all criticism. As Senator Byrd noted after the preamble's announcement in Congress that it was merely, "a lot of pious words" which would not fool anyone that the United States was acting alone.¹⁴⁴

The creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949 pushed the United States further away from the UN. The new alliance created a separate framework where the United States could focus on military confrontation with the Soviet Union, instead of using the United Nations to try and achieve peace. While the organization was not only desired by the US but also many states in Western Europe, it came from an abundance of fear of Soviet aggression, leading to a further distancing with the UN. Truman's decisions separating the United States from the UN all came together in the Korean War. Truman committed the United States military to the conflict before the UN called for military action, even telling Secretary of State Acheson that the United States would fight the war without the UN if it had to.¹⁴⁵ Over two thirds of the NATO members joined the US in fighting North Korea, the alliance was taking up a military

¹⁴⁴ United States Congress, *Congressional Record*, 80th Congress, 1st Session, 1947, vol 93, pt. 3, *HeinOnline*, 2951.

¹⁴⁵ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 200.

confrontation and would be further expanded during the conflict with the rearmament of West Germany and an increase of American troops in Western Europe. While acting outside of the United Nations, the Truman administration also repeatedly killed efforts at negotiating with Communist China, refusing to even consider giving them the permanent seat on the Security Council, or support the multiple popular attempts to find common ground accepted by NATO, Communist, and neutral countries alike.

Throughout all of Truman's foreign policy decisions to abandon the United Nations, Congress and the American people largely supported him. Although Truman was often responding to foreign crises and domestic pressures Truman choose those responses, creating an activist and unilateral foreign policy in the place of Roosevelt's internationalist one. While some in Congress, such as Senator Byrd, occasionally opposed Truman's decision sidelining the UN, most in the Democratic party followed their president, and most in the Republican party followed Senator Vandenberg, whose support Truman cultivated. The American public were initially aghast at Truman going around the United Nations, but their opposition did not amount to any political consequences beyond lip service to the organization surrounding the Truman Doctrine, NATO, and Korean War. While he claimed to follow Roosevelt's vision for the organization, instead Truman left it in the cold, as a rubber stamp for his unilateral and confrontational policy towards the Soviet Union and any major international crisis he saw fit. The United Nations was no longer a part of American foreign policy.

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