

THE ROOSEVELT FOREIGN POLICY

FLAWED, BUT SUPERIOR TO THE COMPETITION

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THE UNDECLARED WAR

In what became known as *blitzkrieg*, or “lightning war,” German armies spearheaded by tanks and aircraft quickly overran Poland in September of 1939. Via a secret accord within the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the two dictatorships then divided Poland between themselves. On the western front, however, relative quiet reigned for the remainder of 1939 and the first months of 1940, leading some to derisively describe this lack of warfare as *sitzkrieg*, or “sitting war,” as opposed to the *blitzkrieg* that had overrun Poland. Such humor quickly ended in April and May of 1940 when the Germans successfully invaded first Denmark and Norway and then Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and France. In a matter of weeks they split the French and British armies, with the latter forced to evacuate the continent at Dunkirk in late May. Italy soon thereafter declared war on Britain and France. By the end of June the French had been totally defeated and forced to surrender. Only an isolated and weakened Great Britain, one that the Germans now planned to invade, stood between Hitler and total victory.

These German military victories shocked Americans, who had expected a repeat of the extended World War I attrition and stalemate. Instead, in the space of only a few months, Hitler’s armies had accomplished what the Kaiser’s armies had been unable to do in the four bloody years of 1914–1918 and now stood triumphant across most of the European continent—including the French shores of the Atlantic.

The result was a revolution in American thinking. Germany, many now argued, had by its stunning military victories and its hostile ideology become a mortal threat to the United States. Modern technology in the form of aircraft made the Atlantic Ocean far less of an effective moat capable of protecting the United States than it previously had been. Indeed,

some argued, the ocean itself had in reality never been such a moat. What had actually protected the United States in the past was the European balance of power, sustained by Great Britain, which had precluded the emergence of a hostile hegemonic power dominant on land and sea. In effect, Britain and its fleet were and long had been America’s first line of defense against such a power, and the United States, in the interest of its own future security, now had to maintain that first line of defense by providing the British with aid so that they, too, would not succumb to German conquest. If Britain fell, the United States would stand alone against a Germany supreme on land, on the sea, and in the air. At best it could survive in such a situation only as a garrison state; at worst, it too would be conquered.

The logic and policy of this school of thought could be seen in the name of its major public organization, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, which quickly became known as the White Committee after one of its leaders, the prominent Midwestern editor-publisher William Allen White. While most of this organization pressed for material aid to Britain, a small group within it argued that material aid would not be sufficient and that the United States should actually enter the war as Britain’s ally.

Far from all Americans agreed with any of this logic. Those who opposed the White Committee’s program argued that Britain was doomed to defeat, that aid to London would therefore do no good, and that Germany did not constitute a mortal and immediate threat to the United States but that a futile effort to aid Britain would make it one. The United States, these people maintained, both could and should remain aloof from the European conflict and learn to live with a triumphant Nazi Germany. To do otherwise would involve the nation in a needless war that would wind up destroying liberty at home. Proponents of this school of thought would also organize, most notably as the America First Committee under the leadership of former general and Sears Roebuck head Robert E. Wood, with aviator and national hero Charles Lindbergh as its most popular spokesman.

Whatever his previous beliefs had really been, Roosevelt in the summer of 1940 clearly aligned himself with the White Committee. Indeed, in a June 10 address at Charlottesville, Virginia, he denounced Germany, Italy (“the hand that held the dagger had struck it into the back of its neighbor”), and American isolationism in the face of the existing situation and pledged “the material resources of this nation” to the British. Throughout the spring

and summer he and the Congress would agree to the sale of scarce war materials to Britain, massive increases in American defense expenditures, and the institution of the first peacetime draft in American history.

In an effort to avoid making the issues of preparedness and aid to Britain partisan, Roosevelt also invited two major Republicans who supported these measures, former secretary of state Henry L. Stimson and 1936 vice-presidential nominee Frank Knox, into his cabinet as secretary of war and secretary of the navy, respectively. The resulting bipartisan cabinet both illustrated and accelerated a political realignment whereby domestic liberals who remained isolationist abandoned Roosevelt but were replaced by domestic conservatives who supported aid to Britain.

But Roosevelt remained quite cautious during the summer of 1940 in the aid he was willing to provide to England. Rearmament, the draft, and arrangements with Latin America and Canada he justified as defensive measures to protect the country and the hemisphere against any possible attack and thus deterrents to enable the United States to stay *out* of war, not get into it. Similarly, he argued, helping to keep Britain fighting by selling it war material was a way to keep war far from America's shores. Isolationists continued to disagree, but public opinion polls showed a majority of Americans concurring with the president. That percentage increased throughout the summer, as the British dramatically survived Hitler's air assault, known as the Battle of Britain, and thereby precluded a German invasion.

Roosevelt's caution was at least partially the result of the fact that he intended to run for an unprecedented third term and, despite the entry of Stimson and Knox into the cabinet, he still feared opposition to his policies from whomever the Republicans nominated to oppose him. But the candidate the Republicans did select, Wendell Willkie, was an interventionist who favored aid to England. Furthermore, Britain's position remained desperate. Consequently Roosevelt in September responded to a plea from British prime minister Winston Churchill for naval assistance with a dramatic expansion of the aid he was willing to provide. Bypassing Congress, he signed an executive agreement giving Great Britain fifty overage U.S. destroyers for convoy duty in the Atlantic in return for ninety-nine-year leases on eight British bases in the Western Hemisphere, a move

he and his chief of naval operations, Adm. Harold R. Stark, justified as a net strategic gain for the United States. Seventy percent of the public approved. Simultaneously, however, there was very little public support for actually and officially joining the war against Germany, even though the destroyer-bases deal was clearly an unneutral act that could lead to war. By this point 80 percent of those polled favored aid to England, while more than 60 percent considered such aid more important than staying out of war. Yet only 20 percent would vote for war against Germany if a national vote were to be taken, and fewer than 10 percent believed that Congress should declare war against Germany.⁷

Whether Roosevelt shared such contradictory beliefs or merely understood that the public did—and that he had to reflect public opinion—remains an open question. One way or the other, even with Willkie supporting aid to Britain, Roosevelt felt it necessary to reassure the public during the 1940 presidential campaign that “Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.” Simultaneously he began to attack his isolationist opponents not simply as wrong, which he had every right to do, but also—and unfairly—as subversive.

Roosevelt won the ensuing election, but soon after his victory Churchill informed him that Britain's situation remained desperate. The problem, according to the prime minister, was twofold: even with the U.S. destroyers, the British fleet was unable to protect the material it purchased from German U-boat attacks in the Atlantic; furthermore, Britain was rapidly running out of funds with which to buy U.S. war material. Even though Hitler's invasion plans had been foiled in the Battle of Britain, England could thus soon be forced into submission.

For the time being Roosevelt chose to ignore the first problem and instead focused on the second. The lack of British funds to purchase U.S. goods seemed to require American loans, which in turn meant proposing congressional repeal of the Johnson and Neutrality Acts. Rather than take that direct and by no means assured route, Roosevelt instead came up with a novel proposal. Hoping to remove what he labeled “that silly, foolish old dollar sign,” he dramatically proposed in December that the United States lend the British not money to buy war supplies, but the war supplies themselves, directly. Suppose, he argued in a famous analogy, that your neighbor's house was on fire and he asked to borrow your garden hose. Would you ask him to give you cash for it? No, you would lend it to him on the grounds that putting out the fire would prevent it from spreading to your

house. Then he would return it once the fire was out or, if it was damaged, repay you in kind. The war was such a fire, and if it burned down the British house it would spread to the United States. Consequently the United States should lend the British war material, using its huge industrial potential to become the "arsenal of democracy" in the war but also as a way to stay out of actual hostilities. Congressional supporters quickly introduced the ensuing lend-lease bill, which they numbered House Resolution 1776, providing billions of dollars for the president to lend or lease war material to any nation whose defense he deemed essential to the security of the United States.

The lend-lease bill led to a major debate in both houses of Congress during the first three months of 1941, but not over whether the United States should enter the war. Roosevelt had sidestepped such a debate by arguing that lend-lease would keep the United States out of the war. Isolationists were furious over what they considered outrageous presidential disingenuousness. Giving away war material was an openly belligerent act that would lead the United States into the war, they argued, not keep it out. Whereas the New Deal's Agricultural Adjustment Act had plowed under every fourth acre, Senator Burton K. Wheeler (D-Mont.) angrily warned, lend-lease would "plow under every fourth American boy." Furthermore, others argued, the war material was actually going to be given away, not merely loaned. As Senator Robert Taft (R-Ohio) noted, war material was like chewing gum; you did not want it returned after it had been used. Other critics, such as Senator George D. Aiken (R-Vt.) opposed the bill because of the enormous grant of discretionary power it gave to the president. Nevertheless lend-lease had overwhelming support in both houses of Congress and the country at large, with 70 percent of those polled believing it was more important to aid England than to stay out of war. The final Senate and House votes were 60-31 and 317-71, with \$7 billion in the original appropriation (the total figure would eventually top \$50 billion). As the Lend-Lease Act became law, however, those who believed the United States should actually enter the war remained less than 10 percent.⁸

Once again the question emerges as to whether Roosevelt shared these conflicting views, or merely realized he had to work within and somehow manipulate them so as to get the United States into the war. His actions during the remainder of 1941 tend to support the latter interpretation, though far from completely.

As previously noted, Roosevelt's lend-lease proposal ignored the other major problem Churchill had mentioned in December—how to get war supplies and even food across the submarine-infested Atlantic. Churchill desired U.S. naval convoys and use of U.S. merchant ships to carry lend-lease goods. The latter would require a revision of the Neutrality Acts that Roosevelt was not certain he could obtain and was therefore not willing to try. Nor was the Atlantic Fleet ready or the president certain, given the public refusal to sanction a declaration of war against Germany, whether he could get away with the openly belligerent act of ordering convoys—a move that *was* certain to result in armed conflict with German submarines. Instead he decided to move by indirection, much as he had done by proposing lend-lease, though this time without any congressional debate whatsoever. The expansion of executive power through lend-lease that Senator Aiken had feared would be mild compared with the expansion that Roosevelt now created via use of his powers as commander in chief to provide Britain with naval assistance in the Atlantic.

The Constitution makes the president the commander in chief of all the armed forces of the United States. Although only the Congress can declare war, the president can and often has used this military power to commit U.S. forces to a combat situation in advance, thereby either forcing the Congress into such a declaration (as President James K. Polk did in 1846 in regard to Mexico) or enabling him to bypass the formal declaration entirely (as presidents Harry S. Truman and Lyndon B. Johnson did in regard to Korea and Vietnam, respectively, in 1950 and 1965). Throughout 1941, Roosevelt similarly made use of this power to provide the British with naval assistance in the Atlantic. In the process, he created an undeclared, executive naval war against the Germans.

Even while Congress had been debating lend-lease in the first three months of 1941, Roosevelt had used his commander in chief powers to sanction secret staff conversations with British officers in Washington regarding combined global strategy in the event the United States did enter the war. These secret conversations would by March result in the secret ABC-1⁹ accord asserting the fundamental and most important strategic principle of the future Anglo-American alliance: to focus in such a situation on Germany first and assume the strategic defensive against Japan. Then in April FDR unilaterally extended the hemispheric security zone, originally enunciated in the 1939 Declaration of Panama as a neutrality zone of three hundred to a thousand miles around the hemisphere in which European military activity would

not be allowed. This act had been violated by both sides on numerous occasions, but Roosevelt ignored those violations and now extended the zone eastward to 25 degrees west longitude, including the Danish possession of Greenland, which was taken under U.S. protection. He also established U.S. air and naval patrols to enforce this zone and ordered the U.S. Navy to trail German U-boats within it and report their positions to the British. When the German battleship *Bismarck* in May broke out into the Atlantic where it could further menace British shipping and Hitler launched a major offensive against the British in the Mediterranean, Roosevelt declared a state of unlimited national emergency. Then in July he extended the hemispheric security zone all the way to Iceland by ordering U.S. occupation of the island, thereby freeing British troops for duty elsewhere. He also welcomed Stalin as an ally after Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in late June, promised military assistance, and by November made the USSR eligible to receive lend-lease aid.

In August Roosevelt and Churchill secretly met on board warships off the coast of Newfoundland. Here both leaders agreed to a public statement of combined war aims, even though the United States was not formally in the war. Known as the Atlantic Charter and often considered the equivalent of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points during World War I, that statement pledged both nations to a peace based on eight major points: no territorial aggrandizement, no territorial changes without the consent of the people involved, the right of all peoples to self-determination, equal access for all to the world's trade and raw materials, economic collaboration, the ability of all peoples to live in freedom from want and fear, freedom of the seas, and disarmament of aggressor states "pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security."

Roosevelt still refused, however, to order convoys, request Neutrality Act revision to allow for the use of U.S. merchant ships, or actually enter the war as Churchill now desired and pressed for at the conference—probably because of continued uncertainty regarding what the public would accept. Indeed, the House at this time agreed to extension of the term of service for draftees by only one vote, 203–202.

The failure to obtain further and immediate U.S. assistance or beligerency led Churchill to consider the meeting a failure. In hindsight, however, it was critical in establishing a strong personal relationship between the two men, who would meet on ten more occasions during the war for a total of 120 days. It was also important in providing the American

people with both a statement of combined war aims and the stirring sight of the two leaders meeting together on board their warships—and praying together at a special Anglo-American Sunday service that included the singing of "Onward Christian Soldiers."

In early September Roosevelt informed the press that in the Atlantic a German U-boat had attacked an American destroyer, the USS *Greer*. What he did not mention was that the *Greer* had been trailing the U-boat for hours and radioing its position back to a British air patrol that had then attacked the submarine. Instead FDR portrayed the submarine's behavior as an unprovoked attack on the *Greer* and publicly compared the German U-boats to pirates and rattlesnakes. In response he ordered the U.S. Navy to "shoot on sight" whenever it spotted a German U-boat and to escort all merchant ships as far as Iceland. Churchill had his convoys without the word ever being used.

Then in October Roosevelt finally asked Congress to end what he labeled the "crippling provisions" of the Neutrality Acts. Specifically, he requested an end to cash-and-carry and permission to allow armed U.S. merchant ships to carry lend-lease supplies to England. While Congress debated these revisions, German U-boats responded to Roosevelt's "shoot on sight" order by attacking the destroyers *Kearny* and *Reuben James*, killing 11 men in the former and sinking the latter on October 31 with the loss of 115 American lives. After bitter debate, Congress responded in November by granting Roosevelt, by the close votes of 212–194 in the House and 50–37 in the Senate, the revisions that he desired in the Neutrality Acts. It retained the ban on loans and travel by U.S. citizens on belligerent ships, but the former had been made irrelevant by lend-lease and the latter was meaningless, given the situation in late 1941. The important point was that armed American ships could now carry lend-lease supplies to England while the U.S. Navy joined the British Navy to convoy them and British merchant ships across the Atlantic. In effect the United States was in the war with everything except troops.

That was a huge exception, however, and one Roosevelt continued to insist on maintaining. Indeed, he angrily rejected the army's call in its September Victory Program for the creation of a huge force of eight and a half million men in 215 divisions to be used against Germany in Central Europe, despite the fact that his military advisers had been insisting for over a year that Britain could not defeat Germany without full-scale U.S. participation. FDR continued to disagree, though whether he did so out of

honest belief and desire to officially remain out of the war or recognition of the continued refusal of 75 percent of the public to sanction a declaration of war remains open to question.

Indeed, one of the major interpretive disputes concerning Roosevelt is the extent to which he agreed with the public that the United States should aid Britain with all aid short of war but not actually enter the war, and the extent to which he understood the problems and contradictions within such beliefs and realized both that such aid would inevitably lead to war and that full-scale U.S. participation was the only way to defeat Germany. A related question is whether the above-mentioned public beliefs made him overly cautious and held him back overall from more forceful, earlier measures in support of Britain, or whether he consistently used his powers to manipulate public opinion and get it to accept both support of Great Britain and active belligerency against Germany. "It is a terrible thing," he once stated in support of the former position, "to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead—and to find no one there." But the visiting King George VIII had an interesting rejoinder that supported the latter, more aggressive and manipulative position. "I have been struck," he informed FDR, "by the way you have led public opinion by allowing it to get ahead of you."

What is fairly certain in light of what we now know of both Hitler's long-range goals and his wartime strategic planning is that a total German victory was indeed a menace to American security. As Gerhard Weinberg has shown, Hitler in his little-known "second book" had prophesized eventual war between Germany and the United States. Furthermore, at numerous points in the early years of World War II he attempted to focus German energies for this purpose on the creation of long-range bombers and the acquisition of both a blue-water fleet and island bases in the Atlantic. In light of these facts, Roosevelt's support of Britain was both justified and wise. Historical disagreement still exists over whether the security threat necessitated actual U.S. entry into the war and total German defeat; scholars such as Bruce M. Russett argue that such moves were neither necessary nor desirable, as Germany and the Soviet Union would have experienced mutual exhaustion in fighting each other. Nevertheless, little or no disagreement remains over the issue of aiding Britain, and later Russia, so that they could survive the German onslaught and prevent a total German victory.¹⁰

In the process of providing that aid, however, Roosevelt enormously expanded and often abused executive power. Again, he was far from the first president to do so. But his behavior, which most historians justified af-

ter the war on the grounds of the menace posed by Hitler, set extremely dangerous precedents that his successors used in much more questionable ventures. The 1964 Tonkin Gulf episode and ensuing congressional resolution that gave president Lyndon Johnson the right to wage executive war in Vietnam bears a striking resemblance to the *Greer* episode of 1941, and far from accidentally: Lyndon Johnson had been a first-term Congressman in 1941, and throughout his national career he remained a worshipper of Franklin Roosevelt. That was not true of Johnson's successor, Richard Nixon. Nevertheless, Nixon, too, followed Roosevelt's precedents in labeling his opponents as subversive, in illegally attempting to destroy them, and indeed in taping his plans to do so. Whether the ends justified the means in Roosevelt's case, given the menace he faced on one hand versus the very dangerous precedents he set on the other, is an important and provocative question. Indeed, it raises not only the fundamental issue of the relationship of means to ends, but the equally fundamental issue of whether and to what extent political leaders should be held responsible for long-term consequences of their actions and the use by others of the precedents that they have established.

Ironically, in light of all the above, formal entry into World War II did not come as a result of Roosevelt's behavior in the Atlantic. Rather, it followed from events thousands of miles away in Asia and the Pacific.

THE ROAD TO PEARL HARBOR

Throughout his first term Roosevelt had maintained but did not move beyond the nonrecognition policy of his predecessor Herbert Hoover regarding the 1931–1932 Japanese conquest of Manchuria and creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo. When Japan in 1937 initiated a full-scale if undeclared war to crush Chiang Kai-shek and control all of China, Roosevelt responded with his "Quarantine" speech (see p. 125). As with nonrecognition, however, this policy consisted of harsh words divorced from any harsh action. The resource-poor Japanese were dependent on the United States for such critical war materials as iron, steel, and oil, and these continued to be sold to Tokyo without limit. The United States did attend the 1938 Brussels Conference of signatories to the 1921–1922 Nine Power Pact that had guaranteed equal access to and sovereignty for China, to discuss what could or should be done in regard to Japanese aggression, but the

administration refused to make any commitment to economic sanctions. Consequently Japan continued to make war in China with American oil, iron, and steel.

U.S. policy began to change in late 1938 when Tokyo proclaimed its "New Order" for Asia, a focal point of which was economic and political control of China. This proclamation as well as the war itself constituted a direct attack on the U.S. "Open Door" policy, which since the turn of the century had promoted equal economic access for all nations in China as well as preservation of the territorial and administrative integrity of that nation. Consequently Secretary of State Hull established a moral embargo on the sale of aircraft to Japan, and the United States began to purchase Chinese silver, thereby providing Chiang with dollars to buy U.S. war equipment. Roosevelt's 1938 naval buildup was also directed partially against the Japanese. Moreover, the president had previously sanctioned the initiation of secret naval conversations with the British regarding the possibility of joint action against Japan. Neither Hull nor Roosevelt proposed economic sanctions in 1937-1938, however, at least partially because high-ranking members of the State Department and the administration were split on the wisdom of such a move.

During the Manchurian crisis of 1931-1932, those opposed to economic sanctions had argued that they would only strengthen the hands of Japanese militarists against the moderates who still controlled the Japanese government and who had not sanctioned the military takeover of Manchuria. By 1938, however, State Department Far East expert Stanley Hornbeck and other hard-liners were arguing that those militarists had indeed taken over the government and had embarked upon a course of "predatory imperialism" that conflicted directly with major U.S. policies and interests and that threatened to lead to war between the two nations. Since the Japanese relied upon American goods to make war, however, they could be halted (and war thus averted) by the application of economic sanctions, along with aid to China and military as well as diplomatic pressure.

Other experts who continued to oppose such measures, most notably ambassador Joseph Grew in Tokyo, argued that they would not work and indeed would lead to Japanese retaliation and war. What the hard-liners did not take into account, the ambassador warned, was Japanese psychology, which would not accept the humiliation of being forced to back down in the face of economic sanctions and other pressures. Instead the Japanese would respond by lashing out, thereby guaranteeing a war that could and

should be avoided. Indeed, Grew argued, the Open Door could only be kept open in China by going to war with Japan. Better, he maintained, to abandon the policy and negotiate with the Japanese as a means of moderating their behavior and goals. Army strategists concerned with their inability to defend the Philippines concurred.

With a European war looming on the horizon the administration essentially decided not to decide at this time. In July of 1939 it did give the six-month notice required to terminate its 1911 trade treaty with Japan, thereby allowing for the institution of selective economic sanctions in the future should it decide to use them. But no such sanctions would be implemented for another full year, and even then they would be limited.

What led the administration eventually to decide in favor of sanctions was the Japanese response to the German conquest of France in May and June of 1940. That conquest opened tremendous opportunities for Japan within Southeast Asia, an area rich in natural resources to replace those provided by the United States and filled with the colonies of the now-conquered Dutch and French as well as the beleaguered British. Consequently Tokyo successfully pressured Great Britain into closing the Burma Road, a major supply route to Chiang Kai-shek's forces in China, and began to pressure the French in Indochina. Nor would that be the end of Japanese ambitions, given the opportunities available. Japanese foreign minister Matsuoka Yosuke now publicly defined Japan's "New Order" in Asia as including not only Manchukuo and China, as originally announced in 1938, but also Indochina, all French islands in the Pacific, Thailand, British Malaya and Borneo, the Dutch East Indies, Burma, Australia, New Zealand, and India.

Hoping that a show of force and partial embargo might lead the Japanese to rethink their aggressive policy, Roosevelt in May temporarily sent the fleet to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and in late July stopped the sale of aviation gasoline and high-grade scrap metals. But as Grew had predicted, rather than back down, the Japanese responded by moving militarily into northern Indochina and signing the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in late September.

As already noted (p. 114), Japan had previously allied with Germany and Japan in the so-called Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis of 1936-1937. The legal basis for that alliance had been the Anti-Comintern Pact, a vague document formally directed against Communism and the Soviet Union. That pact had been essentially destroyed by the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August, 1939, however. The Tripartite Pact of September 1940 replaced it and actually

established for the first time a formal military alliance between the three powers. By the terms of that alliance, each power recognized the proposed spheres of influence of the other two and pledged mutual military assistance should any of the three be attacked by a currently neutral country. Since the Soviet Union was explicitly excluded, the pact was clearly aimed at the United States. In effect, Germany and Japan were threatening the United States with a two-front war in hopes such a threat would stop Roosevelt from further opposing either of them.

In reality the Tripartite Pact was a diplomatic bluff, for none of the three powers trusted the other two sufficiently to provide for a true military alliance. Nevertheless it succeeded in convincing the Americans of a united threat against them. But the Japanese had misjudged American psychology as badly as the Americans had misjudged Japanese psychology. Rather than back off in the face of such a threat, American policy makers united in a decision to go even further than they had before in halting Japan as well as Germany. Even Grew in Tokyo concluded at this time in his famous "green light" telegram that Japan had become "one of the predatory powers" lacking "all moral and ethical sense" and a threat to the United States, and that a "show of force" was now necessary.

Roosevelt consequently placed an embargo on the export of all scrap iron and steel to any country save Great Britain and ordered the fleet to remain at Pearl Harbor indefinitely. In the ensuing months the United States would provide Chiang with loans, and eventually with lend-lease aid. It would also in effect create an American air force for the Chinese by allowing U.S. pilots to serve in the volunteer unit known as the "Flying Tigers" under Col. Claire Chennault.

The American economy dwarfed that of Japan in 1941. Given this fact, as well as the inability of the Japanese army to crush Chiang Kai-shek and end hostilities in China, war with the United States was the last thing Tokyo desired. Nor did it desire further armed conflict with the USSR in the aftermath of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and a stinging military defeat inflicted on its forces by the Red Army along the Manchurian border in 1939. Consequently, in the spring of 1941, Tokyo signed a neutrality treaty with the Soviet Union and sent to Washington a new ambassador, Nomura Kichisaburo, for special talks in an effort to resolve the growing crisis with the United States.

The ensuing Hull-Nomura talks failed for numerous reasons. Preoccupied with the situation in the Atlantic, Roosevelt provided his secretary

of state with little oversight or guidance, thereby giving free rein to the latter's rigid Wilsonian moralism. Furthermore, the proud Nomura's insistence on speaking his poor English rather than using an interpreter led to confusion and misunderstandings. So did the intervention of a well-meaning but inexperienced group led by two Catholic missionaries, the so-called John Doe Associates, who acted as intermediaries and composed compromise proposals that each side incorrectly saw as coming from the other side.

Even without these problems, success in the negotiations was highly improbable because of the direct conflict between the actual positions of the two nations. Tokyo wanted the United States to cease aiding Chiang, pressure him to make peace on Japanese terms, and restore trade in return for a Japanese promise to use only peaceful means in Southeast Asia. Hull insisted on Japanese acceptance, in return for a restoration of trade, of his "four principles": respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all nations, noninterference in the internal affairs of others, respect for the Open Door policy, and support for peaceful change in the Pacific. Translated into specifics, that meant Japanese military withdrawal from China and Indochina, recognition of Chiang, and disavowal of the Tripartite Pact. Compromise between such diametrically opposed positions was not possible. As one Japanese official accurately stated on July 10, Japanese acceptance of the Open Door and the status quo meant the end of Japan's New Order and acceptance of U.S. leadership in East Asia. To make matters worse, the misunderstandings engendered by the intervention of the John Doe Associates led to great bitterness and charges of deceit on both sides once their true positions became clear. Moreover, the Japanese found Hull's moralism hypocritical, his direct language insulting, and his demand for disavowal of the Tripartite Pact "outrageous."¹¹

Given these facts, the Japanese concluded in late July that they had no choice save to obtain conquests in Southeast Asia that would provide them with self-sufficiency before U.S. economic coercion strangled them—even if this led to war with the United States. On July 24 Japanese troops landed in southern Indochina preparatory to additional military moves in Southeast Asia. Roosevelt and Hull thereupon responded by breaking off discussions with Nomura and freezing all Japanese funds in the United States. Some scholars have argued that Roosevelt originally intended this freeze to be selective and flexible but that the bureaucracy interpreted it as total and that FDR concurred in light of public approval. Others disagree.¹² One way or the other, Britain and the Dutch government-in-exile quickly followed

the American example, thereby cutting Japan off from the supplies it needed to continue the war in China. Indeed, Japan now had only enough oil for twelve to eighteen months.

As Grew had accurately warned, the Japanese would not submit to such pressure. They still did not want war with the United States, a war they feared losing, but they preferred such a risk to humiliation and defeat. Consequently Japanese leaders agreed at a September 6 imperial conference to initiate a new set of talks with the Americans but simultaneously to prepare for war and the seizure of British, Dutch, and American possessions in Southeast Asia.

With time rapidly running out, prime minister Konoye Fumimaro even proposed a visit to Washington for direct talks with Roosevelt. On Hull's advice, FDR rejected the offer, insisting that preliminary terms had to be reached first by subordinates. Konoye thereupon resigned and was replaced by his war minister, Gen. Tojo Hideki, while a special Japanese emissary, Kurusu Saburo, was sent to join Nomura in Washington and present Japan's final offers. Those offers were phrased in two separate packages, the second of which constituted the absolute minimum agreement that Japan would accept and was to be presented only if and when the Americans rejected the first proposal. That absolute minimum boiled down to an American restoration of trade and granting Japan a free hand in China (meaning the end of the Open Door) in return for Japanese military withdrawal from Indochina, no additional military forces in Southeast Asia or the Pacific, and a pledge not to interpret the Tripartite Pact in such a way as to stab the United States in the back given the growing hostilities with Germany. Agreement on the basis of these terms had to be reached, the Japanese emissaries were warned, no later than November 25, a date later extended to November 29; for after that "things are automatically going to happen."

That meant war, something Roosevelt and his advisers well understood (though not exactly where and primarily against whom; see below, p. 146). Indeed, they knew both the terms of the Japanese proposals and the deadline before Nomura and Kurusu did, for American cryptographers had broken the Japanese diplomatic code (MAGIC). Those proposals remained totally unacceptable to Hull, but army and navy chiefs Gen. George C. Marshall and Adm. Harold R. Stark bluntly informed him and Roosevelt that they were unprepared for war in the Pacific and needed three months to beef up Philippine defenses, most notably via the sending of the

new long-range B-17 bomber known as the "Flying Fortress." Indeed, these bombers might even serve to deter Japan from initiating a war if sufficient time were allowed for their arrival.

Hull consequently prepared a temporary ninety-day agreement, a *modus vivendi*, whose proposals approached those in the Japanese Plan B, albeit with only a limited resumption of trade and sale of oil. But he never delivered it. The Chinese objected vehemently, and the British, Dutch, and Australian reactions were not enthusiastic. Nor was Roosevelt's, for this negative international reaction threatened to rupture the coalition of nations he had been building in opposition to Japan, and perhaps public support for his policies in the Atlantic (see p. 144-45, below). Consequently Hull, with FDR's approval, responded to the final Japanese proposal not with the ninety-day *modus vivendi* but with another list of moralistic principles and proposals, the most important of which demanded complete Japanese withdrawal from Indochina and in effect from China, as well as recognition of Chiang Kai-shek in return for a resumption of trade. Although interpreted by the Japanese and some later scholars as an ultimatum, Hull never intended it to be that. Nor did he ever intend it to be a serious proposal. Rather it was designed merely to serve as a restatement of his moral position in light of the obvious failure of negotiations. As he told Secretary of War Stimson just prior to delivery of his memorandum, he had "washed my hands of it and it is now in the hands of you and Knox—the Army and the Navy."

On December 7 Japanese planes taking off from aircraft carriers that had secretly sailed into waters north of Hawaii launched two devastating air raids on the U.S. fleet and air forces at Pearl Harbor, killing over 2,400 American servicemen, wounding 1,200 others, damaging or destroying three hundred airplanes, and sinking or severely damaging eight battleships as well as three cruisers, four destroyers, and four other ships. Simultaneously Japanese forces attacked U.S. and British possessions throughout the western Pacific. On the following day Roosevelt addressed Congress, labeling December 7 "a date which will live in infamy" and requesting a congressional declaration that war existed by act of Japan. Congress agreed by a unanimous vote in the Senate and only one negative vote in the House. "We are all in the same boat now," Roosevelt told Churchill.

That was not totally correct, since the United States was still not formally at war with Germany despite the naval hostilities in the Atlantic. And the lack of such a formal declaration of war created a huge potential

problem, for by the terms of the March Anglo-American ABC-1 agreement as well as the ensuing revised RAINBOW 5 U.S. war plan, the primary American effort in any war was to be against Germany, not Japan. Hitler resolved this problem for Roosevelt by declaring war on the United States on December 11. Congress reciprocated on December 12, thereby joining the preexisting European and Far Eastern conflicts into a truly global war.

Roosevelt's policies vis-à-vis China and Japan that resulted in the Pearl Harbor attack have aroused even more heated controversy than his policies toward Britain and Germany. Although most scholars now agree that Germany constituted a mortal threat to American security and that Britain was indeed America's first line of defense and a natural ally in this situation, many of them also emphasize that Japan did not constitute such a threat—or China such an ally. Nor was the Open Door policy in China a vital U.S. interest. Better, many have argued, for Roosevelt to have surrendered the policy and tempered Hull's rigid moralism in the interest of maintaining peace with Japan while war with Germany loomed on the horizon. Then, once Germany had been defeated, Japan could have been forced to back down without a bloody war. Indeed, even the ninety-day *modus vivendi* might have resulted in Japanese second thoughts, for by the time it ended the German failure to take Moscow and force a Soviet surrender would have been obvious. At the very least, it would have resulted in strengthened American defenses in the Philippines.¹³

Those defenses could not have been strengthened sufficiently to deter or defeat the Japanese, however, for the faith placed in the power of the B-17 was a delusion. Furthermore, what sort of agreement could Roosevelt have made with the military fanatics then ruling in Tokyo that did not totally abandon China, and indeed all of Asia with its huge population and natural resources? Would the resulting Japanese empire, far larger than Germany's, have been any less of a threat to the United States than the one Hitler was creating in Europe? And when the Chinese objected to the ninety-day *modus vivendi* and the British, Dutch, and Australians were nonsupportive, Roosevelt faced the possibility that even a temporary agreement could wreck the coalition he had been building to oppose further Japanese aggression. Equally if not more important, such a temporary agreement could also wreck the domestic support he had been building for aid to Britain and hostilities against Germany, since it asked the public to accept, albeit temporarily, the appeasement of Japan at the same time he

was asking it to accept his opposite conclusion that appeasement of Germany had been a mistake and that the nation should now risk war in the Atlantic to reverse that mistake. Moreover, reaching agreement with Japan would not only mean the end of an independent China, but also free Japanese military forces to attack the Soviet rear in Siberia, which in turn would have led to German victory over Russia by precluding Stalin from sending crack Siberian troops to the successful defense of Moscow.¹⁴ That in turn would have precluded any possibility of defeating Hitler. Admittedly American diplomacy vis-à-vis Japan could have been more realistic in 1941, but as explained directly above, that would by no means have guaranteed the United States a better situation than the one it now faced.

FDR AND PEARL HARBOR: BLUNDERS OR BACK DOOR TO WAR?

Soon after World War II ended, some critics began to accuse Roosevelt not merely of poor diplomacy with respect to the Japanese, but of actually manipulating them into war by both encouraging and allowing them to attack Pearl Harbor. Basing the fleet three thousand miles from the U.S. mainland in Hawaii left it exposed and made it an obvious target, while the July freeze left the Japanese with no choice save surrender or war. Moreover, as a result of MAGIC the president knew about Japanese war plans in advance. He nevertheless allowed the Japanese attack to occur in order to open a "back door" to the full-scale war against Hitler that he now desired but that neither the German dictator nor the public would grant him.¹⁵

The primary evidence for this conspiracy theory consists of the fact that, as previously noted, American cryptographers had broken the Japanese code and knew war was imminent. Yet this information was not shared with the army and navy commanders in Hawaii. Furthermore, no aircraft carriers, the most important naval weapon of World War II, were in Pearl Harbor on December 7—only dated battleships and smaller craft. The clear implication is that cryptographic intelligence revealed the Japanese war plan and that Roosevelt ordered his key capital ships out of the harbor while leaving the dated battleships as bait.

Although this thesis has been resurrected again and again over the last six decades, the actual historical evidence does not in any way support it. Indeed, such a conspiracy thesis and its continued popularity tell us much

more about the individuals who propound it, the nature of their times, the gullibility of the general public, and what historian Richard Hofstadter aptly labeled “the paranoid style in American politics,” than they do about what actually happened at Pearl Harbor and why.¹⁶

American cryptographers had indeed broken the Japanese code, but it was their *diplomatic* code, not any army or navy code. Consequently Roosevelt and his advisers knew from MAGIC that a Japanese attack was imminent if agreement was not reached by November 29 and issued a war warning to their Pacific commanders. But they did not know where that attack would take place or what the overall Japanese war plan was. Furthermore, Japan had to obtain oil quickly, and Japanese troop ships had been spotted heading south. The logical conclusion was that the Japanese intended to attack the oil-rich Dutch East Indies—and the Philippines that lay between those islands and Japan. That is where the attention of Roosevelt and his military advisers, as well as their cryptographers, remained focused. A simultaneous strike thousands of miles to the east against the U.S. fleet, the only force capable of challenging Japan, was never mentioned in the MAGIC cables and appeared to many to be beyond Japanese capabilities.

One reason it appeared beyond their capabilities was that no one yet realized the full power and range of the aircraft carrier. It was a relatively new weapon and in late 1941 not yet considered even equal, let alone superior, to the battleship. Indeed, the superiority of the aircraft carrier was realized only as a result of the Pearl Harbor attack, as well as ensuing naval battles in the Pacific. In December of 1941 the battleship was still the ultimate warship, and U.S. losses at Pearl Harbor were considered devastating. For Roosevelt to have initiated a war by sacrificing this enormous asset would have been insane.

Equally insane would have been a desire to start a second war with Japan as a means of formalizing the one already in progress against Germany—especially since both required scarce naval forces. So would any belief that Hitler, who had previously broken just about every treaty he had signed, would now actually honor his commitments to Japan and declare war on the United States. Indeed, by the terms of the defensive Tripartite Pact, Hitler did not have to do so, since Japan had attacked the United States rather than vice versa. That he did so anyway in no way negates the fact that no one who had lived through the 1930s would have banked on him to do so.

Such a conspiracy would also have required the collusion of Roosevelt's entire bipartisan cabinet as well as the army and navy chiefs of staff, both of whom were opposed to going to war with Japan in light of the German threat. So was the president, who had bluntly admitted during the summer that “I simply have not got enough navy to go around.” Moreover, the president was an avid sailor and had been an assistant secretary of the navy during World War I. So emotionally attached was he to the fleet that General Marshall once had to ask him to stop referring to the navy as “us” and to the army as “they.” Was such a person likely to sacrifice his beloved fleet in such an illogical course of action?

Plainly stated, Pearl Harbor was the result of human error, not conspiracy. Furthermore, the Japanese made a monumental error in attacking the fleet that in the long run would prove more serious than the American errors that allowed the attack to succeed. For the Pearl Harbor attack infuriated the American people and unified them in a way nothing else could have done. The isolationist-interventionist debate ended on December 7, never to be resurrected. In its place stood a people insistent on revenge and willing to accept the sacrifices that would be needed to obtain the total victory it now demanded. Japan could never win such a war. Indeed, it had never planned for such a war. Instead it had planned a limited, colonial war in which it would seize the areas it needed to achieve economic self-sufficiency, establish a strong defensive perimeter, throw back American counterattacks, and thereby convince the Americans, already preoccupied with Germany, to sign a negotiated peace. Pearl Harbor had been the prerequisite for this plan to work, much as the 1904 attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur had been the prerequisite for success in the limited Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. But by its impact on the American people, Pearl Harbor guaranteed the Japanese the unlimited and total war they could not win.

ROOSEVELT THE WAR LEADER

Roosevelt's primary responsibilities changed dramatically after the official U.S. entry into the war. As he once put it, the major problem, or “illness,” had shifted from the Depression to the war, and the physician to be called upon had consequently shifted from “Dr. New Deal” to “Dr. Win-the-War.” In reality, that latter doctor had begun to practice in 1940–1941.

Now, however, the issues were somewhat different. Instead of a focus on aid to Britain and China so as to preclude further German and Japanese conquests, Roosevelt had to focus on just how to defeat the Axis powers—and how to create a peaceful postwar world. Both tasks would involve him heavily in coalition diplomacy as well as military affairs and lead to some of his most controversial decisions.

Roosevelt proved to be one of the most effective war leaders in U.S. history. His administration was able to mobilize the American people for a total war effort comparable only to the Civil War. Under his leadership the United States did indeed become the “arsenal of democracy” that he had proposed in late 1940, massively expanding as well as converting its industrial base so as to supply both its allies and its own armed forces. By 1945 those forces would number over twelve million men and women, who were successfully deployed around the globe and who played a major role in achieving total victory.

World War II was a coalition as well as a global war, however, one that pitted the Axis powers against what Churchill would label the Grand Alliance, a large coalition dominated by its three most powerful members: Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Fighting alone, no one of the three could defeat their Axis enemies. Once the Allies were effectively unified, however, the Axis could not defeat them.

Roosevelt saw the achievement of such unity, both in the war and for the postwar era, as his major diplomatic task. He would succeed in the first component, wartime unity, but fail in the postwar component, as the Grand Alliance began to shatter at the very moment it achieved total military victory. The result would be the forty-five-year Soviet-American global conflict known as the Cold War. Numerous critics have blamed Roosevelt for this conflict and have sharply condemned what they regard as his dangerous and needless appeasement of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin during the war. The reality, however, was far different and more complex.

THE GRAND ALLIANCE: STRUCTURE AND CONFLICTS

The Grand Alliance had actually been forming throughout 1941. It was not formalized until January 1, 1942, however, when all twenty-six nations at war with any of the Axis powers signed in Washington a document, officially known as the Declaration by the United Nations, pledging them-

selves to complete victory over their enemies, cooperation with each other in that effort, no separate peace agreements, and a postwar peace based on the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

The essential problem this coalition faced in light of the Axis threat was the same one that had faced previous wartime alliances throughout history: profound disagreement between the members regarding both appropriate military strategy and what the postwar world should look like. Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States had been brought together only by their fear of a common enemy, but they could defeat that enemy only if they were able to compromise their numerous differences. Churchill, as usual, had the appropriate words to describe this situation when he exclaimed that the only thing worse than fighting with allies was fighting without them!

The primary method that the Allies used to compromise their differences during the war was the summit conference. Churchill and Roosevelt had already met in August of 1941 and would meet again on ten additional occasions during the war. Churchill and Stalin would meet on two additional occasions in Moscow, and all three leaders would meet twice—in Teheran and Yalta. Their military staffs would also meet during all of these conferences, with their foreign policy advisers attending many of them. The three foreign ministers also met separately on one occasion during the war. In addition, each leader would meet on occasion with key military and diplomatic officials of the other two. Roosevelt enjoyed these conferences enormously. They also served to increase his power during the war *vis-à-vis* Congress and made him the final and sole arbiter of American military and foreign policies.

The disagreements that necessitated so many high-level meetings were both military and political in nature. The Allies did agree on some essentials, most notably that Germany had to be defeated before Japan (the Soviet Union was not even at war with Japan before 1945) and that a postwar order had to be created in which these Axis powers could not rise again to begin yet a third world war. Unfortunately, however, they disagreed sharply over how to accomplish either of these objectives.

Strategically, Great Britain favored an approach focusing on naval blockade, bombing, subversion, and raids around the periphery of German-occupied Europe as a means of forcing a German collapse. This translated in 1942 into a focus on North Africa and the Mediterranean in order to, in Churchill's words, “close the ring” around Germany. The key motivations

behind this "indirect" strategy were threefold: a desire to preserve limited British manpower and avoid the horrendous continental casualties that had decimated an entire British generation in World War I; knowledge from bitter experiences in 1940–1941 as to how potent the German army was and a subsequent desire to avoid another direct and potentially disastrous confrontation with it; and a need to maintain and protect the British "lifeline" to the rest of its empire through the Mediterranean and Suez Canal as well as other British interests in the area, most notably the oil reserves and Great Britain's vital strategic position of the Middle East. Churchill was particularly attracted to this peripheral strategy, and indeed had championed it as an alternative approach during World War I.

The Soviet Union objected vehemently to this British approach. Instead, Stalin consistently demanded an Anglo-American cross-Channel attack as soon as possible in order to establish a strong "second front" in western Europe and thereby relieve the pressure on the hard-pressed Red armies, who were facing the overwhelming bulk of the German army, experiencing horrendous casualties, and throughout 1941–1942 standing on the brink of total defeat. The Soviets had admittedly halted the Germans short of Moscow in December of 1941, but only temporarily and at frightful cost. Spring 1942 would bring a new German offensive, this time to the south, and would result in the six-month Stalingrad campaign during which the Soviets would suffer as many combat deaths as the Americans did in the entire war. Nor would that statistic improve much after this campaign. Whereas combined British and American deaths in the war totaled fewer than one million, Soviet deaths totaled over twenty-five million. Given this fact and Stalin's intensely suspicious nature, British insistence on a peripheral strategy was perceived in Moscow as a deliberate attempt to allow the Germans and Russians to bleed each other to death so that Britain could emerge at war's end as the dominant European power.

U.S. military leaders and their planners strongly supported the Soviet approach as not only the best way to keep the Soviets in the war by diverting German forces from the East but also, by forcing Hitler into a two-front war on the European continent, as the quickest and most decisive way to defeat him. Such speed and decisiveness were particularly important to the Americans because they also bore primary responsibility for the war against Japan—a war that, despite the Germany-first approach, could not be put on indefinite hold. Roosevelt understood these facts and would come to support his military chiefs by mid-1943. In 1942 and early

1943, however, his position was closer to Churchill's, for a host of reasons explained below.

The postwar plans of each power were equally if not more antagonistic. Britain essentially desired a return to the status quo that had existed before Hitler's rise to power—most notably a balance of power on the European continent to ensure its security and maintenance of an extensive overseas empire to ensure its continued prosperity, power, and influence. The Soviets had no objection to the overseas imperial component of this policy but viewed the continental component as a continuation of its pre-war isolation by the capitalist powers and the structure that had allowed for three invasions of Russian territory since 1914. Instead, Stalin demanded postwar security in the form of a two-tiered territorial "buffer zone" in Eastern Europe, combined with the permanent weakening of Germany. The internal tier would consist of retention of the territories he had taken in 1939 as a result of the Nazi-Soviet Pact—eastern Poland, the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and portions of Rumania (Bessarabia and Bukovina)—most of which had been part of the Russian Empire before World War I. The external tier would consist of "friendly" governments in the rest of Eastern Europe, with Soviet military bases within these nations to make sure Germany did not rise again. But such security for the USSR would spell insecurity for the British by replacing German hegemony with Soviet hegemony. To make matters worse, Churchill had been a proponent of military intervention to crush the Soviet regime in 1918–1919 and was well-known as a fierce opponent of Communism. Consequently there was little if any trust between the British and Soviet leaders, and mutual suspicion merely exacerbated the very real strategic and policy conflicts between the two nations.

The official American position as enunciated by Cordell Hull and the State Department opposed both the British and the Soviet approaches to the postwar world, seeing them as power-oriented violations of the Atlantic Charter and preferring instead another effort at Wilsonian collective security via a new League of Nations. But this was not Roosevelt's preference. Much more attuned to his cousin Theodore's *realpolitik* than the Wilsonian concepts of his secretary of state, FDR desired great power control of the postwar world via a continuation of the wartime alliance, so that the victorious Allied powers could maintain world peace and preclude an Axis revival. He came to support a new League of Nations during the war when he realized its popularity with the American people (who came to view the

war as a "second chance" to reverse their error in rejecting the original League),¹⁷ and thus the best if not the only way to get the public to accept internationalism after the war and destroy the remnants of isolationist thinking. But within that framework Roosevelt saw the victorious great powers as the real peacekeepers.

Roosevelt would refer to these powers as the "Four Policemen." He added China to the three major Allies, not because it was a great power at the time but because he wanted to make it one. This was admittedly wishful thinking based upon his own and the public's long-held but largely mythical views about the future of China under American tutelage. But it was also based on a realistic desire to have a friendly power replace Japan as the major force in the Far East.

It was further based on a deeply held anticolonialism that Roosevelt shared with the American people as a whole. The United States had, after all, been born as a result of an anticolonial revolt, and throughout most of its history had viewed European overseas empires as causes of war and immoral. By World War II it had also come to view them as anachronisms. China it saw as breaking free of this colonialism and leading the rest of Asia into independence. Throughout the war FDR thus not only supported China as a great power and an end to remaining European imperialist practices regarding that nation, but also blasted European colonialism and made clear his determination to end it. This was especially true, and ironically in light of later history, regarding French Indochina (present-day Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam), which Roosevelt considered one of the worst examples of colonialism and which he was determined to see not returned to France at war's end. But it was also true in regard to other European colonies.¹⁸

Having tremendous faith in his own powers of persuasion, Roosevelt also saw himself throughout the war as a moderating "bridge" between Churchill and Stalin. Yet these postwar U.S. policies placed the nation on a collision course with both of its major allies—Stalin in regard to territorial acquisitions in Eastern Europe that violated the Atlantic Charter and the British in regard to China and the future of their own and other European empires. Indeed, Roosevelt's talk of colonial independence infuriated Churchill, who exploded when the president suggested independence for India and who proudly and publicly announced in late 1942 that he had not become prime minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.

Ever the practical politician, Roosevelt realized that he would have to compromise some of his policies in order to obtain the wartime and postwar cooperation with Stalin and Churchill necessary to win the war and preclude a German revival and a third world war. Consequently he would eventually prove willing to make territorial concessions to Stalin in Eastern Europe and retreat on his anticolonialism with Churchill in order to maintain Allied unity. But he feared a negative public reaction and subsequent revival of isolationism if any such territorial "deals" were made, as well as Allied arguments and a weakening of the coalition in the negotiating process. Consequently he joined with Hull in opposing any territorial agreements during the war, albeit for very different reasons. Unfortunately, however, this insistence on postponing territorial settlements once again put him at odds with Stalin, who insisted that there could be no real alliance without a prior division of the spoils, and with Churchill, who came to believe that a territorial agreement was the best way to limit Stalin's gains in the war.

The result of all this would be a series of bitter Allied controversies during the war that played a major role in the breakup of the coalition once the common enemy had been defeated. Nevertheless, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin would all make the concessions during the war that were needed to maintain the alliance and thereby guarantee victory. These successful efforts stand in stark contrast to the total failure of the Axis powers to overcome their suspicions and conflicting strategies and policies so as to come up with a coordinated approach to the war. Had they done so, they might very well have achieved victory in 1942, when they held the strategic initiative in all theaters.

The formal structure of the Grand Alliance was established when Churchill visited Washington in December–January 1941–1942 for his second meeting with Roosevelt. Code-named ARCADIA, that conference gave birth to the formal Declaration by the United Nations and, within that coalition, to the creation of a very special Anglo-American partnership. During and immediately after the conference, Churchill, Roosevelt, and their military chiefs agreed to theater priorities in alignment with their ABC-1 agreement of early 1941 (see above, p. 133), a division of the globe into theaters of primary responsibility (i.e., Pacific for the United States, Middle East for Great Britain, and combined responsibility in Europe), and an unprecedented fusion of their national war efforts under the innocuous-sounding phrase "unity of command." In all theaters of war, all army, navy, and air

forces of both powers were to be controlled by a single commander. To set priorities and plan global strategy for these forces, the U.S. and British military chiefs of each service (army, navy, air) would form the Combined Chiefs of Staff, a body that would meet in continuous session—in person during each Churchill-Roosevelt summit and by proxy in Washington at all other times. (To match British organization in this body, Roosevelt created the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the predecessor to the contemporary body of the same name.) Never in the history of warfare had two nations attempted to so fuse their military efforts.

Reinforcing as well as illustrating what Churchill would label this “special relationship” between the two English-speaking nations was the fact that the prime minister lived in the White House as Roosevelt’s guest during this conference—and during his two additional wartime visits to Washington in 1942 and 1943. And although they had previously met and gotten along very well at their 1941 conference off the coast of Newfoundland, it was at this meeting in Washington that a close personal relationship was truly established. Both men of course desired such a relationship in the interests of their countries, but something beyond that now occurred. Bluntly stated, the two leaders enjoyed each other’s company enormously and became friends. “It is fun to be in the same decade with you,” Roosevelt would tell Churchill in late January.¹⁹

THE SECOND FRONT CONTROVERSY OF 1942

The fun they had would often drive their military advisers to distraction, for the two leaders considered themselves excellent strategists and would often concoct military plans, late in the evening, that those advisers found harebrained. The close relationship would also infuriate and humiliate the American Joint Chiefs, who found Roosevelt more attuned to Churchill’s peripheral ideas as propounded during ARCADIA, most notably a 1942 invasion of French North Africa code-named GYMNAST, than to their own contrary proposals. In late March to early April, however, the president readily agreed to the cross-Channel alternative they had just devised and sent them to London to obtain British approval.

Roosevelt’s shift resulted from a series of military and diplomatic factors in early 1942. A shipping crisis in the Atlantic had forced the cancellation of GYMNAST at the very time the Japanese were running wild in

the Pacific and the public as well as the Chinese, Australians, New Zealanders, and U.S. commanders in the area were demanding major action to stop them. Maintenance of the critical Germany-first strategy in light of this pressure required the substitution for GYMNAST of another 1942 operation in the European theater—at the very moment that army chief General Marshall was presenting his cross-Channel proposal and the Soviets were warning of possible collapse in 1942 unless Anglo-American forces diverted part of the German army via such a cross-Channel attack. But Stalin was also demanding a treaty with Britain recognizing his territorial demands in Eastern Europe, and Churchill by March was willing to accede. Roosevelt and the State Department were not, however, for the reasons previously enumerated, and FDR saw the promise of a 1942 “second front” across the Channel as capable of convincing the Soviets to drop their demands for a territorial treaty. Consequently Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov visited both Roosevelt in Washington and Churchill in London during May and June, returning to Moscow without any territorial treaty but with a pledge from Roosevelt that “we expect the formation of a second front this year” and a public communiqué that the two men had reached “full understanding . . . with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a second front in Europe in 1942.”

Unfortunately no such agreement had really been reached. Given the shipping crisis and the fact that American mobilization was still in its early stages, Marshall’s plan had called for a major cross-Channel operation in 1943, not 1942. A small 1942 operation with whatever forces were then available (Operation SLEDGEHAMMER) had been included as a contingency operation in the event Russia was on the verge of collapse, but it would have to rely primarily on British troops and might well end in disaster. Having been thrown off the continent twice by the Germans, Churchill was not about to agree to let this happen a third time. He did agree to the American cross-Channel plans in April, but only in general terms (“in principle”) and primarily out of fear that rejection would lead the Americans to turn to the Pacific. In June he returned to Washington in an effort to convince Roosevelt to launch GYMNAST instead, an effort that succeeded by July. While by no means as effective militarily or diplomatically as a successful cross-Channel attack, the now renamed Operation TORCH against French North Africa stood a much better chance of success and would provide both Stalin and the American people with *some* 1942 offensive action in the European theater, as opposed to standing idle

for the entire year, building up for a 1943 invasion. As Churchill cabled Roosevelt, "Here is the true second front of 1942."

Stalin, however, disagreed. Indeed, he was incensed when Churchill flew to Moscow in August to inform him of this change of plans, which from his perspective would in no way divert German forces from the Eastern front but would involve temporary suspension of lend-lease convoys through the North Sea. He would thus be denied any Allied assistance as well as the postwar agreement he had demanded at the very moment the Germans were sweeping eastward and the battle for Stalingrad was beginning. America's allies in Asia and the Pacific were also upset, for they felt their theater was being dangerously ignored. So were the American Joint Chiefs, who had seen their commander in chief reject their proposals in favor of those offered by the prime minister of another nation. FDR had also ignored their warning that this diversion would doom cross-Channel plans for 1943 as well as 1942, a warning that would prove accurate. For although the TORCH landings in French-controlled Algeria and Morocco were successful in November of 1942, the Germans responded with a takeover of Tunisia that would keep Anglo-American forces embroiled in the area until May of 1943.

In January of 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt met again with their military advisers, this time in the recently captured Moroccan port of Casablanca, to plan their next moves (Stalin had been invited but had declined to attend in light of the huge battle still taking place in Stalingrad). Churchill and his chiefs of staff pressed for continuation in the Mediterranean, once Tunisia had been conquered, via an invasion of Sicily instead of a probably impossible effort to shift forces and cross the Channel in 1943. Once again Roosevelt overruled the negative opinion of his Joint Chiefs and agreed. The Allies would not cross the Channel until 1944 at the earliest.

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

At the end of the Casablanca Conference, Roosevelt made a major announcement to the press. Citing the historical example of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant during the American Civil War (inaccurately, as it turned out), he told the assembled reporters that Allied policy would be the same as Grant's—to demand the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers. Critics of Roo-

sevelt have argued that this apparently off-the-cuff announcement, which Churchill maintained came as a complete surprise to him, was a monumental blunder. It provided grist for the Nazi propaganda mill and led the Germans, fearing total destruction, to fight on to the bitter end. It also illustrated political bankruptcy on Roosevelt's part, for it substituted a purely military goal for what should have been political goals in the war. Moreover, it was a military goal so total that it would destroy Germany and Japan as major powers, thereby creating a worldwide power vacuum that the Soviets would try to fill.

Reality was far more complex. Contrary to Churchill's claim, unconditional surrender had previously been discussed in both Washington and London; only the timing of the announcement came as a surprise. Furthermore, it had long been the unstated Allied policy—at least since the enunciation of the Atlantic Charter, fulfillment of whose clauses required the complete destruction of the fascist governments and their ideologies in all of the Axis powers. It also represented an attempt to avoid the errors of World War I, when the Allies had in effect accepted a conditional German surrender and agreed to an armistice before any Allied soldiers had touched German soil. The result had been the creation of the "stab in the back" myth within Germany that Hitler had ridden to power (i.e., "We Germans were never defeated on the battlefield, but instead were stabbed in the back by the Socialists and the Jews"). This time, the Allied leaders realized, the German people had to be made aware of their defeat and their government completely remade. That would require their unconditional surrender and Allied military occupation. Moreover, Roosevelt made crystal clear in his announcement that unconditional surrender did *not* mean the destruction of the German people—only their Nazi government. And the Nazi propaganda mill did not need this particular statement to arouse the German people to continued resistance. Indeed, Nazi propaganda minister Josef Goebbels would probably have invented a similar statement for this purpose had he not used an incomplete and distorted version of the one Roosevelt provided.

But why did Roosevelt decide to enunciate this previously agreed-upon policy at this time? One reason was the perceived need to reassure the other allies, most notably the Soviets and the Chinese, of Anglo-American determination to eventually come to their assistance and not to sign a separate peace. This was particularly important in light of the lack of any positive Anglo-American response so far to their repeated demands for major

action in northern France and on the Asian mainland, combined with the unlikelihood of a positive response in 1943 given the Casablanca agreement to a continued Mediterranean focus, and subsequent fears that Stalin and/or Chiang might very well respond with a separate peace of their own. The statement was also necessary to reassure the British and American people, as well as those allies, in light of an event that had taken place during the invasion of French North Africa—the so-called Darlan Affair.

Morocco and Algeria had been under the military control of French forces that retained allegiance to the officially neutral but in reality collaborationist French government established at Vichy under World War I hero Marshal Henri Petain after the 1940 German conquest of the country. Contrary to the hopes of many British and American leaders, these French forces in North Africa had refused to lay down their arms when the British and Americans landed and had fought back, fiercely in some areas. No French officers seemed able or willing to stop this, including the British-backed Free French leader, Gen. Charles de Gaulle, or the American-backed Gen. Henri Giraud. Ironically, the one exception was Adm. Jean Darlan, commander in chief of the Vichy French armed forces as well as vice premier and official successor to Petain, who was in Algiers visiting his sick son and who was willing to change sides and order a cease-fire in return for future administrative control of French North Africa. Allied commander Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower agreed and was supported by his military and civilian superiors, but a public uproar resulted in both Britain and the United States over working with a known and infamous Nazi collaborator. Would a series of similar odious deals arise in the future, perhaps with Nazi officials directly below Hitler? Roosevelt and Churchill received very sharp criticisms in this regard, with the prime minister forced to defend the Darlan deal on the floor of the House of Commons. Darlan himself was conveniently assassinated by another Frenchman in late December, but that did not halt the criticisms of the deal and questions regarding the future. Roosevelt's announcement, following directly upon a public handshake between de Gaulle and Giraud, who had been chosen to replace Darlan, was a means of reassuring the public, and the Allies, for that matter, that this would not happen again.

Given all of the above, Roosevelt's announcement regarding unconditional surrender was thus a public assertion of a sound and previously agreed-upon Allied policy, done at this particular time to address specific problems within the alliance and Anglo-American public opinion. Its

enunciation at this time also tended to reinforce FDR's policy of postponing specific postwar territorial settlements. Such enunciation was by no means a blunder, and in all likelihood it did not lengthen the war or by itself create any power vacuum for the Soviets to fill that would not have been created in any event. No negotiated peace with Germany was either desirable, in the aftermath of the World War I experience, or possible, given Hitler's past record and the nature of the Nazi government. Moreover, unconditional surrender would in the end be applied only to Germany. Italy surrendered conditionally in 1943 and so did the Japanese, who were allowed to keep their emperor when they surrendered in 1945.

Roosevelt's announcement did not succeed in mollifying Stalin, however, who still demanded action across the Channel rather than mere words. The lack of such action led to a diplomatic crisis in mid-1943, as Stalin recalled his ambassadors from London and Washington and separate peace rumors filled the air.

THE MOSCOW-CAIRO-TEHERAN CONFERENCES AND WATERSHED

Roosevelt realized after the battle of Stalingrad that Russia would not only survive the German onslaught but would actually grow enormously in power as the war progressed and thus play a major role in the postwar world as well as in the Allied victory. Indeed, neither military victory nor a stable postwar peace enforced by the victors would be possible without the Russians. And Stalin continued to make clear that a second front in northern France remained the prerequisite for both wartime and postwar cooperation. It was also, FDR's military advisers consistently reminded him, the quickest and most efficient way to defeat Germany, and far superior to what they considered Churchill's dangerously defective peripheral ideas. Consequently Roosevelt supported their calls in the spring and summer of 1943 for a definite commitment to a 1944 cross-Channel assault to a much greater extent than he had their 1942 calls for a second front that year or in 1943.

Roosevelt also continued to try to arrange a meeting with Stalin, with or without Churchill. Indeed, in both 1942 and 1943, he attempted to set up a private meeting with the Soviet leader behind Churchill's back. That effort collapsed in June of 1943 when Stalin, citing a litany of broken

Anglo-American promises, exploded over the news that no second front would be launched until 1944. But this failure, along with the subsequent recall of Stalin's ambassadors and separate peace rumors, further reinforced the president's support for cross-Channel operations and his opposition, during May and August meetings with Churchill in Washington and Quebec, to continued British proposals for a Mediterranean focus. The two leaders and their military chiefs did agree, after the July invasion of Sicily and subsequent fall of Mussolini, to an invasion of the Italian mainland in order to knock Italy out of the war and stretch German forces, but only in preparation for and subsidiary to Operation OVERLORD, the new code name for the cross-Channel invasion that they now agreed would be launched in the spring of 1944.

Reassured on this matter, Stalin finally agreed to a "Big Three" meeting in Teheran during November, as well as a preliminary conference of the three foreign ministers in Moscow. During that preliminary meeting, Stalin and Molotov were quite amenable to the plans Hull brought with him for a combined Allied policy on the postwar treatment of Germany and establishment of a new League of Nations. That in turn led the secretary to announce to Congress on his return that a new Wilsonian order would indeed be established after the war and that "There will no longer be need for spheres of influence, for alliances, for balance of power, or any of the other special arrangements through which, in the unhappy past, the nations strove to safeguard their security or to promote their interests." Roosevelt did not believe in such utopian fantasies, but he did not publicly contradict his secretary of state or censor him, because he found such statements useful tools to get the American Congress and people to accept internationalism. If they would accept it only through a new League of Nations, so be it. But any new League would be run by his Four Policemen.

The second-front controversy was not over, however. Indeed, it would unexpectedly dominate the Teheran meeting. In the early fall, Churchill had begun to demand a prior meeting with Roosevelt in order to win agreement for yet another delay in cross-Channel operations, this time justified by his desire to take the island of Rhodes in the Aegean and bring Turkey into the war, as well by the need to break the military stalemate that had developed in Italy. Roosevelt agreed to a preliminary get-together in Cairo but was unwilling to jeopardize improved relations with the Soviets by agreeing to any postponement of OVERLORD. Consequently he invited Chiang Kai-shek to the Cairo meeting as a means of making sure that Far

Eastern affairs would dominate discussions and refused even to discuss an OVERLORD delay until he and Churchill met Stalin in Teheran.

In March of 1942, Roosevelt had informed Churchill that he could "personally handle Stalin better than either your Foreign Office or my State Department. Stalin hates the guts of all your top people. He thinks he likes me better, and I hope he will continue to do so." True or not, Roosevelt clearly believed this. Indeed, he was well aware of Stalin's distrust of Churchill as well as the British Foreign Office and U.S. State Department, which probably played a role in his efforts to arrange a private meeting with the Soviet dictator. At least as important, however, was his recognition of Soviet power and importance, and his subsequent unwillingness to let Churchill, who had visited Moscow in August of 1942, continue to take the lead in Allied relations.

Given his wartime and postwar goals as well as his assessment of Soviet importance and his faith in his own powers of persuasion, Roosevelt thus went to Teheran determined to befriend Stalin and break down the Soviet leader's suspicion of the West. That involved disabusing Stalin of the notion that he faced an Anglo-American common front. This was one reason why FDR refused to sanction a delay in OVERLORD at Cairo. It was also why at Teheran he would accept Stalin's invitation, in light of rumors of German assassination plots, to stay at the Soviet rather than the British embassy (the U.S. embassy was a mile away from both); meet privately with Stalin but not with Churchill; and ridicule the British prime minister in Stalin's presence, on one occasion doing so continually until he obtained from Stalin "a deep, heavy guffaw." Such behavior has led to much criticism of FDR for betraying and humiliating his true British friend and for naïvely believing that such behavior could break down Stalin's suspicions and make the bloody dictator a friend.

While this criticism is valid on a personal level (what sort of friend behaves this way?) it overstates the importance of such behavior diplomatically and ignores the fact that, at Teheran, Soviet and American strategic interests coincided, whereas British and American interests did not. In this regard the Cold War era cannot and should not be read back into 1943. Victory in the war required Allied strategic cooperation, and for both the United States and the Soviet Union that meant agreement to cross-Channel operations. For nearly two years now both powers had been thwarted in this regard by British opposition. At Teheran for the first time their leaders were able to combine their efforts and thereby force British agreement to OVERLORD

in the spring of 1944. They also forced British agreement to a supporting operation in southern France from Italy (Operation ANVIL), with Stalin in return promising both a major offensive in the East to coincide with OVERLORD and thus divert the Germans from northern France, and entry into the war against Japan once Germany had been defeated. In effect he was, by this pledge, offering Roosevelt a second front in the Far East if Roosevelt would finally deliver one in Europe. FDR quickly took the offer, and together they beat down Churchill's opposition over a three-day period.

Roosevelt and Stalin were able to do so not only because they outvoted Churchill, but also because by this juncture Britain had reached the peak of its wartime mobilization and was beginning to decline, whereas the enormous Soviet and American war efforts were still expanding and turning them into superpowers. Churchill later stated in this regard that he first realized at Teheran what a small nation Britain actually was compared to its allies: "There I sat with the great Russian bear on one side of me," he said, "with paws outstretched, and on the other side the great American buffalo, and between the two sat the poor little English donkey who was the only one . . . who knew the right way home." The buffalo and the bear disagreed as to what was the right way home, however, and together they forced the donkey to agree to what constituted, in effect, their future combined strategy for winning the war.

Churchill's formal surrender occurred on November 30, his sixty-ninth birthday. That evening he hosted a dinner party during which effusive toasts over the combined strategic agreement replaced the arguments, insults, and ridicule of the previous two days. Indeed, the ability finally to reach accord meant that the alliance would hold together despite all the previous disagreements, that it now possessed a combined strategy that would lead to victory, and that this cooperation could and hopefully would carry over to the postwar world. As the official American minutes of the dinner party noted, "those present had a sense of realization that historic understanding had been reached," and behind all the toasts "was the feeling that basic friendships had been established which there was every reason to believe would endure." Few extensive discussions or firm commitments regarding the postwar world occurred at Teheran, given the lengthy debates over Allied strategy, but the three did discuss informally a host of postwar issues, including Roosevelt's ideas about a new collective security organization run by his Four Policemen and the future of Germany, Poland, and Iran, and in such a manner as to

reinforce this conclusion. No disagreements appeared too difficult to overcome.

ALLIANCE VICTORIES AND PROBLEMS

Such euphoria appeared appropriate, given what then happened on the battlefields during 1944. Indeed, the Teheran military accords resulted in an extraordinary series of Allied victories, including the capture of Rome on June 4, the successful Anglo-American crossing of the Channel two days later and the subsequent defeat of German forces opposing them, the August landing in southern France, and the rapid sweep through the entire country, as well as much of Belgium and Luxembourg. Simultaneously the Soviets launched their promised and highly successful offensive in the East as one in a series of major campaigns that cleared the Germans out of their country and much of Eastern Europe in 1944. The severely shrunken German Empire was now caught in a multifront war that it could not win and that some thought could end in 1944. Major military successes also occurred in the Pacific in 1944, as U.S. forces breached the inner defenses of the Japanese Empire in both the Mariana Islands and the Philippines and, in the process, virtually destroyed Japan's navy and merchant fleet.

Similar success crowned Allied diplomatic efforts at postwar planning. During the summer of 1944 the Allies reached preliminary agreement on a postwar economic order at the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire. And at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in Washington during the fall they reached agreement on the basic structure for a new League of Nations, fittingly to be called the United Nations.

But by year's end major diplomatic as well as military problems had erupted to delay final victory and, indeed, to threaten Roosevelt's postwar plans. Militarily, Anglo-American forces faced stiffening German resistance in the fall and a very sharp and bloody German counteroffensive, known as the Battle of the Bulge, in December. Simultaneously, U.S. forces in the Pacific continued to face fierce Japanese resistance, but now combined with new suicide tactics that increased U.S. casualties enormously. On the Asian mainland, a major Japanese offensive led to the virtual collapse of the Chinese war effort and a crisis in Sino-American relations that threatened all of Roosevelt's plans for China. Simultaneously, a series of Anglo-American disputes erupted over Mediterranean strategy

and occupation policies, while a major politico-military disagreement over Poland threatened both of their relations with the Soviet Union. Before any of these occurred, however, Roosevelt faced a war-related crisis within his own cabinet over the proper response to the systematic German murder of Europe's millions of Jews.

THE NONRESPONSE TO THE HOLOCAUST

Nazi ideology contained a huge racist component that focused not only on the supposed racial inferiority of other peoples, but also on the Jews as the source of all evil in the world. During the 1930s Hitler's government had deprived German Jews of their citizenship and tried to force them out of German territory, only to find many of them back in it, along with millions of other Jews, as a result of German conquests in Europe. Consequently the Nazis began the systematic murder of these people, and in early 1942 they ratified what they labeled this "final solution" to the "Jewish problem." Their aim was nothing short of the physical annihilation of the entire Jewish people.

The response of Roosevelt and his administration to this horror was dismal. FDR's domestic political coalition had welcomed American Jews, as it had other recent immigrant groups, and those Jews had responded by voting for him in record percentages. But while he would court them domestically, speak out against Nazi behavior, and both call for and participate in a 1938 international conference to deal with the Jewish refugees who had been forced out of Germany, Roosevelt would not help those refugees enter the United States by challenging or attempting to alter the immigration laws of the 1920s that severely limited the number of immigrants allowed into the country. This failure to act was partially the result, once again, of fear of weakening his New Deal coalition over a foreign policy issue, and partially because any effort to expand the immigration quotas would fail in Congress because of the continued lack of jobs in the Great Depression, the nativism that had led to the passage of these laws in the first place, and the related anti-Semitism that existed in the United States as well as Europe. Already, domestic opponents were mocking Roosevelt's New Deal as the "Jew Deal." He would not give them further ammunition in a lost cause.

The refusal to act was compounded by the behavior of the State Department official to whom Roosevelt entrusted refugee policy, his old

friend Breckinridge Long. Whether for the obsessive security concerns he expressed or the anti-Semitism and racism that critics charge he shared with numerous other Americans, Long interpreted his responsibility as a mission to keep out of the country as many Jews and other immigrants as possible. So did most of his subordinates and representatives in Europe. The shift in German policy from expulsion to outright murder during the war did not alter their behavior. The United States and its allies did publicly condemn what they labeled "Nazi war crimes" and promised postwar justice. But there was no change in immigration policy and no other effort to rescue these doomed people.

In January of 1944, Roosevelt's treasury secretary and New York neighbor Henry Morgenthau Jr. sent the president a blistering attack on State Department behavior regarding what he bluntly called "One of the greatest crimes in history." "The matter of rescuing Jews from extermination," he advised FDR, "is a trust too great to remain in the hands of men who are indifferent, callous, and perhaps even hostile." Time was short, and the president needed to act. Roosevelt responded in 1944 with the establishment of the War Refugee Board, but it had only limited success. Indeed, by 1944 it was already too late for the millions of Jews who had already perished in Nazi gas chambers. Suggestions to bomb those gas chambers went unheeded by War Department officials, who resented civilian interference in their operations and who argued that the best way to halt the killings was to focus on the military defeat of Germany, not launch bombing missions that diverted them from this goal.²⁰

Roosevelt's poor record on this issue came to light only decades after the war, partially because accepted wisdom had been that his administration did not know about Nazi extermination policies before 1944. But recent scholarship has shown that it had such knowledge very early in the Nazi campaign, in mid-1942 if not earlier, and still did nothing.²¹ Partially this resulted from the bureaucratic insensitivity and obsessive concern with security of Long and his associates, as well as the anti-Semitism and nativism that they shared with large segments of the American public. Partially it stemmed from the fact that expanded immigration quotas could not help Jews trapped in German-occupied Europe during the war itself, and the fact that these Jews were not Americans and therefore in many minds not worth risking the lives of American bomber crews. Partially it stemmed from the preoccupation of Roosevelt and his advisers with other war-related issues that they considered far more important and the inability of American Jews

to apply sufficient pressure on Roosevelt to make this a high-priority issue. He often responded to such pressure by organized groups, but American Jewry was not well organized during the war. And ironically, he had so won them over during the 1930s that he had no reason to believe additional action was needed to maintain their support.

Finally, the Roosevelt administration's lack of action also resulted from disbelief, despite the evidence, that this extermination of an entire people was actually happening. Americans had discovered during the 1930s that extensive British propaganda about German atrocities during World War I had been false, and many of them thus refused to believe the very true reports of such atrocities during World War II. Furthermore, while contemporary readers know that the reports of such atrocities were true, at the time they were simply too horrifying and incredible for many to comprehend and accept. On a certain level, disbelief pervaded the administration as much as insensitivity. This is not to excuse the behavior of Roosevelt and his subordinates, but simply to understand it. Despite contemporary confusion, the two are not the same.

THE CHINA TANGLE

The military situation in China was the major exception to the string of Allied victories that occurred in 1944. In early 1942, Roosevelt had sent to China Gen. Joseph Stilwell, one of his best officers and an individual with extensive experience in that country, to serve as both lend-lease administrator and Chiang's chief of staff in an effort to weave the Chinese into the Allied war effort. After a humiliating 1942 defeat in Burma, Stilwell had focused on the training of Chinese troops to retake that country and reopen the Burma Road supply route, as well as to effectively fight the large Japanese army occupying much of China. But Chiang, Stilwell soon discovered, had no intention of using his troops for these purposes. He welcomed Stilwell's training and the lend-lease assistance that the American general also controlled, but he intended to preserve his forces as much as possible for a postwar continuation of the civil war with Mao Tse-tung's (Mao Zedong's) Communists that had been raging since 1927, while the Americans took care of the Japanese in the Pacific. The acerbic Stilwell quickly became both furious at and contemptuous of Chiang and his cor-

rupt regime, referring to the Chinese leader in his diary as "Peanut" and his Kuomintang (Guomindang) Party as a bunch of fascists.

Stilwell was additionally frustrated by U.S. general Claire Chennault, who before Pearl Harbor had commanded the U.S. volunteer pilots known as the Flying Tigers and who after U.S. entry into the war had been placed in charge of the U.S. Army Air Forces in China. A firm believer in the doctrine known as strategic bombing, Chennault argued that a major bombing campaign could by itself defeat the Japanese and that his air forces rather than Stilwell's ground forces should receive the bulk of the military supplies still able to get to China from India via an air route over the Himalayas known as the Hump. Stilwell warned that, without strong and reliable ground forces to stop them, the Japanese would simply overrun the air bases. He was supported by army chief Marshall, but Chennault's plan fit in with Chiang's and thus won the Chinese leader's approval.

It also won Roosevelt's approval. Throughout the war, FDR faced a serious disconnect between his plans to make China one of the postwar Four Policemen and its position near the bottom of the Anglo-American list of strategic priorities, given the "Germany first" strategy. In 1942 FDR attempted to compensate for this by sending Stilwell and additional loans to Chiang as well as promising an end to extraterritoriality, an imperialist vestige whereby westerners in China who were accused of a crime were judged by their own, not Chinese, courts and laws. In 1943 Roosevelt continued his compensation efforts by siding with Chiang and approving Chennault's plan despite Marshall's opposition, and by emphasizing the importance of combined Anglo-American-Chinese operations in Burma to reopen the land supply route to China. Such operations were continually postponed throughout 1943, however, and the objectives consistently diminished.

At the November 1943 Cairo Conference, Roosevelt once again attempted to compensate by promising Chiang an amphibious operation in the Bay of Bengal and by a public statement known as the Cairo Declaration. Focusing on postwar as well as wartime issues, that document stated not only that Britain, China, and the United States were in agreement on future military operations in Asia but also that, at war's end, Japan would be stripped of all its conquests since 1914, China would regain all territories that had belonged to it, and Korea would become independent. Clearly, Roosevelt was attempting to build up China both militarily during the war and diplomatically for the postwar world.

The military effort failed wretchedly. First, Roosevelt was forced because of OVERLORD and a landing craft shortage to renege on his promise of a 1944 amphibious operation in the Bay of Bengal and extensive operations in Burma. Then, Stilwell was proven correct when the Japanese responded to Chennault's air campaign with a major and highly successful ground offensive in the spring and summer of 1944 that captured the air bases, extensively expanded the area under Japanese control and completed their conquest of the entire Chinese coastline, threatened what remained of the Chinese war effort, and led Chiang to demand the withdrawal of Stilwell's trained Chinese forces from the north Burma front.

Roosevelt had previously supported Chiang and rejected calls by Marshall as well as Stilwell for a showdown with Chiang. But he could not ignore the military catastrophe now unfolding. Furthermore, he had begun to sour on Chiang and his Wellesley-educated wife, whose vanity and arrogance were revealed during a 1942-1943 visit and stay at the White House. Consequently FDR finally agreed to the showdown Marshall had been recommending by threatening Chiang with a cutoff of all aid unless Stilwell was in effect placed in charge of the entire Chinese war effort. Chiang at first appeared to accede to this humiliating surrender of his power, at least formally, but if he was ever serious he quickly changed his mind. Furious at Stilwell for this episode as well as a host of past slights and the general's desire to make contact with Communist forces that were effectively fighting the Japanese, he asserted in October that he had lost faith in the American general and demanded his recall.

In effect, Chiang had called Roosevelt's bluff. The president held the aid card, but China was simply too important to his postwar plans for him to play it fully and thereby risk Chiang's defeat and/or alienation. Furthermore, FDR himself had helped to create a domestic Frankenstein monster by joining Chiang's vocal supporters within the United States (the so-called China Lobby) in building up the Chinese leader's image as the George Washington of China. Consequently any break with Chiang could seriously affect the public support for the war that he had so carefully constructed. Roosevelt thus agreed to the recall of Stilwell. His replacement, Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, proved to be much more diplomatic and successful in his relations with Chiang. But from this point onward Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff minimized what they could expect of Chiang both during and after the war. Far from accidentally, Roosevelt's assault on British and other European colonialism began to wane at this time, while

both he and the Joint Chiefs became even more concerned with securing Soviet entry into the war against Japan so that the Red Army could replace the ineffective Chinese as the main force tying down the Japanese army on the Asian mainland.

ANGLO-SOVIET-AMERICAN CONFLICTS

Unfortunately, however, U.S. relations with the British and the Soviets also soured in 1944. During the first half of the year, Anglo-American disputes dominated. During the second half of the year, relations with the Soviets also became badly frayed.

The Anglo-American disagreements of early 1944 were once again strategic in nature as Churchill, growing more fearful of postwar Soviet power, pressed for cancellation of Operation ANVIL against southern France so that Allied forces in Italy could instead shift eastward for a movement down the Dalmatian coast and through the Ljubljana Gap toward Vienna and the Hungarian plain. To Roosevelt and his advisers, this was yet another example of Churchill's continued effort to get Anglo-American forces into the Balkans for British political purposes. It also detracted from OVERLORD and promised military defeat in mountainous terrain as well as serious conflict with the Soviets. Moreover, it violated pledges made to them at Teheran regarding ANVIL. Consequently Roosevelt and the JCS refused to agree to Churchill's proposal and used their growing military and economic preponderance within the alliance to bludgeon the prime minister into acquiescence on ANVIL, which was now renamed DRAGOON. Illustrating the forced nature of his agreement, Churchill began to speak of being "dragooned" into accepting the operation. Even after the August landings in southern France, he continued to propose a movement from Italy into the Balkans that the Americans continued to angrily reject.

Anglo-American conflict over postwar economic issues also occurred in 1944, both at the Bretton Woods Conference in July and at the September Anglo-American summit meeting in Quebec. By this time it was more than obvious that any postwar economic and financial system would be dominated by the American economy, which continued to grow and by war's end would be responsible for half of the world's total gross national product, and by American money that would be needed for postwar reconstruction. At Bretton Woods, American negotiators made clear once

again that such funds would be available to Britain only if London agreed to a global Open Door policy and abandoned its imperial preference system of trade. The destitute and desperate British were forced to concede, but they were anything but pleased by such behavior. When FDR during the Quebec Conference delayed signing an agreement to continue lend-lease to Britain between a German and a Japanese defeat, Churchill sardonically asked, "What do you want me to do? Get on my hind legs and beg, like [your pet dog] Fala?"

Far more menacing to Roosevelt were problems that simultaneously erupted with Stalin. At Dumbarton Oaks, the Allied delegates had reached agreement on the basic structure of the postwar United Nations, a structure that would include a Security Council run by the great powers as well as a General Assembly for all members. The Soviets, however, fearful that their wartime allies might turn on them, demanded sixteen seats in the General Assembly, one for each supposed Soviet "republic" within the Soviet Union, to counter the multiple votes that Britain would have because of the Commonwealth nations and the United States would control in Latin America. They also demanded an absolute veto in the Security Council on all matters, including disputes to which they were a party. The British and the Americans rejected both demands, but Stalin refused to back down. Continuation of this disagreement could doom the postwar organization and with it, both Roosevelt's plans and public support for an interventionist foreign policy.

Equally if not more menacing was the crisis that erupted in regard to Poland during August and September. It was a crisis with deep roots. In 1939, Stalin had joined Hitler in the invasion and partition of Poland and had refused to recognize the Polish government-in-exile that established itself in London. Diplomatic relations were eventually established after Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, but they quickly became strained over Stalin's insistence on keeping the eastern portion of Poland that he had taken in 1939, something the Polish government refused to sanction, and his refusal to account for thousands of Polish officers missing since that date. In the spring of 1943, Germany announced that it had discovered the bodies of those officers, who it claimed had been killed by the Russians and buried in the Katyn Forest. Moscow heatedly denied the charge and countered that the Germans themselves had murdered the officers during their 1941 invasion. (The Soviets had indeed killed them, but this was some-

thing they would not admit for nearly fifty years.) When the Germans in 1943 proposed a Red Cross investigation and the Poles accepted the offer, Stalin angrily broke diplomatic relations with them and began to form a puppet government that would ignore this atrocity and agree to Soviet retention of eastern Poland.

At Teheran, Churchill had attempted to resolve the diplomatic crisis and impasse by proposing, with matchsticks to illustrate his idea, that Poland be compensated for its loss of territory in the East with German territory in the West. Stalin appeared willing to accept this proposal, but refused to reestablish diplomatic relations with the Poles before they accepted it—which they refused to do. Fast running out of options as the Red Army crossed the old Polish border, occupied the territory in question, and in August approached Warsaw, their underground force known as the Home Army launched a revolt against the German occupiers in the capital in the hopes of liberating it before the Red Army arrived, thus giving them a major bargaining chip. But when the Germans counterattacked, the Red Army halted outside Warsaw on the east bank of the Vistula River, which allowed the Germans to destroy both the Home Army and the city. Churchill and Roosevelt pleaded with Stalin to rescue the Poles and/or allow the Anglo-American air forces to drop supplies and land in Soviet-controlled territory. Stalin refused both requests until the situation was hopeless, leading many American officials to begin to question Roosevelt's belief that postwar cooperation was possible with such an individual.

Churchill continued to believe that it was, though only if concrete agreements were reached before the Red Army totally overran Eastern Europe. With his hopes of preventing this dashed by the American refusal to cancel ANVIL and/or invade Yugoslavia, and Stalin behaving as he did over Warsaw, Churchill in October flew to Moscow for a second time to finalize a territorial deal in the Balkans. As proposed by him and accepted by Stalin with modifications, Britain would agree to predominant Soviet postwar influence in Bulgaria and Rumania in return for Soviet agreement to predominant British influence in Greece and fifty-fifty influence in Yugoslavia and Hungary. Two months later Churchill made use of this agreement to crush an uprising of Greek Communist guerrilla forces against the Royal Greek government that he had reinstated in light of German withdrawal from the area. Numerous Americans angrily protested such behavior, though Stalin did not.

For Roosevelt, however, this event and those preceding it were ominous. At Moscow his two allies had signed exactly the sort of secret territorial agreement he had consistently tried to avoid for fear it would disillusion the American people and doom his efforts to persuade them to accept postwar internationalism. So could Soviet behavior in Poland and British behavior in Greece. It was obvious that his allies were determined to have such agreements, however, and that, given both their behavior and the approach of victory, he could no longer avoid them. Clearly, it was time for a second Big Three meeting, this time to be held at the Crimean resort of Yalta in the Soviet Union.

THE YALTA CONFERENCE

The ensuing Big Three conference in February of 1945 remains the most famous, or infamous, of the many wartime summit conferences that Roosevelt attended. For nearly six decades now, critics have charged that a naïve and mentally as well as physically disabled and dying FDR needlessly gave away half of the world to Stalin and thereby guaranteed the Cold War that would follow. That FDR remained physically disabled from polio and confined to a wheelchair, as he had been throughout his presidency, is correct. That he was dying from serious heart disease during the Yalta Conference is also correct, and within two months of the conference he would indeed be dead. But whether or not his illness impaired his mental abilities at Yalta remains very questionable, for his behavior at the conference was similar to the behavior he had exhibited throughout his presidency. And in reality, he gave away nothing at the conference that he actually possessed. To argue that he did misreads the situation that existed in February of 1945 and the resulting major issues, and it incorrectly projects later issues and values onto this time period.

Yalta was a wartime conference called to plan final military operations against Germany and future operations against Japan, to ratify postwar agreements tentatively discussed at Teheran and/or reached by subordinates in 1944, to attempt to compromise differences that had arisen and that those subordinates had been unable to resolve, and to deal with other postwar issues the three leaders had previously postponed or avoided. If successful in these endeavors, the Allies would be able to achieve both total military victory in the war and postwar cooperation that would ensure the

peace. If they failed, the war could end short of total victory and/or simply set the stage for Axis revival and another war in the future.

It was because the stakes were so high, and because Stalin refused to leave the Soviet Union, that an obviously ill Roosevelt agreed after election to a fourth term in November to a conference at such a lengthy distance from the United States. Situated on the Black Sea, Yalta had been a resort of the czars and the Russian aristocracy and possessed a very temperate climate. It was in that sense a very suitable spot for a February Big Three meeting. But it had only recently and forcefully been liberated from the Germans and was thus hardly ready for their arrival, despite massive Soviet efforts to clean it up. Furthermore, it was situated on the southern end of the Crimean peninsula, an extremely distant and difficult location to reach even today. "We could not have found a worse place for a meeting if we had spent ten years on research," Churchill told Hopkins just before the conference.

The Yalta discussions and the agreements that followed were both quite lengthy and complex. Most important were those concerning the postwar United Nations organization, the military occupation and future of Germany, the boundaries and government of Poland, future governments in the rest of Europe, and the terms for Soviet entry into the war against Japan.

On the United Nations, the Big Three reached agreement on the remaining structural issues of the Security Council veto and the number of Soviet seats in the General Assembly. They further agreed that a conference would take place in San Francisco in late April to actually write the charter for the new international organization and settled on an invitation to the conference that included guidelines for that charter.

In regard to Germany, the three agreed to combined military operations to achieve total victory and the postwar division of the country into zones of occupation. The Soviets would control the eastern zone, the British the northwest, and the Americans the southwest zone, with the capital of Berlin within the Soviet zone similarly divided. They also agreed that a fourth zone in Germany be created for France out of the two western zones. Within these zones the victorious powers were to possess supreme authority, including the power to disarm, demilitarize, and dismember Germany "as they deem requisite." Furthermore, reparations were to be made in kind via equipment, tools, and labor, with the amount to be determined by an Allied Reparations Committee in Moscow. The Soviets and

Americans but not the British agreed to the figure of \$20 billion "as a basis for discussion" in Moscow, with 50 percent going to the Soviet Union. War crimes trials were to take place, with the foreign secretaries directed to arrange and report on this matter.

Poland was to lose territory in the east to the Soviet Union but be compensated with German territory in the west. A puppet government that the Soviets had already established and recently recognized was to be reorganized so as to include individuals from within Poland and abroad (meaning the London-based government-in-exile) and recognized by all the Allies, with free elections to follow. In the Declaration on Liberated Europe the three Allies also promised democratic elections and institutions throughout the continent, as promised in the Atlantic Charter.

In the Far East Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan two to three months after the defeat of Germany. In return he would retain the pro-Soviet status quo in Outer Mongolia and receive the Japanese Kurile Islands as well as all the territories and special rights in China that Russia had lost in its 1904–1905 war with Japan—the southern half of Sakhalin Island, a lease on Port Arthur, internationalization of the Chinese port of Dairen with preeminent Soviet interests, and joint operation of the Chinese railroads to that port—with the United States to obtain Chiang's agreement to these terms and the Soviet Union in return to conclude a treaty of alliance with Chiang.

After the war, critics labeled these accords a sellout by Roosevelt of the peoples of both Europe and Asia. In Europe the president had given away Poland and all of eastern Germany, with Berlin within that zone, in return for worthless agreements regarding a United Nations that would prove totally ineffective and free elections that Stalin had no intention of allowing in the areas his armies occupied. In the Far East, FDR had compromised Chinese sovereignty and thereby set the stage for the postwar Communist triumph in return for a Soviet entry into the Far Eastern war that was unnecessary in light of U.S. military successes and the atomic bomb.

Such an interpretation misunderstands the goals of Roosevelt and his colleagues at this time and ignores the previous wartime history of each of these issues. It similarly ignores or misunderstands the weakness of the American military position vis-à-vis the Soviets in February of 1945 had postwar conflict indeed been the primary issue—which it was not for any of them.

The primary goals of the Big Three at Yalta were to achieve total victory and compromise their differences so as to remain united in the post-

war world. Moreover, each of their major agreements had a previous history, and on each of them all three compromised the differences that remained.

The basis for the United Nations, for example, had been established at Teheran and Dumbarton Oaks. As previously stated, all three had agreed at Dumbarton Oaks on the basic structure of the postwar United Nations but had disagreed as to the extent of the veto power in the Security Council and the number of Soviet seats in the General Assembly. At Yalta Stalin agreed to three rather than the sixteen seats he had demanded at Dumbarton Oaks, offered the same to Roosevelt, gave up his insistence on an absolute veto, and accepted the more limited American proposal that the veto not include procedural matters and that abstention be used instead on matters in which a dissenting member was a party. He also accepted veto power for France and China as proposed by Britain and the United States. Simultaneously, Roosevelt backed off on his earlier proposal for UN trusteeships over colonies, which he had originally seen as a way to end European colonialism and to which Churchill had objected vehemently, and agreed instead to Churchill's proposal that trusteeships be limited to old League of Nations mandates, conquered enemy territory, and colonies voluntarily placed in the system.

Soviet entry into the war against Japan had similarly been discussed at Teheran, and Stalin had made clear his price. Military occupation, disarmament, and possible dismemberment of Germany had also been discussed at Teheran, and in 1944 the newly established European Advisory Commission meeting in London had agreed to the zonal division that was ratified at Yalta. Indeed, it would have been ratified earlier, save that Roosevelt objected to the southwestern rather than the northwestern zone for his troops—and any zone for a France now controlled by de Gaulle, whom he loathed. He did not change his mind on these matters until September. FDR thus compromised on these matters, as did Stalin in agreeing to the French zone. Dismemberment was listed only as a possibility because none of the three powers had yet made up its mind internally, let alone with each other, as to whether or not this was a good idea.

The basic problem in this regard was that a unified and economically strong Germany appeared necessary for the postwar economic health and thus the peace of Europe, but a potential menace to the rest of Europe militarily. At the September Quebec Conference, Churchill and Roosevelt had appeared to agree that the military menace was paramount when they

agreed to the so-called Pastoralization Plan of Treasury Secretary Morgenthau prohibiting any heavy industry in Germany, but objections from the U.S. State Department and War Department as well as the British Foreign Office that this would create economic and political chaos throughout Europe soon led to second thoughts. No final decisions had been reached by February of 1945, and none were stated as absolutes in the Yalta Protocol.

As for Poland, its boundary shift had also been discussed at Teheran, and the Warsaw Affair of 1944, as well as the ensuing advances of the Red Army, had left Stalin and his puppet government in total control of the country by the time the conference opened. The best that Roosevelt could obtain, given these facts, was Stalin's agreement to allow London Poles into the government and eventually hold free elections, and the president clearly realized how limited these concessions were. When Adm. William D. Leahy of the Joint Chiefs objected that the Polish accord was "so elastic that the Russians can stretch it all the way from Yalta to Washington without technically breaking it," Roosevelt responded, "I know, Bill—I know it. But it's the best I can do for Poland at this time."

Discussions over Poland took up more time at the conference than any other single issue, and in the end would be a major factor in the breakup of the Grand Alliance and the advent of the Cold War. At Yalta, however, Roosevelt had other, and from his perspective more important and more realizable goals than a Poland free from Soviet control—which he could not achieve under any circumstances. Without agreement on the United Nations he feared a revival of isolationism within the United States that would guarantee an Axis revival and World War III. Such agreement on the postwar UN was achieved at Yalta. Lack of agreement on postwar Germany similarly promised only German revival and a third world war. Again, such agreement was achieved. And in light of the virtual collapse of Chinese resistance in the summer and fall of 1944, lack of agreement on Soviet entry into the war against Japan meant that the bulk of the Japanese army would be freed to fight U.S. forces. Similarly, a postwar Soviet refusal to work with Chiang instead of Mao could doom what remained of Roosevelt's postwar plans in China. And similarly, Roosevelt obtained Stalin's agreement to recognize and work with Chiang.

As for the Cold War that would soon replace cooperation, it was not desired or expected by any of the three leaders. All of them wanted cooperation, even Stalin, albeit on his own terms. Belief that such cooperation would occur may have been a mirage, but if so it was a mirage shared by all

three and by no means the monopoly of Roosevelt. And all three, as well as their advisers, left Yalta convinced that they had succeeded in reconciling their differences and that both military victory and postwar cooperation would ensue. Indeed, General Marshall told the press a few weeks later that the Yalta accords constituted a major German defeat in that they precluded the Allied split on which Berlin had always planned. Hopkins later stated,

We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for and talking about for so many years. We were absolutely certain that we had won the first great victory of the peace—and by "we" I mean *all* of us, the whole civilized human race. The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine.

Even if Roosevelt had been prescient enough to see the coming Cold War and considered it unavoidable, his military position with regard to the Soviets was anything but strong enough to have obtained a better deal than the one he did obtain at Yalta. In this regard, FDR "gave away" absolutely nothing that he actually possessed in February of 1945. The Red Army occupied all of Poland and was less than forty-five miles from Berlin, whereas Eisenhower's forces were just recovering from the Battle of the Bulge and remained on the west side of the Rhine River, more than 250 miles from the German capital. Indeed, at that time it appeared possible that the Red Army might reach the Rhine before Eisenhower crossed it. Furthermore, in light of the Chinese collapse, the continued fanatical and suicidal Japanese resistance that U.S. forces were facing, and the ensuing hideous casualties those forces were taking, Roosevelt's military advisers desperately desired Soviet entry into the Far Eastern war and considered the price paid to be well worth it. Indeed, Marshall stated that, for that agreement alone, "I would have gladly stayed [in Yalta] a whole month." As for the atomic bomb, it did not even exist in February of 1945.

It might exist before the war ended, however, and it was clearly something that interested Roosevelt as a method of balancing Soviet power should Stalin prove unwilling to cooperate. Indeed, after the Quebec Conference Roosevelt had agreed with Churchill to maintain any atomic bomb that was developed as an Anglo-American monopoly and not to share its

secrets with Stalin, as the Danish nuclear physicist Niels Bohr had proposed. Consequently he did not even mention the potential weapon at Yalta. Simultaneously the additional bait that Roosevelt held out to Stalin for cooperation was the possibility of a massive postwar loan from the United States. Once again, the master card player was keeping a few cards up his sleeve.

Roosevelt did appease Stalin at Yalta, as his critics have charged, especially on the issue of Poland. But he also appeased Churchill on the U.S. occupation zone in Germany, a zone for France as well as a French veto in the UN, and severe limits as to what territories would be placed under UN trusteeships—limits that clearly compromised his previous anticolonialism. Churchill, as well as Roosevelt, appeased Stalin on numerous issues at Yalta, while Stalin appeased Roosevelt and Churchill on numerous aspects of the UN and German issues. Interestingly, he also vetoed an immediate assault on Berlin requested by his commanders that could have advanced his armies even farther westward once agreement on German occupation zones had been reached. In this regard it is important to note that, while appeasement became a dirty word as a result of the events of the 1930s, it had long been an accepted diplomatic practice among allies and nations with an otherwise close relationship, and Churchill and Stalin practiced it at Yalta as much as Roosevelt did.

Unfortunately, however, the Yalta accords began to break down even before the ink was dry, as Stalin brutally established his dominance in Poland, Rumania, and everywhere else his armies moved, thereby making a mockery of the Yalta agreement to a coalition government in Poland and free elections throughout Europe that he probably dismissed as mere window dressing. As victory approached in March and April of 1945, he also accused his allies of trying to negotiate a separate peace with the Germans. Roosevelt responded harshly, expressing to Stalin both "astonishment" and "bitter resentment" over what he bluntly termed "such vile misrepresentations of my actions or those of my subordinates." What he would have done had he lived must always remain a matter of conjecture. Despite these harsh words, he continued to refuse to sanction a "race" for Berlin as desired by Churchill but opposed by Eisenhower, and in an April 11 telegram he told Churchill that he "would minimize the general Soviet problems as much as possible because these problems, in one form or another, seem to arise every day and most of them straighten out." But he then continued, "We must be firm, however, and our course thus far is correct." On the next

day he died, taking with him whatever specific plans and ideas for Soviet-American relations that he may have had.

CONCLUSIONS

At the time of Roosevelt's death, millions of U.S. armed forces were deployed around the world and, in combination with their allies, were only a few weeks away from achieving total victory in Europe and a few months away from a similar victory in the Pacific and Far East. Roosevelt deserves a great deal of the credit, for he had overseen the creation of these forces, now consisting of the largest navy and air force in the world, as well as an army second in size only to the Soviets'. He had also overseen the recovery, mobilization, and enormous expansion of the American economy that undergirded this military power. Furthermore, he had led the nation into the war, helped to sustain allies with military supplies both before and after that entry, and played a major role in the creation and effective functioning of the alliance that was needed to defeat the Axis. In the process he had made the United States the greatest power the world had ever seen, with one of the lowest casualty figures of any of the major combatants—a fact often ignored by his critics. As the British historian A. J. P. Taylor once quipped, "Of the three great men at the top [of the Grand Alliance], Roosevelt was the only one who knew what he was doing: he made the United States the greatest power in the world at virtually no cost."²²

This is not to say that Roosevelt's diplomacy was flawless. Far from it. Although this essay has defended FDR from many of the criticisms usually leveled against him, most notably but far from exclusively his Soviet policy, it has also noted that he does not fully deserve the credit he has received for some of his policies, such as the Good Neighbor policy in Latin America and his support for a postwar United Nations organization. It has also noted his numerous failures. He sacrificed any possibility of an effective foreign policy to stop the Axis powers in the 1930s by supporting a disastrous American isolationism and Anglo-French appeasement in the interests of preserving his domestic program; similarly temporized on what are today considered fundamental moral issues, such as responding to the Holocaust; blundered in his diplomacy with the Japanese; possessed unrealistic expectations regarding China; retreated on his anticolonialism; and

treated with contempt a Churchill he claimed was his friend, when that individual stood in his way and British power waned.

Roosevelt also massively expanded and abused executive power, with extremely negative consequences for the future, and consistently misled the American people by never explaining to them the power realities of the world that he either clearly understood or should have understood. His military advisers warned him throughout 1940–1941 that only full-scale American participation in the war could defeat Hitler, for example, while he clearly realized that such defeat would also require Soviet participation and result in a massive, unavoidable extension of Soviet power that would run contrary to American ideals in the war. Yet he never attempted to educate the populace in this regard, choosing instead to argue disingenuously that aid to England would keep the United States out of war and to encourage unrealistic Wilsonian visions of the postwar world that could only result in severe public disillusionment when the truth became known. He was also held in low esteem by many of his international contemporaries, for his shallowness and deviousness as well as his policies.

But just what were the alternatives to the policies Roosevelt pursued, and what would have been the consequences of pursuing those alternatives? This is, of course, counterfactual or “what if” history, and as such the matter of consequences cannot be definitively answered. History deals with what actually did happen, not what might have happened under different circumstances. Nevertheless, as has been noted throughout this essay, negative consequences were at least as likely as positive ones from alternative courses of action. What good could have resulted, for example, if a more interventionist policy in the 1930s had resulted in defections from his New Deal coalition and an ensuing failure for his domestic program and reelection bids? Would a more flexible diplomacy in the Far East have made any difference, given Japan’s leadership, or merely weakened the alliance and public opinion that Roosevelt was building to oppose Japanese expansion? Who would have filled the power vacuum created by Japan’s defeat in a way supportive of American interests in the area if not China? The Soviet Union? What alternative and more effective policy could have been pursued toward the Soviet Union, given the fact that Germany could not be defeated without continued Soviet participation, that Soviet power would inevitably grow if Germany were defeated, and that Berlin constituted a far greater menace than Moscow during this time period? What positive re-

sults could have flowed from allowing measures to be deadlocked in Congress as opposed to using executive authority to get critical things done during a war? Would an educational effort to explain to the American people the power realities of international affairs have succeeded, or merely led them to retreat in disgust into another disastrous round of isolationism?

Once again, to ask these questions is not in any way to dismiss or whitewash Roosevelt’s failures. But it does help to explain and understand his fears, his decisions, and the limits within which he had to operate. He may have overestimated those limits, especially in regard to isolationist sentiments within the United States, but perhaps it appears that way to us only because he was so successful in destroying such sentiments.

Finally, just who were those contemporaries who attacked Roosevelt during the 1930s and 1940s, and how much better did they do? Roosevelt must be judged not by an absolute standard that no one save a saint could meet, but by the relative standards of the other human beings of his time and the values of his era. What national leader of Roosevelt’s era, then, would have been preferable to FDR?

Many critics point to Churchill, especially in terms of his fears regarding the Soviet Union, but recent scholarship has shown that the British leader grossly exaggerated in his memoirs the role such fears played in his actions and the date at which they arose. Moreover, Churchill was totally out of step with American values regarding such issues as colonialism and the postwar world, as indeed he was with British values—hence the British public’s decision to vote out of office this admittedly great war leader once Germany had been defeated.

As for other world leaders, a colleague of mine once asked a group of Europeans who had been critical of U.S. political leadership if they would allow him to compare a U.S. leader with those of Europe for any year in the twentieth century. Certainly, they replied. “Fine,” he said. “I choose 1938.” Going west to east, he then listed the dictator Salazar in Portugal and the fascist Franco in Spain, the appeasers Chamberlain and Daladier in Britain and France, Mussolini in Italy, Hitler in Germany, military dictators who ruled Poland and Greece, the ineffective and/or dictatorial kings and regents in the rest of Eastern Europe, and Stalin in the Soviet Union. And all the United States had in comparison, he concluded with a sly smile, was Franklin D. Roosevelt. FDR was far from perfect. But he was clearly and vastly superior to the competition.

NOTES

1. John M. Carroll, "American Diplomacy in the 1920s," in *Modern American Diplomacy*, ed. John M. Carroll and George C. Herring, rev. and enlarged ed. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996), 61–62.
2. For the historical debate see, for example, Robert A. Divine, *Roosevelt and World War II* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), 1–23, vs. Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 3–168. For FDR's views of Europe, see John Lambertson Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
3. James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1956, 1984), 156–57.
4. Hoover quote in Burns, *Roosevelt*, 474; FDR "blew up" in Larry I. Bland, ed., *George C. Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue* (Lexington, Va.: George C. Marshall Research Foundation, 1991), 623; FDR to Hull in James M. Burns, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 427–28; Geoffrey C. Ward, "On Writing about FDR," *American Heritage* 23 (Summer, 1991): 119.
5. Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, 10th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 672.
6. Bailey, *Diplomatic History*, 683, n. 7.
7. See Hadley Cantril et al., *Gauging Public Opinion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1944; Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1972), 222.
8. Cantril et al., *Gauging Public Opinion*, 222.
9. ABC stands for "American-British Conversations" in the military files.
10. Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 86–87, 175–78, 182, 238–45, and 250–63, argues that the German threat was a clear and present danger that required U.S. entry into the war and total German defeat as well as aid to Britain. Bruce M. Russett, in *No Clear and Present Danger: A Skeptical View of American Entry into World War II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972, 1997), 24–43, 63–66, disagrees on formal U.S. entry and total German defeat but supports aid to Britain as a necessary U.S. policy to preclude a total German victory that would have constituted a menace to American security.
11. See Nobutaka Ike, *Japan's Decision for War: Records of the 1941 Policy Conferences* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1967), 94–98.
12. See, for example, Jonathan G. Utley, *Going to War with Japan, 1937–1941* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 151–56, vs. Waldo H. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 141–42 and 246–47, n. 68.

13. See Russett's previously cited *No Clear and Present Danger*, 44–62.
14. See Heinrichs, *Threshold of War*, esp. 159, 179, and "The Russian Factor in Japanese-American Relations, 1941," in *Pearl Harbor Reexamined: Prologue to the Pacific War*, ed. Hilary Conroy and Harry Wray (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 163–77; and Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 58–63.
15. Charles C. Tansill, *Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933–1941* (Chicago: Regnery, 1952).
16. Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Random House, 1964), 3–40.
17. See Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967).
18. For FDR's foreign policy views and behavior during the war, see Dallek, *Roosevelt*; and Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).
19. Warren F. Kimball, ed. *Churchill & Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 339. See also Kimball, *Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War* (New York: William Morrow, 1997).
20. See Michael J. Neufeld and Michael Brenbaum, eds., *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It?* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
21. See Richard Breitman, *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1998).
22. A. J. P. Taylor, *English History, 1914–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 577.