

proclaimed that the "strength of the people would bring about the final victory," a theme which the KKE kept on repeating until the end.¹⁴

Thus, to return to our problem of "the dog that did not bark," i.e., the "missing" reaction from the KKE, I think that the way in which the Greek communists behaved after March 1947 can be used to understand the wider issues of the Greek Civil War. Of course, the missing reaction also implies total ignorance of U.S. determination to keep Greece out of what was perceived by the Truman administration to be Soviet control,¹⁵ an ignorance that can be easily explained, since no one, not even the Greek government, dared to hope that the American intervention was going to be so all-embracing as it actually came to be. What is more important, I think, is that the comparative neglect with which the KKE treated the American factor — apart from propaganda purposes — gives us a clue to KKE hopes and perceptions of the conflict. To put it another way: the KKE must have been deeply convinced that the help from its allies in Eastern Europe would be more than sufficient to counter the Greek government and the American support, and this confidence must surely have been based on tangible promises of aid from, first and foremost, Stalin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union — even though Zahariadis, in his talks with Papaioannou mentioned above, clearly implies that no documentary evidence of these promises exists. Moreover, such promises must have been suggested before the Truman Doctrine was announced, which accounts for changes in party policy in February. Zahariadis' soundings in April and May 1947 have had the purpose of confirming that the attitude of Stalin had not been altered in the meantime after the KKE had taken the decisions. At the mysterious February meeting, the Politbureau must have had solid evidence for the views of their allies, and the Truman Doctrine, on this background, did not impress the KKE leaders or make them readjust their policy. At best, one could say that it probably became necessary to get final corroboration from Belgrade and Moscow that nothing had changed. This, however, is pure speculation since the Truman Doctrine is nowhere mentioned as a serious factor. It is a quite different matter that the KKE later, after the war, with the benefit of hindsight, found that the U.S. intervention had been, perhaps, the decisive factor. It was certainly not seen in that light in 1947.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Επίσημα κείμενα* 6, 244. It should be noticed that the anonymous articles by "W" in *Κομμουνιστική Επιθεώρηση* from May and July 1947 on "Problems of the Civil War" never refer to the U.S. aid and the Truman Doctrine.

¹⁵ See the excellent analysis by J. O. Iatrides, *Studies* (above n. 4), pp. 225ff.

¹⁶ We can now expect a substantial contribution to the analysis of Soviet policy towards the KKE in this period from Peter J. Stavrakis. Though he has been kind enough to let me see his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, I have found it best not to comment upon his results which partly differ from mine.

The Truman Doctrine in Greece: America's Global Strategy and the "New Kind of War"

HOWARD JONES

IN EARLY 1949 THE *NEW YORK TIMES*' VETERAN CORRESPONDENT in Athens, Anne O'Hare McCormick, observed that the Truman Doctrine had involved the United States in "a new kind of war" against communist-led guerrillas in Greece. The conflict was dark and murky, a war in the shadows characterized by enemies difficult to define or even to see, and by a search for victory not measurable in territorial terms or human and material loss. The enemy rarely wore uniforms, often fought with confiscated weapons, usually relied upon non-conventional warfare, and nearly always received supplies and shelter from neighboring communist countries. Battlefronts seldom existed, for the guerrillas preferred the terrorist tactics of raiding, pillaging, sniping, and abducting villagers and townspeople into their small but effective force. Communist propagandists kept the atmosphere tense by attacking America for pursuing imperial interests and opposing the popular will. In the United Nations and other public forums, the United States sought to defend its actions while attributing a large measure of the turmoil in Greece to outside communist forces. Greece, McCormick insisted, was a "preview of the frontless, almost faceless, war of tomorrow — a war of Trojan horses pointing the way for machine guns. The battleline is everywhere and nowhere," for the Kremlin's central directive was "rule or ruin."¹

The Truman Doctrine has been the subject of debate since its announcement in March 1947. Critics have called it the "first shot of the Cold War" and proof of an "arrogance of power" that helped lead

¹ *New York Times*, Dec. 29, 1948, p. 20; *ibid.*, Jan. 5, 31, Feb. 2, 5, 1949, clippings encl. in Francis F. Lincoln Papers, Truman Library, Independence, MO. Although McCormick was 5'2" tall and sixty-seven years old, she made her way up and down the mountains with the soldiers, visiting outposts, refugees, and prisons. See *Time* (Jan. 10, 1949) 45.

the United States into Vietnam; defenders have hailed the declaration as evidence of America's determination to contain Soviet communism first in Greece and Turkey and then in any nation that could prove need.² Yet, in focusing on these issues, writers have not given adequate attention to one of the Truman administration's greatest contributions: the development of a flexible and restrained foreign policy designed to counter the renewed threat to freedom without a resort to all-out conflict.

The Truman Doctrine signaled the administration's willingness to engage in the struggle against communism on all fronts: social, political, and economic, as well as military. More than a decade before President John F. Kennedy's program of "flexible response," Truman and his advisers (some of whom would also advise Kennedy) developed a foreign policy that was adaptable in strategy to the shifting challenges to democracy. The policy rested on the fundamental premise that freedom was indivisible and that wherever it was endangered, so also was America's future in jeopardy. The Truman Doctrine authorized U.S. intervention in European affairs during peacetime; it also constituted a viable response to shadow-like aggressions in which victory lay in convincing democracy's enemies that they could not win.

The greatest danger in this kind of war was its endemic trend toward

²Critics of the Truman Doctrine include: William A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York, 1959); J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York, 1966); Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism* (New York, 1970); Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York, 1972); Thomas G. Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War* (Baltimore, 1973); Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making of the Cold War* (New York, 1979); Daniel H. Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, 1977); Lawrence S. Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949* (New York, 1982). Among defenders of the Truman Doctrine, see: Robert H. Ferrell, *George Marshall* (New York, 1966), vol. 15 of *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, eds. Robert H. Ferrell and Samuel F. Bemis; Robert H. Ferrell, *Harry S. Truman and the Modern American Presidency* (Boston, 1983); Cabell Phillips, *The Truman Presidency: The History of a Triumphant Succession* (New York, 1966); Herbert Feis, *From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York, 1970); Gaddis Smith, *Dean Acheson* (New York, 1972), vol. 16 of *American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*; John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York, 1972); John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York, 1982); John L. Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York, 1987); Richard F. Haynes, *The Awesome Power: Harry S. Truman as Commander in Chief* (Baton Rouge, 1973); David S. McLellan, *Dean Acheson: The State Department Years* (New York, 1976); Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948* (New York, 1977); Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton, 1980); Donald R. McCoy, *The Presidency of Harry S. Truman* (Lawrence, 1984); Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York, 1986).

escalation. As the United States explored the limits of the enemies' will, it raised the level of involvement in Greece. Step by step, American intervention grew as the guerrillas countered each move with one of their own. Years afterward, Dean Acheson emphasized that the "limited use of force" was the central principle underlying effective foreign policy. If the struggle at hand was "military in background but really not military in operation," the nation had to have "strong economic and political aspects" in its foreign policy. But if the struggle was on the verge of becoming fully military, the United States had to determine the level of counter-force required without using the "ultimate force."³ In Greece, victory would come by breaking the will of the enemy while holding the allegiance of the Greek people. Yet each antagonist further confused the complex situation by couching its actions in democratic and patriotic terms. And, as each side intensified claims to being the defender of freedom, it moved in the opposite direction. As Americans became immersed in the struggle, they relied less on democratic methods because of the difficulty in controlling the variables essential to victory. The most baffling complication was that the United States was expected to use democratic methods in a war that, by its very nature, made them ineffective.

Greece's economic needs were intertwined with military problems, which increased the chances of an economic aid program becoming military in orientation. Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria were aiding the guerrillas, who were seeking to undermine the government in Athens and promote its collapse. The real problems in Greece were political and economic, but the present emergency was military and required an equivalent response. As George McGhee (soon to become coordinator of the Greek-Turkish Aid Program) asked years afterward, "What good was economic reconstruction when the bandits simply blew up bridges and railroads as fast as Americans built them?" The resurgence of civil war in Greece assumed Cold War significance as the country provided a microcosm of East-West differences and left the impression that both the United States and the Soviet Union were involved.⁴

Following the British notification of their retrenchment policies in Greece and Turkey, Loy Henderson, head of the State Department's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, chaired the "Special Committee to Study Assistance to Greece and Turkey," whose recommendations pointed toward a global strategy. The committee warned that if the United States failed to act, Greece and Turkey could become

³Interview with Acheson (Feb. 16, 1955), 29, Truman Papers, Post-Presidential Files, "Memoirs File," box 1, Truman Lib.

⁴Author's interview with McGhee, May 24, 1979.

"Soviet puppets," leaving an example of democratic failure that would cause the "widespread collapse of resistance to Soviet pressure throughout the Near and Middle East and large parts of Western Europe not yet under Soviet domination." A consensus developed that the administration should present the economic approach to Congress as one ingredient of a multifaceted and global program.⁵

In keeping with the committee's recommendation, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) on Foreign Policy Information met to discuss the means for securing congressional support. The group's central argument was that the Greek and Turkish problems were "*only part of a critical world situation confronting us today in many democratic countries*" and must receive attention "*as a whole*." The independence of Greece and Turkey was strategically vital. By implication, however, every decision in those countries hinged upon the relative importance of events elsewhere. The Intelligence Division of the War Department emphasized that the assistance effort must be a "psychological and political one in which morale, and the superficial manifestations of force, such as possession of weapons and equipment," constituted "the most important element." Economic rehabilitation was needed — under American supervision.⁶ Military assistance would be a means toward that end.

The SWNCC Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information, also chaired by Henderson, recommended that the White House inform the American people of the worldwide challenge facing the United States. Henderson rejected the proposal of Soviet specialist George F. Kennan to restrict the assistance to Greece and Turkey. America's objective, as Secretary of State George C. Marshall emphasized, was to salvage Greece as a demonstration of America's will. To set this example, Henderson explained, the United States must help the Greek army restore domestic order as the prerequisite to economic reconstruction.⁷

The Truman administration's global concern over Greece became

⁵"Analysis of the Proposals," in U.S., Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 5: *Near East and Africa* (Washington, D.C., 1971), 51-53; minutes of "Special Committee to Study Assistance to Greece and Turkey," Feb. 24, 1947, *ibid.*, 45-47.

⁶Minutes of meeting of secs. of state, war, and navy, Feb. 26, 1947, Department of State Decimal File, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Hereafter cited as DSDF, NA. Sec. of state to Truman, Feb. 26, 1947, *FRUS*, 5: *Near East and Africa*, 58 (text underlined in the original); memo for sec. of war, Feb. 26, 1947, Plans & Operations 092, sect. 6-A, case 95, Army Staff Records, Modern Military Division, NA.

⁷Agenda for meeting on "Implementation of Aid to Greece," Feb. 28, 1947, DSDF, NA; report of meeting of SWNCC Subcommittee on FPI, Feb. 28, 1947, *FRUS*, 5: *Near East and Africa*, 67; meeting of SWNCC Subcommittee on FPI, Feb. 28, 1947, Lot 54D202, box 11569, Diplomatic Branch, NA.

evident in a paper prepared by SWNCC's Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information and designated FPI 30. Written by the State Department, the paper contained ideas that Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson attributed to the White House. FPI 30 declared that the administration must convince the American people that Greece was the starting point of a global conflict between freedom and totalitarianism. America sought a world in which the people determined their way of life. The policy of the United States was to "give support to free peoples who are attempting to resist subjugation from armed minorities or from outside forces." These universal rights were embodied in the Atlantic Charter, UN Declaration, and Yalta Agreement.⁸

Truman told his advisers that aid to Greece marked the beginning of a policy of intervention that would require the "greatest selling job ever facing a President." After considerable discussion, his advisers recommended that he deliver a message to Congress that would explain the world situation in frank terms, while not provoking the Soviet Union. Presidential adviser Joseph Jones recalled his own remark to the undersecretary that the draft of the speech had taken on the air of a general authorization of aid. Acheson had responded by leaning back in his chair, thinking a while, gazing at the White House, and then saying slowly: "If F.D.R. were alive I think I know what he'd do. He would make a statement of global policy, but confine his request for money right now to Greece and Turkey."⁹

On March 12 President Truman went before the joint session of Congress to recommend the program of economic and military assistance to Greece and Turkey that became known as the Truman Doctrine. "I believe," he asserted in a close rendition of FPI 30 that became the central idea of the Truman Doctrine, "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Although the president focused on Greece and Turkey, he placed their troubles within the broader context of self-determination and warned against totalitarian expansion into the Mediterranean and Middle East. He

⁸John Gange of DS to Gen. John H. Hilldring and Francis H. Russell, March 20, 1947, DSDF, NA; note by secs., March 5, 1947, *encl. ibid.*; memo from Brig. Gen. George A. Lincoln, chief of P & O, for Gen. Cook on aid to Greece, March 8, 1947, P & O 091, Greece, sect. II, cases 8-17, p. 1, Army Staff Records, NA; sec. of state to embassy in Athens, March 4, 1947, *FRUS*, 5: *Near East and Africa*, 87; Public Information Program on U.S. Aid to Greece (FPI 30), March 3, 1947, pp. 3-5, DSDF, NA.

⁹Cabinet meeting notes of March 7, 1947, Truman Papers, Matthew J. Connelly Files, Truman Lib.; notes on cabinet meeting of March 7, 1947, Robert P. Patterson Papers, General Correspondence, box 19, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Wash., D.C.; personal notes, March 8, 1947; *ibid.*; "The Drafting of the President's Message of March 12, 1947," Chronology, ca. March 13, 1947, Joseph Jones Papers, Truman Lib.

called for \$400 million in emergency aid, most of it military and for Greece.¹⁰

Kennan was concerned that the president had committed the United States to a global crusade that it should not and could not support. Already disenchanted with the shift in emphasis from economic to military aid, Kennan denied that the immediate threat in either Greece or Turkey was military. Unrest in Greece was attributable to political and ideological factors and could be handled by economic means. The president's address was "grandiose" and "sweeping," Kennan insisted years afterward. His criticisms found some agreement among Marshall and others, who supported the program yet believed the speech characterized by anti-communist rhetoric.¹¹ But their faith in the Truman Doctrine rested on controls in which Kennan had little confidence: the ability of policymakers to control the rate and type of escalation and to restrict the nation's involvement to countries both vital to America's security and capable of being saved.

Despite these differences over method, Kennan saw the challenge in the same way as did the White House. His disagreement stemmed from the opposing assessments of the Greek crisis: whereas the White House believed military assistance necessary, Kennan argued that the situation was salvageable by less provocative means. Economic assistance would counter "ideological and political penetration" by encouraging the Greek people to have confidence in their government. In a speech before the National War College in Washington, D.C., Kennan asserted that the Soviets had "taken care to shove forward Balkan communists to do their dirty work for them and to disguise as far as possible their own hand in Greek affairs." Inaction by the United States would "confirm the impression that the Western Powers were on the run and that international communism was on the make." Ironically, Kennan's position was not that much different from that taken by the White House: both would lead the United States to worldwide involvement. If the democratic ideals propounded by the president were indivisible, America's commitment to freedom had no territorial limitations. If the Kremlin, as Kennan claimed, was searching for "soft spots," his call for containment carried the same global implications. Finally, even if the Soviets were not guilty of motives and actions attributed to

¹⁰ *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1947* (Washington, D.C., 1963), pp. 176-79.

¹¹ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Boston, 1967), p. 315; author's interview with Dean Rusk, Nov. 3, 1978; Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York, 1973), p. 261; Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Statesman* (New York, 1987), pp. 172-73. Others who agreed with Marshall were presidential advisers Charles E. Bohlen and Clark Clifford.

them by American policymakers, the perception was more important than whatever the reality might have been. Given Washington's prevailing assumptions that the Soviets were engaged in a new type of war, the global impetus of America's foreign policy was predictable.¹²

During the House and Senate committee hearings on the aid bill, Acheson repeatedly denied that the Truman administration had made an automatic global commitment for the United States. He assured committee members that the White House would have to consider each applicant for assistance on an individual basis. Do you consider the Truman Doctrine an "extension of the Monroe Doctrine?" asked a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "No, I do not," Acheson crisply replied. Some parts of the world were irretrievable. Whenever self-determination was in danger, the United States would help — if a reasonable chance for success existed. Certain areas were inaccessible to American influence — Rumania, Bulgaria, and Poland, for instance, because they fell within the "Russian sphere of physical force." The Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Arthur Vandenberg, sought clarification: "In other words, I think what you are saying is that wherever we find free peoples having difficulty in the maintenance of free institutions, and difficulty in defending against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes, we do not necessarily react in the same way each time, but we propose to react." Acheson replied: "That, I think, is correct." Joseph Jones declared that these words suggested the "test of practicability" and thereby constituted "the global implications of the Truman Doctrine."¹³

¹² Kennan to Henderson, March 27, 1947, DSDF, NA; Kennan, "Comments on the National Security Problem" in Europe and Asia, 1-4, 9-12, 15-17, encl. *ibid.* For Kennan's views, see his "Long Telegram" to the secretary of state of Feb. 24, 1946, in *FRUS, 6: Near East and Africa* (Washington, D.C., 1970), 696-709, and his article signed "X," "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," in *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July 1947) 566-82. See also Kennan's *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, pp. 354-57; Kennan, "Containment Then and Now," *Foreign Affairs* 65 (Spring 1987) 885-90. In this last article of 1987, Kennan declared that Russia was no military threat in 1947 and that the real danger was "ideological-political" — again, a disagreement with the White House over the nature of the Soviet peril, not the peril itself. *Ibid.*, 886. See John O. Iatrides, "Perceptions of Soviet Involvement in the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949," in Lars Baerentzen, John O. Iatrides, and Ole L. Smith, eds., *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949* (Copenhagen, 1987), 225-48.

¹³ Acheson's written replies to Senate questions, pp. 10, 22, 49, 58, encl. in Acheson to Arthur H. Vandenberg, March 24, 1947, DSDF, NA; Acheson before House Foreign Affairs Committee on Greek-Turkish Aid Bill, March 20, 1947, in Frank McNaughton Papers, Truman Lib. Acheson assured Senator Theodore Green of Rhode Island that the administration would judge each aid applicant on its "individual merits." Acheson to Green, April 18, 1947, DSDF, NA. Circumstances alone would determine whether to extend aid, he insisted. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State*

The major criticism of the administration's proposal came from those who believed that the Greek and Turkish problems were the UN's responsibility. White House supporters argued that the UN lacked funds and authority to approve military assistance; above all, they asserted, the UN could not act quickly.¹⁴ In practical terms, of course, the White House was correct; but in a symbolic and perhaps idealistic sense, the critics had a just complaint in declaring that the United States had ignored an instrument for peace that the White House itself had fashioned into existence. Had the president authorized his UN representatives to consult that body — either before or immediately following the congressional speech of March 12 — opponents of the bill would have lost the basis of their argument.

Among several other complaints that confronted the administration, it had to deny charges that the purpose of the Truman Doctrine was to remake its beneficiaries in the American image. According to McGhee, the United States never sought to recast Greece into an Americanized democracy. Some years earlier, Brigadier General Patrick J. Hurley suggested to President Franklin D. Roosevelt that the United States use "nation building" as a criterion for dealing with states

Department (New York, 1969), 300-01. See also Francis F. Lincoln, *United States' Aid to Greece, 1947-1962* (Germantown, TN., 1975), 4. Gaddis and McLellan agree that the Truman Doctrine was not a blanket global commitment. Gaddis, *United States and Origins of Cold War*, p. 351; McLellan, *Acheson*, pp. 403-04. Despite Acheson's efforts, his answers were, according to a British observer, Christopher M. Woodhouse, "unilluminating, and the doubts remained." See his *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* (Brooklyn, NY., 1976), p. 201. Evidence indicates that the president wanted the aid proposal to be global in application. Years afterward, Henderson recalled a discussion with Acheson concerning a meeting the acting secretary of state had had with the president sometime before the March 12 address to Congress. Acheson claimed that when he showed the president a draft of the proposed speech, Truman asked: "Why limit it to the Middle East? Why not leave the thrust of the message 'general' in application?" Author's interview with Henderson, May 24, 1979; Oral History Interview with Henderson (June 14 & July 5, 1973), 86-87, Truman Lib. The British encouraged the White House to realize that the problem was not confined to Greece and Turkey, but arose everywhere there was a threat of Soviet communist expansion. Orme Sargent to sec. of state, March 18, 1947, Foreign Office 371/61086/1947 — Aid to Greece and Turkey, Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, London, England. Acheson's testimony, March 13, 1947, U.S. Senate, *Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine: Hearings Held in Executive Session Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 80th Cong., 1 sess., on S. 938: A Bill to Provide for Assistance to Greece and Turkey* (Washington, D.C., 1973), 17; MacVeagh's testimony, March 28, 1947, *ibid.*, 66, 67; Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks (February 21-June 5, 1947)* (New York, 1955), pp. 193, 196, 262. *Time* magazine grasped the meaning of Acheson's statement. Hungary, for example, was outside American reach because of Red Army occupation, whereas France and Italy were subject to American economic and political pressure. Edition of June 9, 1947, p. 27.

¹⁴Jones, *Fifteen Weeks*, p. 160; Oral History Interview with George M. Elsey (July 7, 1970), 354, 356-57, Truman Lib.; Acheson's written replies to Senate questions, pp. 1-4, 67-68; author's interview with Henderson.

threatened by aggression; but Acheson had opposed the idea then as "innocent indulgence in messianic globaloney." He now reiterated to the congressional committees that the United States sought only to guarantee Greece and Turkey the right to establish the government they wanted. Failure to guarantee this right would produce a "very strong conviction throughout the world that our professions are mere words."¹⁵

The chief concern among Americans was that the aid program in Greece would lead to full-scale military involvement — and in support of a repressive government that was only professing to be democratic. In a single morning, nine people testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the Greek-Turkish aid bill was too military in nature. Similar expressions of alarm came from the press, radio, Congress, and public opinion analyses. Columnist Stewart Alsop warned that the United States, in attempting to stop Soviet expansion, would become a supporter of the status quo. The "easiest course" in foreign policy was to "shore up any regime, however corrupt, merely because it [was] an anti-communist regime. That course . . . [was] in the long run self-defeating." Acheson assured the Senate that American military figures in Greece would advise only on the use of weapons and supplies and would number no more than forty army officers. The present proposals, he said, "do not include our sending troops to Greece or Turkey. We have not been asked to do so. We have no understandings with either Greece or Turkey, oral or otherwise, in regard to the sending of troops to those countries."¹⁶

Still, the fears persisted. The tensest moment came during Acheson's appearance before the House committee. Democratic Representative

¹⁵Author's interview with McGhee; Hurley to Roosevelt, Dec. 21, 1943, Acheson Papers, Truman Lib.; Acheson to Edward Stettinius, Jan. 28, 1943, *ibid.*; Acheson's written replies to Senate questions, pp. 4, 29-30, 58, 65, 94, 111, DSDF, NA; "Statement by Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson before the House Foreign Affairs Committee," March 20, 1947, Clark Clifford Papers, #6 (Greece & Turkey), Truman Lib.; notes on Acheson's testimony before House Foreign Affairs Committee, March 21, 1947, McNaughton Papers, *ibid.*; *Time* (March 31, 1947) 21.

¹⁶Durward V. Sandifer, DS legal adviser, to Acheson, March 26, 1947, DSDF, NA; Alsop quoted in "An Analysis of U.S. Public Comment, Prepared by the Division of Public Studies, Office of Public Affairs," May 1, 1947, *ibid.*; Shepard Jones to Joseph Jones, March 27, 1947, Jones Papers, box 2 (Greece — newspaper clippings), Truman Lib.; "Latest Public Opinion Survey on Greece and Turkey," memo by Division of Public Studies to Interim Greek and Turkish Assistance Committee, April 29, 1947, DSDF, NA; Acheson's written replies to Senate questions, pp. 26, 51, 77, 92, *ibid.*; "Source of Supply of Equipment for the Greek Armed Forces," ca. mid-March 1947, unlabeled, *ibid.*; Acheson's testimony before House Hearings on Aid Bill, March 20, 1947, summary in McNaughton's Papers, Truman Lib.; MacVeagh's testimony, March 25, 1947, U.S. House of Representatives, *Military Assistance Programs, Part 2. Assistance to Greece & Turkey* (Washington, D.C., 1976), 6: 334.

Mike Mansfield asked whether the administration's policy could lead to war. The crowded room became silent as Acheson rubbed his chin, hesitated, and finally responded: "I was going to say — no possibility it would lead to war." But after a pause, he added: "I don't think it could lead to war. By strengthening the forces of democracy and freedom, you do a great deal to eliminate the friction between big powers."¹⁷

Despite these disclaimers, the truth was that the White House had thought from the beginning of its direct involvement in Greece that stronger military measures would become necessary. Widespread feeling had developed in the administration that expanded military help was inescapable because of the pending British troop withdrawal, the dire condition of Greek armed forces, and the strategic and symbolic importance attributed by the United States to the region. Acheson carefully explained that "present plans do not envisage any training program for the Greek armed forces under American auspices, except possibly for limited technical instruction in the use of American equipment."¹⁸

The Truman administration likewise had difficulty convincing the Senate committee that the military aspects of the aid program were only one part of a broadly conceived response to world problems. As Secretary of Navy James V. Forrestal explained, the administration preferred a general authorization bill that allowed maneuverability. Democratic Senator Tom Connally of Texas supported the aid effort but warned that such encompassing terms would give tacit approval to the use of American combat troops. Vandenberg feared that a blank check could lead to war with Russia.¹⁹

The White House insisted upon a flexible aid bill. Henderson remarked that the president had purposely worded the Truman Doctrine loose enough to be either economic or military in thrust. Indeed, Henderson would have opposed the bill had it ruled out military aid. McGhee insisted that the chief quality of the Truman Doctrine was that its administrators could shift the emphasis to either economic or military aid, depending upon circumstances. White House counselor Charles E. Bohlen agreed that the Truman Doctrine did not assure the use of

¹⁷PM, March 21, 1947, Democrat Clipping File, Truman Lib.

¹⁸Memo for record: conferences concerning Greek situation, March 5, 6, 1947, ABC-400.336 Greece, sect. 1-A, pp. 2-4, War Dept. Records, NA; Acheson's written replies to Senate questions, p. 73, DSDF, NA.

¹⁹Patterson to secretary of state, ca. March 11, 1947, P & O 092, sect. 6, case 95, p. 2, Army Staff Records, NA; all testimonies, March 13, 1947, U.S. Senate, *Legislative Origins of Truman Doctrine*, 5-6, 10-11.

armed force. But all argued that the United States should maintain the military option.²⁰

The nature of the American response came under full discussion in the Senate committee hearings. When Georgia Democrat Walter George inquired whether American assistance was to be military or economic or both, Acheson replied in a way that only at first glance seemed evasive. "I do not think it is something which it is possible to answer," the undersecretary told the committee. "I do not think those words were used." The decision to intervene rested on a consideration of all aspects of the problem. Republican Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., of Massachusetts grasped the importance of having a general authorization bill. In this case "military" assistance did not mean preparation for maneuvers, tactics, field exercises, or combat on any scale; it meant equipping Greek personnel so that they could keep order inside the country. "We can, therefore, safely conclude that there is nothing whatever in this bill which involves the United States in combat operations in Greece or which by any stretch of the imagination could put Greece in a position to undertake offensive international action." The program did not break down into economic or military compartments because the two forms of assistance were "constantly merging" and interrelated. The best descriptive word for America's efforts, used in the broadest sense, was strategic.²¹

Acheson emphasized strategic considerations in attempting to ease the concerns of those senators who feared that sinister American oil interests were guiding the administration's actions. The assistance program, he assured committee members, did not result entirely from the presence of oil. America's "policy would have been exactly the same in this instance if there had not been a single drop of oil in the Near East." This statement was doubtless the truth, but what few observers realized was that Acheson was not denying the nation's interest in oil; he was arguing that oil was only one aspect of America's strategic concern in the region. The growing American interest in oil was a matter of record, both public and private. Acheson recognized the importance of the Middle East's oil, but his immediate concern was the impact that the area's collapse would have on morale and security. The Soviets'

²⁰Acheson's testimony in U.S. Senate, *Legislative Origins of Truman Doctrine*, p. 11; author's interview with Henderson; author's interview with McGhee; Bohlen, *Witness to History*, p. 310.

²¹Acheson's testimony, April 11, 1947, U.S. Senate, *Legislative Origins of Truman Doctrine*, 90; Lodge's testimony, April 2, 1947, *ibid.*, 141; Acheson to Green, April 18, 1947, DSDF, NA; *Congressional Record*, 80th Congress, 1 sess., vol. 93, part 3, April 11, 1947, pp. 3335-36; William J. Miller, *Henry Cabot Lodge: A Biography* (New York, 1967), p. 190.

postwar interests in the region added urgency to the question.²²

The Greek-Turkish aid bill became law on May 22, 1947, and, in a victory for both the administration and bipartisan foreign policy, it did not contain the restrictive amendments that had risen in both the Senate and House committee hearings. The measure passed the Senate by the largest bipartisan support for a major foreign policy bill since war broke out in Europe in 1939. Republican Representative Francis H. Case of South Dakota warned, however, that "no country, ours or any other, is wise enough or rich enough, or just plain big enough, to run the rest of the world."²³

McGhee expressed the feelings of many in the administration when he declared that the Truman Doctrine provided the "excitement of a new venture." White House adviser Clark Clifford argued that the program was an outgrowth of his report of September 1946 setting out patterns of Soviet behavior, and that the president's speech had let the Russians know that "by God, we understood what we were up to." The Truman Doctrine, Henderson insisted, constituted a frank statement of what State Department analysts had long been saying with "subdued voices." Dean Rusk, then America's political adviser to the UN, declared that the administration had taken a stand against the "phenomenon of aggression — an insatiable political doctrine backed by

²²Acheson to Green, April 18, 1947, DSDF, NA; Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece*, pp. 17-22, 232; Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation*, chap. 9; James V. Forrestal diaries, VII, entry for May 2, 1947, pp. 1610-11, Operational Archives, Naval History Division, Washington, D.C. (photocopies of originals at Princeton University); Arnold A. Rogow, *James Forrestal: A Study of Personality, Politics, and Policy* (New York, 1963), p. 180; Michael B. Stoff, *Oil, War, and American Security: The Search for a National Policy on Foreign Oil, 1941-1947* (New Haven, 1980), pp. 178, 207-08; McLellan, *Acheson*, p. 115; Kuniholm, *Origins of Cold War in Near East*, p. 301, n. 247. The truth is that the Truman administration found the nation's oil companies to be valuable tools in achieving strategic objectives. If any question exists about whether these companies were more concerned about profits than national security, there can be no doubt that their leaders wanted support — not directives — from Washington in the postwar years. America's oil magnates had established themselves in the Middle East through private and unregulated policies — not as part of a coherent national policy. U.S. government officials now recognized that if they supported the companies in their daily business, the result could be a more effective foreign policy that was in part constructed upon securing the nation's postwar oil requirements. Even though oil had become a "dirty word" by the 1940s, Henderson declared, that product of the Middle East was the "lifeblood" of the West. The administration faced the challenge of developing "a more mature approach" that would put oil in its proper place as a "vitaly needed commodity like food" and "not necessarily a symbol of sinister imperialism." See Oral History Interview with Henderson (June 14 & July 5, 1973), 57, Truman Lib.; Stephen J. Randall, *United States Foreign Oil Policy, 1919-1948: For Profits and Security* (Montreal, 1985), pp. 237, 241.

²³Sandifer to sec. of state, May 9, 1947, *FRUS*, 5: *Near East and Africa*, p. 164; Jones, *Fifteen Weeks*, pp. 197-98; Case to Truman, May 10, 1947, Truman Papers, Official File, Truman Lib.

force" and resting on a "doctrine of world revolution that also was insatiable because there were no world boundaries." The president was convinced that the Soviet Union rested on a "Frankenstein dictatorship worse than any of the others, Hitler included."²⁴

To an administration deeply suspicious of the Kremlin, signs repeatedly confirmed some form of Soviet involvement in Greek affairs. When America's decision to help Greece became known, the Soviet delegate on the UN Security Council Commission of Investigation, Alexander Lavrishchev, immediately confronted his American counterpart, Mark Ethridge, with the question: "What does this mean?" "It means," Ethridge crisply replied, "that you can't do it." Lavrishchev smiled and commented, "I quite understand, Mr. Ethridge."²⁵

The Truman administration recognized the impossibility of guaranteeing self-determination throughout the world. Some regions were crucial for strategic reasons; others would furnish examples of the people's capacity to resist aggression; still others were untouchable because they lay within Soviet spheres of influence. But the administration also knew that actual and symbolic considerations had meshed to broaden the definition of America's vital interests. In theory and in ideal, the commitment to Greece and Turkey was part of a global strategy designed to protect freedom wherever challenged. In practice and in reality, that strategy was limited by circumstances — whether the troubled area could and should be saved. As long as ideal and reality remained distinguishable, congressional fears were groundless.

²⁴Author's interview with McGhee; Oral History Interview with Clifford (March 1971-Feb. 1973), 83-84, 151-55, Truman Lib.; author's interview with Henderson; author's interview with Rusk, Nov. 3, 1978; Truman quoted in Margaret Truman, *Harry S. Truman* (New York, 1973), pp. 343, 359-60. Clifford's report was entitled "America's Relations with the Soviet Union" and had been written as a result of the president's directive and with the assistance of presidential adviser George M. Elsey.

²⁵Conversation between Lavrishchev and Ethridge quoted in Stephen G. Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947: Prelude to the "Truman Doctrine"* (Thessalonike, 1963), p. 489. See also Oral History Interview with Ethridge (June 4, 1974), 36-37, Truman Lib. The UN Commission had been established to investigate the causes of unrest along Greece's northern borders and to make recommendations on how to resolve these problems.