PART XII

National Security and Foreign Affairs

44. The Makers of Foreign Policy

Department of State

THE federal government possesses a monopoly over the conduct of the foreign relations of the United States. The Constitution denies the States such powers as negotiating treaties, forming alliances, supporting troops, or waging war, powers without which the States cannot enter the arena of foreign relations. This is one of the principles that distinguishes a federal from a confederate government; it sets off the present Constitution from the Articles of Confederation, under which each State could and did have its own relations with other nations. Moreover, the federal courts have proclaimed that the management of foreign affairs is an inherent power of a sovereign government, and is therefore a function reserved exclusively to federal authorities. A corollary of this latter doctrine is that the federal government has unlimited power with respect to foreign relations; unlike its obligations in the matter of domestic affairs, it is not compelled to seek justification from the Constitution for much of its behavior regarding other countries.

American foreign policy is set in many ways by history and circumstances, but the actual making of the policy is done by certain persons. The makers of foreign policy must arrive at decisions; that is, they must choose between two or more alternative policies regarding another country, a group of

countries, or an international situation. The most important persons associated with the making of foreign policy are the President, the Secretary of State and his aides in the State Department, the members of the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the members of certain other administrative agencies such as the Departments of Defense and of the Treasury, outstanding figures in Congress, and the leaders of a few pressure groups. Furthermore, public opinion in a sense to be defined later also influences the making of foreign policy.

THE PRESIDENT

The President is the focus of decision in foreign policy. His office is singularly equipped for the making of decisions, since it is the hub of all channels of communication respecting foreign affairs. It receives information concerning those phases of international relations in which the United States is interested, and today American interests extend to the entire world. Yet the President does not reach decisions regarding foreign policy solely on the ground of information brought him by government officials. He may also have made commitments to the chiefs of other countries which he is obliged to honor. He is forced to respect the opinions of the public, if only because it is the public that placed him in office. Should public opinion deviate so far from his own purposes that the execution of his policy might endanger his or his party's chances in the next election, he may endeavor to shape public opinion to his own ends. He has, of course, entered office with certain convictions regarding what is an appropriate foreign policy for the United States. These, too, guide his activities.

Finally, for any one of several reasons, different Presidents, and the same President at different times, will rely more upon one source of information and advice than upon others. For example, the President may have chosen his Secretary of State so as to placate an opposing faction in his party rather than to have an experienced diplomat in charge of foreign affairs; this President will not place much reliance upon the judgment of the Secretary, and the Secretary may cause him some trouble. Such were the relations between Woodrow Wilson and his first Secretary, William Jennings Bryan. A President who has unusual regard for military officers may turn to them in reaching final decisions about foreign policy. Such, for instance, was Harry S. Truman's attitude toward General George C. Marshall. Sometimes a private individual will have exceptional access to the President, and will have more influence over his policies than any government official. Colonel Edward M. House had this sort of association with President Wilson. It is almost impossible to enumerate all the conceivable variations.

The President of the United States is also the leader of the country in matters of national defense. He is the Commander in Chief of all military forces of the United States. He carries on, or is at least responsible for, all negotiations with foreign powers regarding American security. Whereas he

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cannot declare war, he can so manage foreign relations, and so deploy American armed forces, that war becomes almost inevitable. The President chooses all the important figures, save congressmen, who share in making decisions concerning national security; all lines of information converge upon the presidency, and all lines of command radiate from it. Ultimately, all the threads of military and civil policy and strategy are drawn together in the office of the President.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Secretary of State next to the chief executive is the most important official in making foreign policy. In the process of reaching decisions the Secretary is checked both from above and from below. That is, he may serve under a President such as either of the Roosevelts, or Truman, who will grant him slight latitude; on the other hand he may hold office under a President such as Eisenhower, who will permit him broad discretion. At the same time he must depend upon his numerous subordinates, both in the United States and abroad, for the information upon which he must base his conclusions. Thus the Secretary's subordinates, by withholding facts or by unduly stressing them, or by being ignorant of them, may help to shape American foreign policy. In the Department itself, he has a formidable legislative and publicity machine at his disposal. During the Eighty-first to Eighty-third Congresses, the Department drafted ninety-eight pieces of legislation and about 105 treaties or executive agreements, and presented its views on 4,764 bills that other interests had introduced. It dealt with at least 6,000 inquiries from congressmen and issued probably in excess of 2,000 press releases. Therefore, a determined Secretary with a loyal staff can forcefully project his ideas.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

The National Security Council (NSC) is the principal agency in the Executive Office of the President for gathering and interpreting facts relative to national security. It is an extremely secretive organization; Anthony Leviero, writing in the *New York Times* on January 30, 1955, described it as "untouchable, unreachable, and unquotable." It consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM). The President may name other members of the Cabinet to the NSC provided that the Senate confirms these nominations; usually the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission is also present at NSC meetings. The chief administrative officer of the NSC is known as the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Under the direction of the NSC are three subordinate bodies: (1) the Planning Board, comprising officials at the rank of Assistant Secretary, from the Departments of State, Defense, and Treasury, and from the ODM, which recommends policies; (2) the Operations Coordinating Board, including the Under Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of Defense, the

Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Director of the United States Information Agency, and a representative of the President, to assure that NSC policies are executed; and (3) the Secretariat, to keep the records of the NSC. Apart from these bodies, yet subordinate to the NSC, is the CIA, which assembles and correlates intelligence materials from the different government offices, then advises the NSC on the basis of its findings. In bald language, the CIA is the nucleus of the espionage activities of the United States.

The NSC evaluates the ability of the United States to perform its various obligations, such as those fixed by its military treaties, in terms of the military and industrial power of its allies. It also analyzes questions respecting national security that are of importance to other government agencies. Thereafter the NSC can reach decisions on security issues which, since the President is a member of the NSC, amount to presidential decisions. One recent conclusion ascribed to the NSC was that the United States should depend upon a policy of "massive retaliation"—that is, in the event a communist aggression should start in a country bordering upon the Soviet Union that was clearly instigated and assisted by the Soviet Union, the United States should not confine itself to a containing action as it did in Korea but should strike at the heart of the communist domains with its mightiest armaments.

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) consist of the Chairman of the JCS; the Chief of Staff, United States Army; the Chief of Naval Operations; and the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force. When the JCS are considering Marine Corps affairs, the Commandant of the Marine Corps sits with the other members of the JCS as their equal. Each of these men is a high-ranking military officer who is appointed by the President. The Chairman has exceptional authority. He presides over the meetings of the JCS and directs the 200-odd men in the various specialized military committees that serve the needs of the group. He also enjoys special access to the President and to Congress, so that his voice can count more than the others in the making of decisions respecting foreign affairs. The Chairman may be from any of the military services.

Today the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who are responsible for guiding the policies of the armed forces, are of great significance in the shaping of American foreign policy. This lofty place is one that the military leaders have only recently attained; their present eminence is largely the result of the fact that American foreign policy today, much more than ever before, must be supported by large-scale and immensely complicated military forces. It has been pointed out that the role of the military leaders in achieving foreign policy decisions has undergone considerable evolution. Initially, the military leaders were called upon primarily to offer expert counsel; that is, they were asked to notify civilian chiefs what impact a particular conclusion might have upon the armed forces. Later, however,

perhaps because there had arisen a practice of calling upon the military leaders for advice, their role changed to that of representing an arm of the state which had an inherent right to share in policy-forming. A revealing bit of evidence concerning the rise of military spokesmen in the realm of foreign affairs is provided by Figure 110, which shows how the Joint Chiefs have risen socially in Washington circles.

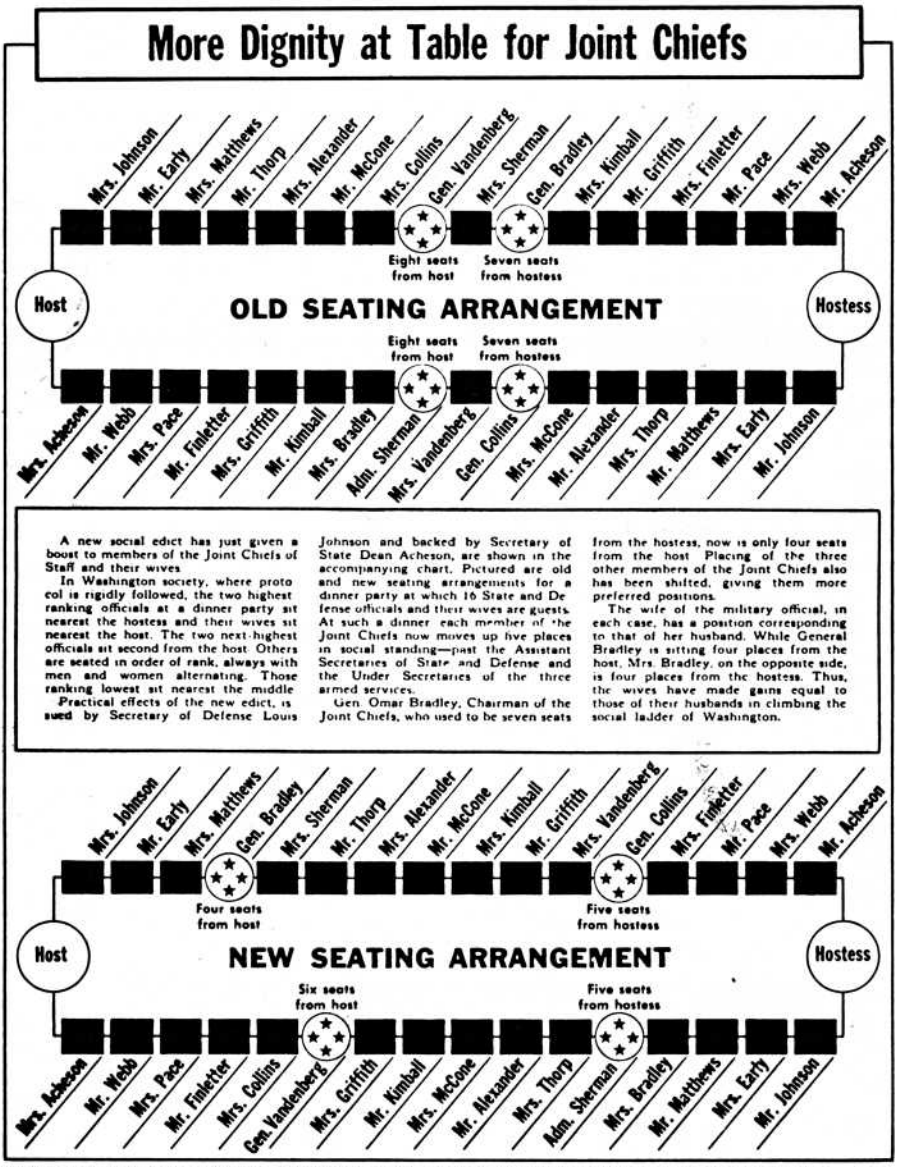

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Figure 110. Etiquette Changes with Power. An alert journal catches the significance of a seating arrangement in reflecting the increased role of the military in American life as a consequence of World War II.

In some respects the JCS have more independence than the Secretary of State. That is, although they are appointed by the President, their choice is determined by few political considerations. The subordinates of the Secretary of State are mostly professional career officers, but the Secretary need not be, and indeed rarely is. By contrast, both the Joint Chiefs and their subordinates are professional soldiers. Hence the Joint Chiefs are not responsible to control by political parties, and are subject to comparatively little public criticism. Like the Secretary of State, however, they must fall back upon their subordinates for detailed information. These subordinates, like those in the State Department, may be ignorant of, or may withhold, or may overemphasize, certain data; the Yalta papers disclose that General George C. Marshall, then Army Chief of Staff, also pressed upon Roosevelt the need for assuring Soviet military assistance against Japan. To what degree the so-called "military mind" determines the policies of the JCS is difficult to establish, since there is as yet no unimpeachable definition of the "military mind." Whoever is brave enough to use the phrase must consider the vast differences among the minds, for example, of General Douglas MacArthur, General Dwight Eisenhower, General George Patton, and General Omar Bradley.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES

Several other administrative bodies contribute to the making of foreign policy; some are directly responsible to the President, and others are independent agencies. The Departments of Defense, of the Treasury, of Agriculture, and of Commerce all lend a hand in making foreign policy decisions. Their contributions, of course, are all less than, and usually inferior to, those of the State Department. On the other hand, a few of these contributions have been of great importance; for example, the Treasury Department elaborated a plan for the handling of Germany after World War II—the so-called Morgenthau Plan—which, if not put into effect literally, did help fashion American treatment of the defeated enemy. In the main, however, these offices were not primarily intended to deal with foreign policy; hence they can assist in making it only with respect to certain phases. The Secretary of the Treasury, for instance, can effectively discourage expenditures in foreign affairs and on the armed forces; the Director of the Bureau of the Budget can do likewise.

Secretaries of these Departments are responsible to the President and to their party. They have other responsibilities as well, which condition their attitudes toward foreign policy. For example, the Departments of Commerce and of Agriculture, which represent functional groups, must take the interests of those groups into account. The Secretary of the Treasury is in part liable for the solvency of the federal government; he must remember this duty while operating in a foreign policy-making role. The Secretary of Defense is occupied with achieving administrative efficiency in the armed forces; in fact, his direct contributions to foreign policy decisions

may be very slight. All of these Departments, save Defense, suffer an important disability; they do not have access to the information available to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Joint Chiefs. This condition also restricts their participation in decisions.

The United States Information Agency is the most important arm of the government in foreign affairs outside of the State Department, the National Security Council, and the Department of Defense. However, to this moment the functions it has performed have been more significant than the leadership it has contributed to the making of policy. Hence it will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. The main point to grasp here is that the Director has little influence in setting the ultimate policy of the Agency; the Secretary of State is more potent in determining what the propaganda policies of the government will be.

CONGRESS

In spite of the dominance of the chief executive in the areas of foreign policy and of national security, Congress still plays an important role. Perhaps most significant of all, Congress must vote the funds needed for the national military establishment. Today, however, this power is not nearly so great as it once was. The Constitution empowers Congress to appropriate money for the support of armies, but provides that such appropriations may not last longer than two years (Art. I, sec. 8, cl. 12). The aim of the Founding Fathers was to prevent the armies from having sufficient funds to support themselves indefinitely, so that they might dispense with Congress and usurp its power over national expenditures. (Interestingly enough, this limitation was not applied to naval appropriations, perhaps because, since naval strength is on the sea, a navy is not in an advantageous position to overthrow a government.)

Until very recent times this bar to lengthy appropriations has caused little strain. Today, however, a new military weapon requires several years for the evolution from original conception through research, planning, and testing, to mass production. Hence the government must be able to negotiate contracts with industries for a period of several years, so as to procure new arms. Therefore a considerable part of the money appropriated for the armed forces remains unspent at the end of the year, and will not be spent for several years to come. In 1955 there were enough unexpended funds for the armed forces to maintain them for an entire year, even if Congress were to appropriate no money at all.

The powers of Congress in foreign affairs are also reduced by the growing demand for secrecy on all matters concerning foreign affairs. The restrictions on congressmen's obtaining information that the agencies consider vital to the security of the nation have mounted greatly. For instance, the National Security Council has stated that "Classified defense information possessed by the NSC may be made available to the Congress only under appropriate security safeguards (as authorized by the Presi-

dent) by member or participating agencies of the NSC which originate or receive such classified defense information."[1] Other agencies connected with national security follow the same line. The Atomic Energy Commission in fiscal 1955 twice refused information to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, and the Central Intelligence Agency refused information to committees on seven occasions during the same year.

Sometimes a feeling of inadequacy assails a congressman, who is supposed to represent his constituency on matters of war and peace, when he cannot learn some of the fundamental information needed for judging certain foreign policies. Moreover, Congress cannot force executive agencies to yield this information; the agencies may release it at their own discretion or by command of the President. Several committees, such as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, are the only congressional groups that are ordinarily allowed to see some of the important materials or documents on national security and foreign affairs; members of this Committee are expected to regard these matters as confidential. In 1930, under President Hoover, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee could not, however, obtain from the Secretary of State certain confidential letters and telegrams leading up to the London Conference and London Treaty. All three Presidents since his time, and several before him, have on occasion refused to release information to the legislative branch when, using the words of President Eisenhower (May 17, 1954), "its disclosure would be incompatible with the public interest or jeopardize the safety of the Nation."

In one important respect, Congress has gained added stature in foreign affairs. Its control of taxes and appropriations allows it increasingly to play a hand in the determinations of the executive branch of the government. At one time, American foreign policies did not provide for large expenditures of money in the form of loans and grants to other nations. In later years, however, every annual budget has contained provisions for lending and spending money abroad. Congress must approve and enact these provisions if they are to be carried out. Consequently, the power of Congress in foreign affairs has been extended.

In making foreign policy, congressmen encounter public opinions different from those that administrative officials meet. Since different regions of the United States have varying attitudes toward problems involving other countries, the foreign policy that is ultimately adopted by Congress will tend to be less clear and more compromising than the policy of the State Department or of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Moreover, inasmuch as public opinion samplings have shown the vast majority of the population to be almost utterly ignorant of the details of foreign affairs, the opinions that congressmen voice tend to echo the arguments of organized groups that are strong in their districts.

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[1] Committee on Government Operations, *Replies from Federal Agencies to Questionnaire submitted by the Special Subcommittee on Government Information* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 360.

INTEREST GROUPS

A number of American interest groups take a direct concern in foreign policy. A few are organized specifically to influence foreign affairs; one example is the American Association for the United Nations, Inc. Many American cities have Foreign Policy Councils; however, these bodies more frequently incite individual interest and action in foreign affairs than take a position as organized groups. The English-Speaking Union and the America-Italy Society are examples of cultural organizations that work primarily for greater mutual appreciation between two countries. The AFL-CIO represents American views in the affairs of the International Labor Organization and often leads American policy concerning labor unions and working conditions abroad. On problems of military preparedness, the chiefs of the American Legion and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars give advice to Congress and the President, and also conduct campaigns among the public on behalf of their views.

Other interest groups move onto the foreign affairs scene when a specific piece of legislation affects them. For example, the American Farm Bureau Federation lent its support to the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe following World War II; it explained part of its support as benevolence toward the unfortunate masses abroad, but it clearly admitted a second motive of seeking foreign outlets for farm surpluses that were threatening to lower prices. The introduction of the subject of tariffs in Congress is the signal for the convergence upon Washington of a host of special representatives for different branches of industry and commerce. E. E. Schattschneider, in his study of how Congress enacted the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act of 1930, concluded that a large number of the provisions of the law were written by spokesmen for high tariffs. Congress once sought to rid itself of some of these pressures by creating the Tariff Commission. The Commission was required to provide the government with information on trade and tariffs, and a general schedule of rates and rules for raising and lowering tariffs. But the burden had been only partially lifted from Congress, as matters turned out, and both the legislature and its administrative creation suffer the onslaughts of tariff lobbies still.

Perhaps the most simple means of illustrating the concern of different groups in foreign affairs is to list the groups appearing before a congressional committee that is studying a piece of legislation. In 1949, 105 Representatives proposed that the House of Representatives adopt a concurrent resolution (H. C. Res. 64, 81st Congress, 1st Session) to seek conversion of the United Nations into a World Federation. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs then held hearings for two days on the motion to have Congress declare "that it should be a fundamental objective of the foreign policy of the United States to support and strengthen the United Nations and to seek its development into a world federation

open to all nations with defined and limited powers adequate to preserve peace and prevent aggression through the enactment, interpretation, and enforcement of world law." Fifty-seven congressmen appeared before, or gave statements on the resolution to, the Committee. The private groups submitting views to the Committee through spokesmen or in written form for inclusion in the record of the hearings were the following:

American Association for the United Nations, Inc.
American Federation of Hosiery Workers
American Professional Writers
Atlantic Union Committee
A member of the Institute for Nuclear Studies
General Federation of Women's Clubs
Citizens Committee for United Nations Reform, Inc.
International Association of Men's Y Clubs
United World Federalists
Steering Commission to Study the Organization of the Peace
Chairman, President's Air Policy Commission
National Economic Council, Inc.
American Veterans Committee
Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Kiwanis International
Americans for Democratic Action
National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution
Friends' Committee on National Legislation
Liberal Party of New York
American Veterans of World War II
Norfolk Committee for the United Nations
National Sojourners
National Farmers' Union
A former Supreme Court justice
National Grange
Florida Junior Chamber of Commerce
Cooperative League of America

Most of these groups were friendly to the resolution; the major objection, and of course the key obstacle to all similar legislation, was that the independence of the United States would be completely submerged in such a world government. However, the point emphasized here is not the merits of the resolution, but rather the way in which interest groups close in upon a resolution dealing with foreign policy. Every proposed law or resolution, regardless of its contents, will attract the attention of groups, although each bill or resolution will have a different pattern of interested groups.

Some peculiarities of the relations between pressure groups and the government on matters of foreign affairs deserve mention. The National Security Council and the Department of Defense, which, as has been noted, are influential in determining foreign policies, are somewhat pressure-proof with respect to their foreign policy functions. By custom, by reason of their professional structure, and because of their unpublicized mode of operation, they are not beset directly or indirectly by interest groups as much as the State Department or President are.

The State Department in turn is in a weaker position to defend itself against pressures than are other Departments or agencies. The reason for this condition is a complicated one. Since there are no great pressure groups that have an immediate economic stake in its work and some control over its policies, the State Department can be strongly moved by pressure groups that work through the presidency and Congress. For example, the Departments of Labor and of Agriculture are to a degree controlled, but also and therefore promoted and protected by, respectively, several great labor and farm organizations. When the budgets and the programs of the Departments are under attack, these great pressure groups often rise to their defense.

This is not the case with the State Department. It has to give an intellectual defense of its views and needs, and intellectual arguments go only so far against the arguments of aggressive economic interests. Some of the strongest supporters of the policies of the State Department are the foreign allies of the United States; yet nothing could damage the case of the Department so badly as the use of pressure by friendly foreigners on Congress or on the President. Other State Department supporters are simply foreign affairs discussion groups here and there in the United States; these often feel no great personal stake in the policies of the Department. Consequently, no agency of the government is so likely as the Department of State to be buffeted helplessly by gusts of congressional anger.

This situation only provides one more reason for the State Department to find itself close to, and responsive to, the President. Yet this closeness has its own problems, for the President gives a cordial ear to the voices of interest groups that are well placed with respect to influencing the electoral vote of heavily populated States. When the State Department reports its soundings from abroad, it may again influence the President intellectually, but often not so effectively as he is influenced by the votes in the hands of American interests.

THE PUBLIC

Where does the public as a whole fit into the picture of the makers of foreign policy? Generally the public behaves in foreign affairs along the lines that it follows in other kinds of public affairs, a tendency described in the chapter on public opinion. That is, a tiny fraction of the adult public is informed or active in creating "mass opinion"; a great many people react to international events only at the polls; some do not react to foreign affairs at all. Professor Gabriel Almond, in *The American People and Foreign Policy,* states that the task of getting an informed attention to foreign affairs from most people is impossible. The best that can be hoped for in the way of public involvement in foreign policy, he says, is to increase somewhat the size of the tiny fraction of informed and active citizens, and to make better informed those who as leaders of interest groups and political parties are already influencing foreign policy.

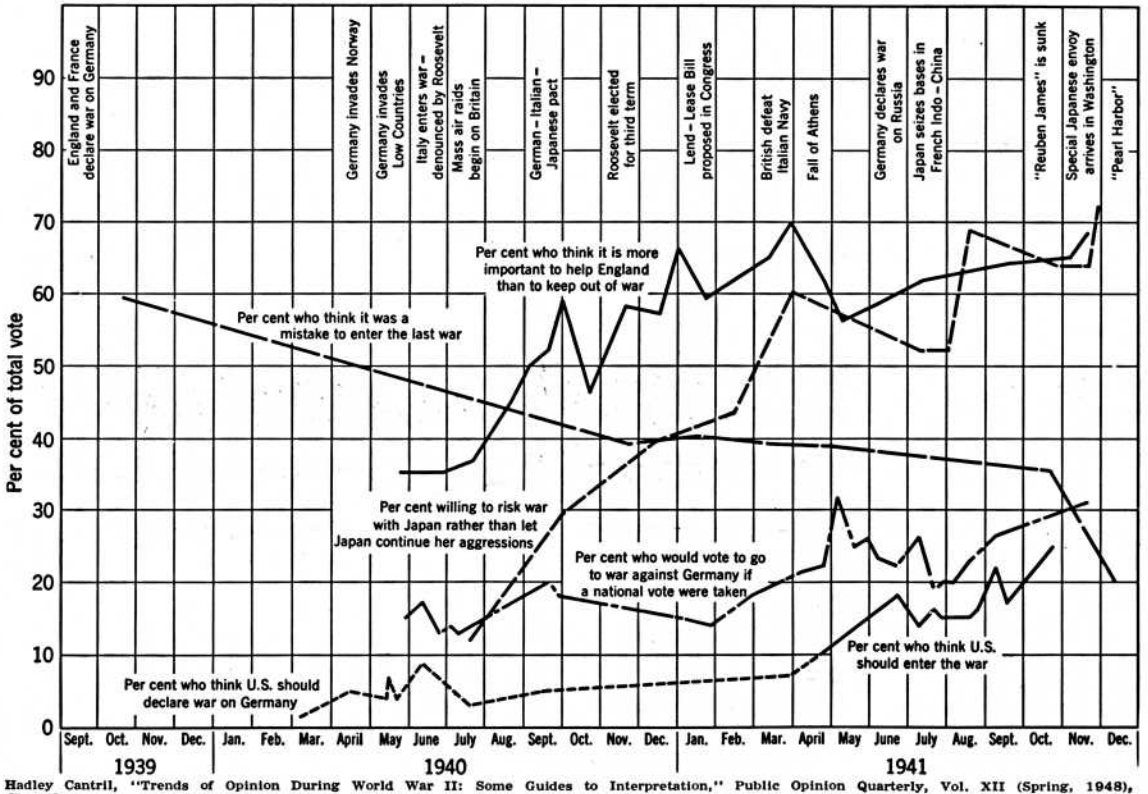
An example of the development of a new public opinion group was the

Committee for a National Trade Policy, formed by a group of businessmen who sought to interest their own circles in President Eisenhower's program of lowering international trade barriers. Hitherto, advocates of high tariffs had had a virtual monopoly on the attention of businessmen; suddenly, new names and powerful connections appeared in the struggle for a freer foreign trade policy. As a result, decisions about foreign trade policy could be made from richer sources of opinion and interest than were known before.

The public as a whole gives attention only to spectacular events on the international scene. Its interest goes first to the local, then national, and then international news. Only eight per cent of a sample of American adults in 1953 expressed a desire to have a greater proportion of international news in the papers, that proportion being now only one to eleven according to one survey of international versus domestic content. Of course, the most exciting of all events has been war. The tedious process by which peace is sought is generally ignored. Therefore the leaders of policy must contend with public moods rather than public opinions about war and peace; they must ask themselves such questions as: "Are most people angry and excited against a foreign power? Do they trust the intentions of other countries? Are they firmly opposed to military action by the United States?" Then, since many people cast their votes according to their mood about world affairs, the leaders adjust their foreign goals to the limits set by this mood.

Professor Hadley Cantril, in his study *Gauging Public Opinion* (1944), used the chart in Figure 111 to show the changing moods of the public on policies connected with entering World War II. Note how much more popular was the desire to help England than was the wish to declare war on Germany, despite the fact that the two wishes were tied together in many ways. The American government could have concluded that either policy was the popular one, and followed it. Note, too, how a widely held notion about history, to wit, that it was a mistake to enter World War I, was abandoned in the face of events that seemed contradictory to that attitude. Note, finally, how well prepared the public was to receive the notion of war with the Axis, just before the enemy struck. It is almost as if the Axis had waited to attack the United States until American opinion was prepared for war. Perhaps, more plausibly, people had sensed the meaning of developments and were moving to an aggressive climax; meanwhile the enemy, realizing the trend, launched their assault. Although President Roosevelt from 1938 to 1941 held a clear personal position favoring drastic American intervention against the Axis, he was always held back by strong currents of opinion from making his intentions (which were of course shared by many others) the official policy.

Taking into account the various relations described in this chapter, the roles of the different "makers" of American foreign policy can be generalized in a rough way. The President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff seem to have the greatest power and initiative. The National Security Council has extraordinary significance through its functions of gathering



Hadley Cantril, "Trends of Opinion During World War II: Some Guides to Interpretation," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. XII (Spring, 1948), Chart 2

Figure 111. Shifts of Public Opinion in the Crisis Before America Entered World War II.

and of intepreting data on foreign affairs. The Secretary of State is quite dependent upon the President, and can be powerful only with strong presidential backing; the several other chiefs of agencies dealing with foreign affairs, such as the Director of the United States Information Agency, have only minor voices; Congress, and especially the Senate, have an essentially critical and restraining role; and pressure groups operate effectively—perhaps more positively—through the President and—perhaps more critically—through Congress. Public opinion works through pressure groups, Congress, and the President; however, the active, informed public with respect to foreign affairs is very small. The moods of the public nevertheless set almost impassable limits to the desires and the abilities of the individual makers of foreign policy.

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

1. What powers does the President have in foreign affairs?
2. Describe the structure and the functions of the National Security Council.
3. What changes have occurred in the role of American military leaders in the formulation of American foreign policy since 1900?
4. What powers does Congress possess in foreign affairs?
5. Every locality with a considerable population has one or more groups that have taken a stand on foreign policy. Discover one such group (usually a branch of a national organization) and interview its officers to learn and report on its activities over the past year.
6. Describe the disadvantages the State Department has in the politics of foreign policy.
7. What influence does the public have on the making of foreign policy?