

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE WORLDVIEW OF FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT:
FRANCE, GERMANY, AND UNITED STATES
INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE

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President Franklin D. Roosevelt operated from a remarkably consistent view of the world that grew naturally from his experiences. Before he entered the White House, Roosevelt already possessed a coherent worldview that influenced his thinking and informed his decisions as president. The product of his background and education, his experiences, and his exposure to contemporary ideas, Roosevelt's worldview fully coalesced by the mid 1920s and provided a durable and coherent foundation for Roosevelt's thinking as president and his strategic direction in response to the deteriorating situation in Europe in the late 1930s and toward the Second World War.

Roosevelt's "worldview" was his broad perspective and sweeping understanding of the impact and interplay of states, parties, groups, and individual people on the progressive advance of world civilization. His background and personal experiences, understanding of historical events, and ideology shaped Roosevelt's perspective and enabled him to formulate and deliberately pursue long-range strategic goals as part of his foreign policy. The foundation of Roosevelt's worldview was a progressive, liberal outlook that provided

a durable basis for how he interpreted and responded to events at home and abroad. An essential aspect of that outlook was Roosevelt's deep conviction that he had a personal responsibility to advance civilization and safeguard the cause of liberal reform and democracy. He believed that he was an agent of progress.

Examining several of Roosevelt's wartime policies within the context of his overall perspective allows new insights and a deeper appreciation for the depth and complexity of his thinking. As wartime leader, he remained focused on his fundamental strategic goals of defeating Nazi Germany and totalitarianism while crafting and implementing an enduring peace. As part of the enduring peace, he envisioned a postwar world marked by continued cooperation between the great powers, the reestablishment of republican France, and the revitalization of German liberalism.

THE WORLDVIEW OF FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT:
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AND UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE

by

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Preface

Tales of the exploits of the Second World War have been part of the fabric of my entire life, and the political story of Franklin D. Roosevelt and United States entry into the war attracted my interest over twenty years ago. I first encountered Wayne S. Cole's masterful Roosevelt and the Isolationists while a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Since then, my fascination with Roosevelt and the Second World War has remained strong. The period offers many insights that are invaluable today.

During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, service in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iraq awakened my interest in how prewar perceptions and assumptions influence United States entry into foreign conflicts. Related to that issue is the extent those perceptions and assumptions also shape, inform, or limit the manner in which the United States wages the subsequent war. As a citizen and a soldier, I find these to be vital issues. Events since 9/11 have served to sustain and reinforce my curiosity concerning the assumptions underpinning strategic direction and decision-making as the United States transitions from peace to war.

This study developed out of my master's thesis at the University of Maryland. Under the direction of Wayne Cole, my thesis examined United States relations with the French State between the Fall of France and the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa. During that study, I came to appreciate three circumstances. The first was the central role Franklin D. Roosevelt played in the foreign policy and strategic direction of his administration. The second was the extent to which United States policies derived from

attitudes, perceptions, and influences in the United States that did not always reflect what was happening overseas. The third was that in Roosevelt's thinking there seemed to be a symbiotic relationship between France and Germany. With these as a point of departure, I began my dissertation research and had the great fortune to return to the Hudson Valley as a member of the Department of History at West Point. With the assistance of a generous research grant from the United States Military Academy's Faculty Development Research Fund, I began detailed exploration into Roosevelt's personal direction of policy, his background, and his experiences in the collection at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York and at other repositories.

This study could not have succeeded without the kind and professional assistance provided by the staff at the National Archives and the Roosevelt Library. I would like to offer my particular appreciation to National Archives staff archivists: John Taylor, from the modern military record branch, Larry McDonald, in the records of the Office of Strategic Services, and Rich Boylan, at the Suitland Federal Records Center and College Park. I also owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the superb staff of the Roosevelt Library, especially Raymond Teichman, Robert Parks, Mark Renovitch, Nancy Schnedecker, and Virginia Lewick. Their character made my visit to Hyde Park a rewarding one.

Throughout this study I have benefited from the professional advice and helpful encouragement of colleagues and friends. Historians Wayne Cole, George Herring, and Mark Stoler encouraged, supported, and inspired my efforts. Herman Belz, Rose-Marie Oster, and Shu Guang Zhang at the University of Maryland and J. Samuel Walker, the historian of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, provided critical analyses and

invaluable feedback. To Keith Olson, who directed my doctoral studies, I owe a lasting debt of gratitude for his counsel, patience, insight, and commitment. I am deeply grateful to him.

As always, my greatest acknowledgement is to my wife, Terri, and our wonderful children: Elise, Michael, and Mary Ellen. They have supported me in every way. What follows is a testament to their love, inspiration, and encouragement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

He has an amazingly retentive memory and constantly floors his family with knowledge of events, geography and history, factual concrete knowledge.

Joseph Lash's diary description of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940¹

Before he entered the White House, Franklin D. Roosevelt already possessed a coherent and consistent worldview that influenced his thinking and informed his decisions as president.² That worldview shaped how he understood and responded to events in Europe as war threatened and his conduct of the Second World War. As a result, Roosevelt pursued what he believed was a steady and rational foreign policy and strategic concept. The consistency in Roosevelt's major decisions and strategic direction for waging the war against Nazi Germany and totalitarianism emanated from his particular worldview.

Roosevelt operated from a remarkably consistent view of the world that grew naturally from his experiences. His worldview developed over more than forty years and fully

¹ Entry for August 6, 1940, Joseph P. Lash Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, The Papers of Joseph P. Lash, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter cited as FDRL).

² Although Roosevelt has remained a subject of historical scrutiny for over half a century, there is no scholarly consensus on his actions with regard to World War II. Historians Justus Doenecke and Gerhard Weinberg assert that previously untapped or classified sources may lead to a greater understanding of Roosevelt's actions. With those, Weinberg suggests, historians may develop a more complete assessment of the influence of Roosevelt's experiences, particularly from the Great War and immediate post war era, on Roosevelt's perceptions and the impact of those perceptions on some of his most important decisions and wartime policies. Justus D. Doenecke, "U.S. Policy and the European War, 1939-1941," Diplomatic History, Fall 1995, vol. 19, number 4, pp. 673, 696; Gerhard L. Weinberg, "World War II: Comments on the Roundtable," Diplomatic History, Summer 2001, vol. 25, number 3, p. 492; Gerhard L. Weinberg, Germany, Hitler, and World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 186-7, 299-301.

coalesced by the mid 1920s. As a young man, Roosevelt's family background and his boyhood travels, reading, and experiences provided a solid foundation for his emerging perspective. As he matured during the progressive era, his formal education complemented those views and his subsequent entry into public life further exposed him to contemporary attitudes and strategic thinking. In world affairs, he thought the United States had a responsibility to promote liberty and progress, wielding significant influence through moral suasion and sea power. As Roosevelt entered public life, his ideas underwent further refinement, particularly in association with the two presidents and statesmen whom he admired most: Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Postwar events affirmed his progressive perspective. His tenure in Woodrow Wilson's administration as assistant secretary of the navy proved to be a formative experience solidifying his strategic views and progressive inclination. By the mid 1920s, the lessons he derived from the Great War and from the postwar setbacks led Roosevelt to formulate a remarkably clear strategic blueprint for resolving future conflicts and left him enduring images of France and Germany that remained powerful frames of reference throughout his life.³

³ Gerhard L. Weinberg notes, "A significant factor in the understanding of international relations is the perception of countries and issues by those in position to make policy." Weinberg added, "The more policy formulation is restricted to one man or a small group, the more important this factor becomes." Weinberg's study examines the thinking of Adolph Hitler in order better to understand Hitler and how his views and perceptions shaped his decisions. Justus Doenecke notes that no similar study has attempted to assess the views of Roosevelt and that such a work is sorely needed. In this paper, I attempt to provide an assessment of Roosevelt's thinking and perceptions with respect to World War II in Europe. Gerhard L. Weinberg, "Hitler's Image of the United States," in World in the Balance: Behind the Scenes of World War II (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1981), pp. 53-74. Justus D. Doenecke, "U.S. Policy and the European War, 1939-1941," Diplomatic History, Fall 1995, vol. 19, number 4.

For the purposes of this study, I have defined Roosevelt's "worldview" as his broad perspective and sweeping understanding of the impact and interplay of states, parties, groups, and individual people on the progressive advance of world civilization. His background and personal experiences, understanding of historical events, and ideology shaped a perspective that encompassed politics, foreign affairs, geography, and military strategy.⁴ It enabled Roosevelt to formulate and deliberately pursue long-range strategic goals as part of his foreign policy. The foundation of Roosevelt's worldview was a progressive, liberal outlook that provided a durable basis for how he interpreted and responded to events at home and abroad. An essential aspect of that outlook was Roosevelt's deep conviction that he had a personal responsibility to advance civilization and safeguard the cause of liberal reform and democracy. He believed that he was an agent of progress.

Roosevelt's worldview possessed two salient features, the first being his absolute confidence that certain nations represented higher expressions of civilizations than others, with the United States being the highest. From that derived the unshakeable faith in American exceptionalism that Roosevelt inherited from his grandfather Isaac Roosevelt. It also reflected contemporary Social Darwinism and the ideas of progressive historians such as Frederick Jackson Turner that the American experience refined and strengthened the attributes of superior Anglo-Saxon racial stock. He operated from the conviction that the United States represented a major moral force in the world for democratic progress.

⁴ Although he does not elaborate further on Roosevelt's thinking, Gerhard Weinberg asserts, "Roosevelt had a view of the world which was indeed geographically global." Gerhard L. Weinberg, Germany, Hitler, and World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 301.

As an adult, domestic politics held primacy for Roosevelt because of his sense that the maintenance of democracy in the United States remained the most vital precondition for the continued advance of civilization in the 20th century.

From Roosevelt's perspective, the superior civilization that developed in the United States derived from English, Dutch, and northern European stock; those European nations represented the next tier of civilization in his thinking. For Roosevelt, Britain possessed the most advanced form of civilization in the old world, and he deeply respected English institutions and liberal politicians. Roosevelt considered the Dutch on par with their English neighbors. Rounding out the most advanced nations were France and Germany, both on a slightly lower tier due to the inherent tensions that Roosevelt perceived in each. Roosevelt believed that in both France and Germany reactionary and conservative forces often set back the course of progress. Roosevelt sensed a tension between liberal, intellectual, and industrial Germany and the impulses of Prussian militarism and *Junker* conservatism. Likewise, he believed that the "true" France, republican, anti-clerical, and anti-colonial, struggled against the influences of the mixed racial heritage of France, the Catholic Church, colonial imperialism, and monarchism. Coming of age in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War and German unification and conditioned by the Great War, throughout his life Roosevelt typically perceived France and Germany in relation to each other. Ultimately, the conclusions that he reached about both countries fundamentally shaped his policies as president and the strategic direction he provided for prosecuting World War II in Europe.

Beyond the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, France, and Germany, Roosevelt saw relatively weaker national expressions of civilization. He believed that the mixed

heritage of the Latin states of southern Europe resulted in archaic and heterogeneous institutions in their countries and in their colonies in the western hemisphere. Beyond Western Europe, Roosevelt probably placed the greatest faith in the potential of the Russian people who he believed possessed a democratic character by virtue of their own frontier experience. Although fascinated with stories of trade with China and his mother's time there, there was no particular prominence given East Asia in his thinking about civilization. Roosevelt, furthermore, seems to have taken little notice of the native and aboriginal peoples; they remained on the periphery of his world. Although he favored their independence, he envisioned a period of great power paternalism in order to prepare them for eventual self-rule.

Despite his primary geographic focus on the United States and Western Europe, the second feature of Roosevelt's worldview provided its universal character and gave him a powerful and compelling sense of mission. Roosevelt perceived states, groups, activities, and individuals either as the agents of democratic progress or as the reactionary and conservative opponents of the advance of civilization. Roosevelt's pervasive outlook provided the perspective from which he interpreted and understood historical events as well as contemporary international affairs and conflicts, domestic political struggles, and the competition between individuals. For Roosevelt, it illuminated the roles that his kinsmen had played in furthering liberal democratic reforms in his particular version of the advance of western civilization. An essential product of that was Roosevelt's faith that he was an agent of progress and as such had a personal responsibility to further the cause of progressive civilization.

In spite of the fact that the progressive label lost much of its allure by the early 1920s, Roosevelt's progressive outlook remained a powerful and all encompassing aspect of his worldview. In Roosevelt's thinking, the forces of reaction arrayed against his notion of progress and democracy were monolithic. He paid little, if any, regard to their ideological differences. It did not matter to Roosevelt whether the opponents from the so-called forces of reaction were Republicans in the United States, isolationist critics, industrialists, politicians of the French Right, Fascists, members of Adolph Hitler's Nazi Party, conservative Prussians, or Catholic French *général*s. From his perspective, they all belonged to the same group and were united by their opposition to the continued advancement of a progressive and liberal world. Roosevelt believed that across time, the forces of reaction worked for complementary, if not for identical, goals. Roosevelt judged that the reactionary leaders of those groups could not enjoy the popular support of an informed population and only maintained their hold on power by keeping their subjects in the dark, misinformed and deceived. In the White House, Roosevelt tended to surround himself with advisors who viewed the world in a similar manner.

Roosevelt's worldview had several implications for this thinking. Because of the gravity of assuming the role as an agent of progress in the 20th century, it is not surprising that Roosevelt thought seriously about the strategic concepts and the strategic means that might best accomplish his fundamental goals. By the 1920s, Roosevelt developed a strategic blueprint for achieving United States objectives while potentially avoiding formal belligerency. In his thinking, economic sanctions and blockade could complement the use of public information and moral suasion to deter aggressor states. In the event that dissuasion failed, he believed the application of naval and air power might achieve

victory without having to resort to sending an American Expeditionary Force to fight overseas. In Roosevelt's strategic thinking, Britain, France, and Germany figured prominently. The advance of world civilization required liberal, reform-minded leaders in each country.

During wartime, however, the consistency of Roosevelt's thinking was not always evident from his tactical maneuvering and political methods; instead, it emerges from an examination of his policies and actions within the larger context of his background, ideas, and aspirations. Roosevelt's views and ideas make sense when examined in relation to contemporary attitudes and culture, his family and experiences, and his sense of world geography, history, and current events. Those influences shaped particular views of France and Germany in Roosevelt's thinking. At the same time, his thinking about military force and the effectiveness of different elements of national power also coalesced into lucid strategic concepts well before he became president. The product was a durable and coherent worldview that provided the foundation of Roosevelt's thinking and the strategic direction that his administration took in response to the deteriorating situation in Europe in the late 1930s and toward the Second World War.

Examining several of Roosevelt's key policies within the context of his overall perspective allows new insights and a deeper appreciation for the depth and complexity of his thinking. In office, he consciously reflected on the experiences of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, and others such as Georges Clemenceau who provided him with both positive and negative examples of presidential leadership and statesmanship. As wartime leader, he remained focused on his fundamental strategic goals of defeating Nazi Germany and totalitarianism while crafting and implementing an

enduring peace. As part of the enduring peace, he envisioned a postwar world of continued cooperation between the great powers, the reestablishment of republican France, and the revitalization of German liberalism.

During the Second World War, Roosevelt was not the only major figure to possess a worldview and a vision for the future. The aims and desires of Adolph Hitler and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill have been well documented.⁵ Hitler's racial vision of German *lebensraum* did not survive his death and the end of the war in Europe. As the defeat of Nazi Germany seemed assured, tensions emerged in the Grand Alliance because of differing views among the Allied leaders that were evident during the summit conference at Yalta in early 1945. Nonetheless, the war against Nazi totalitarianism also weakened British power and quickened the spread of national consciousness in Britain's colonial populations, hastening the eclipse of Churchill's Britannic empire. While Soviet leader Josef Stalin's vision lasted decades longer than those of Hitler or Churchill, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union marked the demise of Stalin's worldview. In contrast to its wartime alternatives, Roosevelt's liberal worldview has endured.

Examination of the influences on Roosevelt's thinking and the development his perspective and strategic views produces conclusions that challenge the popular

⁵ Eberhard Jäckel and Gerhard L. Weinberg provide compelling portrayals of Hitler's worldview. Eberhard Jäckel, Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power, translated by Herbert Arnold (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981) and Gerhard L. Weinberg, World in the Balance: Behind the Scenes of World War II (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1981). Concerning Churchill, see Martin Gilbert, Churchill: A Life (New York: Holt, 1991) and Churchill's multi-volume series, Winston S. Churchill, The Second World War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949-51). British author David Irving provides controversial accounts of both Hitler and Churchill in Hitler's War (New York: Avon Books, 1990) and Churchill's War (New York: Avon Books, 1987).

interpretations of Roosevelt and his motivations. Historians have tended to portray the young Roosevelt as a poor student with a shallow intellect who possessed limited academic interests. Among Roosevelt's adherents the experiences of his early life are depicted as preparation for pragmatic political activities and maneuvering as president, not from the perspective of philosophical pragmatism but in a practical and opportunistic sense. Rather than influence his thinking or perspective, his experiences, and his bout with polio in particular, are viewed as honing the traits of his character and refining the qualities of an adept political operator.⁶ Roosevelt's critics have taken a similar approach, portraying him as a political opportunist whose foreign policy derived from political expediency rather than out of any coherent or fundamental strategy.⁷

Although Roosevelt was politically adept, his thinking also reflected a remarkable coherence. There existed a clear foundation for his thinking, actions, and strategic policies as president. Research reveals Roosevelt to have been a bright and curious young man with a sense of optimism and assurance that derived from his inherited station in life and was reflected in his apparent lack of lasting concern for academic degrees or the attainment of specific grades. As a student at Harvard, he already had developed a discernable historical perspective and a sense of family and personal agency that shaped and informed his view of events. The progressive ferment in the United States further

⁶ See for instance, James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (San Diego, California: Harvest, 1984); Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990); Roy Jenkins, American Presidents Series: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003).

⁷ Historian Frederick Marks characterizes Roosevelt's foreign policy as "drift and indecision" without "any clearly defined strategy." Frederick W. Marks III, Wind Over Sand: The Diplomacy of Franklin Roosevelt (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1988), p. 287.

reinforced those inclinations in Roosevelt's thinking. His tenure in the Wilson administration also had a major influence on his attitudes, and even before the United States entered the Great War, he had considered effective strategic options as evidenced by his advocacy for air power in 1915 or for a policy of armed neutrality in early 1917. Rather than alter Roosevelt's character, his struggle with polio in the 1920s was important because it provided him with a relatively uninterrupted opportunity for reflection. His strategic thinking coalesced during the mid 1920s as he considered how in the future to avoid the mistakes of the Great War and its immediate aftermath in order to advance civilization.

Chapter 2: The Development of Roosevelt's Worldview, 1882-1913

It is wise for us to recur to the history of our ancestors. Those who do not look upon themselves as a link connecting the past with the future, do not perform their duty to the world.

Daniel Webster⁸

By the time he entered Woodrow Wilson's administration in 1913 at the age of thirty-one, Franklin D. Roosevelt had developed a durable and consistent perspective of history, Europe, and the role of the United States in world affairs. That worldview lasted throughout the remainder of his life. Three complementary influences fundamentally shaped the development of Roosevelt's early thinking about Germany, France, and the nature of American power. Those influences were: his family, their background, and his fascination with his lineage; his education and exposure to contemporary attitudes and historical interpretations; and his own travels in Europe.

Because of those key influences four ideas coalesced in Roosevelt's mind prior to the outbreak of World War One in Europe. The first was a fundamental belief in American exceptionalism and in the superiority of Anglo-Saxon civilization over any found on the continent of Europe. Second, that France, despite its cultural achievements, was a civilization in decline, that French imperialism was artificial and archaic, that French politics and society were divided, perhaps hopelessly so, and that French administration remained old fashioned and obsolescent. Third, that Germany represented a level of civilization superior to that found in France. Although disdainful of common Germans, Roosevelt believed that German intellectuals had the potential to liberalize Germany and

⁸ Quoted on the title page of a pamphlet entitled "The Royal Descent of Your Colonial Ancestry," dated 1936, "Genealogy: Delano I," Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Hereafter cited as FDRL.

advance civilization. Germany was, however, a nation in tension between the influences of the liberal and intellectual southern German states and militaristic and autocratic Prussia. Fourth, that the United States exerted significant influence in world affairs, particularly as a moral force and through its sea power. Therefore, American policy, Roosevelt believed, had a responsibility to promote liberty and progress.

I.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's father, James Roosevelt, led the life of a Hudson Valley squire and gentleman-capitalist.⁹ Born in his father's Poughkeepsie home in 1828, James was well educated, graduating from Union College in 1847 at the age of nineteen. Following his graduation, James embarked on a two year Grand Tour of Europe.¹⁰ The tour began in England where James Roosevelt mingled with and came to admire Britain's landed gentry. One of his relatives later suggested, "He tried to pattern himself on Lord Landsdowne, sideburns and all."¹¹ His son, however, reflected that James Roosevelt "was

⁹ James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, Affectionately, F.D.R.: A Son's Story of a Lonely Man (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), p. 19.

¹⁰ National Cyclopedia of American Biography pamphlet, "James Roosevelt," in Roosevelt II, Genealogy, Box 17, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹¹ Allen Churchill, The Roosevelts: American Aristocrats (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 143-4; Karl Schriftgiesser, The Amazing Roosevelt Family, 1613-1942 (New York: Wilfred Funk, 1942), p. 188.

no snob” and emphasized that “He was the most generous and kindly of men and always liberal in his outlook.”¹²

Following his stay in England, James Roosevelt journeyed through France, the German states, Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, Greece, Italy, Egypt, and the Middle East.¹³ Perhaps influenced by the spirit of Italian nationalism or caught up in the liberal mood of Europe in 1848, Roosevelt enlisted in Guiseppe Garibaldi’s red shirts. The red shirts, however, were between battles, and, after a month, the boredom convinced James to forsake the legions and continue his tour.¹⁴ Upon learning of his son’s exploits, his father Isaac Roosevelt cautioned, “Do not incur further danger by risking your life amid revolutionary scenes--”¹⁵

Isaac Roosevelt’s letters to his son in 1848 reveal a strong belief in American exceptionalism and a particular view of French Catholic society that influenced the thinking of his son and grandson. That summer, glad to learn that his son had left Italy, Isaac Roosevelt asserted, “Liberty in Europe is far different from the liberty we enjoy in our country - & I hope you will continue to take no active part in the revolutions which

¹² Entry for September 8, 1942 in William D. Hassett, Off the Record with F.D.R., 1942-1945 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1958), p. 124.

¹³ Passport of James Roosevelt, Box 53, Papers of James (II) Roosevelt, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

¹⁴ Churchill, The Roosevelts, p. 144. Although in a 1941 memorandum Franklin Roosevelt heavily embellished the tale of his father joining the Red Shirts, biographer Geoffrey C. Ward supports the essential facts of the incident as having happened. Geoffrey C. Ward, Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt, 1882-1905 (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 31.

¹⁵ Isaac Roosevelt to James Roosevelt, March 31, 1848, Box 52, Papers of James (II) Roosevelt, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

are agitating the old world.”¹⁶ Several months later, he praised his son’s ability to preserve his “moral character” “amid many perils.” He added, “I esteem the morality of our people far superior to that of any other.” Isaac Roosevelt suggested that “the welfare and happiness of nations & individuals depends on the strict observance of the laws of morality & justice - of true religion - not of forms - but of the spirit and affections.” Contrasting the “true religion” of America with the “forms” of Catholic France, Isaac Roosevelt further noted that “the French people were without religion, they only had a religion of forms - not influencing the life or conduct.”¹⁷

After returning from his Grand Tour, James Roosevelt resumed the life expected of a gentleman of his station. He received a degree from Harvard Law School in 1851 and briefly practiced law in New York City. In 1853, he married his cousin Rebecca Brien Howland and she bore him a son, James Roosevelt Roosevelt. Almost immediately, however, his professional interests turned to business, and he became a prominent financier, serving as president of three railroads and two transportation companies. In addition to owning mining interests in Appalachia and the Old Northwest, he helped organize one of the first “holding companies” in the United States and incorporate New York’s City Trust Company. His philanthropic activities included service on the State Board of Charities and as director of the State Hospital for the Insane in Poughkeepsie. In

¹⁶ Isaac Roosevelt to James Roosevelt, July 10, 1848, Box 52, Papers of James (II) Roosevelt, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

¹⁷ Isaac Roosevelt to James Roosevelt, October 2, 1848, Box 52, Papers of James (II) Roosevelt, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

1893, he was one of the New York State representatives at the World's Columbian Exposition.¹⁸

James Roosevelt's first wife died in 1876, and in 1880 he married Sara Delano, the daughter of a wealthy shipping merchant.¹⁹ The two had met at a dinner given by Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Sr. at her home in New York City. He was fifty-six; she was twenty-six.

Although for several generations the Delanos had been deeply immersed in the China trade, the family proudly traced its lineage to Phillipe de la Noye, the first Huguenot in America. Descended from Norman nobility, the de Lannoy family had settled in Leyden after leaving France at the end of the sixteenth century. Born in 1602, Phillipe grew up under the teachings of the English Separatists in Leyden and became closely affiliated with the Pilgrims. In 1621 he reached Plymouth Colony on the companion ship to the *Mayflower*, and the name became de la Noye and later Delano.²⁰ The coat of arms of ancestor Jean de Lannoy, a knight of the Golden Fleece, hung on a shield over the door of the family house in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.²¹ Proud of her heritage, Sara Delano

¹⁸ National Cyclopedia of American Biography pamphlet, "James Roosevelt," in Roosevelt II, Genealogy, Box 17, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Newspaper clipping "Facts Concerning Your Ancestors," Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

²¹ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 119.

Roosevelt would often comment to her grandchildren, “Franklin is a *Delano*, not a Roosevelt at all.”²²

As a child, Sara Delano had lived in Hong-Kong for a year and a half, but the chartered clipper ship and its crew that took her to Canton seems to have left a deeper impression on her than did China. The seven-year-old girl who turned eight at sea later recalled that she and her brother made friends with the crew, “learned the sailors’ songs,” and thrilled at their “wonderful tales of the sea.” Furthermore, in China, the Delanos lived “much as we had at home” and had little contact with the Chinese people and their culture. She recalled that the family rarely ate the Chinese foods that seemed “very strange to us.”²³

When Sara Delano’s father Warren Delano decided to send four of his children back to the United States from China, he chose to send them by way of Egypt and the Mediterranean. The route avoided the one hundred day journey around either Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, and also exposed his children to new sights. Returning to the United States, the Delano children essentially followed the same route that their father had traveled twenty years earlier, before the completion of the Suez Canal.²⁴ “We returned by ‘Messagerie Imperiale’ to France,” Sara Delano Roosevelt recounted, “stopped at Saigon, Singapore, Aden, Suez; thence by train to Cairo for two or three

²² Roosevelt and Shalett, *Affectionately, F.D.R.*, p. 17. see also Elliott Roosevelt and James Brough, *An Untold Story: The Roosevelts of Hyde Park* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1973), p. 108.

²³ Sara Delano Roosevelt memorandum, July 24, 1931, pp. 4-7, Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Faith, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

²⁴ Hall Roosevelt and Samuel Duff McCoy, *Odyssey of an American Family: An Account of the Roosevelts and Their Kin as Travelers, from 1613 to 1938* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), p. 273.

days, and to Alexandria; then by steamer to Marseilles and by rail to Paris.” At the age of ten she got her first glimpse of Paris, spending several weeks there, followed by a week or two in London prior to finally sailing home.²⁵

In 1866 the Delano family moved to Europe, and Sara Delano lived there until 1870. Those four years in Europe had a profound impact on her views. During the first year in Europe her family lived in Paris on the rue de Presbourg.²⁶ Throughout her life, she remained fascinated with the images of France that she knew as a young woman, recalling “that happy winter so long ago” in Paris and the glimpses she caught of the Empress Eugénie and her court.²⁷ The following spring, the Delano family went to Dresden and spent a year there. In 1868, although most of the family returned to the United States, Sara Delano, a brother, and a sister remained in Germany with an aunt and uncle and accompanied them to Hannover. She spent her final year in Europe living with a German family in Celle and returned to the United States in the summer of 1870, immediately prior to the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War.²⁸

²⁵ Sara Delano Roosevelt memorandum, July 24, 1931, p. 7, Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

²⁶ Sara Delano Roosevelt memorandum, July 24, 1931, p. 9, Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

²⁷ Sara Delano Roosevelt, Isabel Leighton, and Gabrielle Forbush, My Boy, Franklin (New York: Ray Long and Richard Smith, 1933), p. 10.

²⁸ Sara Delano Roosevelt memorandum, July 24, 1931, pp. 9-10, Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers; and entry for May 1881, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary 1880-1897, Book 1, Papers of Sara Delano Roosevelt, Box 67, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

The four years that Sara Delano Roosevelt spent in France and Germany as a young woman had a profound impact on how she viewed the two nations. She noted that during the Franco-Prussian War her “sympathies were thoroughly German,” despite the fact “that Papa was absolutely French.” Her sympathies, however, reflected the attitudes that she developed in Saxony, one of the south German states that maintained its independence from the Prussian-dominated North German Confederation until 1871, and Hannover, where she noted the people “still clung to their own royal family.” She recalled that “the attitude against Prussia was very strong” as a result of “the overbearing behavior of Prussia toward the smaller states of Germany.”²⁹ Those attitudes are not surprising, however, given the fact that both the Kingdom of Saxony and the Kingdom of Hannover had been allied to defeated Austria during the 1866 Austro-Prussian War. In 1866, Prussia absorbed defeated Hannover.³⁰

Sara Delano married James Roosevelt on October 7, 1880 in her parent’s home outside of Newburgh, and in early November, the couple began their honeymoon in Europe. Toward the end of the ten month long honeymoon, Sara Delano Roosevelt noted in her diary, “James was wonderful in the way he did it all, and we had such happy days all along.”³¹ Throughout the vacation, the couple spent a great deal of their time with relatives. Kinsman Elliott Roosevelt, the son of Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., was on his way

²⁹ Sara Delano Roosevelt memorandum, July 24, 1931, p. 10, Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

³⁰ Donald S. Detwiler, Germany: A Short History (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989, 2nd ed.), pp. 126-7, 132-3.

³¹ Undated entry from August 1881, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

to India but joined them for the transatlantic passage; at their request he made their rooms in London his headquarters. Like Sara Delano Roosevelt, Elliott Roosevelt and his brother Theodore had lived with German families in Dresden, spending 1873 in Saxony.³² In addition, her sister and brother-in-law, Dora Delano Forbes and husband Will Forbes, met them in Italy and stayed with them at the Forbes villa in Pegli. The Forbeses also joined them for three weeks in Rome, almost a month in Paris, and several days in London. Sara Delano Roosevelt assessed that they “saw a good deal of the Forbes.” Most of the Delano family, which had been touring Italy, also joined them in Paris. The couple also found time to visit several of James Roosevelt’s “cousins” from the Howland side of the family in Italy and Paris.³³

The people and the places that the couple visited also reflected their particular interests and previous travels in Europe. As if retracing much of James Roosevelt’s Grand Tour, the Roosevelts toured Italy, the Riviera, Spain, Paris, Brussels and Antwerp, the Rhine Valley and the Black Forest, the resorts of Switzerland, and finally England and Scotland. Sara Delano Roosevelt noted that they “met a good many friends and acquaintances” in Paris and during their month at the mineral baths at Bad Homburg, particularly members of the English upper class who were “old friends of James.” In England, the Roosevelt’s stayed with “James’ friends Sir Hugh and Lady Cholmeley” at their estate Grantham and

³² Joseph P. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt’s Private Papers (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1971), pp. 6, 11.

³³ Undated entry for April 1881, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

met others that he had known “years ago.”³⁴ In addition to previous acquaintances of James Roosevelt, the couple also visited Madame de Stuers, a friend of Sara Delano Roosevelt from her youth in Dresden. They also spent five and a half days in Hanover and Celle meeting old friends “who seemed enchanted to see us,” pointing out her “old school,” and reminiscing over familiar places.³⁵ Furthermore, it was probably at Sara Delano Roosevelt’s request that the couple made a special trip to Leyden and to the “interesting old cathedral” at Ghent that contained the coat of “Arms of Jehan de Lannoye (knight of the Golden Fleece).”³⁶

II.

In September 1881, Sara Delano Roosevelt returned home from her honeymoon pregnant, apparently having conceived a child in Paris that spring. She gave birth to their son Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Hyde Park on January 30, 1882.³⁷ James and Sara Delano Roosevelt had their son christened on March 20, 1882. The godfathers were

³⁴ Undated entry from July 1881, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

³⁵ Undated entry for March 1881 and entry dated May 1881, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

³⁶ Entry dated May 1881, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

³⁷ Entry by James Roosevelt for January 30, 1882, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's uncle Will Forbes, then living in Paris, and Elliott Roosevelt, the father of Franklin D. Roosevelt's future wife.³⁸

At Hyde Park, Franklin D. Roosevelt's half-brother James Roosevelt Roosevelt, Rosy, and his wife, the former Helen Astor, lived in the house next door.³⁹ Their children were James Roosevelt Roosevelt, Jr., Taddy, born in 1879, and Helen Rebecca Roosevelt, born in the fall of 1881.⁴⁰ The two children remained Franklin D. Roosevelt's playmates until 1893 when half-brother Rosy became the first secretary of the United States embassy in London as a reward for his substantial donation to Grover Cleveland's campaign.⁴¹ Rosy also remained close to the Oyster Bay Roosevelts, and when Rosy's wife died while they were in London, Elliott Roosevelt's sister Anna, "Cousin Bammie," went to London to act as hostess and to care for Taddy and Helen.⁴²

With the exception of three children of neighboring Hyde Park gentry, Franklin D. Roosevelt's circle of boyhood friends did not extend beyond his immediate family and an

³⁸ Entry for March 20, 1882, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

³⁹ Entry for September 25, 1881, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁴⁰ Taddy married beneath his social station in 1900, an act that ostracized him from the family. Helen later married her sixth cousin, Theodore Douglas Robinson, a nephew of Franklin D. Roosevelt's godfather Elliott Roosevelt. Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, volume 1, Early Years (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947), pp. vii-ix.

⁴¹ Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, volume 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 15.

⁴² Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 224.

extended family of aunts, uncles, and “cousins.”⁴³ His future wife recounted that when she was two, her family visited Hyde Park, and “Franklin rode me around the nursery on his back.”⁴⁴ She also recalled attending a party at Hyde Park in which “all the other guests were mostly his cousins.”⁴⁵ Nevertheless, distance frequently meant that most of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s time was spent with his parents.⁴⁶

From a young age, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s interests mirrored those of his parents, and the boy received constant exposure to aspects of France and Germany and their respective cultures. The images that he received, however, whether of his father in Europe in 1848 or his mother’s life in Paris, Saxony, and Hanover as a young woman, were highly romanticized. While at Campobello in August 1883, his mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt, noted that she would “read German or French aloud with several people here who care for these languages.”⁴⁷ In addition to its interest in both languages and in German literature and music, particularly Wagnerian opera, the family also treasured its genealogy and lore detailing the exploits of many generations of forebears. “I have always been a great believer in heredity,” Sara Delano Roosevelt confided, and she

⁴³ The three neighbors were Mary Newbold and Archibald and Edmund Rogers. Entry for January 1, 1887, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁴⁴ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 104.

⁴⁵ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 104.

⁴⁶ Believing that “the sources” of Franklin Roosevelt’s “vivid personality” can be found “in his youth and young manhood,” Geoffrey Ward credits Franklin Roosevelt’s parents with “molding their son’s personality and character.” Ward asserts that Roosevelt’s parents “instilled in him the rudiments of responsibility toward his community” from a young age. Geoffrey C. Ward, Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt, 1882-1905 (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), pp. vii-viii, 153.

⁴⁷ Entry for August 21, 1883, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

passed her “own love of ships and distant horizons” on to her son. From her perspective, however, her son’s “mythical excursions” were more extensive than his physical travels.⁴⁸

Throughout his life, Franklin Roosevelt, in particular, remained enamored with his ancestors and the stories that had grown up around them. Despite the fact that she considered that Roosevelt was “not a great student,” one member of his cabinet, Frances Perkins, later characterized him “as one who knows all the old stories and folklore” and who had “listened eagerly to the tales” spun by his elders. Perkins credited family influence in awakening Roosevelt’s interest in history.⁴⁹ His son James later recalled, “Father was a walking encyclopedia of knowledge of the family tree.”⁵⁰

Roosevelt painstakingly traced his colonial lineage and never seems to have lost interest in the exploits of his ancestral cousins. Claus Martenszen, of Roosevelt, supposedly aided in mapping New Netherlands in 1616, and cousins John Howland and Isaac Allerton were on the *Mayflower*.⁵¹ The first Huguenot in America, Phillipe de la Noye, reached Plymouth Colony on the companion ship to the *Mayflower* in 1621.⁵² Franklin D. Roosevelt’s great-great-grandfather was “a noted Revolutionary patriot,” a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1775, and one of the founders of the Bank of

⁴⁸ Sara Delano Roosevelt, et al., My Boy, Franklin, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Frances Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York: Viking Press, 1946), p. 34.

⁵⁰ Roosevelt and Shalett, Affectionately, F.D.R., p. 18.

⁵¹ Hall Roosevelt and Samuel Duff McCoy, Odyssey of an American Family, pp. 337-8.

⁵² Newspaper clipping “Facts Concerning Your Ancestors,” Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

New York.⁵³ The family tree also boasted Anne Hutchinson, Captain Ephraim Bill who oversaw the construction of two of the first ships for the American Navy, and Robert Livingston, the negotiator of the Louisiana Purchase.⁵⁴ Roosevelt later boasted, “I am descended from a number of people who came over on the Mayflower but, more than that, every one of my ancestors, both sides -- . . . without exception, was in this land in 1776. And there was only one Tory among them.”⁵⁵

Other, more distant, ancestors claimed by the family influenced how Roosevelt came to view the history of Europe. The list of “Brave leaders of men” included the Frankish kings Charles Martel and Pepin the Great, the Emperor Charlemagne, King Henry I of France, Bourbon Huguenot Henry of Navarre who proclaimed the Edict of Nantes, Norman Earl Robert de Bellmont who accompanied William the Conqueror to England in 1066, and the Earl of Winchester, “one of the insurrectionary barons” who compelled King John to grant the Magna Carta.⁵⁶ Another English ancestor opposed Charles I and became “Cromwell’s right hand” but ultimately placed himself in opposition to Cromwell too when “Cromwell made himself dictator.”⁵⁷ It is not surprising, furthermore, that

⁵³ National Cyclopedia of American Biography pamphlet, “James Roosevelt,” in Roosevelt II, Genealogy, Box 17, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁵⁴ Hall Roosevelt and Samuel Duff McCoy, Odyssey of an American Family, p. 338.

⁵⁵ Informal, extemporaneous remarks before the Daughters of the American Revolution Convention, April 21, 1938, Stenographer’s copy, Master Speech File Number 1131, FDRL.

⁵⁶ “Some notable ancestors of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, by his Ancestor Richerd Lyman,” undated, Roosevelt II, Genealogy, Box 17, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁵⁷ Hall Roosevelt and Samuel Duff McCoy, Odyssey of an American Family, pp. 131-2.

Roosevelt family lore tended to be the story of good cousins and their struggles against the unenlightened of their day.

With respect to the continent of Europe, however, Roosevelt's family tree seemed rather sparse for the period between the Magna Carta and the arrival of his colonial ancestors to North America in the seventeenth century. Although documentary evidence of the Roosevelt branch of the family only went back to 1658, family tradition enabled the Roosevelts to push back their lineage to Claus Martenszen, of Roosevelt, and the year 1616.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, concerning Dutch ancestors and their fortunes prior to the arrival of "Roosevelts" to New Netherlands, the family appears to have had no details. To fill the gap, the family turned to their comparatively well-documented Huguenot ancestors, particularly the de Lannoy family.

Evidently Franklin D. Roosevelt's initial exposure to the history of continental Europe during the later Middle Ages and the Reformation was from the perspective of the Huguenots. Franklin D. Roosevelt documented his Delano line back to a knight who had been born in 1267 and settled in Flanders near the town of Lannoy in 1310 or 1312. Three generations later, Baudoin de Lannoy, "le Bègue," Seigneur de Molembais, became one of the original knights of the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1429.⁵⁹ During the Reformation the grandson of "le Bègue," Philippe Comte de Lannoy, Seigneur de Molembais, became a Calvinist, and to escape religious persecution in France, the family

⁵⁸ Hall Roosevelt and Samuel Duff McCoy, Odyssey of an American Family, p. 337.

⁵⁹ Untitled genealogy of the de Lannoy line, Delano I, Genealogy, Box 16, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

went to Leyden in the Netherlands during the last half of the sixteenth century.⁶⁰ Clearly, from the perspective of the Roosevelts, Calvinists were the true agents of progress and liberty during the Reformation; arrayed against them were the forces of reaction embodied in absolutist monarchs and the Catholic Church.

Another group of Huguenots, the de Veaux family, provides one of the few links between the Roosevelts and ancestors who had settled in the German states for any appreciable length of time. Around 1651, the de Veaux family and other Huguenots sought shelter in Mannheim in the Palatinate under the protection of Elector Charles Lewis. Although their parents remained in Mannheim hoping to someday return to France and their old estates, the de Veaux sons eventually sailed to America. Two sons arrived in Harlem in 1675, with one eventually settling in the village of Rhinebeck near Hyde Park. Another son, Frederick de Veaux, became the Burgomaster of Mannheim prior to joining his brothers in Harlem. He purchased several “plantations” near Westchester, New York, and later settled in New Rochelle. Jacob de Veaux remained in his birthplace longer than his other brothers, sailing to Harlem around 1685 following the death of their parents. Being a man of “considerable means” and finding the climate in New York too cold, he went south, becoming prominent around Beaufort in the colony of South Carolina. Theodore Roosevelt, Sr. married Martha Bullock, a direct descendant of Jacob de Veaux.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibid and newspaper clipping “Facts Concerning Your Ancestors,” Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁶¹ Ida Dudley Dale, “Huguenot Pioneers of America,” The Huguenot, vol. 1, no. 6 (December 1931) and “Theodore Roosevelt’s Huguenot Ancestry: The DeVeaux Family,” The Huguenot, vol. 2, number 2 (February 1932) in Roosevelt II, Genealogy,

In the Roosevelt family lore, the exploits of another cousin, Daniel Ludlow, also hold a place of prominence. Ludlow had been in Paris during the French Revolution and the family account of his experiences in 1793 undoubtedly colored how Franklin Roosevelt came to view that event. According to family lore, soon after his arrival in Paris, Ludlow soon found himself on a crowded street “lustily” singing “the march of the men of Marseilles.” Perceiving the existence of a special bond between the United States and the French, Ludlow observed, “The English are in disfavor here, but Americans need fear no molestation.” In the family lore the French crowd is purposeful, controlled, and conscious of how its actions might be perceived overseas; the message received by later generations of the Roosevelt family was “that the affection of the French for America was too strong to permit any action which would give offense to every American.” With a red rag tied around his head, Ludlow reputedly watched as the delegates of the Convention decided that the king had to be executed.⁶²

Two incidents in the story of Daniel Ludlow’s visit to revolutionary Paris deserve further attention. After the Convention voted to execute the king, Daniel Ludlow supposedly contacted the head of the finance committee of the National Assembly and offered an immediate loan of four hundred thousand francs to the French Republic. Reputedly, Ludlow was the first foreigner to do so. The assemblyman accepted Ludlow’s offer in the name of “France.” Family lore also held that Ludlow met a conceited young artillery captain while in Paris that he dubbed “Captain Cannon,” Napoleon Bonaparte.

Subject File, Box 17, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁶² Hall Roosevelt and Samuel Duff McCoy, Odyssey of an American Family, pp. 95, 99, 100, 105-6.

Roosevelt lore portrayed Bonaparte as a brash, malicious man who was disdainful of popular sovereignty and advocated power in the hands of a single man. As if to provide a contrast between Bonaparte and the true French citizens on the crowded streets of Paris, Bonaparte reputedly told cousin Ludlow, “They are not my countrymen.” The family lore emphasized that Bonaparte was not French at all but was instead a foreigner, a Corsican, who wore the French uniform only as only an avenue to power and domination.⁶³

III.

Concerning Franklin Roosevelt’s formal education as the son of an affluent Hudson valley landowner, gentlemen tutors, a French governess, and a German governess prepared him to enter Groton boarding school at the age of fourteen in September 1896.⁶⁴ His parents, however, seem to have chosen his governesses carefully. In accord with their own preferences, they selected Swiss Protestants to teach their son French and German governesses from southern Germany and Vienna rather than the Prussian lands.⁶⁵ Franklin Roosevelt’s mother and father frequently traveled, and at the age of two and a half, he accompanied them to Europe for the first time.⁶⁶ Although it seemed probable in 1887 that James Roosevelt might take a foreign appointment, Sara Delano Roosevelt

⁶³ Hall Roosevelt and Samuel Duff McCoy, Odyssey of an American Family, pp. 109-10, 122-3, 126-7, 131-3.

⁶⁴ Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Entries for April 19, 1890, September 2 and October 24, 1891, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL; Sara Delano Roosevelt, et al., My Boy, Franklin, p. 23.

⁶⁶ Sara Delano Roosevelt, et al., My Boy, Franklin, p. 11.

hoped for Vienna, his declining health precluded him from accepting the offers of the Cleveland administration.⁶⁷ Because of James Roosevelt's health, however, the family began to take annual trips to Europe so that he could "take the cure." By the time Franklin Roosevelt was fourteen, he had made seven trips to Europe ranging from two to nine months in duration.⁶⁸

Roosevelt's boyhood experiences on the continent of Europe, however, remained narrow, exclusive, and largely aristocratic. Outside of Britain, the Europe that he came to know consisted of sightseeing in Paris, Pau, a resort in the Pyrenees, and the spa town of Bad Nauheim. Short excursions to Frankfurt, Cologne, Heidelberg, Baden Baden, Nürnberg, and a five-day visit to see the complete Ring cycle in Bayreuth rounded out his childhood exposure to Germany.⁶⁹ Clearly, his travels complemented the romanticized views of south-central Germany and Paris that he acquired from his parents. Those romantic excursions, however, had a major impact on Roosevelt's views. His secretary later recalled that much of Roosevelt's conception of Germany seemed "bound up in Roosevelt's mind with his own trips to Germany as a boy."⁷⁰

It is not clear where the Roosevelt family traveled in Europe when their son was two, and the trip seems to have left no impression on Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt's direct

⁶⁷ Entry for April 12, 1887 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁶⁸ Six of FDR's first seven trips to Europe can be followed in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁶⁹ Entries for May 20 and 21, 1891, July 3, 1891, July 4, 1895, July 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31, 1896, August 17, 1896, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁷⁰ Grace Tully, F.D.R., My Boss (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 70.

exposure to France as a boy came exclusively during his second trip to Europe between October 1889 and April 1890. His family spent nearly five months in Pau that winter. His mother noted, “We have been very busy with dinners, races, hunt breakfasts, . . . golf, lovely drives, etc.”⁷¹ At the resort, the socially active Roosevelts mingled with the upper class of Europe. Sara Roosevelt noted that her husband “knew many Pau people before.”⁷² Nevertheless, with the exception of two other American families at Pau, the friends of the Roosevelt family were British aristocrats, the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, Sir Cameron and Lady Gull, Sir Hugh and Lady Cholmeley, and the Earl and Countess of Clanwilliam.⁷³

The Roosevelt’s also spent approximately two weeks visiting Paris in the autumn of 1889 and spring of 1890. Although the family spent most of its time in the French capital at various lunches, teas, or dinners, Sara Delano Roosevelt observed that her eight-year-old son “enjoys seeing something of Paris.”⁷⁴ A variety of Forbes and Howland aunts, uncles, and “cousins” lived in the French capital, and James Roosevelt even provided the funds to support the lifestyle of “cousin Hortense,” Madame Meredith Howland, in Parisian society. Among the circle of her Paris salon was novelist Marcel Proust.⁷⁵ In

⁷¹ Entry for April 10, 1890 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁷² Entry for November 15, 1889 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁷³ Rita Halle Kleeman, Gracious Lady: The Life of Sara Delano Roosevelt (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1935), pp. 156-9.

⁷⁴ Entries for March 3, April 10, April 16, April 17, April 19, April 20, April 21, 1890 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁷⁵ Marcel Proust to Robert de Billy, June 9, 1893 in Philip Kolb, ed., Marcel Proust: Selected Letters, vol. 1, 1880-1903, Trans. Ralph Manheim (Garden City, New York:

addition to visiting relatives, Franklin Roosevelt spent two days sightseeing at the Jardin des Tuileries, the Champs-Élysées, and the Eiffel Tower.⁷⁶

In the summer of 1891, James Roosevelt took his family to Bad Nauheim for what became an annual event for a month or two each summer until his death in 1900. The Roosevelts arrived at Bad Nauheim on May 20, 1891, and several weeks later, Sara Delano Roosevelt lamented the fact that “There are hardly any English or Americans here.”⁷⁷ Nevertheless, Bad Nauheim quickly became comfortable and familiar for the Roosevelts. Sir Cameron and Lady Gull, two of their friends from Pau, did join them in Bad Nauheim, and the Cholmeleys and the Duke and Duchess of Rutland were in nearby Bad Homburg.⁷⁸ After 1895, Lord Clanwilliam also joined them at Bad Nauheim.⁷⁹ Additionally, Delano relatives regularly visited the Roosevelts in Bad Nauheim, so the family had little need to socialize with any local German commoners.⁸⁰ The Roosevelts quickly settled into a routine at Bad Nauheim, even to the point of occupying the same

Doubleday and Company, 1983), pp. 47-8. Also, I. H. E. Dunlop, “Proust and Painting,” in Peter Quennell, ed., Marcel Proust: A Centennial Volume, 1871-1922 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 112.

⁷⁶ Entries for March 3, April 10, April 16, April 17, April 19, April 20, April 21, 1890 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁷⁷ Entry for June 25, 1891 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁷⁸ Entries for June 16, 25, and 28, and July 19, 1891 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁷⁹ Entries for June 14, 1895 and July 17, 1896 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁸⁰ Entries for July 15, 19, 27, and 29, and August 1, 11, 14, and 17, 1891 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

hotel rooms year after year.⁸¹ By 1892, the German church in Bad Nauheim began offering a service in English, and two years later, the Roosevelts were part of a group pushing to build “an Anglo-American Church here.”⁸²

Soon after his arrival in Bad Nauheim in 1891, nine-year-old Franklin Roosevelt wrote to his cousins, “I go to the public school with a lot of little mickies and we have German reading, German dictation, the history of Siegfried, and arithmetic.”⁸³ His mother reflected, “Franklin goes daily to the ‘Volkschule’, it is rather amusing but I doubt if he learns much.”⁸⁴ Roosevelt, however, only remained in the school less than one month before the family left Bad Nauheim to spend nearly a month at Badenweiler. When they returned, Franklin received “a daily German lesson” rather than return to the German school.⁸⁵ Although he enjoyed the town of Bad Nauheim, Roosevelt remained disdainful

⁸¹ Entries for August 21, 1893, May 22, 1895, July 17, 1896 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁸² Entries for June 5, 1892 and June 24, 1894 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁸³ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Muriel Delano Roosevelt and Warren Delano Robbins, May 30, 1891 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 20.

⁸⁴ Entry for June 16, 1891 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁸⁵ Entry for August 8, 1891 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL. Historians have paid scant attention to Roosevelt’s boyhood experiences in Germany, assessing them as having little impact on the future president. Frank Freidel characterizes the annual visits as “interludes in Europe” during which the sheltered, privileged boy would have had “no awareness of the tensions and arms race quarrels over empire were generating.” Freidel places Roosevelt in the school at Bad Nauheim for six weeks, but Sara Delano Roosevelt’s diary reflects a period of only three weeks. James MacGregor Burns glosses over Roosevelt’s annual visits to what he incorrectly refers to as “Nauheim” and notes that Roosevelt attended the local public school for “one summer.” Political scientist, John Lambertson Harper, however, finds root in Roosevelt’s boyhood of the deep-seated ideas and principles that ultimately gave logic and consistency to his dealings with the Old World. One of those ideas, Harper mentions, was

of the common Germans he encountered there, referring to them as “dirty” or by derogatory nicknames such as “mickies” or “Frau Juggernaut.”⁸⁶

Franklin Roosevelt’s disdain for Hessian commoners was in sharp contrast to his family’s enthusiasm to meet German aristocracy. His mother noted the “great excitement” over the visit of the “much loved” Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden. At Bad Nauheim, James and Sara Delano Roosevelt befriended Baron von Falkenberg and his wife in addition to their friends from the English gentry. With apparent pride, Sara Delano Roosevelt recorded in her diary that she had “been presented to Princess Helena (Christian of Schleswig Holstein).”⁸⁷

With the exception of short sightseeing trips with his mother, the Germany that Franklin Roosevelt experienced as a boy was largely confined to the Wetterau valley north of Frankfurt-am-Main in the Grand Duchy of Hesse.⁸⁸ Far removed from Brandenburg-Prussia, the Hessian towns that Franklin Roosevelt came to know, Bad

the emerging difference in Roosevelt’ thinking “between the benevolent old and the misguided new Germany.” Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), p. 7; James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 1882-1940 (San Diego, California: Harvest, 1984), pp. 9-10. John Lamberton Harper, American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 12-3, 18.

⁸⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Dora Delano Forbes, September 10, 1892, Folder 16, “Forbes, Dora Delano, 1892-1940,” Box 17, Roosevelt Family Papers Donated By the Children, FDRL; Franklin D. Roosevelt to his father and mother, May 18, 1897 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 100.

⁸⁷ Entries for July 4, 1894, May 30 and June 5, 1897, and September 14, 1893 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁸⁸ I visited Hessen briefly in 1985 and again in 1986. In 1997, I moved to Friedberg and lived there for two years. The following three paragraphs are an interpretation drawn from my incursions into the local history of the Wetterau region.

Nauheim, Friedberg, Bad Homburg, and Frankfurt itself, boasted rich Roman, Carolingian, and medieval histories, a tradition of independence, and persistent anti-Prussian attitudes. About eighteen miles north of Frankfurt, the waters of Bad Nauheim had attracted bathers since Roman times, and by the 1890s, the fashionable town and its park had become a place for the wealthy to take the “cure” for circulatory problems and heart conditions. Until the Romans withdrew west of the Rhine by 260 A.D., the valley around Bad Nauheim constituted the most northern extent of the Roman occupation of Germania east of the river. The *Limes*, the Roman palisade separating Germania from the barbarian tribes, ran along the hills to the west, north, and east of Bad Nauheim. It is likely that Roosevelt visited the archeological excavations at one of the Roman legion forts that he passed on family trips to Bad Homburg.

The history of Wetterau, the region around Bad Nauheim, would certainly have held Roosevelt’s interest. Scarcely a mile from Bad Nauheim, Friedberg, where Franklin Roosevelt took swimming lessons, featured an imperial town built by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, partially dominated by a picturesque fortress tower from the fourteenth century. In Friedberg, the imposing evangelical church provided the focal point for the other half of the old town; nearby stood a ceremonial Jewish bath from the thirteenth century. Since the Reformation, the predominant religion in Hesse north of Frankfurt had been the Reformed faith. Marburg, fifty-eight miles north of Frankfurt, possessed the world’s first Protestant university and, in 1529, was the site of an unsuccessful meeting between Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli intended to reconcile the two reformers. Eleven miles north of Frankfurt, Bad Homburg, where James and Sara Delano Roosevelt had spent a month of their honeymoon, was a fashionable spa and casino town and the

residence of the popular Landgraves of Hesse-Homburg prior to the incorporation of the Electorate of Hesse into the Kingdom of Prussia in 1866.

Frankfurt, likewise, would have held a personal and historic charm for young Roosevelt. As a boy, Roosevelt had been in the city at least half a dozen times to see visiting Delano relatives and to tour museums.⁸⁹ The Emperor Charlemagne, a kinsman claimed in Delano family lore, held court in Frankfurt in the eighth century. Certainly, Franklin Roosevelt's visits to the museums of Frankfurt led him past the ruins of the Römerberg, a fort built by Charlemagne and later destroyed in World War II. Starting in the twelfth century, Frankfurt had provided the venue for the election of German emperors. Declared a Free Imperial City in 1530, Frankfurt hosted imperial coronations as well until the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. The Frankfurt that Franklin Roosevelt visited was a vibrant bustling town of technological innovation and liberal ideas. It had been the birthplace of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and the scene of the German Constituent National Assembly in 1848-9.

The German states, to include the Electorate of Hesse and the Free City of Frankfurt, allied themselves with Austria against Prussia and a few small principalities in 1866. During the three-week long Austro-Prussian War in the summer of 1866, three Prussian armies successfully attacked the Austrians and their Saxon allies while other Prussian troops forced the capitulation of Hannover and advanced through Hesse toward Frankfurt, the capital of the German Confederation. Prussian battlefield success at Sadowa and subsequent diplomatic triumphs resulted in the abolishment of the German Confederation and the Prussian annexation of the Kingdom of Hannover, Electoral

⁸⁹ See entries for August 11, 14, 17 and 26, 1891, June 20, 1892, August 9 and 31, 1896 in Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

Hesse, and Frankfurt.⁹⁰ It is not surprising that independent attitudes and liberal, anti-Prussian sentiments persisted in Frankfurt through the turn of the twentieth century.⁹¹ Clearly, the nascent anti-Prussian attitudes that he took from Frankfurt and the Wetterau region laid a deep foundation for Franklin Roosevelt's perspective of Germany in his emerging worldview.

IV.

Sparked by travels to Europe and the interests of his family, Franklin Roosevelt developed an avid curiosity for history and sea power at a young age. The Delanos were a family with a deep maritime tradition of ships and overseas trade, and his mother believed that she had passed her "own love of ships" on to her son.⁹² His father, however, also had a fondness for the sea and sailing.⁹³ At Pau, Roosevelt had listened intently to his father's long conversations with Richard James Earl, the fourth Earl of Clanwilliam, a career officer in the Royal Navy who had risen to the rank of Admiral of the Fleet.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Donald S. Detwiler, Germany: A Short History (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989, 2nd ed.), pp. 126-7; Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945 (London: Oxford University Press, 1964 paperback edition), pp. 196-8, 203; Larry H. Addington, Patterns of War Since the Eighteenth Century (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994, second edition), pp. 94-7.

⁹¹ On anti-Prussian sentiments, see for example, Gordon A. Craig, The Germans (New York: Meridian, 1991 paperback edition), pp. 26-7.

⁹² Sara Delano Roosevelt, et al., My Boy, Franklin, p. 7.

⁹³ Tully, F.D.R., My Boss, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁴ Kleeman, Gracious Lady, p. 156. Nearly nine and a half years later, Roosevelt wrote to his parents in Europe, "hope you will be able to dine with the Clanwilliams. Give Mr.

Franklin Roosevelt reveled in the liners that took him across the Atlantic, and while in England in 1891, his parents took him to a naval exhibition.⁹⁵

Closer to home, uncle James Russell Soley served as assistant secretary of the navy from 1890 to 1893 and had taught at the United States Naval Academy. Convinced of the value of history, Soley strongly encouraged its pursuit. He was one of the original members of the American Historical Association, and his prodding persuaded Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan to publish his monumental book, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*. No stranger to Franklin Roosevelt, Soley also recognized and encouraged the interests of his nephew. He prompted Roosevelt to consider attending the United States Naval Academy and forwarded to Groton his book about the Navy in the Civil War.⁹⁶ Soley's ideas certainly resonated with a young nephew enamored with history and his lineage. As if addressing Roosevelt, Soley wrote, "It is part of wisdom to study the lessons of the past, and to learn what we may from the successes or failures of our fathers."⁹⁷

Encouragement also came from the Oyster Bay branch of the Roosevelt family.

Franklin Roosevelt and his mother were no strangers to their Oyster Bay cousins, and the

C., I mean Lord, my kind regards." Letter dated June 10, 1899 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 324-7.

⁹⁵ Entry for May 15, 1891, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁹⁶ Soley's book included the activities of kinsman Captain James D. Bulloch in London as an agent of the Confederate government. The inscribed copy of Soley's book is in the library at Hyde Park. James Russell Soley, The Blockade and the Cruisers (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898 edition); letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to his mother and father, September 25, 1898, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 207-8.

⁹⁷ James Russell Soley, "Our Naval Policy—A Lesson From 1861," Scribner's Magazine, vol. 1, issue 2, February 1887, p. 235.

two visited Theodore Roosevelt's family in the summer of 1896.⁹⁸ Franklin Roosevelt's visits to Oyster Bay certainly included a substantial dose of history. Theodore Roosevelt, a president of the American Historical Association and the author of a naval history of the War of 1812, had a talent for sparking the historical curiosity of the children at Oyster Bay. His daughter Alice recalled that "history was made vivid to us by father."⁹⁹ History, as Theodore Roosevelt saw it, contained definite heroes, and he celebrated the exploits of citizen-soldier statesmen such as Timoleon, John Hampden, and George Washington.¹⁰⁰ That same year, Theodore Roosevelt published the fourth and final volume of his history entitled *The Winning of the West*. It is not surprising that those volumes, as well as his earlier *Naval War of 1812*, found their way to the collection at Hyde Park.¹⁰¹

In *The Winning of the West*, Theodore Roosevelt presented a sweeping interpretation of "the spread of the English speaking peoples," an event that he considered "the most striking feature in the world's history." Roosevelt traced the "perfectly continuous history" of Anglo-American progress and exceptionalism back to "the Germanic peoples"

⁹⁸ Entries for June 12-3, 1896, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

⁹⁹ Alice Roosevelt Longworth, *Crowded Hours* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), p. 12.

¹⁰⁰ Timoleon was a Greek statesman and general who was sent to aid the Greek city states in Sicily against the tyrants of Syracuse. John Hampden was a member of England's Short Parliament in 1640 who led the opposition to the king. Impeached in 1642, he escaped arrest, raised an infantry regiment for the Parliamentary Army, and was mortally wounded leading it in battle the next year. Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, page 84, Series 4A, Reel 416, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Hereafter cited as LCMD.

¹⁰¹ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, 4 volumes (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894-1896) and *The Naval War of 1812; or, The History of the United States During the Last War with Great Britain* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1882).

of the Roman era and their success over “the all-conquering Roman power” during the battle of the Teutoberger Wald. During the feudal period, Roosevelt argued that “the Germanic tribes conquered Europe” and strengthened “the mixed races of the south--the Latin nations” with an infusion of their vigorous blood. Nevertheless, greater than any success of the Germanic peoples on the continent of Europe was the spread of “Germanic stock” to England, an event that enabled that branch of the Germanic race “in the end to grasp almost literally world-wide power.” In England, he argued, the Germanic race developed into a distinct nationality that differed not only from that found in the Germanic countries but also from all other nationalities on the continent of Europe. Roosevelt attributed much of the success of the United States to its Germanic stock; he asserted, “The Germanic strain is dominant in the blood of the average Englishman, exactly as the English strain is dominant in the blood of the average American.” Besides Germanic stock, Roosevelt believed that the only “new blood” of “importance” to America came from Dutch, Scandinavian, Irish, and French Huguenot sources.¹⁰²

Consistent with Herbert Spencer’s theory of Social Darwinism, Theodore Roosevelt established a clear hierarchy of the races of European descent. He considered the English-speaking peoples the most advanced, followed by the Germanic race on the continent of Europe. He placed the “Latin” races of southern Europe at the bottom of the European scale; because of their “mixed blood,” Roosevelt believed that the people of those races developed into more heterogeneous and less coherent nations than their Teutonic counterparts. Roosevelt viewed France and Spain, “the so-called Latin nations,” as a hopeless mixture of races and cultures. In his way of thinking, the medieval successes of

¹⁰² Theodore Roosevelt, The Winning of the West, vol. 1, From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi, 1769-1776 (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1894), pp. 1-7, 12, 20-1.

France, Normandy, Lombardy, and Burgundy were due to an infusion of Germanic rulers and systems on the remnants of archaic Roman practices. Nevertheless, despite an occasional infusion of Teutonic blood, fundamental divisions in France and Spain doomed those nations to a lower tier in the hierarchy of races. Roosevelt saw the ancestry of “the modern Frenchman or Spaniard” particularly confusing because they derived “portions of their governmental system and general policy from one race, most of their blood from another, and their language, law, and culture from a third.”¹⁰³

That mixed heritage had proven particularly disastrous for the French. In North America, the French had been able to prolong their struggle with their English neighbors only by resorting to the use of Indian allies.¹⁰⁴ To Roosevelt the French were “utterly unsuited for liberty.”¹⁰⁵ As colonists the French had failed because they “were not very industrious” and “were often lazy and improvident.” Under a system of “ancient customs,” a religion of superstitious practices, and priests that possessed “unquestioned rule” over their congregations, their Catholic, patriarchal society left the French “unacquainted with what the Americans called liberty.” As if echoing kinsman Isaac Roosevelt’s comments from 1848, Theodore Roosevelt observed that the “average” Frenchman “though often loose in his morals, was very religious.”¹⁰⁶

In his study *The Naval War of 1812*, Theodore Roosevelt also came to several conclusions about United States military power and preparedness. Roosevelt asserted that

¹⁰³ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1, pp. 3, 5.

¹⁰⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 2, *From the Alleghenies to the Mississippi, 1777-1783* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1894), p. 169.

¹⁰⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1, pp. 41-5.

the “striking and unexpected successes” of the U.S. Navy against the British was due to excellent training, particularly in seamanship and marksmanship, and to the fact that the “few vessels” in the U.S. Navy during the war were qualitatively superior to any other ships in their class. Roosevelt found that the excellence of American seamen had been a result of the conditions in which the American merchant fleet had operated while the Napoleonic Wars raged in Europe. He believed that the conditions of the day produced men of “resolute and hardy character” who relied on themselves for protection. Unlike British merchantmen that moved in large convoys guarded by the Royal Navy, Roosevelt observed that American commercial vessels typically sailed alone and were forced to defend themselves with both cannon and musket against pirates and privateers around the globe or run the blockades of Europe. Roosevelt praised the product of those armed merchantmen, and he labeled them “as fine a set of seamen as ever manned a navy.” Naval service, Roosevelt conjectured, also strengthened the American race and developed vital “habits of independent thought and action.”¹⁰⁷

As he considered the contemporary state of readiness of the U.S. Navy, Theodore Roosevelt observed “that our navy in 1812 was the exact reverse of what our navy is now, in 1882.” In 1882, as the Civil War-era ships of the U.S. Navy rotted, Roosevelt conjectured that the United States wasted more money trying “to patch up a hundred antiquated hulks” than if it constructed “half a dozen ships on the most effective model.” Over the years, he argued, lack of “Congressional forethought” and “political short-sightedness” had prevented the U.S. Navy from maintaining a state of readiness during

¹⁰⁷ Theodore Roosevelt, The Naval War of 1812 reprinted in Mario R. DiNuzio, ed., Theodore Roosevelt: An American Mind: Selected Writings (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), pp. 80-2 and 84.

years of peace. Although he doubted that political realities would ever allow the United States “to have a navy that is first-class in point of size,” Roosevelt advocated that the ships of the U.S. Navy “be of the very best quality.” Peacetime readiness, Roosevelt asserted, would enable the U.S. Navy to “produce results of weight” upon the outbreak of war. Those results could be significant either materially or morally. While militarily inconsequential, Roosevelt noted that American victories against the Royal Navy during the War of 1812 produced a moral result of “inestimable benefit to the United States” by raising American spirits and enhancing the reputation of the United States overseas.¹⁰⁸

V.

In the fall of 1896 Franklin Roosevelt entered Groton, and although he seems to have studied diligently, his overall grades suggest that he was not a particularly remarkable student.¹⁰⁹ For example, in March 1898 he reported his monthly grades with the comment, “I, as usual got a B.”¹¹⁰ His specific grades, however, demonstrated an interest in, and perhaps a talent for, political economy, French, German, and history. Although his average grade in nine subjects during his first term at Groton was 81, a B-, he scored

¹⁰⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, The Naval War of 1812 reprinted in Mario R. DiNunzio, ed., Theodore Roosevelt: An American Mind: Selected Writings (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), pp. 84, 92.

¹⁰⁹ Entry for October 25, 1896 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

¹¹⁰ Letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to his mother and father, March 2, 1898 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 182.

95 and 90, respectively, in French and political economy.¹¹¹ Consistent in his letters from Groton was his confidence that he “easily” passed his French examinations or that he had done so well in the course that he was not required to take them.¹¹² Roosevelt did even better in the German courses that he took during his third and fourth years at the boarding school. He confided to his parents during his third year that “so far” German “is *awfully* easy.” At the start of his final year at Groton, he expressed his fear that the “tyrannical” rector might not let him take German because he “could *easily* pass it.”¹¹³ Ultimately, he scored high B’s and A’s in the language and “led the form all right in German.”¹¹⁴ In addition to languages, Roosevelt consistently “got through my History all right” with high B’s, and based on his professed interest in the subject, it is not surprising that he completed his 1898 Easter examinations with only a single A, in history.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Xmas Exams 1896, “Classroom Papers, Third Form,” Box 17, Groton School, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹¹² Franklin D. Roosevelt letters to his mother and father, December 15, 1897, March 18, 1898, September 22, 1898, and September 27, 1898 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 151, 188, 205, 209.

¹¹³ Franklin D. Roosevelt letters to his mother and father, September 25, 1898 and June 7, 1899 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 207, 323. Italics in the originals.

¹¹⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt letters to his mother and father, October 19, 1898, December 20, 1898, and April 2, 1899 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 223, 247, 287.

¹¹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt letters to his mother and father, September 27, 1898, January 24, 1899, and March 28, 1899 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 209, 250-1, 285; Easter Examinations 1898, “Classroom Papers, Fourth Form,” Box 18, Groton School, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL. Friedel credits Groton with giving Roosevelt a general “impetus for public service” and rates his performance as undistinguished, even though Roosevelt managed to complete his first year of college courses and also won the Latin prize. Burns characterized Roosevelt’s Groton letters as containing “hardly a hint of any intellectual excitement.” Burns downplayed the Groton experience as having no impact on Roosevelt’s future political views, values, or decisions other than shaping his “basic attitudes toward social problems.” In contrast to Burns and Freidel, Ward finds that

During his first year at Groton, the ideas in Franklin Roosevelt's political economy class probably had implications for how he viewed Germany and France. Although a Democrat, Roosevelt's father had favored "Sound Money," currency based solely on gold, and he was "especially relieved" when the Republicans won the election of 1896.¹¹⁶ Franklin Roosevelt's Groton political economy notebook reveals that, at the time, he shared his father's faith in the gold standard. "A measure must be stable," he noted, "Gold is stable, silver is unstable, therefore gold is the only suitable standard of value."¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Franklin Roosevelt's views about the gold standard may have had broader implications beyond the stability of the dollar. Contemporaries argued that the gold standard was the hallmark of more advanced nations such as Britain and Germany while less advanced or declining nations had currencies based on bimetallism or silver. France

Roosevelt "displayed more than ordinary intelligence" while a student at Groton. The school experience, Ward asserts, reinforced the optimism and confidence in the future that his parents had passed to their son. Political scientist John Lamberton Harper goes even further than Ward and finds that Roosevelt "experienced an intellectual awakening of sorts" at Groton stimulated by the events of 1898 and what he read. Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), pp. 9-10; James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 1882-1940 (San Diego, California: Harvest, 1984), pp. 14-6. Geoffrey C. Ward, Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt, 1882-1905 (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), pp. 180, 191, and 194. John Lamberton Harper, American Visions of Germany: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 23.

¹¹⁶ Entry November 3, 1896 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

¹¹⁷ Political Economy notebook, "Classroom Papers, Third Form," Box 17, Groton School, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

had been in the later category, and its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War seemed to validate the view that French civilization was in decline.¹¹⁸

At Groton and, later, while attending Harvard, Roosevelt “delighted” in the subscription to *Scientific American* that his parents had given him.¹¹⁹ An article that was undoubtedly of interest to Roosevelt was an account of how his “cousin” Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt “inspected, participated in, and, no doubt, infused with some of his own energy and decision” the gunnery training of the North Atlantic Squadron.¹²⁰ Evidently, the magazine also interested Franklin Roosevelt because its articles reinforced the direction that his thinking already had begun to take. While his political economy class studied stable currency, *Scientific American* argued that “there are certain economic laws which belong to the very nature and essence of things” and cannot be changed. The magazine called for “the calm judgment of the farming and artisan class” to assert itself against the “subversive and perilous teaching” of the movement for the coinage of silver.¹²¹

In its treatment of nations, *Scientific American* reflected a faith in Social Darwinism, addressing issues of “national character” and mirroring contemporary pseudoscientific stereotypes about different races and nationalities. In fact, the magazine termed the

¹¹⁸ Nell I. Painter, Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1987), p. 86.

¹¹⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother and father, January 29, 1899 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 254.

¹²⁰ “Our Big Ships in Fleet Practice,” Scientific American, Vol. LXXVII, No. 12 (September 18, 1897), p. 178.

¹²¹ “The Serious Side of the American Character,” Scientific American, Vol. LXXV, No. 18 (October 31, 1896), p. 326.

practice of anthropometric measurements as an “ingenious and scientific method.”¹²²

While at Groton, such theories would have seemed natural to Roosevelt who underwent regular anthropometric examinations. The fifty measurements taken in each exam compared Roosevelt’s body size “to the Normal Standard of the Same Age” in “any American Community.”¹²³ After one such round of measurements, the growing boy proudly reported his “marked improvement” to his parents.¹²⁴

Scientific American provided its readers with a clear contrast between the national character of France and the United States. As if addressing Roosevelt, the magazine exclaimed, “If the American temperament is enthusiastic and impulsive, the American mind is thoughtful, logical and practical, and delights to get down to first principles.” Asserting, “Here-in we differ from the French nation,” the magazine argued that, unlike France, the United States has “a passion for improvement, not merely in our mechanical industries but in our social life and in our municipal and national government.” “The Frenchman,” in contrast, “lacks the strong individualism, the power of independent judgment, the patient determination to study the merits of a question and get to the foundation truth.” Far from experiencing constant improvement like the United States, France historically had “been at the mercy” of “the demagogue” preaching what *Scientific American* considered “subversive and perilous” ideas, “a Robespierre or a

¹²² “The Bertillon System of Identification by Measurement,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXVI, No. 14 (April 3, 1897), p. 214.

¹²³ Anthropometric Chart, 1898-1899, “Miscellaneous Memorabilia,” Box 18, Groton School, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹²⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother and father, April 28, 1899, *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters*, vol. 1, p. 297.

Marat, quick to rush into the excess of a Reign of Terror or the bloodshed of a Commune.” The implication for its readers was evident, due to its unique and distinctive national character, France would never enjoy the same “remarkable progress” that American “civilization” was experiencing.¹²⁵

The French colonial empire portrayed in *Scientific American* provided virtually no impetus for the advancement of French civilization. To readers such as Franklin Roosevelt interested in the progress of civilization, the contributions of France’s colonies must have seemed insignificant and irrelevant. Senegal supplied a new hippopotamus for the Garden of Plants in Paris.¹²⁶ In China, a French officer from Tonkin conducted a geographical exploration in an area “not previously traversed by Europeans” and made “important corrections in the map of the Yang-tse-Kiang and its tributaries.”¹²⁷ Although in French North Africa French archeologists and military officers had uncovered extensive Punic and Roman ruins, the fruits of their labors remained sequestered exclusively in museums in Tunis, Algiers, and Carthage.¹²⁸

The French military reflected in the pages of *Scientific American* was an institution locked in the past. Characterizing the massed French cavalry attacks in the Franco-Prussian War as “brilliant though unfortunate,” the magazine noted how “useless” such

¹²⁵ “The Serious Side of the American Character,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXV, No. 18 (October 31, 1896), p. 326.

¹²⁶ “The New Hippopotamus of the Garden of Plants, of Paris,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXV, No. 14 (October 3, 1896), p. 265.

¹²⁷ “Asiatic and African Explorations in 1896,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXVII, No. 12 (September 18, 1897), p. 183.

¹²⁸ “Archeological Discoveries in Northern Africa,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXVII, No. 20 (November 13, 1897), p. 315.

tactics had become.¹²⁹ Clinging to similarly anachronistic ways, French military engineers put up twenty years of “systemic opposition” to proposals to demolish the fortifications of Paris despite the fact that those fortifications “counted for nothing in the defense of Paris in 1871” and presented a barrier to the growth and progress of the city.¹³⁰ Surveying the armies of Europe, the magazine noted that while the German army was probably “the most perfect of all” the French army was “still embarrassed by certain sources of weakness” despite its complete reorganization and the brave men in its ranks. The magazine pointed to corrupt contracts in the supply departments, large numbers of “inefficient” officers, and the fact that military service does not suit the “brilliant” but “giddy and thoughtless” temperament of the French people.¹³¹ The editors of Scientific American saw little in the French national character that suited them for the discipline necessary in modern military or industry. The French seemed more suited for the “world of fashion” and the “pursuit of pleasure.” The magazine noted, “The French stand easily first among the peoples of the world in the matter of getting up fetes and shows and in arranging pageants which shall have the highest spectacular effects.”¹³²

In contrast to its portrayal of France, *Scientific American* consistently praised the advancement and progress of Germany. According to *Scientific American*, Germany’s

¹²⁹ “Cavalry in Future Wars,” Scientific American, Vol. LXXVIII, No. 9 (February 26, 1898), p. 140.

¹³⁰ “Recent Archæological News,” Scientific American, Vol. LXXVIII, No. 7 (February 12, 1898), p. 102.

¹³¹ “The Armies of Europe,” Scientific American, Vol. LXXVI, No. 16 (April 17, 1897), p. 245.

¹³² “The Paris Exposition of 1900,” Scientific American, Vol. LXXVII, No. 10 (September 4, 1897), p. 147.

industrial success was the product of a unique German character or “mind” which was “essentially scientific and methodical,” the “qualities that contributed largely to the signal triumph of the German arms in the memorable war of 1870.” The magazine suggested that the same “restless energy” and “scientific methods” that had enabled Germans to triumph over the French twenty-five years earlier were being applied to “the arts of peace.”¹³³ The pages of *Scientific American* catalogued German scientific achievements ranging from suspension bridge and ship design, incandescent lighting and surgical instruments, to a prototype dirigible and an early automobile in service as an urban ambulance.¹³⁴

Already in the late 1890s *Scientific American* portrayed Germany as a future rival of the United States. On one hand, Germany was not immune from the European race to acquire colonies, and the magazine noted in its survey of 1897 that “Germany has just seized a Chinese port.”¹³⁵ Nevertheless, the magazine portrayed the majority of German expansionism as part of a much more subtle economic process. Germany owed its “commanding position” in the world market to its ability to make “rapid encroachments” into the foreign trade of other nations. In addition to scientific training in schools, and the alliance between universities and industries, government played a key role in the

¹³³ “The Secrets of Germany’s Industrial Success,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXV, No. 13 (September 26, 1896), p. 246.

¹³⁴ “The Rigid Suspension Bridge at Loschwitz, Saxony,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXV, No. 13 (September 26, 1896), p. 245; “The Leipsic Exhibition,” Vol. LXXXVI, No. 23 (June 5, 1897), p. 355; “The Twin Screw Passenger Ships of the North German Lloyd Company,” Vol. LXXVI, No. 20 (May 15, 1897), p. 307; “A New Dirigible Balloon,” Vol. LXXV, No. 14 (October 3, 1896), p. 271; “A Velocipede Ambulance,” Vol. LXXV, No. 15 (October 10, 1896), p. 284.

¹³⁵ “A Retrospect of the Year 1897,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXVIII, No. 1 (January 1, 1898), p. 4.

expansion of commerce. According to *Scientific American*, the expansion of German trade was a “carefully planned and carried out” process that relied on a network of commercial attachés or “agents” overseas.¹³⁶ One United States consul in Germany reported that, through representatives who possessed “a knowledge of the language of the country they may visit,” Germany built up its foreign trade to the point that it had become “One of the greatest competitors of the United States for the foreign trade of the world.”¹³⁷

VI.

After spring 1897 when Roosevelt joined a debating group at Groton, his thinking about international affairs began to coalesce. Over the next two years, Roosevelt never lost a debate, and it is likely that the positions he argued reflected his own views and familial interests. After viewing one of his final debates his mother appraised, “He did well.”¹³⁸ Early topics of debate included the issue of a canal across the Nicaraguan Isthmus and increasing the size of the United States navy.¹³⁹ Roosevelt was no stranger to either topic. His father had been one of the directors in a Nicaraguan canal company and

¹³⁶ “The Secrets of Germany’s Industrial Success,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXV, No. 13 (September 26, 1896), p. 246.

¹³⁷ “How to Win Foreign Markets,” *Scientific American*, Vol. LXXV, No. 14 (October 3, 1896), p. 269.

¹³⁸ Entry for March 7, 1899 in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary Jan 1898-July 1905, Book 2, Papers of Sara Delano Roosevelt, Box 67, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

¹³⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother and father, February 27, 1897 and letter in French and German to his mother, March 4, 1897 in *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 68, 69.

his uncle James Russell Soley had served as assistant secretary of the navy when Congress authorized a major naval construction program. Theodore Roosevelt, another advocate of a transisthmian canal and naval expansion, became the assistant secretary of the navy in the spring of 1897.

It is likely that the “splendid” visit of Roosevelt’s fifth cousin Theodore Roosevelt to Groton in June 1897 and Roosevelt’s subsequent visit with his “Cousin Theodore” at Oyster Bay, Long Island the following month further reinforced his views.¹⁴⁰ Clearly, Theodore Roosevelt’s ideas and example continued to exert a fundamental influence on the thinking of his younger kinsman. Despite some pressure from his parents to spend his Fourth of July holiday at Hyde Park, for Franklin Roosevelt the letter on the stationary of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy inviting him to Oyster Bay for “*as long as you can stay*” proved to be irresistible.¹⁴¹

Earlier that month, Theodore Roosevelt had delivered a speech at the Naval War College calling for naval preparedness. Roosevelt based his speech on George Washington’s maxim, “To be prepared for war is the most effectual means to promote peace.” Asserting that the best way for the United States to avoid war was by being prepared for war, Roosevelt called for “building a proper navy and carrying out a proper foreign policy.” Rejecting the argument that military readiness would lead to “wanton

¹⁴⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt letters to his mother and father, June 4, and June 8, 1897 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 110, 112.

¹⁴¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother and father, June 11, 1897 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 115; Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 11, 1897, folder 11, “Roosevelt, Theodore. 1883-1944,” Correspondence: Family Members, Box 20, Roosevelt Family Papers Donated by the Children, FDRL. A copy of the last letter is also on Reel 313, Series 2, Volume 1, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm, LCMD.

aggression” by the United States, he observed that the only war since the Revolution between the United States and a European power, the War of 1812, had been due to lack of preparedness. He assessed that “again and again we have owed peace to the fact that we were prepared for war.” Considering the potential threats to the United States, Roosevelt admitted “that no nation can actually conquer us, owing to our isolated position,” but cautioned that the United States could “be seriously harmed, even materially, by disasters that stopped far short of conquest.” Roosevelt predicted, “If in the future we have war, it will almost certainly come because of some action, or lack of action, on our part in the way of refusing to accept responsibilities at the proper time, or failing to prepare for war when war does not threaten.”¹⁴²

Theodore Roosevelt, however, was not the only advocate of naval preparedness in Franklin Roosevelt’s family. A few years earlier, James Russell Soley, Franklin Roosevelt’s uncle, had been the first man to hold the newly created position of assistant secretary of the navy. A teacher, prolific writer, international lawyer, and naval advocate, Soley graduated from Harvard in 1870 and in 1871 joined the faculty of the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland as professor of ethics and English. In 1873, he became the head of the academy’s Department of English Studies, History, and Law. He married Mary Woolsey Howland two years later. From 1882 until 1890, he served as the librarian of the Navy Department and the Superintendent of the Naval War Records Office. During his tenure in the Navy Department library, he gathered rare books, prints, and photographs, subscribed to scientific and technical journals, and catalogued the

¹⁴² Theodore Roosevelt address at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, June 2, 1897, “Washington’s Forgotten Maxim,” reprinted in Mario R. DiNunzio, ed., Theodore Roosevelt: An American Mind: Selected Writings (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), pp. 173-9.

Navy's diverse collection. After 1885, he also lectured at the Naval War College and at the Lowell Institute in Boston on international law and naval history. In 1890, Soley resigned his commission and President Benjamin Harrison nominated him to fill the newly created post of assistant secretary of the navy. After leaving the Navy Department in 1893, Soley practiced international law in New York City.¹⁴³ In 1898, at the outbreak of the Spanish –American War, Soley reportedly was under consideration to return to the post of assistant secretary upon the resignation of Theodore Roosevelt.¹⁴⁴

When Soley began his tenure as assistant secretary, the Navy was in the process of modernizing and the first three steel cruisers, the ABC ships: *Atlanta*, *Boston*, and *Chicago*, had recently joined the fleet. The first American battleships, *Maine* and *Texas*, were still under construction. Soley worried, however, that there might not be sufficient impetus to go beyond that modest initial start. When he assumed his duties, the U.S. Navy was ranked twelfth in the world. Acting aggressively, the Harrison administration's Navy Bill of 1890 called for the rapid construction of one hundred vessels, to include the battleships *Oregon*, *Indiana*, and *Massachusetts*. By the time Soley left Washington in 1893, the U.S. Navy ranked seventh in the world. It was during his tenure, moreover, that the policy and strategy of the Navy Department shifted away from the defense of North

¹⁴³ Biography of "James Russell Soley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy 1890 to 1893," May 31, 1949, Box 205, ZB Files, Navy Department Library, Washington Navy Yard; "Resigned to be Promoted: Prof. Soley to be Made Secretary Tracy's Assistant," The New York Times, July 17, 1890, p. 5; "Assistant Secretary Soley," The New York Times, December 29, 1892, p. 9.

¹⁴⁴ "Will Mr. Roosevelt Resign?" The New York Times, April 22, 1898, p. 4.

American coastal shores to the concept of defending the United States by taking offensive action to threaten and divert the forces of an opponent.¹⁴⁵

Soley shared a view of the world that was similar to that imparted on Franklin Roosevelt by his father. Soley's perspective was based on his fundamental belief in Anglo-American exceptionalism and the steady progress of their superior institutions. He advised, "Americans can never lose sight of the fact that England stands to-day in European politics for the same idea of constitutional liberty that they themselves believe in." He pointed out, however, that Anglo-American constitutional liberty was unique and "markedly different from that which prevails in France, and still more from that of Germany." More than just a common heritage bound the United States to Britain in his way of thinking. Soley expressed his conviction that the people of the United States had to consider "a serious calamity to England" as "a "calamity to the United States and the entire world."¹⁴⁶

From his study of naval operations during the Civil War, Soley reached some important conclusions. In *The Blockade and the Cruisers*, Soley observed that the vital commerce of the United States was extremely vulnerable. The Confederacy, being powerless to raise the Union blockade and acquiring few ships-of-war for strictly naval warfare, immediately turned to commerce raiding against the merchant fleet of the United States. He noted the asymmetric and effective application of relatively weak Confederate naval power, "In warfare against commerce, the Confederacy could strike heavy blows,

¹⁴⁵ James Russell Soley, "The Effect on American Commerce of an Anglo-Continental War," *Scribner's Magazine*, vol. 6, issue 5, November 1889, p. 551.

¹⁴⁶ James Russell Soley, "The Effect on American Commerce of an Anglo-Continental War," *Scribner's Magazine*, vol. 6, issue 5, November 1889, pp. 545-6.

without fear of being struck in return.” Presaging the impact of the submarine in the world wars of the next century, Soley noted that “a few cruisers well adapted for the purpose” of commerce raiding by the Confederacy “inflicted injuries on the American merchant fleet from which it never recovered.”¹⁴⁷

Surveying the condition of the U.S. Navy in 1861, Soley also made his case for deliberate naval preparedness before the onset of hostilities. He related that the U.S. Navy in 1861 “was by no means in a condition of readiness for war” and had no plans for transforming the force from a “peace footing” in case war broke out. Exacerbating problems within the U.S. Navy, Soley believed, was “the general policy of inaction” of the Buchanan administration “which forbade any measures pointing even remotely to coercion” to the extent that even the “most ordinary preparations were neglected.” He contended that the luxury of beginning military preparations after the onset of hostilities succeeded in 1861 because of the Confederacy’s military weakness and inability to mount offensive operations. Soley predicted that similar “good fortune” might not be possible in the future against a prepared adversary. He theorized that in the first few months of a modern conflict “the issue of the war is generally decided” and that “the most telling blows” would already have landed.¹⁴⁸

Another factor contributing to the “failure of preparation during peace” of the U.S. Navy in 1861 was what Soley described as the “conservative tendencies” of officers to resist change or realize the potential of new or improving technologies. Rapid advances

¹⁴⁷ James Russell Soley, The Blockade and the Cruisers (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895 edition), pp. 23-4, 168.

¹⁴⁸ James Russell Soley, The Blockade and the Cruisers (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895 edition), pp. 1-2, 13, 21, 231-2, and 237.

in technology in the years immediately preceding and during the Civil War convinced Soley that naval warfare had become a “new art” and a “living a growing science.” Future success in modern war, he argued, required “men of progressive minds and of energetic and rapid action.” Soley admitted that talented men would rise to the top during war but cautioned that the requirement for preparedness “can only be attained by having the ablest and most energetic men in the foremost places.” “Unless such a provision is made, and made before war begins,” he warned, “the possibilities of naval development will be neglected; the vigor and audacity that should mark the earlier operations of a war will be wanting; and the opportunity of striking sharp and sudden blows at the outset will be lost.”¹⁴⁹

Soley’s ideas and his case for naval preparedness certainly left their mark on Franklin Roosevelt’s views of sea power. Soley continued to advocate that the U.S. Navy be ready for war. Admitting that while the U.S. Navy had many peacetime missions and that it “protects American interests, chiefly by the exercise of moral force,” he believed that only a navy in an “excellent state of preparation” could avert war. Initially making the case for naval preparedness in 1887, when only the cruiser *Atlanta* had joined the fleet, he feared that additional naval appropriations might be halted, leaving the country in grave danger due to the misinformed popular belief that those few ships would be sufficient. He labeled the initial plans to complete the *Boston* and *Chicago* “a respectable beginning, but nothing more.” What he envisioned was replacing the sixty-odd rotting ships of the Civil War-era U.S. Navy with a “modern fleet” comprised of “vessels in considerable numbers,” eighty to one hundred warships, ranging from seagoing “monster

¹⁴⁹ James Russell Soley, The Blockade and the Cruisers (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895 edition), pp. 2-4.

ironclads” or battleships, to cruisers, light draft gunboats carrying one or two guns, and swift torpedo boats. Acknowledging the lead-time that naval construction required, he asserted, “Potential strength will not deter foreign states from a policy of aggression.” Rather than provoke war as the Buchanan administration feared, Soley conceived that military preparations could avert war.¹⁵⁰

Because of the serious consequences it would have for the United States, Soley considered the nature of a major war between Britain on one side arrayed against a continental European enemy on the other. Given British naval superiority and the immense difficulty an enemy would have adequately blockading the British Isles, he predicted that Britain’s European enemy would employ “commerce-destroyers” along much the same lines as the Confederate raiders. He theorized that in a modern war the conditions would become “much more favorable to the destruction of commerce than formerly.” Soley argued that even a dozen raiding vessels “would produce a famine immediately” in Britain. International law, furthermore, offered no relief. He observed that the direction of contemporary international law supported declaring food as contraband in order to starve out an enemy and induce the enemy population to force their government to come to terms. Although Britain and the United States opposed the broad definition of food as contraband, Soley noted that the continental powers of Europe, namely France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, either assented or made no objections to the policy of treating provisions as legitimate targets.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ James Russell Soley, “Our Naval Policy—A Lesson From 1861,” Scribner’s Magazine, vol. 1, issue 2, February 1887, pp. 223-4, 234-5.

¹⁵¹ James Russell Soley, “The Effect on American Commerce of an Anglo-Continental War,” Scribner’s Magazine, vol. 6, issue 5, November 1889, pp. 542-4, 548-9.

Soley put significant thought into the proper policy for the United States to follow in the event of an “Anglo-Continental War.” Rather than forcing the United States to abandon its traditional neutrality, he believed that the United States would not be drawn inevitably into such a war as a belligerent if it pursued “its true policy, of armed neutrality.” If backed by a war-ready fleet, he asserted the United States could “convoy its transatlantic trade” and secure it against “an illegitimate extension of the rights of capture.” With a force “of reasonable size” the United States would also be able to conduct reprisals against any offender, an act he considered “a perfectly proper form of coercion.” He suggested, however, that coercion or bravado would not be necessary if the United States possessed a ready fleet; in which case, American threats could “remain unuttered.”¹⁵² Over nine years before the Spanish-American War, Soley had formulated what Theodore Roosevelt later popularized as speaking softly and carrying a “big stick.”

Soley also formulated some specific actions to support a policy of armed neutrality by the United States. Rejecting the notion that the United States could ever build a fleet capable of totally securing its merchant marine from commerce raiders, he advocated the protection of commercial shipping in two ways. Fast steamships, supplemented with “a few rapid firing guns,” would rely on their speed and upon dispersion for security. In contrast, slow steamers were much more vulnerable. He believed that the U.S. Navy would have to resort to the “clumsy process” of convoying the slower steamers and providing partial security. Convoys should continue, he advocated, until there was a fleet large enough to guard and patrol the sea-lanes. He also predicted that on the outset of any Anglo-Continental War that a significant number of British merchant ships would seek to

¹⁵² James Russell Soley, “The Effect on American Commerce of an Anglo-Continental War,” Scribner’s Magazine, vol. 6, issue 5, November 1889, pp. 543, 551.

be reflagged as neutrals. Protectionist United States laws, however, would prevent those ships from acquiring American registry because they had been built abroad, something Soley lamented as a missed opportunity for American business. Although those laws could be suspended, he speculated that any “opportunity would be long gone before Congress met.” To overcome that unfortunate condition, Soley advocated presidential action and argued for the development of “a provision for executive suspension” of statutes in such emergencies.¹⁵³

In addition to Soley, the writings of Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan represented another major influence upon Franklin Roosevelt’s early thinking. Like so many other things in his life, it was relatives that introduced Roosevelt to Mahan’s writings. For Christmas 1897, an aunt and uncle presented Franklin Roosevelt with a copy of Mahan’s *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1773*.¹⁵⁴ His mother recalled that her son “used to pore over Admiral Mahan’s ‘History of Sea Power’ until he had practically memorized the whole book.”¹⁵⁵ Mahan, however, had only initially published the work at the prodding of another of Franklin Roosevelt’s uncles, James Russell Soley, the former

¹⁵³ James Russell Soley, “The Effect on American Commerce of an Anglo-Continental War,” *Scribner’s Magazine*, vol. 6, issue 5, November 1889, pp. 543-5.

¹⁵⁴ The inscribed copy is in the library at Hyde Park. Half-nephew James Roosevelt Roosevelt, Jr. also received a copy of the same book that Christmas. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1773* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1896).

¹⁵⁵ Sara Delano Roosevelt, et al., *My Boy, Franklin*, p. 15. Historian Frank Freidel downplays the impact of what Roosevelt read. He asserts that Roosevelt “was not of a particularly contemplative nature and there is no evidence that he thought much about what he read.” Frank Friedel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), p. 32. I believe that Roosevelt’s letters showing his interest in *Scientific American* or following the course of the Dreyfus Affair, the reasoning he used during his debates at Groton, or his fascination with Mahan’s writing reflect otherwise.

assistant secretary of the navy on the faculty at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Soley also recognized and encouraged his nephew's naval interests and forwarded to Groton his own book about the navy in the Civil War.¹⁵⁶

In *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, Mahan attempted to establish a historical explanation for British success, and for apparent French decline, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Reflecting the ideas of many contemporaries, Mahan attributed "England's unique and wonderful success as a great colonizing nation" to particular traits of English "national character." In contrast, Mahan noted that the French, unlike the British, possessed "a supercilious contempt for peaceful trade" that had persisted since the Middle Ages and "a national trait" of "excessive prudence or financial timidity" that stagnated the French population and its commerce. For those reasons, Mahan believed that although France was "a fine country" with "an industrious people" it would never become a major power or achieve anything "more than a respectable position" in the rivalries between nations.¹⁵⁷

In his treatment of the Seven Years War, Mahan emphasized his theme that France lacked suitable character to be a major power, and his portrayal revealed greater respect for Prussia than for France. Mahan related how the empress of Austria, "working on the religious superstitions of the [French] king and upon the anger of the king's mistress," united "the two Catholic powers" against Frederick the Great, "a Protestant king." During the war, Frederick's "thrifty and able hands" put "the abundant wealth and credit of

¹⁵⁶ The inscribed copy is in the library at Hyde Park. James Russell Soley, *The Blockade and the Cruisers* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1898); letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to his mother and father, September 25, 1898, *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 207-8.

¹⁵⁷ Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, pp. 53-4, 56-7.

England” to good effect; while, “the blindness and unwillingness” of France’s rulers destined that they only “grudgingly” funded their own fleet. To Mahan, the traditional preoccupation of the French navy with commerce raiding, rather than concentrated fleet action, reflected the “national bias of the French” and guaranteed that France would never “achieve more substantial results “ from war. In Canada, careful planning enabled Montcalm to delay a British victory despite the “character and habits of the French settlers” and a neglectful monarchy whose “paternal centralizing system of French rule had taught the colonists to look to the mother-country, and then failed to take care of them.”¹⁵⁸

In the text, Mahan also made a case for what he considered to be the proper focus of military preparedness. In addition to pursuing a flawed maritime strategy, Mahan argued that France had foolishly neglected its sea power while seeking continental hegemony. Mahan observed, “A false policy of continental expansion swallowed up the resources of the country, and was doubly injurious.” Mahan, however, warned that history revealed that “the simplicity of an absolute monarchy” enables it to use “the influence of government” to rapidly build its sea power. As a result, Mahan advocated greater United States naval preparedness “because a peaceful, gain-loving nation is not far-sighted, and far-sightedness is needed for adequate military preparation, especially in these days.”¹⁵⁹

The direction of Roosevelt’s thinking is evident from an address that he delivered in a debate on January 18, 1898 opposing the annexation of Hawaii. Opening with a strategic argument that borrowed heavily from Mahan, Roosevelt claimed that annexation would

¹⁵⁸ Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, pp. 283, 292, 295, 538-9.

¹⁵⁹ Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, pp. 26, 74-5.

mean that “we should for the first time in our history have a vulnerable point” that could “be cut off by a naval enemy.” Citing Mahan’s warning about the cost of fortifying the islands, Roosevelt favored the United States merely retaining Pearl Harbor as a coaling station. If in the future another major power had designs on Hawaii, Roosevelt predicted that “the expression of the feelings of the United States would be enough to stop it.” In Roosevelt’s mind, European governments took heed of the American opinions. As an example, Roosevelt cited the substantial influence that the United States had wielded over France when “the feeling of America led Louis Napoleon to withdraw his troops from Mexico, a number of years ago.”¹⁶⁰

Roosevelt then switched from strategic considerations to a more moralistic tack. He argued against the United States taking “away the nationality of a free people” and annexing the islands without the “consent” of their inhabitants. Revealing a strong strain of American exceptionalism and a deep opposition to colonialism, he argued against annexation on the grounds that only nations “ruled upon the monarchic plan, have seized territory for commercial reasons.” In contrast to European colonialism, he argued that all the United States wanted with the Hawaiian Islands was “a favorable trade treaty.” Continuing, Roosevelt suggested that “not only are foreign colonies expensive, but they are dangerous children and may bring political difficulties upon the mother country at any moment.” Surveying the colonial record he asked, “Why should we soil our hands with colonies?” After characterizing Italy’s colonial system as an utter failure, he made

¹⁶⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt’s notes for his address, January 19, 1898 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 160-3. The original is located in Master Speech File Number 1, FDRL.

his final point with another reference to France. He urged his audience, “ask yourself what good France’s colonies do her.”¹⁶¹

From the address, the direction of Roosevelt’s conception of France is discernible. From his comments about French colonialism, it is clear that he saw France as a power in decline. In fact, when addressing the possibility that one of the major powers might attempt to seize the Hawaiian Islands, Roosevelt considered only the actions of England, Japan, and Germany, not France. Furthermore, Roosevelt’s comment about “nations of modern times ruled upon the monarchic plan” seems to place the blame for French decline with Louis Napoleon and the government of the Second Empire.¹⁶² For Roosevelt, the rapid defeat of “monarchic” France during the Franco-Prussian War must have presented a vivid contrast to his image of the First Republic. Among his Groton papers, Roosevelt had made a special point to save an English translation entitled “THE MARSEILLAISE” that lauded an earlier French “day of glory,” the heroic resistance of “France’s children” during the Revolution.¹⁶³

Less than two weeks after his debate, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s aunt and uncle presented him with another of Mahan’s books, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*. In addition, the following summer, his mother presented her son with Mahan’s biography, *The Life of Nelson: The Embodiment of the Sea Power of Great Britain*.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt’s notes for his address, January 19, 1898 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 163-4.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, pp. 162-4.

¹⁶³ THE MARSEILLAISE, “Miscellaneous Memorabilia,” Box 18, Groton School, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁶⁴ Both books are currently part of the collection of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s personal library at Hyde Park. Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Interest of America in Sea Power,

Roosevelt proved totally receptive to Mahan and his ideas. In 1936, Roosevelt acknowledged, “As a young man I had the pleasure of knowing Admiral Mahan and I have an almost complete collection of his books and magazine articles.”¹⁶⁵

Francis Parkman was another author whose ideas interested young Franklin D. Roosevelt. Descended from Pilgrim forebears, Parkman belonged to a wealthy Boston family with whom Sara Delano Roosevelt was familiar, and in January 1899, she introduced her son to Parkman’s *Montcalm and Wolfe*.¹⁶⁶ When he got back to Groton, Franklin Roosevelt reported to his parents, “You’ll be pleased to hear that I’ve found a *Montcalm and Wolfe* in the library.” He added, “I will surely finish it as I am much interested.”¹⁶⁷ Writing from the Romantic or Whig school of historical interpretation, Parkman narrated for his readers the story of progress and its struggle against the forces of reaction and evil. Historian C. Vann Woodward later characterized the book as the triumph of “the Anglo-American forces of progress” over the medieval remnants of “French absolutism, feudalism, and Roman Catholicism.”¹⁶⁸

Present and Future (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1897) and The Life of Nelson: The Embodiment of the Sea Power of Great Britain (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1897).

¹⁶⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to M. J. Smith, August 13, 1936, PPF 3790 “Mahan, Adm. Alfred Thayer,” President’s Personal File, FDRL.

¹⁶⁶ Entry for January 18, 1899, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL; Franklin D. Roosevelt to his mother, January 30, 1904, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 526.

¹⁶⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt to his mother and father, January 24, 1899, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 250-1.

¹⁶⁸ C. Vann Woodward foreword to Francis Parkman, Montcalm and Wolfe (New York: Atheneum, 1984 centennial edition), pp. xxv, xxvii-xxviii.

Several aspects of Parkman's interpretation would have been particularly appealing to Roosevelt. According to Parkman, Louis XV's persecution of the Huguenots cost France "the most industrious and virtuous part of her population, and robbed her of those most fit to resist" the monarchy and the Catholic Church. He portrayed France as a fragmented and divided nation "of disjointed parts" held together "by a meshwork of arbitrary power." The arbitrary power that Parkman referred to was the Bourbon monarchy, "one great machine of centralized administration." Furthermore, in Parkman's portrait, behind the throne of the French monarchy was the dominant Catholic Church, a reactionary power that "clung to its policy of rule and ruin" and carried out the persecution of the Huguenots with either "priestly fanaticism" or "selfishness masked with fanaticism." In Parkman's tale it is fortuitous to the advancement of liberty that many of those Huguenots "escaped to the British colonies, and became part of them." Parkman's message to his readers was that the Catholic Church robbed the people "of every vestige of civil liberty" and "is fatal to mental robustness and moral courage." Catholicism was the antithesis of progress, and the implication for French society was that in order to "fulfil its aspirations it must cease to be one of the most priest-ridden communities of the modern world."¹⁶⁹

In conjunction with the portrait of the French military found in *Scientific American* and in Mahan's writings, Parkman's *Montcalm and Wolfe* seems to have awakened Roosevelt's interest in French politics in early 1899. Although the details of his thinking are not entirely clear from his correspondence, the Dreyfus Affair excited Roosevelt, and he probably accepted the contemporary warnings of a reactionary conspiracy at work in

¹⁶⁹ Parkman, Montcalm and Wolfe, pp. 6, 8, 12, 546-7.

France. In 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, an Alsatian Jew on the French General Staff, had been sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island for treason. By 1898, the case had become a political scandal after novelist Émile Zola denounced the verdict and warned of a military-clerical conspiracy against the Republic. Later that year, a colonel on the General Staff committed suicide after admitting that he had forged evidence of Dreyfus's guilt. The French army, however, did not consent to a retrial. In response, during the winter and spring of 1899, calls for a resolution of the "Affair" became increasingly compelling. Roosevelt's interest in the "Affair" came during those calls for a retrial of Dreyfus. In April 1899, Roosevelt requested that his parents send him a book on the "Affair" so that he could compose an article for the school paper. Animated, Roosevelt related to his parents that "when I get any spare time I shall work on the 'Dreyfus case.'" The editor of the paper, however, seems to have rejected the article prior to its completion because the paper had carried an article on the "Affair" the year before.¹⁷⁰

While at Groton Roosevelt also echoed the views of expansionist advocates such as Josiah Strong who argued that in the future the "Anglo-Saxon race" would dominate the world. Roosevelt sympathized with the Boers upon the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War and thought that the unnecessary war could have been avoided. At Harvard, he collected money for the Boer Relief Fund. Nevertheless, in the interest of progress, he favored a British victory. Roosevelt reasoned that "it will be best from the humanitarian standpoint

¹⁷⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt to his mother and father, April 18, 23, and 25, 1899, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 288, 292, 295.

for the British to win speedily and civilization will be hurried on.”¹⁷¹ While accepting the notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority, Strong, like Theodore Roosevelt, had argued for American exceptionalism, believing that the Anglo-Saxon race in the United States represented “the highest type of Anglo-Saxon civilization.”¹⁷² Reflecting those views as well as those of his grandfather Isaac Roosevelt, Roosevelt noted in a letter to his parents, “You see the Old World is behind the new in everything--”¹⁷³

VII.

Although Franklin Roosevelt had hoped to join the U.S. Navy after Groton, in accordance with his father’s wishes he entered Harvard in the fall of 1899 instead.¹⁷⁴ Although Roosevelt spent much of his time at Harvard in social activities and athletics, beyond those two pursuits, he devoted time for the school paper, the *Harvard Crimson*, and for studies in history. Occasionally, he would make the comment in his terse diary,

¹⁷¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to his mother and father, November 10, 1899 and January 21, 1900, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 358, 378 and Franklin D. Roosevelt to E. Reeve Merritt, May 26, 1902, Series 1, Reel 27, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm, LCMD.

¹⁷² Excerpt from Josiah Strong, Our Country, printed in Richard and Beatrice K. Hofstadter, Great Issues in American History, vol. 3, From Reconstruction to the Present Day, 1864-1981 (New York: Vintage, 1982), p. 176.

¹⁷³ Franklin D. Roosevelt to his mother and father, April 25, 1899, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 296.

¹⁷⁴ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 122.

“Working on History.”¹⁷⁵ Much of Roosevelt’s historical study at Harvard focused on genealogy and on understanding the role that his ancestors played in the past. In his letters home, he would proudly relate finding “some additions to our family tree.”¹⁷⁶ Advisor, Archibald Cary Coolidge, whose brother taught at Groton and who had served as his uncle’s secretary while the later was minister to France in 1892, assisted Roosevelt in selecting courses. He took Coolidge’s course on medieval and modern European history his freshman year, along with courses in French and English literature, geology, and a course on government given by history professor Silas Marcus Macvane. In his sophomore year, he chose a two-semester course on American history that devoted a full semester to the Colonial and Revolutionary periods and a two-semester course on English history since 1688 also given by Professor Macvane. Courses in economics, public speaking, and composition rounded out his second year. In his junior year, in addition to courses in English and government, he took a course on United States constitutional and political history to 1865 under Professor Edward Channing.¹⁷⁷

Roosevelt’s European history and French literature courses crafted an image of France heavily influenced by French Republican historical interpretation, namely celebrating the

¹⁷⁵ Entry for February 2, 1902, “FDR’s Diary 1901(-1903),” Box 39, FDR as Author, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁷⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 21, 1901, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 443. Biographer James MacGregor Burns has a different interpretation. Discounting Roosevelt’s clear interest in history and genealogy, Burns suggests that Roosevelt displayed no “interest in the intellectual side of Harvard beyond meeting course requirements and cramming for examinations.” Burns dismisses “the doctrines taught Roosevelt at Harvard” as having little relation to the views of the politician of the 1930s.” James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 1882-1940 (San Diego, California: Harvest, 1984), p. 19.

¹⁷⁷ Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 423-5, 460-1, 479-80.

Revolution of 1789 and its ideals while condemning the reactionary Bonapartists, Royalists, and Catholic clergy that consistently opposed democratic France. After completing European history and French literature, Roosevelt identified a shortcoming in the Harvard library collection, and in May 1902, he received a check from his parents so that the Harvard library could purchase “needed” works by French political philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau.¹⁷⁸ Conducted in English, the intent of “French Prose and Poetry” was to acquaint the student “with a few of the great writers of the last 3 centuries.” Clearly structured to reveal the progress of the republican tradition over three centuries, the course featured writers such as Racine, a prominent Jansenist who resisted the Catholic Church hierarchy and the absolutism of Louis XIV, and Lamartine, a convert to republicanism in 1848 and a member of the government of the Second Republic. The final quarter of the course was devoted solely to the writings of Victor Hugo.¹⁷⁹ Until his death in 1885, Hugo had been a consistent critic of Bonapartists, a supporter of the political views of French Socialists and extreme Republicans, and, after 1871, a defender of the Communards.¹⁸⁰ Apparently, Hugo’s writings interested Roosevelt to the extent

¹⁷⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, May 5, 1902, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 471.

¹⁷⁹ French 2-C, Course catalog, Department of French and other Romance Languages and Literatures 1900-01, Box 764, HUC 8900.130.2, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

¹⁸⁰ James F. McMillan, Twentieth-Century France: Politics and Society, 1898-1991 (London: Edward Arnold, 1992 ed.), p. 31; Alistair Horne, The Fall of Paris, The Siege and the Commune, 1870-71 (New York: Penguin Books, 1985 ed.), pp. 28, 50-1, 233, 506.

that two years later he entertained himself during the passage to Europe with one of Hugo's books.¹⁸¹

Roosevelt's studies, however, also led him to develop a broader historical view. In his history thesis on the Roosevelt family, written while "cousin" Theodore Roosevelt occupied the White House, he concluded that the success of his ancestors was due to the fact that they possessed "progressiveness and a true democratic spirit."¹⁸² By the time that Roosevelt completed his undergraduate courses at Harvard, he was well on his way toward developing what his son later characterized as a "sweeping view of history."¹⁸³ Increasingly, Franklin D. Roosevelt came to view his ancestors as the agents of reform. In his view, several traits made his ancestors "good citizens," leaders, and reformers. Those included their sense of "duty" "instilled into them from their birth," their "very democratic spirit," and the fact that they married "the best New York families" and thereby "kept virile and abreast of the times."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, July 24, 1903, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 493.

¹⁸² "The Roosevelt Family in New Amsterdam Before the Revolution," Notes and Papers, Harvard College, Box 18, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁸³ Elliott Roosevelt and James Brough, An Untold Story: The Roosevelts of Hyde Park (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), p. 59.

¹⁸⁴ "The Roosevelt Family in New Amsterdam Before the Revolution," Notes and Papers, Harvard College, Box 18, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL. Although acknowledging that Harvard would provide Roosevelt with some of the ideas that he would take into public service, Frank Freidel dismisses the impact of the Harvard education on Roosevelt, believing that extracurricular and social activities, rather than scholarship, were his priorities. Freidel characterizes Roosevelt's writing as "mediocre and uncritical." Geoffrey Ward asserts that Roosevelt "was rarely overly concerned with what anyone tried to teach him" at Harvard. Ward finds Roosevelt most concerned with his crowded social life, displaying no interest in achieving academic brilliance. Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A

While a student at Harvard, Roosevelt admired Germany. Although his family stopped their annual retreat to Bad Nauheim following his father's death in 1900, his mother still made occasional visits to Europe. In 1901, Sara Delano Roosevelt and her son toured Europe. While touring Norwegian fjords with several of Franklin Roosevelt's friends, they came upon Kaiser Wilhelm's yacht, *Hohenzollern*. In an otherwise terse diary, Franklin Roosevelt noted, "Wil.[helm] II came on board [our ship the] P.[rinzessin] V.[ictoria] L.[ouise] for a few minutes & then we all went on the Hohenzollern and saw her."¹⁸⁵ Although Sara Delano Roosevelt remained on their cruise ship, she proudly related the incident to her sister. She noted that her son and his friends boarded the *Hohenzollern* and then Franklin "passed the Emperor and bowed." She observed that in response to her son's courtesy, the Kaiser "& his two companions" turned and looked "quite distinctly" at her son.¹⁸⁶

During that same 1901 vacation, Franklin Roosevelt and his mother also spent ten days in Germany. It was then that Franklin Roosevelt made his only visit to Berlin. He and his mother spent two days in the capital. She noted, "F.[ranklin] and I drove all over the city to get an idea of it." They found the sights "all very interesting."¹⁸⁷ Sara Delano

Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), pp. 10-1.
Geoffrey C. Ward, Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt, 1882-1905 (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), pp. 215-7.

¹⁸⁵ Entry for July 28, 1901, FDR's Diary 1901(-1903), Box 39, FDR as Author, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁸⁶ Sara Delano Roosevelt to Dora Delano Forbes, July 29, 1901, Box 17, Folder 17, "Forbes, Dora Delano, 1892-1940," Roosevelt Family Papers Donated by the Children, FDRL.

¹⁸⁷ Entries for August 13 and 14, 1901, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

Roosevelt, however, seemed much more interested in taking her son to Dresden for a longer stay. Their visit in Dresden included opera, plays, sightseeing, a visit to the Meissen porcelain factory, and church services in English. Sara Delano Roosevelt proclaimed the city to be “such a fascinating place.” On a more somber note, however, she noted that that she “found great changes here since our winter here in 1868,” referring to the changes that had taken place in Saxony after 1871 as a result of German unification under Prussian leadership.¹⁸⁸

Franklin Roosevelt’s editorials in the *Harvard Crimson* in 1903 and 1904 reflected his positive regard for German culture and efficiency. Harvard, he asserted, could “produce better results” by imitating the “recognized custom” in German universities of beginning and ending lectures punctually.¹⁸⁹ Commenting on a gift to Harvard from German Kaiser Wilhelm II, Roosevelt noted, “The University counts itself fortunate in having . . . the token of good-will which the head of the German race has shown.”¹⁹⁰

Roosevelt had very little direct exposure to France while he was at Harvard. During their 1901 vacation, he and his mother took the train from Geneva and spent four days in Paris. The two stayed with Aunt Dora Delano Forbes in her Paris apartment. The brief visit consisted of lunches and teas with Delano and Howland relatives in addition to sightseeing at the Louvre and Versailles. The only other French town that the two visited

¹⁸⁸ Entries for August 15, 16, 17, and 18, 1901, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

¹⁸⁹ Editorial for January 8, 1904, “Harvard Crimson: Editorials by FDR 1903-1904,” Box 19, Harvard College, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁹⁰ Editorial for November 10, 1903, “Harvard Crimson: Editorials by FDR 1903-1904,” Box 19, Harvard College, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

in 1901 was Dieppe. Having taken the evening train from Paris, Franklin Roosevelt and his mother caught the cross-Channel steamer in Dieppe later that night and arrived in London the following morning.¹⁹¹

After receiving his bachelor's degree in 1903, Roosevelt remained at Harvard for an additional year to take economics and history courses that interested him. He selected history courses by Marcus Silas Macvane, John B. Merriman, and Frederick Jackson Turner. Evidently the ideas of the aged Professor Macvane had impressed Roosevelt. Although he had already studied under Macvane for three semesters of government and English history, he took Macvane's year long course on the history of Continental Europe covering the period from the Peace of Utrecht, through the fall of Napoleon I, to the present. Under Professor Merriman, Roosevelt spent one semester studying Tudor and Stuart England and another on the history of Germany from the Reformation to the end of the Thirty Years' War. Roosevelt also took Turner's course: "The Development of the West."¹⁹² Those courses solidified the connection between the Whiggism of Roosevelt's family lore and the progressivism emerging in the United States early in the twentieth century.

Franklin D. Roosevelt enjoyed history and that attitude that probably made his decision to take additional courses by Professor Macvane that much easier. With the exception of the three Bs that he received in Professor Macvane's courses in history and government,

¹⁹¹ Entries for September 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1901, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

¹⁹² Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. 505.

Roosevelt was a consistent C student while an undergraduate at Harvard.¹⁹³ Concerned with his students discovering the “truth,” Macvane argued that the “value of historical study is not so much the amount of exact information that one carries away from it, as the insight it gives into the life and thought of other times.”¹⁹⁴

The “truth” that Macvane imparted to his students portrayed the history of Europe as the constant struggle between the friends of progress and the forces of reaction. Clearly an adherent of the Whig school of historical interpretation, Macvane portrayed history as the emergence of Anglo-Saxon civilization and liberty as a result of the alliance between Protestants and Whigs and despite the obstructionism of Catholics and Tories.¹⁹⁵

According to Macvane, the history of the period between 1600 and 1750 could be distilled into three episodes of Catholic, monarchical autocracy and reaction. Of those, his primary focus was the struggle in England between Parliament and the Stuart kings. In keeping with his whiggish perspective, Macvane noted that “it is best to devote attention mainly to the course of affairs in England--the history of the continental states being on the whole rather arid.” Although in considerably less detail, Macvane also covered “the Catholic reaction in Germany” that, he argued, ultimately led to both the Thirty Years’ War and “the practical disruption of the empire.” His final topic for the

¹⁹³ Marks in courses of Freshman year, Sophomore year, and Junior year, Memoranda page, FDR’s Diary 1901(-1903), Box 39, FDR as Author, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁹⁴ Silas M. Macvane, European History.--Course C (New York: J. J. Little and Company, 1889), p. 8.

¹⁹⁵ Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1965 ed.), pp. 4-5, 12-3, 39-42. An ardent Anglophile quick to take offense at any criticism of Britain, Macvane viewed amicable relations between Britain and the United States as vital. Marcus Silas Macvane, “A Century of American Diplomacy,” The Atlantic Monthly, vol. 87, number 520, pp. 270-1.

period up to 1750 was the growth of absolute monarchy and “French ascendancy in Europe” and the subsequent struggle “against the unscrupulous ambition of Louis XIV.” With regard to France, however, Macvane only briefly covered Cardinal Richelieu’s policies and the reign of Louis XIV; instead, he placed greater emphasis on the rise of the Huguenots and their dispersion.¹⁹⁶

Macvane’s portrayal of the period of the French Revolution and First Empire continued his established theme. Macvane considered the French Revolution “a social upheaval against the state of affairs” created by the Catholic Church and the monarchy. Concerning the French Constitution of 1791, Macvane judged that “Frenchmen took it all too lightly” by “trusting too much in the Rousseau conception of the human race, that it was all good.” In Macvane’s lectures there was no recognition that the revolution ever went to excess, no terror. Instead, with an apparent air of Anglo-Saxon superiority, Macvane argued that the Republic failed because the people “w[oul]d not take advice from [the] example of Eng[land].”¹⁹⁷

In Macvane’s portrait, Napoleon had no redeeming qualities and, starting in 1796, his career was nothing more than a series of great excesses. Seeing something sinister in the rapprochement between Napoleon and the Pope, Macvane emphasized to his students that France was not a Catholic country and that, instead, it contained many Protestants and Jews. Clearly sympathetic toward Britain and the forces arrayed against Napoleon, Macvane termed Austerlitz the “terrible defeat” after which “Napoleon became master of Europe.” Macvane emphasized the dark and oppressive nature of the French Empire and

¹⁹⁶ Macvane, European History.--Course C, p. 4, 11-2.

¹⁹⁷ Entry for March 3, 1900, Roger Bigelow Merriman, Notes in History 12, 1899-1900, Box 1201, HUC 8899.338.12.54, Harvard University Archives.

decried “Napoleon’s work of destruction in Germany.” Continuing, he observed that the “One gleam of light was [the] naval fight & victory of Trafalgar by Nelson over France & Spain.”¹⁹⁸

Macvane’s view of the course of European history after Napoleon is found in a book that he published in 1900, the year Roosevelt arrived at Harvard. The book was a heavily edited and revised translation of a European political history survey by French republican Charles Seignobos. The work provided “an explanatory history of political evolution” in Europe by emphasizing a cyclic, recurring pattern of revolution followed by “long periods of conservation.” It was an interpretation that reflected Seignobos’s, as well as Macvane’s, “preference for a liberal, unclerical, democratic, Western government.”¹⁹⁹

It is not surprising that Macvane, who edited Seignobos work while the Dreyfus Affair raged in France, portrayed France as being “divided into irreconcilable factions” after 1815. According to Macvane, “the Bourbons were restored by a foreign power” instead of allowing “the French the free exercise of their right to choose their government.” Unlike the other Allies, however, England had pursued a wise policy of not recognizing the legitimacy of any French government during the Napoleonic Wars and of waiting until after the conflict for the French people themselves to chose their rulers. In Macvane’s narrative, France’s “progressive party” opposed monarchy and clericalism and with the Revolution of 1848 it “converted France into a democracy.” Paris, Macvane argued, was the center of the French yearning for democracy because in both 1830 and

¹⁹⁸ Entries for October 17, 1899, March 16 and April 5, 1900, Roger Bigelow Merriman, Notes in History 12, 1899-1900, Box 1201, HUC 8899.338.12.54, Harvard University Archives.

¹⁹⁹ Silas Marcus Macvane, ed., Charles Seignobos, A Political History of Europe Since 1814 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1900), pp. iii, x.

1848 “the revolution made in Paris was passively accepted by the rest of the nation.” France, however, remained plagued by its antiquated administrative system and, as a result, had to copy the practices followed by more advanced countries. For example, the French Constitution of 1814 copied the English, in 1848 France imitated the United States government, and, after its defeat in 1870, France’s schools and military reforms mirrored Prussian institutions.²⁰⁰

Familiar with his mother’s recollections of Saxony and Hannover during her youth, Macvane’s portrayal of Prussia and the German states must have struck a familiar chord in Roosevelt’s mind. Macvane observed that after the annexation of Hannover, Hesse-Kassel, Nassau, and Frankfurt by Prussia, “a large body of people” in Hannover hoped “for a return of the old dynasty” and “gave the most emphatic signs of hostility” to the Prussian system. Meanwhile, “the repressive actions of Prussian generals in Schleswig and Frankfort . . . gave Europe the impression of a barbarous power greedy for conquests.” Meanwhile, the “four independent states” in southern Germany had no desire for closer attachment to the north, and “the people” demonstrated an “aversion to the Prussians and their military service.” Macvane argued that in southern Germany after 1868 “the opposition to Prussia increased.”²⁰¹

Nevertheless, in Macvane’s portrait the status of liberalism and progress in Germany after unification was not entirely bleak. Rather than exclusively dominated by Prussian autocracy, Macvane portrayed Germany as a nation in tension between that impulse and liberalism. He observed,

²⁰⁰ Macvane, ed., Seignobos, A Political History of Europe Since 1814, pp. 115, 122, 103, 134-5, 155, 159, 224, 107, 164-5, 226.

²⁰¹ Macvane, ed., Seignobos, A Political History of Europe Since 1814, pp. 473, 480-1.

German society since the founding of the Empire, seems drawn in two opposite directions by two conflicting tendencies. The one is monarchical, bureaucratic, and military; springing from the Prussian government, it tends to mold all Germany on the Prussian model, by extending to it the old *régime* of divine right and ecclesiastical authority. The other tendency is democratic, springing from the new populations of the great cities and manufacturing districts, but now beginning to extend to the rural sections and to affect even the Conservatives . . .²⁰²

Consequently, he characterized German politics as being in a state of “confused but undeniable unrest” between the “champions of a monarchy in alliance with the Church” and the “democratic, anti-clerical, and industrial” impulse of the socialists, a party strengthened by the infusion of radical republicans after the extermination of their own party in 1849.²⁰³

Macvane considered the German Empire to be a compromise between Prussian absolutism and the liberal democracy of 1848, but a compromise in which Prussia held the predominant share. He described the German constitutional system as the “personal government of the King, who retains all his bureaucratic and military apparatus, slightly controlled by a democratic representative assembly.” Macvane also portrayed the unification of Germany as a compromise between popular wishes and the dictates of Prussia, but a compromise in which the King of Prussia “reserved for himself the greater share of the advantage.” As a result, Macvane warned that the German Empire was “a daughter of *Borussia*,” the barbarian land at the southeastern corner of the Baltic sea during the Roman era, “not of *Teutonia* (ancient Germany).”²⁰⁴

²⁰² Macvane, ed., Seignobos, A Political History of Europe Since 1814, p. 516.

²⁰³ Macvane, ed., Seignobos, A Political History of Europe Since 1814, pp. 515-6.

²⁰⁴ Macvane, ed., Seignobos, A Political History of Europe Since 1814, pp. 515-6.

In the spring of 1904, Roosevelt also took Frederick Jackson Turner's course on "The History of the West." One of the attractions of the course may have been the fact that Turner's assigned readings included President Theodore Roosevelt's *Winning of the West*. Given Franklin Roosevelt's interest in history and family, it is likely that the course reinforced his thinking about the German people. Turner lectured about the earliest Germans that migrated to America, Protestants from the Rhine River valley and Palatinate. According to Turner, those members of "a great religious movement" sought peace in America from the depredations of Catholics in the Thirty Years' War and from the armies of Louis XIV. Turner even noted how the governor of New York settled one group of four thousand "favored German protestants" on a New York manor in 1709.²⁰⁵

Frederick Jackson Turner showed less sympathy for the French in his lectures. He noted that although "French exploration was vast, from the snows of Canada to the cane brakes of L[ouisian]a," in sharp contrast to England, France had no intention of establishing settlements "and consolidating her power on the Ohio." Instead, Turner suggested, "Desire for the western ocean drove them westward."²⁰⁶ Turner's later lectures painted a picture of French intrigue in North America after the American Revolution. He argued that the French hoped to prevent the United States from growing powerful by

²⁰⁵ Entry for March 7, 1904, Albert G. Waite ('05) Notes in History 10B-1904, Box 745, HUC 8903.338.10.92, Harvard University Archives. Roosevelt took a Caribbean cruise early in the term and missed the lecture on March 7, but it seems likely that he would have gotten the contents of the lecture from a classmate's notes. He returned to Cambridge on March 14, 1904. Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, March 14, 1904 in *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters*, vol. 1, p. 527. Roosevelt had been visiting the Columbian Expedition in Chicago with his uncle when Turner first presented his "frontier thesis."

²⁰⁶ Entry for March 11, 1904, Albert G. Waite ('05) Notes in History 10B-1904, Box 745, HUC 8903.338.10.92, Harvard University Archives.

keeping Americans east of the Allegheny Mountains, a desire supported by French plans for “two Indian protectorates in west.”²⁰⁷

Turner, however, suggested that both President George Washington and his secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson, viewed France with sympathy after the French Revolution. Turner argued that, at the time, the two believed “that France was our ally.” Washington and Jefferson, furthermore, “may have secretly favored [an] expedition” proposed by the French “to help South America to revolt” against Spanish rule and to “aid France in getting L[ouisian]a.”²⁰⁸

According to Turner, the establishment of the Directory in 1795 seems to have turned both Washington and Jefferson against France. Turner noted that, in the spring of 1796, the new government in France “feared” the growth of the United States and, as a result, “wished to help Spain if possible.”²⁰⁹ Clearly, in Turner’s view, authoritarian France was not a friend of the United States. Turner asserted, “Napoleon was determined to secure entire Miss. valley, by detaching the west from the union, & have checked the U.S. at the Alleghanies.” Probably to Roosevelt’s delight, Turner echoed Mahan’s general thesis about the Napoleonic Wars, noting that the only thing that stopped Napoleon was “the lack of sea power.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Entry for March 28, 1904, Albert G. Waite (‘05) Notes in History 10B-1904, Box 745, HUC 8903.338.10.92, Harvard University Archives.

²⁰⁸ Entry for April 1, 1904, Albert G. Waite (‘05) Notes in History 10B-1904, Box 745, HUC 8903.338.10.92, Harvard University Archives.

²⁰⁹ Entry for April 4, 1904, Albert G. Waite (‘05) Notes in History 10B-1904, Box 745, HUC 8903.338.10.92, Harvard University Archives.

²¹⁰ Entry for April 6, 1904, Albert G. Waite (‘05) Notes in History 10B-1904, Box 745, HUC 8903.338.10.92, Harvard University Archives. For Alfred Thayer Mahan’s views of the Napoleonic Wars see The Influence of Sea Power Upon the French Revolution and

Turner's lectures also offered broad proposals for the tenor of American foreign relations. Taking a dim view of French colonialism in Asia, Turner argued explicitly that "Oriental questions" should only "be settled by countries with experience with vast territory; Russia & Eng[land]." The United States, he maintained, exerted valuable international influence through its "will power & imagination." As if alluding to President Theodore Roosevelt, Turner acknowledged that "we talk big & think big" and portrayed naval power as an effective force in world affairs.²¹¹ Turner's prescription for American security against Napoleonic designs was an alliance with England.²¹²

Roosevelt's decision to stay at Harvard and pursue his interests by taking an additional year of classes and working on the *Crimson* reflected his distinct lack of concern with earning specific grades or degrees. What emerges from an examination of Roosevelt's time at Harvard is a portrait of a young man concerned with gaining a practical understanding about himself, his heritage, and his world. His emphasis on the practical application of history was consistent with the urgings of historians of the progressive school such as Turner. As a result, throughout the remainder of his life, Roosevelt possessed a deep practical knowledge of historical events within a broad interpretive framework built around the advance of civilization. Rather than a man with little intellectual curiosity, Roosevelt emerged from his Harvard experience as an assiduous

Empire: 1793-1812. 2 Vols. Boston: Little, Brown, 1892. Theodore Roosevelt provided a review the book. Atlantic Monthly 71 (April 1893).

²¹¹ Entries for February 17 and April 6, 1904, Albert G. Waite ('05) Notes in History 10B-1904, Box 745, HUC 8903.338.10.92, Harvard University Archives.

²¹² Entry for April 6, 1904, Albert G. Waite ('05) Notes in History 10B-1904, Box 745, HUC 8903.338.10.92, Harvard University Archives.

reader with what Joseph Lash described as “an amazingly retentive memory” and an impressive “knowledge of events, geography and history, factual concrete knowledge.”²¹³

VIII.

When it came time to marry, the Roosevelts tended to look to their relatives. One cousin, attempting to “unravel” the family tree of “the mixed up Roosevelt’s, Aspinwall’s, Woolsey’s & Howland’s,” noted, “They just had to marry cousins - the whole family seems to have preferred themselves to any others!”²¹⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt’s immediate family was no exception. James Roosevelt’s first marriage in 1853 was to his cousin, Rebecca Brien Howland. Furthermore, the case of half-brother Rosy Roosevelt’s children suggests that marrying relatives met with familial approval. Taddy married beneath his social station in 1900, an act that ostracized him from the family. After the “disgusting business about Taddy” hit the newspapers, Franklin D. Roosevelt noted that it would be best for Taddy “not only to go to parts unknown, but to stay there and begin life anew.” Taddy’s sister Helen, however, chose more judiciously. Helen later married her sixth cousin, Theodore Douglas Robinson, a nephew of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s godfather Elliott Roosevelt.²¹⁵

²¹³ Entry for August 6, 1940, Joseph P. Lash Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, The Papers of Joseph P. Lash, FDRL.

²¹⁴ U. Connfelt to M. Suckley, January 28, 1943, “Genealogy: Howland,” Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

²¹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt’s comments from a letter to his mother, Joseph P. Lash, Love, Eleanor: Eleanor Roosevelt and Her Friends (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1982), p. 43; Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, pp. vii-ix, 430.

Given his background, Franklin D. Roosevelt's marriage to his fifth cousin, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, on March 17, 1905 comes as no surprise. Eleanor had her debutante debut in the winter of 1902 after her return from school in England, and she began to see her cousin at "occasional dances" and "a house party at Hyde Park where all the other guests were mostly his cousins."²¹⁶ At the White House on December 31, 1902, Franklin Roosevelt attended a large lunch and later had tea with Theodore Roosevelt's daughter Alice and his niece Eleanor.²¹⁷ The couple became engaged in late 1903 and announced their formal engagement a year later.²¹⁸ The wedding took place at the Ludlow house on Fifth Avenue in New York City, and President Theodore Roosevelt gave the bride away.

Clearly Franklin Roosevelt's marriage to Eleanor Roosevelt reinforced his ideas about both France and Germany, particularly his sense of the sharp contrasts inherent in both countries. Eleanor's perspectives, like her life prior to her marriage, had been fundamentally shaped by two influential people. Those two were her father, Elliott Roosevelt, and the headmistress of the English boarding school that she attended from 1899 to 1902, Mlle. Marie Souvestre. The autobiography that Eleanor wrote in 1936 reveals that, under their influence, her images and memories concerning both France and Germany fell into one of two extremes: harsh, dark, and unhappy, or dreamlike, beautiful,

²¹⁶ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 103-4.

²¹⁷ Entry for December 31, 1902, FDR's Diary 1901(-1903), Box 39, FDR as Author, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

²¹⁸ Elliott Roosevelt, ed. F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 1, p. 517.

and delightful.²¹⁹ Those images easily translated into a view that equated those two extremes with the forces of reaction and the forces of progress.

As a child, Eleanor Roosevelt was never close to her mother because, as she perceived it, “her mother had been so disappointed that she wasn’t beautiful.” She confided that, as a result, she always had a “great devotion” to her father.²²⁰ As his deteriorating health worsened due to alcoholism, however, life was not happy for his family. Hoping to find a cure, he took his family to Europe in 1890, stopping initially in Berlin. In the capital, Count Otto von Bismarck provided the family with excellent seats to a military review of the Berlin garrison, and a German count took them to see cavalry drill. After Berlin, the family stayed in a small Bavarian town for a month, so that Elliott could bathe and drink from the mineral springs, and visited Munich and Oberammergau. Although Eleanor began to speak a little German, the family had little to do with Bavarian commoners. Accustomed to European aristocracy, Eleanor’s mother noted that the Germans in the town were “all of a class that no one would think of meeting.”²²¹ Although Eleanor’s reactions to her first visit to Germany are not clear, it seems reasonable that the entire experience, to include the martial display in the former Prussian capital, must have been bewildering to the sheltered young girl who did not speak the language.

From Bavaria, the Roosevelt family continued to Italy where it toured Venice, Florence, and Naples. In Italy Elliott Roosevelt resumed heavy drinking. Consequently, on the advice of doctors, the family went to Graz, Austria, and soon Elliott entered a

²¹⁹ See [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 8-12, 67-9.

²²⁰ Entry for July 15, 1940 in Journal, 1939-42, folder 3, box 31, Speeches and Writings, Joseph P. Lash Papers, FDRL.

²²¹ Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 34.

sanitarium in Vienna for treatment.²²² Nevertheless, according to Eleanor's recollections, her father had been in a sanitarium in Germany, and the only incident that she recounted from the time was one that left her "a disillusioned and disappointed child."²²³ It seems significant that, over time, Eleanor came to associate that unpleasant episode with Germany rather than Austria.

Eleanor Roosevelt's earliest recollections of France were as dark and unhappy as those of Germany. In the spring of 1891, Elliott Roosevelt and his pregnant wife rushed to Paris, leaving Eleanor and her brother to travel with their servants. Somehow Eleanor and her nurse got off the train at a station and, unable to find their tickets, were left behind. That night, "after much telegraphing," the two boarded another train for Paris, where Eleanor's "distinctly annoyed" parents met them.²²⁴ Given her sensitive nature and desire to please her father, her reception in Paris undoubtedly upset Eleanor immensely. She commented, "I was not yet six years old, and I must have been very sensitive, with an inordinate desire for affection and praise."²²⁵ She later recalled her "despair" as a child when her father merely gave her a "disapproving look" and how "she had aggravated over this for weeks."²²⁶ Her reception in Paris had been much more than just a disapproving glance.

²²² Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 36.

²²³ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 9-10.

²²⁴ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 10.

²²⁵ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 11.

²²⁶ Entry for July 16, 1940 in Journal, 1939-42, folder 3, box 31, Speeches and Writings, Joseph P. Lash Papers, FDRL.

Following her sharp reception in Paris, Eleanor's life became increasingly bleak. Expecting to deliver a baby at the end of June, her mother settled down for several months in a small house in Neuilly and her father entered a sanitarium. Eleanor's parents sent their five-year-old daughter to a convent, ostensibly "to learn French" and to keep her "out of the way when the baby arrived." In the Catholic convent, Eleanor felt ostracized due to the fact that she "did not speak their language and did not belong to their religion." In a desperate attempt to get attention, Eleanor told an apparent lie to one of the sisters, and refusing to recant, the convent contacted Eleanor's mother who took her daughter "away in disgrace." Eleanor recalled, "The convent experience was a very unhappy one."²²⁷

Eleanor Roosevelt's experiences at Allenswood with its French headmistress, Mlle. Souvestre, between 1899 and 1902 stood at the opposite end of the spectrum from her earlier experiences in Europe. The experience changed Eleanor's thinking and perspective. Upon Eleanor Roosevelt's departure from Allenswood in 1902, Souvestre was "happy in the thought that these three years of such sustained and productive work" had proven to be "a period of joy and rest" for her young student.²²⁸

Initially shocked by the self-proclaimed atheist, Eleanor Roosevelt ultimately praised Souvestre as a "woman who was not in the habit of hiding her feelings."²²⁹ Souvestre's father had been a staunchly anti-Royalist writer and philosopher whose sympathies

²²⁷ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, [This Is My Story](#), pp. 10-12.

²²⁸ Marie Souvestre to Eleanor Roosevelt, July 7, 1902, Allenswood: Souvestre, Marie, Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

²²⁹ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, [This Is My Story](#), p. 70.

bordered on radical, forcing him to flee France to Geneva on several occasions.²³⁰ Prior to the Franco-Prussian War, Mlle. Souvestre had run a school outside of Paris at Les Ruches, but, according to Eleanor, “The siege of Paris had been such an ordeal that Mlle. Souvestre had left France and moved to England.”²³¹

Nevertheless, it was probably more than merely the “ordeal” of the Prussian siege of Paris that induced Mlle. Souvestre to depart France. It seems more likely that the destruction of the Paris Commune in 1871 was the event that compelled Souvestre to move to England. An adherent disciple of French Radicalism, Souvestre was a self-styled “radical free thinker” and nonconformist with anti-clerical views and a deep interest in politics; later she became a passionate *Dreyfusard*.²³² Fundamentally, Radicalism was a militant form of Republicanism committed to regenerating France by the creation of a strong, secular Republic. Free Thought was one Radical organization committed to the militant secularization of marriages, baptisms, and festivals. Along with moderate Republicans, Radical Republicans shared a particular view of French history. They accepted the Revolution of 1789, viewed it as the foundation of popular sovereignty, and believed that the essence of the political struggle was to defend the Republic against the forces of reaction: Royalists, Bonapartists, and the Catholic Church. From the Radical viewpoint, the Dreyfus Affair revealed the existence of a reactionary plot, and most

²³⁰ Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 80.

²³¹ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 54.

²³² Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 80.

Dreyfusards saw the injustice against Captain Alfred Dreyfus symbolically as a political opportunity to discredit the clerical-military threat to the Republic.²³³

At meals, Eleanor Roosevelt sat across from Mlle. Souvestre whom she considered “far and away the most fascinating person.” Additionally, Mlle. Souvestre occasionally invited Eleanor and several others to spend a few hours after dinner with her in the study. Apparently, the Dreyfus case was one of Souvestre’s favorite topics of conversation, and she often recounted the details of the affair for the spellbound girls listening to her. In addition to her duties as headmistress at Allenswood, Mlle. Souvestre also taught French literature and history.²³⁴ Presumably, her historical interpretation mirrored or validated her own French radical and anti-clerical views. Thirty-six years later, Eleanor Roosevelt noted, “I still say all my historical names in French, harking back to this early teaching.”²³⁵ Given Souvestre’s convictions, however, it seems certain that Eleanor Roosevelt retained more than simply “historical names” from Souvestre’s instruction and that Eleanor undoubtedly accepted many of her teacher’s characterizations, perspectives, and assumptions about the past. Testifying to Eleanor Roosevelt’s attentiveness, Souvestre found her “highly interested in all her work” and noted, “She works admirably in French and history and is the 1st out of a class of 9.”²³⁶

²³³ James F. McMillan, Twentieth-Century France: Politics and Society, 1898-1991 (London: Edward Arnold, 1992), pp. 4, 7-8, 13-5.

²³⁴ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 58, 64, 72; Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 80.

²³⁵ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 61.

²³⁶ Souvestre’s comments for the January to April 1900 term, Allenswood: Report Cards, Box 4, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

Mlle. Souvestre also shaped Eleanor Roosevelt's thinking beyond the daily regimen at Allenswood. A "warm affection" developed between the two.²³⁷ Souvestre made a point of occasionally introducing her guests to Eleanor Roosevelt and actively planned her student's vacations on the continent. After Christmas 1899, Souvestre arranged for Eleanor Roosevelt "to live in a French family for the rest of my holiday, in order to study French." The family turned out to be "two very charming, cultivated women" who lived with their mother in Paris. Souvestre joined Eleanor in Paris for the last few days of her stay. Having forgotten any details of Paris from her first visit as a child, Eleanor characterized her visit as "almost like a dream."²³⁸

Souvestre not only assisted Eleanor in planning her holidays, she joined her on a number of vacations. One of Mlle. Souvestre's consistent themes was that while on vacation they "see the people of the country." In practice, the two spent a great deal of time with friends of Mlle. Souvestre, presumably friends whose thoughts ran along similar lines. In 1901 Souvestre joined her student during her summer vacation; the two traveled through Marseilles, visited Pisa, and stayed in Florence with "an artist friend of Mlle. Souvestre." On their return trip, they spent several days in Paris. Eleanor Roosevelt considered the trip "one of the most important things that happened in my education."²³⁹ That Christmas, Mlle. Souvestre took Eleanor and another student to Rome, and in the spring of 1902, Souvestre asked Eleanor to travel with her again. The two crossed the Channel into France where they stayed with her friends, the Ribots, near Calais. Eleanor

²³⁷ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 58.

²³⁸ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 67-8.

²³⁹ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 80-9.

recalled that she “felt somewhat awed by our two dignified and kindly hosts,” host Alexandre Ribot, a Republican politician, later became premier of France in 1917. In Belgium they visited other friends of Mlle. Souvestre and in Frankfurt stayed with the family of two girls who had been students at Allenswood so that Eleanor might catch a “glimpse of German family life and customs.”²⁴⁰

A transformation took place in Eleanor’s attitudes and thinking as a result of her exposure to Mlle. Souvestre. She recalled that her father had taken her to Venice during their visit to Europe when she was five. In Venice, she seemed almost overawed by a statue of Saint Peter. As a young woman armed with new ideas, however, she returned to Venice and found the Catholic icon “to be a little affair.”²⁴¹ In Florence she had a similar experience. Considering the impact of Mlle. Souvestre on her changed perspective, Eleanor Roosevelt posed the rhetorical question, “Isn’t it queer how children take things for granted until something wakes them up?” As Souvestre saw it, Eleanor Roosevelt’s three years at Allenswood had created a life for her that was “entirely new and entirely different, and, in several respects entirely contradictory,” from the life that she had known.²⁴² Souvestre passed away in March 1905 before she saw Eleanor Roosevelt again.

IX.

²⁴⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 92-5.

²⁴¹ Entry for July 15 or 16, 1940 in Journal, 1939-42, folder 3, box 31, Speeches and Writings, Joseph P. Lash Papers, FDRL.

²⁴² Marie Souvestre to Eleanor Roosevelt, July 7, 1902, Allenswood: Souvestre, Marie, Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

Franklin Roosevelt entered Columbia Law School in the fall of 1904, and in March 1905, during his second term at Columbia, he married Eleanor Roosevelt. Upon the completion of his second term, the couple sailed to Europe in June 1905 for a three-month honeymoon. Not surprisingly, the route the couple followed in Europe resembled the path followed by his parents twenty-five years earlier. After landing in Liverpool, the couple initially stayed in London for several days, a city that Eleanor recalled “my husband loves.”²⁴³ London was followed by four days in Paris at the end of June. From Paris, the couple traveled to Italy and spent a week near Venice. After Italy, they traveled through the Alps, spent seven days at the Palace Hotel in St. Moritz and then toured through Switzerland, southern Germany, Augsburg, Ulm, and the Black Forest. Franklin Roosevelt had visited many of those places with his parents years before. After stopping in Strasbourg and Nancy, the couple returned to their Aunt Dora Delano Forbes’s Paris apartment “which is always the center for the entire family when they go to Paris.” After reveling in the sights of Paris with their Forbes and Howland relatives, the couple traveled back to London and sailed for the United States in early September.²⁴⁴ Their first child, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, was born in early May 1906, apparently conceived, like her father, in Europe.

The people and places that the couple saw on their honeymoon were familiar and comfortable; clearly, their honeymoon exposed them to little, if anything, new. Their

²⁴³ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, [This Is My Story](#), p. 128.

²⁴⁴ Several years before, Aunt Dora’s husband and Franklin Roosevelt’s godfather, Will Forbes, had passed away, and in 1903 Aunt Dora married her former husband’s younger brother Paul Forbes. [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, [This Is My Story](#), pp. 127-38.

Maxwell and Bulloch relatives met them at the dock in Liverpool and got them “quickly through the custom house.” They spent their first evening in Europe at the Bulloch home “talking over old days, family history, etc.”²⁴⁵ In London, Franklin and Eleanor met with his mother’s sister, Aunt Kassie, and her daughter Muriel Delano Robbins. One of Eleanor’s roommates from Allenswood also met them in London, and together they paid a short visit to the old school and then toured the art exhibit at the Royal Academy. In London, they also saw many friends and acquaintances of Franklin Roosevelt’s parents to include the Cholmeleys, the Edwardeses, and the United States ambassador in London, Whitelaw Reid.²⁴⁶ Franklin and Eleanor spent their time in Paris with Aunt Dora, shopping and visiting their Forbes and Howland relations. In Venice they toured the Grand Canal with “an excellent gondolier recommended by Cousin Julia Delano” and dined with Charles Forbes, Aunt Dora’s brother-in-law.²⁴⁷ Eleanor recalled, “We went to one or two of the old palaces, thanks to Mr. Forbes’ kind offices, and visited some friends of Franklin’s mother and father who lived there.”²⁴⁸ During the their stay in Cortina, they met acquaintances of Sara Delano Roosevelt from Campobello “who were very nice and

²⁴⁵ James and Irvine Bulloch were half-brothers of Eleanor Roosevelt’s grandmother and agents of the Confederate States of America who elected to settle in England after the Civil War. James Bulloch’s eldest daughter married a Maxwell, who like the Bullochs was a prominent official in the Cunard Steamship Company. Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, June 16, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 10.

²⁴⁶ Eleanor Roosevelt letter to Sara Delano Roosevelt, June 19, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, pp. 12-4.

²⁴⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt letters to his mother, June 22, June 26, and July 3, 1905, and Eleanor Roosevelt letters to Sara Delano Roosevelt, June 23, June 29, and July 5, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, pp. 16-7, 19, 20-1, 22-3, 24-5, 26-8.

²⁴⁸ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 129.

made the hotel seem quite homelike.”²⁴⁹ Eleanor’s Aunt Tissie and Uncle Stanley Mortimer were in St. Moritz when the couple arrived. Meals, golf, and walks with the Mortimers, whose cottage was next to the Palace Hotel, occupied the majority of the time Franklin and Eleanor spent at St. Moritz outside of their hotel room.²⁵⁰

The week and a half that Franklin and Eleanor spent in southern Germany and northern Switzerland was the only period of their honeymoon that they did not spend with relatives. Even then, however, Franklin Roosevelt clung to the familiar, making a point to seek lodging in the hotels where he had stayed as a youth.²⁵¹ Throughout their honeymoon on the continent of Europe, Franklin and Eleanor seem to have had no social interaction with any native Europeans, the only exception being Meredith Howland in Paris and her half-French, half-American children.

Envious of cousin Muriel Delano Robbins’s opportunity to dine with the Kaiser, the couple remained aloof from European commoners and disdainful of their actions. Eleanor proudly reported that her husband had received the “great compliment” of being confused for an Englishman because “he was so handsome and had the real English profile!” With the air of traveling patricians, Franklin and Eleanor deliberately avoided talking with “common” Americans as well as lower class Germans. For instance, Eleanor reported the rudeness of “four large and burly Germans” who shared the compartment on their train.

²⁴⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, July 15, 1905, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 35.

²⁵⁰ Eleanor Roosevelt letter to Sara Delano Roosevelt, July 19, 1905 and Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt letter to Sara Delano Roosevelt, July 22, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, pp. 40-1, 44-5.

²⁵¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt letters to his mother, July 30 and August 7, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, pp. 51, 56.

She also noted with satisfaction that they managed to take a photograph of “a German hen party who sat near us” in a restaurant. It is apparent, furthermore, that Eleanor could not relate to the interests of the common Germans that she met. In Augsburg, “the little old lady caretaker” of the town hall “endeavored” to explain the fine details in the building to Eleanor and Franklin, but, Eleanor noted, “I don’t think she found me too sympathetic so she finally gave it up.” She displayed a similar lack of sympathy during a tour of an old church in the city and “came away with the creeps” after “the small boy who kept the keys . . . exhibited with triumph the skeleton” of St. Afra.²⁵² For meals at St. Blasien, Franklin Roosevelt commented that they were fortunate to secure a table “on the verandah - the dining room has four long pigsties where the strange assortment of mortals (swine are mortal, n’est ce pas?) consume victuals.”²⁵³

It was during his honeymoon that Franklin Roosevelt seems to have accepted Professor Macvane’s warnings about the spread of Prussian domination and bureaucracy in liberal Germany. On his honeymoon, Franklin Roosevelt encountered a Germany that was different from the images of his youth and his mother’s recollections. After seeing changes in the Black Forest town of Freiburg, he lamented, “In fact it is so unromantic.”²⁵⁴ Prussian bureaucratization provided a plausible explanation for many of the unwelcome changes. The couple observed that in southern Germany and northern Switzerland “they have all kinds of strange rules and regulations!” Franklin and Eleanor,

²⁵² Eleanor Roosevelt letters to Sara Delano Roosevelt, June 13, July 25 and August 1, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, pp. 9, 46-8, 52-5.

²⁵³ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, July 30, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 51.

²⁵⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, August 7, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 57.

however, blatantly violated the posted regulations.²⁵⁵ Thirteen years later, Franklin Roosevelt characterized the regimentation that they encountered in Germany on their honeymoon as “preparation for the first stages of their war machine.”²⁵⁶ When news of Theodore Roosevelt’s mediation in the Moroccan crisis reached him at the end of his honeymoon, Franklin Roosevelt observed that the tone of the German government revealed “a certain animosity and jealousy as usual.”²⁵⁷

Franklin Roosevelt’s reaction to the Moroccan crisis also provides an indication of the direction of his thinking in several other areas. Clearly, he had developed the highest regard for statesmen who could preserve peace between the major powers or serve as peacemakers. Reflecting on the unexpected “peace” between the major powers after the tension over Morocco, he noted, “I think Uncle Ted must be gratified to have done so much towards it.”²⁵⁸ Franklin Roosevelt expressed surprise, however, that his kinsman’s efforts to keep the peace had been well received not only in Britain but in France as well. He observed, “Even the French were quite enthusiastic.” In Roosevelt’s mind, attitudes in Britain and France had undergone a noticeable shift. He perceived that over the previous few years those two countries had begun “adopting towards our country in general a most

²⁵⁵ Eleanor Roosevelt letter to Sara Delano Roosevelt, August 1, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 55.

²⁵⁶ Entry for July 30, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

²⁵⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, September 7, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 84.

²⁵⁸ Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt letter to his mother, August 30, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 80.

respectful and almost loving tone.”²⁵⁹ Perhaps the attitude of the French government signaled to Franklin Roosevelt that the Republicans in France had gained the upper hand over the forces of reaction: imperialists, army officers, and revanchists seeking an opportunity to avenge France’s defeat in 1870.

Following his honeymoon, Franklin Roosevelt returned to Columbia Law School. Initially, Franklin and Eleanor rented an apartment in New York City. Not wanting to be far from her son, his mother lived three blocks away in a house on Madison Avenue, returning to Hyde Park during the summer months. Later, Sara Delano Roosevelt had adjoining houses built so that they could live side by side. Eleanor Roosevelt considered her mother-in-law “a very strong character” and quickly found herself “growing very dependent” on her. Meanwhile, Franklin Roosevelt passed the bar exam in 1907 and went to work for a New York City law firm that fall.²⁶⁰ For several years, he occupied himself with work and his new familial responsibilities, his interest in France and Germany seemingly confined to new additions to his stamp collection.²⁶¹ Nevertheless, the example, and the prodding, of Theodore Roosevelt helped to convince him to enter politics in 1910, winning election to the New York State senate in November.²⁶² Although Franklin Roosevelt entered politics as a Democrat, the party of his half-brother

²⁵⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, September 7, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 84.

²⁶⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 122, 126-7, 138, 152-3.

²⁶¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, August 23, 1907 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 125.

²⁶² [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 166-7.

and their father, after his nomination by the Dutchess County Democrats in 1910, he immediately sought the approval of Theodore Roosevelt, and it was quickly granted.²⁶³

Until his death in 1919, Theodore Roosevelt remained an influential figure in Franklin Roosevelt's life. While at Harvard, Franklin lead a student group that supported Theodore Roosevelt's election in the 1904 presidential race.²⁶⁴ On March 4, 1905, Franklin and Eleanor "were thrilled" to attend "Uncle Ted's inauguration" followed by lunch at the White House. Eleven days later, Theodore Roosevelt came to New York for the couple's wedding.²⁶⁵ Over the next few years, Franklin and Eleanor remained close to Theodore Roosevelt and frequently visited him at the White House.²⁶⁶

After leaving office in 1909, Theodore Roosevelt began a long safari in Africa and a tour through Europe, returning to the United States in 1910. Upon his return, he shared his impressions from his trip with close friends and family, presumably Franklin and Eleanor were among those taken into his confidence. Theodore Roosevelt classified those that he met throughout Europe as either proponents of progress or reactionaries.

Roosevelt thought that the city of Rome provided "the very sharpest contrasts" between

²⁶³ Theodore Roosevelt letter to his sister A. R. Cowles, August 10, 1910, Series 3A, Reel 363, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm, LCMD; Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), p. 17.

²⁶⁴ John Milton Cooper, Jr., The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 420, fn. 5.

²⁶⁵ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 123.

²⁶⁶ Grace Tully, F.D.R.: My Boss (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), p. 41. For one visit, see Franklin Roosevelt's comments in his speech before the Associated Harvard Clubs at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C., May 1, 1920, Master Speech File No. 121, FDRL.

“radical modern progress . . . and the extremes of opposition.” Although not opposed to Catholicism per se, Roosevelt believed the Catholic Church to be “the baleful enemy of mankind” whenever and wherever “priestly reactionaries” had “the upper hand.” He described the pope as “a worthy, narrowly limited parish priest” but a man under the control of “a furiously bigoted reactionary, and in fact a good type of sixteenth century Spanish ecclesiastic.” In contrast to the Vatican, he praised Garibaldi for leading “the movement that turned Rome into what it now is” and lauded “the free-thinking Jew mayor, a good fellow, and his Socialist backers in the Town Council.”²⁶⁷ In Italy, France, Spain, and much of Germany, he believed that an incompatibility existed between “Liberalism and very strong religious feelings.” He asserted that particularly in Italy and France “devout Catholics were almost always reactionary” whereas “Liberals were always anti-clerical - - probably inevitably so.”²⁶⁸

Despite his loathing of Catholic reactionaries, Theodore Roosevelt returned from his trip with a higher opinion of France. He noted that although France’s “royalist press, being Catholic” criticized him, his comments “delighted republican leaders.” He also confessed that his meetings with “members of the various ministries” forced him to overcome some of his “own complacent Anglo-Saxon ignorance” and view “French public men” with greater regard. Roosevelt found that “in talking with these French republicans” that he “had a sense of kinship” and a feeling of “sympathy somewhat akin to that which I felt in talking with English Liberals.” He particularly praised “the able and

²⁶⁷ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 1, 11, 12, Series 4A, Reel 416, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm, LCMD.

²⁶⁸ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 42-3, Ibid.

cultivated” Republican “public men” and French intellectuals that he met, declaring, “What a charming man a charming Frenchman is!”²⁶⁹

Despite his optimism for French progress behind the vanguard of the able and cultivated, Theodore Roosevelt was less laudatory of the capricious French political system. In his way of thinking, politics had undermined each of the successive governments in France between 1789 and 1871, and politics flourished in the French parliamentary system of “a government by groups, where the people do not mind changing their leaders continually.” Fundamentally, the problem in France derived from the mixed heritage of France’s institutions and culture. Roosevelt postulated that the combination of France’s unique national character and its political system produced a nation where the people “are so afraid of themselves that, unlike the English and Americans, they do not dare trust anyone[sic] man with a temporary exercise of large power for fear they will be weak enough to let him assume it permanently.”²⁷⁰ Despite its cultural and intellectual achievements, heterogeneous France remained on a tier behind the United States and Britain, by implication, relegated to play a role, perhaps, as a major, regional power, but not as a great, progressive international power.

In sharp contrast to the exuberant, warm reception given him by the people of Paris and the French government, Theodore Roosevelt related that in Berlin he had been received correctly, but coolly, by the German authorities and the people. He noted, “But excepting the university folk, they really did not want to see me.” Roosevelt perceived that the United States, like Britain, had become extremely unpopular in Germany. He laid

²⁶⁹ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 55-7.

²⁷⁰ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 56-7; Cooper, The Warrior and the Priest, p. 113.

the blame for that hostility on the German upper classes. Emphasizing the Prussian system that had come to dominate Germany, he noted that the “stiff, domineering, formal” upper classes had “the organized army, the organized bureaucracy, [and] the organized industry of their great, highly-civilized and admirably-administered country behind them.”²⁷¹

There seemed to be little immediate prospect for liberal, democratic values in a nation dominated by the Prussian upper class and not by German intellectuals. Although admitting individual exceptions, Roosevelt perceived that “the German upper class, alone among the European upper classes - so far as I knew - really did not like the social type I represented.” The German upper class, according to Roosevelt, regarded “loose democratic governmental methods” and liberal ideas “as irregular, unnatural, and debasing, and were rendered uncomfortable by them.”²⁷² In Roosevelt’s mind, the unique character of the Junker class accounted for their disdain of liberal democracy. Despite their “fine domestic qualities,” Roosevelt considered “the North German women of the upper classes” the least attractive of any he saw in Europe. He ventured that they, perhaps, “are cowed in their home life” by husbands who “not only wish to domineer over the rest of mankind - which is not always possible - but wish to, and do, domineer over their own wives.”²⁷³

Roosevelt suggested, however, that those attitudes were not universal in Germany. He experienced a particular affinity with the German intellectuals, “the professors and the

²⁷¹ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 75-6.

²⁷² Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 76-7.

²⁷³ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 82-3.

people” at the Berlin university, and “other African explorers and scientific men whom I met while in Berlin.” Roosevelt also enjoyed the company of the army officer assigned him as an aide, a descendant of the German patriot and lyric poet Karl Theodor Körner who died fighting against Napoleon in 1813 during the Wars of Liberation, and the “able” men “at the head of politics and the Administration.”²⁷⁴ He considered Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz “an exceedingly able man” and “enjoyed meeting the various other ministers.”²⁷⁵

Theodore Roosevelt also offered his impressions of his “chief interest at Berlin,” Kaiser Wilhelm II. After spending the better part of three afternoons with Kaiser Wilhelm, Roosevelt assessed the emperor as “an able and powerful man.”²⁷⁶ “In the fundamentals of domestic morality, and as regards all that side of religion which is moral,” Roosevelt confided, “we agreed heartily; but there is a good deal of dogmatic theology which to him means much and to me is entirely meaningless.” Roosevelt contrasted his own views in international affairs with those of the Kaiser who had been “brought up in the school of Frederick the Great and Bismarck,” noting that “there were many points in international morality where he and I were completely asunder.”²⁷⁷ Roosevelt observed that “Germany has the arrogance of a very strong power” and that the Kaiser’s references to Britain contained a “a curious mixture of admiration and resentment.” Nevertheless, he judged that the Kaiser, although jealous of Britain, never

²⁷⁴ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 75, 78-9.

²⁷⁵ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 79, 82 83.

²⁷⁶ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, page 83.

²⁷⁷ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, page 84.

consciously entertained any idea of “the conquest of England.” Others in Germany, however, clearly entertained such views, and, therefore, if Germany had a navy as large as Britain’s, Roosevelt believed it likely that incidents would occur which might induce Germany to use its fleet “for the destruction of England.”²⁷⁸

Despite his basic admiration for the Kaiser and respect for his power, Roosevelt assessed that Kaiser Wilhelm II “was not supreme.” Many people in Berlin stressed to Roosevelt that, in fact, the Kaiser “must yield to the Nation on any point as to which the Nation had decided views.”²⁷⁹ After hours of intimate conversation with the Kaiser, Roosevelt assessed, “Down at the bottom of his heart, he knew perfectly well that he himself was not an absolute sovereign.” Perceiving limitations on the Kaiser’s freedom of action, Roosevelt believed that “whenever Germany made up its mind to go in a given direction he could only stay at the head of affairs by scampering to take the lead in going that direction.”²⁸⁰ By 1910, however, the Prussian upper class, not German intellectuals and public servants, seemed to have dominated fundamental attitudes in Germany and, therefore, the essential direction of the Kaiser’s policy.

Germany and, to a lesser extent, France figured prominently in Theodore Roosevelt’s conception of international relations and cooperation. Of the two nations, Roosevelt had a greater attraction toward the German people. To the Kaiser, he expressed his belief “that the English, Germans and Americans ought to be fundamentally in accord; and that

²⁷⁸ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 85-6.

²⁷⁹ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 79-80.

²⁸⁰ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, page 87.

nothing would so make for the peace and progress of the world.”²⁸¹ Concerning the conduct of international relations, however, Theodore Roosevelt found that his own views not only differed from those of the Kaiser but diverged even sharper from the views held by others shaping German policy. The Kaiser’s brother, for example, seemed to espouse “the theory that might rules, and that the one crime in international matters is weakness.” As a result, Roosevelt found Germany’s ambition almost limitless, unchecked by any concern for “international equity” or responsibility.²⁸² Roosevelt could not condone such attitudes, shaped as they were by the Prussian upper class, preferring the current leadership of France to that of Germany. In the area of statesmanship, Roosevelt confessed his affinity for French Republicans, English Liberals, and American progressives. He noted that “the radical liberal” in those three countries “is at least working toward the end for which I think we should all of us strive.” Continuing, he observed that “when he adds sanity and moderation to courage and enthusiasm for high ideals he develops into the kind of statesman whom alone I can whole-heartedly support.”²⁸³

Theodore Roosevelt, however, had little use for the “washy movement for international peace” associated with Andrew Carnegie’s name and, instead, saw a need for military power. Along with power, Roosevelt also believed that there had to be the resolve to use that power, in order to enforce a nation’s “engagements” and “the equities of other peoples.” During Roosevelt’s presidency, the United States had become a power that

²⁸¹ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, page 86.

²⁸² Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, page 85.

²⁸³ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, page 57.

exerted considerable influence in international affairs; his decision to send the “Great White Fleet” around the world recognized and strengthened that influence. Roosevelt told von Tirpitz that he “thought it a good thing that the Japanese should know there were fleets of the white races which were totally different from the fleet of poor [Russian Admiral Zinovy Petrovitch] Rodjestvensky” whose Baltic fleet the Japanese sunk at Tsushima in 1905. Roosevelt, furthermore, seemed flattered that Admiral Tirpitz and the Kaiser both regarded the “voyage of the [American] battlefleet as having done more for peace in the Orient than anything else that could have happened.”²⁸⁴

X.

Throughout his life, Franklin D. Roosevelt displayed an avid interest in genealogy and history.²⁸⁵ One close observer later observed, “He has an amazingly retentive memory and constantly floors his family with [his] knowledge of events, geography and history, factual concrete knowledge.”²⁸⁶ Roosevelt, however, consciously sought to avoid “dwelling on facts and on facts alone.” Admittedly, he sought “benefit in the present from the lessons which undoubtedly exist in history.”²⁸⁷ Prodded by his professors at Harvard, particularly Frederick Jackson Turner and Marcus Macvane, to “think big” and value

²⁸⁴ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Sir George Trevelyan, October 1, 1911, pages 82, 84-5.

²⁸⁵ Tully, F.D.R., My Boss, pp. 10, 12-3.

²⁸⁶ Entry for August 6, 1940, Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, Lash Papers, FDRL.

²⁸⁷ Speech entitled “Montcalm’s Victory and its Lesson,” Oswego, New York, September 30, 1913, Master Speech File Number 24, FDRL.

history for the insights it provides, Roosevelt developed a broad, sweeping historical perspective. His thinking meshed the romantic impressions of his parents and his own parochial travels in Europe with the contemporary ideas of Theodore Roosevelt, Francis Parkman, A. T. Mahan, Macvane, and Turner. Taken together, those influences produced in Roosevelt a remarkably coherent view of history and of Western Europe by the time he departed the New York legislature and accepted President Woodrow Wilson's offer to become assistant secretary of the navy in 1913.

His ideas reflected the liberal, progressive view of history and world events. In 1912, he observed that "the history of the past thousand years" was the story of "the Aryan races . . . struggling to obtain individual freedom." He argued,

The Reformation, for instance, and the Renaissance in Europe are too commonly regarded as religious or educational struggles and have not, by teachers of history, been sufficiently explained as efforts . . . to obtain individual liberty. In the same way the American revolution, the French revolution and at a later date the general European uprisings of 1848.²⁸⁸

As a function of his perspective, Roosevelt tended to view people and groups as either agents of progress and individual liberty or as a manifestation of the forces of reaction. From his point of view, American progressives, English Liberals and Whigs, Calvinists, Puritans and Parliamentarians filled the ranks of history's reformers. He believed that in France the agents of progress consistently were Republican, anti-clerical, civilian, and secular. In Germany, they were the liberal intellectuals of central Germany, in the tradition of Martin Luther and the revolutionaries of 1848.

²⁸⁸ Address before the People's Forum, Troy, New York, March 3, 1912, Master Speech File Number 14, FDRL.

Against those reformers, Roosevelt's thinking arrayed the opponents of liberty and the forces of reaction: conservatives, Tories, advocates of monarchy and absolutism, professional militarists and proponents of imperial expansion, clerics and the Catholic Church. He believed that throughout history "the forces of reaction so often defeat the forces of progress."²⁸⁹ He conceived history as the cyclic interplay between the two forces with periods of conservative, reaction punctuated by periods of reform that ultimately moved the people closer to attaining individual liberty. That conception persisted throughout his life. In 1940, for instance, he observed, "There have been occasions . . . when reactions in the march of democracy have set in, and forward-looking progress has seemed to stop. But such periods have been followed by liberal and progressive times."²⁹⁰

Roosevelt's comments about France in 1912 and 1913 reveal a mixture of admiration and disdain. Clearly, he was sympathetic to the efforts of French Republicans in 1789 and 1848, and he prized French cultural and artistic achievements.²⁹¹ Despite its progressive aspects, however, it seemed to Roosevelt that many archaic institutions and impulses persisted in the French nation, aspects that Roosevelt labeled "un-American." Concerning society, Roosevelt believed that vestiges "of an outworn social system" dominated by the monarchy and the Catholic Church remained in France despite the anti-clerical efforts of

²⁸⁹ Radio Address to the Young Democratic Clubs of America Meeting in Milwaukee, August 24, 1935, Master Speech File Number 795, FDRL.

²⁹⁰ Acceptance Speech to the Democratic National Convention, July 19, 1940, Master Speech File Number 1291, FDRL.

²⁹¹ Address before the People's Forum, Troy, New York, March 3, 1912, Master Speech File Number 14, FDRL. On his attitude toward French culture, see, for example, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt letter to Sara Delano Roosevelt, August 16, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 69.

French Republicans. In addition, French political life remained sharply divided and included monarchists and Bonapartists, advocates of what Roosevelt considered “a discredited form of government.” In Roosevelt’s mind, closely linked to the French monarchy was the impulse in France for overseas colonies and empire. Unlike “healthy” British colonization, French efforts had been “comparatively artificial” efforts driven by antiquated religious, military, and political motives. Considering France’s colonial record, he commented, “But what had they gained besides the knowledge of the trails and streams?”²⁹² Evidently, Roosevelt also viewed the French administrative system, both at home and in its colonial ventures, as an ineffective holdover from the past. In Panama in 1912, Roosevelt found the country “clean and fairly orderly--a very different Panama than under the French.”²⁹³ On account of its inherent divisions and heterogeneous national character, it seems evident that Roosevelt viewed France as a nation that did not belong in the ranks of the great colonial or world powers. Nevertheless, he seems to have believed that under responsible and progressive Republican leadership France was a country that would continue to play an important role in European affairs.

By 1913, Roosevelt perceived that, although Prussian militarism dominated Germany, the tension in the nation between the conflicting impulses of autocracy and liberalism remained. He described the impulse as “the inevitable conflict between the past and the future.” In the New York State senate Roosevelt had served as chairman of the Forest,

²⁹² “Montcalm’s Victory and its Lesson”- Oswego, New York, September 30, 1913, Master Speech File Number 24, FDRL.

²⁹³ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to his mother, April 22, 1912 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 185.

Fish and Game committee.²⁹⁴ In that capacity, he found conservation efforts in Germany to be more farsighted than those in the United States. Praising the impact of the German intellectual as a force for progress, Roosevelt observed, “It was recognized in Germany for instance a hundred years ago that the trees on the land were necessary for the preservation of the water power and indeed for the general health and prosperity of the people.”²⁹⁵ For the time being, however, Prussian autocracy and militarism increasingly dominated liberal Germany. Clearly, Roosevelt considered the government of Germany in 1913 and the French monarchy during the Seven Years War to be analogous. He warned that absolutist governments, because of their “highly concentrated organization,” had the ability to arm rapidly. Whilhelmine Germany’s aggressive naval building program exemplified that ability. Roosevelt, furthermore, suggested that Germany’s military expansion constituted more than a threat to Great Britain alone; it represented a global threat to all of the “Anglo-Saxon peoples.”²⁹⁶

Roosevelt’s perspective had clear implications for the direction he thought United States policy should take. In 1913, he urged expanding the United States navy in order to avoid “the usual weakness of Anglo-Saxon peoples, a lack of preparation for armed conflict.” His primary purpose for advocating military preparation, however, was peaceful; American military power would allow the nation to deter or avoid war rather

²⁹⁴ “Autobiographical sketch for the New York Red Book February 9, 1911,” Folder 12, Box 39, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

²⁹⁵ Address before the People’s Forum, Troy, New York, March 3, 1912, Master Speech File Number 14, FDRL.

²⁹⁶ “Montcalm’s Victory and its Lesson”- Oswego, New York, September 30, 1913, Master Speech File Number 24, FDRL.

than wage it. Concerning war, he claimed, “We are all striving - army and navy alike - to prevent its occurrence.” Roosevelt, nevertheless, viewed preparation as essential because “no one can guarantee to the American people that there will be no more war.” From his perspective, if the United States did not improve its naval power and prepare to “fight with fourteen-inch guns at ranges of ten miles,” then it not only invited a potential attack but also risked losing a future conflict in its initial stages before the nation could effectively mobilize its strength and resources. Roosevelt, however, believed that the United States possessed an inherent advantage over autocratic governments despite the fact that autocracies “may have armies and navies of the greatest.” He perceived that the power of absolute rulers was fragile. He surmised that military strength “is in itself of no avail” and that ultimately an autocratic government “will go down in defeat if the people at home on the farms or in the towns are weak in resources, in endurance, in fundamental ideals.”²⁹⁷

Although he emphasized the defensive value of military preparedness, it seems evident that Roosevelt in no way espoused a passive policy for the United States. In that respect, the activism that he urged against trusts and monopolies, which ran on an “out of date” theory, presumably applied to autocratic governments as well. Considering the progress of liberty and civilization, he argued, “The trust is evil because it monopolizes for a few and as long as this keeps up it will be necessary for a community to change its features.” Clearly, Roosevelt believed that the policies of the United States government needed to further progressive goals. The people of United States, he further asserted, had a definite responsibility to “care what happens after they are gone . . . and even care what happens

²⁹⁷ “Montcalm’s Victory and its Lesson”- Oswego, New York, September 30, 1913, Master Speech File Number 24, FDRL.

to their neighbors.” Mindful of that responsibility to the world and future generations, Roosevelt offered the following prescription, “When men are serfs or are ruled by tyrants they need first of all, individual freedom.”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ Address before the People’s Forum, Troy, New York, March 3, 1912, Master Speech File Number 14, FDRL.

Chapter 3: The Great War and the Confirmation of a Progressive Worldview, 1913-1918

To understand the present gigantic conflict one must have at least a glimmering of understanding of foreign nations and their histories.

Eleanor Roosevelt to Franklin D. Roosevelt
August 7, 1914¹

Events from March 1913, when Franklin D. Roosevelt first entered national public life, to the end of the Great War in November 1918 left an indelible mark on Roosevelt's thinking.² During Roosevelt's tenure as assistant secretary of the navy, his progressive worldview coalesced and his views of France and Germany matured. Influenced by

¹ Eleanor Roosevelt letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 7, 1914, quoted in Joseph P. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1971), p. 202.

² Roosevelt's biographers have expressed a broad range of opinions concerning the importance of Roosevelt's experiences as assistant secretary of the navy. Biographer Geoffrey Ward downplays Roosevelt's actions in the Wilson administration and finds him "more cheerleader and expediter than maker of decisions." Frank Friedel finds Roosevelt "impressionable" and notes that circumstances caused Roosevelt to alter his views. Brushing through the Great War and ignoring the ideas that motivated Roosevelt's actions, Friedel casually assesses Roosevelt to have been contradictory during the Great War, characterizing him as "a big navy man and an imperialist" who somehow came to support the League of Nations by the end of the war. Friedel, however, notes that many of Roosevelt's experiences during that period "affected his later course of action." Concerned with the emergence of Roosevelt as a politician, James MacGregor Burns assesses that the experience had a maturing effect on Roosevelt's political judgment and turned "him into a seasoned politician-administrator." Gerhard Weinberg suggests, however, that historians need to develop a more complete assessment of the influence of Roosevelt's experiences, particularly from the Great War and immediate post war era, on Roosevelt's perceptions and the impact of those perceptions on some of his most important decisions and policies during the Second World War. Geoffrey C. Ward, A First-Class Temperament: The Emergence of Franklin Roosevelt (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), p. 433; Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), pp. 31-2; James MacGregor Burns, The Lion and the Fox: Roosevelt, 1882-1940 (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), pp. 61-5, 67; Gerhard L. Weinberg, "World War II: Comments on the Roundtable," Diplomatic History, Summer 2001, vol. 25, number 3, p. 492. Weinberg, Germany, Hitler, and World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 186-7, 299-301.

contemporary progressive ideas amid heightened wartime sensitivities, Roosevelt developed an enduring progressive outlook in which he perceived international events from the perspective that groups and national leaders served either as the agents or the opponents of progress. As Roosevelt matured as a politician, his experiences in the Wilson administration also strengthened his appreciation for the primacy of domestic political concerns. With his perspective shaded by the belief that he ranked among the agents of progress, he developed an approach to foreign policy consistently conditioned by his particular, partisan political perspective, awareness, and sensitivities.

The Great War taught Roosevelt some fundamental strategic lessons and reinforced his thinking about military preparedness. Events convinced Roosevelt that the United States exerted a major moral force in world affairs. The United States represented a powerful force for democratic progress, and even symbolic American gestures represented a significant psychological weapon to assist friends and allies. Building on the advocacy of James Russell Soley, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and Theodore Roosevelt, the circumstances surrounding United States entry into the Great War solidified Roosevelt's thinking about the value of military preparedness to avert war or, if necessary, to wage it.

By the end of the war Roosevelt also had gained tremendous confidence in the ability of the French soldier and guarded optimism for the future of the French political system. He found the *poilieu* fierce and resolute and believed French soldiers particularly adept at responding to and recovering from battlefield setbacks. Despite the fragmented, heterogeneous nature of French society and political life, Roosevelt thought that French morale and national will were not always hopelessly divided. Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau's wartime leadership provided him an enduring frame of reference. In

Roosevelt's thinking, the solution for France was a strong, progressive leader drawn from the Radical or Republican ranks in the liberal center between the extremes of the French Left and Right. Roosevelt believed that only with a man such as Clemenceau in power in France would the French be capable of national unity. Given such leadership and resolve, he believed that the French soldier would enable France to persevere.

In contrast to his image of French martial abilities and political life, Roosevelt envisioned German morale as much more fragile. In the progressive spirit, Roosevelt perceived a sharp dichotomy between the militaristic Prussian upper class and industrialists in power in Imperial Germany and the submerged liberal and intellectual masses of the old German states. Although he hoped that the idyllic liberal Germany of his youthful recollections would ultimately reemerge in the post war period, Roosevelt perceived the absolute dominance of an autocratic government supported by a militaristic, Prussian upper class throughout the Great War. Consistent with his disdain for German commoners, he pictured the unintelligent and brutal German soldiery as prone to committing atrocities when they had the upper hand but highly susceptible in defeat. Consequently, Roosevelt thought that a German battlefield setback potentially would have a more decisive impact on the Prussian war machine and the Imperial German government than a similar blow against French soldiers.

I.

Between 1890 and the end of the Great War in 1918, a generation of American reformers responding to the problems in their urban-industrial society labeled themselves

as progressives. Although not a unified movement, progressivism encompassed many diverse domestic reform impulses in the United States around the turn of the century. As a group, those who considered themselves progressive shared an acceptance of industrialization and faith in progress. Progressives believed that people could intervene in economic and social affairs in order to improve their environment, to protect those hurt by industrialization, and to advance civilization.³ Although normally regarded as a domestic reform impulse, progressivism also guided the way policy makers and opinion leaders in the United States viewed Germany during the Great War. Progressive ideology shaped the antagonism toward Germany of many Americans and their affinity with the French Republic. Ultimately, progressivism influenced how Woodrow Wilson and his administration waged war against Germany on the side of the Allies.

Like Franklin D. Roosevelt, the majority of the men who later became advisors during his presidency had considered themselves progressive in 1914. With the exception of Cordell Hull, an agrarian progressive from Tennessee, the prominent men of the Roosevelt administration essentially came from the ranks of mid western insurgents and the upper class of the northeastern United States. In addition to Hull, progressive Democrats included Breckinridge Long and Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Many of those later advisors, however, not only hailed from the Democratic Party but formerly had belonged to the insurgent wing of the Republican Party and the Progressive Party as well. Harold L. Ickes, William H. Woodin, Henry A. Wallace, Henry L. Stimson, Frank Knox, Felix Frankfurter, and William J. Donovan had been members of the insurgent wing of the Republican Party; in 1912, many of them had supported the Bull Moose or Progressive

³ Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, Progressivism (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1983), pp. 2-3, 21-2.

Party candidate, Theodore Roosevelt, as well. Certainly among the ranks of progressive reformers were others whose earlier political affiliations were less distinct, for example, settlement house worker Harry Hopkins. Others presumably shared the progressive perspective by virtue of similar educational backgrounds at elite schools in New England. Like Roosevelt, Sumner Welles attended Groton, Harvard, and Columbia Law School. Similarly, Jay Pierrepont Moffat attended Groton and Harvard before embarking upon a diplomatic career. Alumni of Harvard or Harvard Law included Adolph A. Berle, William Phillips, William C. Bullitt, Archibald MacLeish, Stimson, and Frankfurter, and, in addition to their studies at Harvard, Bullitt, Stimson, and MacLeish also attended Yale University prior to United States entry into the Great War.

Hoping to restore power to the “people,” progressive reformers constantly attacked the “interests” that, in their mind, had subverted opportunity and freedom in the United States: monopolies and trusts, investment bankers, the industrial oligarchy, urban party bosses, and political machines.⁴ American reformers and opinion leaders applied that same outlook to Germany around the turn of the century. Germany had been an example to American reformers since the 1880s. In the late nineteenth century, concessions to labor in the United States fell far short of the legislation enacted by the German government to protect workers. In contrast, after 1900, Germany rounded out the social legislation inaugurated in the 1880s.⁵

⁴ Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 204, 230-1.

⁵ Arthur Meier Schlesinger, The Rise of Modern America, 1865-1951 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951, 4th edition), pp. 100, 204.

Although American reformers found support for their proposals in the precedents set by Bismarckian welfare legislation, it would have been impossible for them to ignore the criticism coming from intellectuals inside Imperial Germany. For instance, German historian Theodor Mommsen decried the “pseudo-constitutional absolutism under which we live and which our spineless people has inwardly accepted.”⁶ Consequently, between the turn of the century and United States entry into the Great War, many Americans increasingly accepted the view that unified Germany was a nation in tension between a militaristic Prussian oligarchy and the liberal and democratic mass of the people. On a speaking tour of eight mid-western states in early April 1917, Henry L. Stimson noted that the distinction “between the German people and their autocratic government was everywhere recognized.”⁷

German actions during the first decade of the twentieth century, however, convinced American policy makers that the autocratic and militaristic Prussian system increasingly dominated liberal Germany. Acquisition of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War had raised tensions between the United States and Imperial Germany, and during Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency, his friends Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and diplomat Henry White were strongly anti-German. In the same vein, Roosevelt’s Secretary of State John Hay perceived “something monstrous” in “the German mind” with respect to war. In contrast to his friends and advisors, Theodore Roosevelt’s feelings

⁶ Melvyn Dubofsky, Industrialism and the American Worker, 1865-1920 (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1985 ed.), pp. 80-1; Donald S. Detwiler, Germany: A Short History (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989 ed.), pp. 132, 134, 138-9.

⁷ Entry for April 1917 in the Henry L. Stimson Diaries, Vol. III, frame 32, microfilm edition, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut.

were mixed, but he maintained an attitude of good will toward Germany during most of his tenure in the White House. The threat of German, and to a lesser extent British, naval intervention against Venezuela in 1901 and 1902 induced Roosevelt to improve the readiness of the U.S. Navy and formulate his corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. Roosevelt admired German leaders such as Frederick the Great and Otto von Bismarck and initially displayed qualified admiration for Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Kaiser had sought improved relations with the United States after the Venezuelan affair, and in 1902, Roosevelt's daughter Alice christened the Kaiser's yacht, part of Wilhelm's policy of consistent flattery toward Roosevelt. Nevertheless, by 1908, Theodore Roosevelt also came to distrust the Kaiser and the German government's antagonism toward Britain.⁸

Following Theodore Roosevelt's departure from the White House in early 1909, distrust of German aspirations persisted among members of the United States government and the press. In 1910, a confidential estimate by the Navy General Board predicted a break with Germany likely on account of its expansionist drives in the Pacific and Caribbean. Between 1910 and 1912, the War and Navy Departments repeatedly protested

⁸ Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989 ed.), pp. 390-1, 442, 446-7; Lewis L. Gould, The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1991), pp. 75-81. At Harvard at the time, Franklin D. Roosevelt did not attend the launching of the Kaiser's yacht on February 25, 1902. Many of his family and relations from New York City, however, did attend the ceremony near Jersey City. In addition to President Theodore Roosevelt's immediate family, the guest list included Franklin Roosevelt's mother, his half-sister Helen Roosevelt, and cousins Douglas M. Robinson and Corrine Roosevelt Robinson. For a copy of the guest list see the untitled memorandum, ca. February 1904, Series 13H, Reel 450, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Theodore Roosevelt's daughter's brief account of the launching and the visit of the Kaiser's brother to the United States can be found in Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Crowded Hours: Reminiscences of Alice Roosevelt Longworth (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), pp. 48-9.

to the Department of State concerning alleged German designs on the Galapagos Islands and Haiti, acquisitions that would threaten American dominance in the Caribbean and the safety of the Panama Canal nearing completion. American periodicals expressed similar concerns. For example, writing in 1909, Amos S. Hershey, a political science professor from the University of Indiana, urged the creation of an Anglo-American alliance to counter the German menace to American security, economic interests, and world peace. Career diplomat Lewis Einstein was among the group of writers who emphasized the importance of friendly ties with Britain and the danger represented by German naval supremacy. Einstein predicted that German victory in a future war with Britain would undermine United States economic and diplomatic interests in both the Caribbean and the Far East.⁹

In contrast to the growing distrust and unease that marked American attitudes toward Germany, attitudes toward France improved in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great War. One man, French ambassador Jean Adrien Antoine Jules Jusserand, was particularly active and influential. Fully accepted in the United States, Jusserand was a unique figure in American diplomatic history. Long serving, he first presented his credentials in Washington, D.C. in February 1903 and was only recalled over twenty-one years later. No stranger to American society, his wife, Mme. Elise Jusserand, had been born in France of Bostonian parents. Furthermore, after arriving in Washington, D.C., he quickly developed a close relationship with President Theodore Roosevelt. That relationship, strengthened by frequent, strenuous walks with the president in Rock Creek Park, resulted in his inclusion in Roosevelt's "tennis cabinet."

⁹ Daniel M. Smith, The Great Departure: The United States and World War I, 1914-1920 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 10-13.

Jusserand effectively influenced Roosevelt's ideas, especially those concerning France and Germany, and it is revealing that Jusserand is said to have persuaded Roosevelt to read *Chanson de Roland* rather than the *Nibelungenlied*. The French diplomat also appealed to Roosevelt as a historian. Jusserand, like Roosevelt, became president of the American Historical Society, the only non-American ever to do so, and in 1917, he won the Pulitzer Prize in history.¹⁰

The amicable relations established between Jusserand and Theodore Roosevelt ushered in a period of increasingly favorable attitudes toward France on the part of the United States. In 1911, President William H. Taft pressed for arbitration treaties with both France and Britain. By March 1912, although the Senate had watered down the treaties and Taft refused to ratify them, in the American press it seemed that France had undergone a fundamental transformation since the *Agadir* incident the previous year. The editors of *The New York Times* declared that France "has obviously awakened now, recovered from its disabilities, and prepared to fulfill its duties in the world of progress."¹¹

The divisions that had apparently led to the French defeat during the Franco-Prussian War and had persisted for forty years in French politics and society seemed healed. American correspondents in Paris reported a "wave of buoyant optimism which is sweeping over the country." That optimism manifested itself in patriotic signs and gestures, in support for the French army, in greater emphasis on "orderliness and self-

¹⁰ Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft, *Twentieth Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1942), pp. 739-40.

¹¹ "The Awakening in France," *The New York Times*, March 24, 1912, p. 14; Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, tenth edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980), pp. 540-1.

discipline,” and in a strong campaign against immorality. The failure of a general strike in the coal industry, hopeful observers suggested, was further evidence that “even the Socialists are falling into line” with a popular patriotic movement. According to the report from Paris, the movement resulted in a fundamental transformation in French society and accounted for “great improvement in the national physique and a modification of certain traits in the French character.”¹²

The American press argued that the “new France” that they were seeing in 1912 sprang from the deep-seated aspirations of the French people. What the writers described was a phenomenon that their progressive readers in the United States would have immediately recognized. *The New York Times* reported that it appeared to “attentive observers” that France was “at the beginning of one of those periods of moral and material renaissance from the depths of the people, and not from elsewhere.” The enthusiastic patriotism in France reportedly represented the desires of the French people and was “too spontaneous” to have been the product of inspiration or manipulation by “the Bonapartists, with the considerable amount of private influence they have and the newspapers they control.” Indeed, the military impulse in France, Americans reported, was wholly unlike that existing in Germany. Progressive rather than autocratic, French “democracy is a military one, for defensive, not offensive, measures.” Suggesting the sharp contrast between the Prussianized German war machine and the French military, writers explained that the enthusiasm of the French people for their army reflected the

¹² “France Reborn in Patriotism,” The New York Times, March 24, 1912, p. 2C.

fact that the French army “is the only one that exists at present in Europe created in perfect liberty.”¹³

In retrospect it is clear that the nationalist revival in France after 1912 was not the manifestation of broad popular support that Americans perceived. American progressives tended to see events as being part of a dichotomy. The logical extension of that view was that if the patriotic movement in France was not a reflection of popular will then it must be a product of the conservative, reactionary, anti-democratic interests: Bonapartists, Royalists, and the clergy. The nationalist revival in France, however, was neither. It was largely a product of the efforts of a small group of conservative Republican politicians, journalists, and the military. The key figure in that group was Raymond Poincaré, an aloof but successful lawyer from Lorraine. Troubled by what he perceived as a distinct lack of patriotism, Poincaré, as prime minister in 1912 and president of the Republic the following year, deliberately set out to make nationalism the dominant issue on the political agenda. He did so not only because he was conscious of the growing danger of war with Germany but also to further his own political cause as well. Under Poincaré’s leadership, the conservative Republicans hoped to break up the political power of the Left, the Radical-Socialist *bloc*, and replace it with a Center-Right *bloc* that could contain the threat posed to the Republic by the extremists on the Right.¹⁴

Notwithstanding the actual situation in France, many prominent Americans accepted the reports that France was undergoing a popular rejuvenation and did their best to

¹³ “Awakened France Feels Her Strength,” The New York Times, March 31, 1912, part III, p. 1.

¹⁴ James F. McMillan, Twentieth-Century France: Politics and Society, 1898-1991 (London: Edward Arnold, 1992), pp. 36-8.

encourage the progressive transition that they perceived. In New York City, diplomat Henry White served as the toastmaster at a dinner commemorating the 125th anniversary of the treaty of alliance between France and the American colonies and celebrating negotiations for Taft's proposed Franco-American arbitration treaty. In addition to Ambassador Jusserand, those in attendance included former Senator Chauncey M. Depew, Attorney General George W. Wickersham, and the mayor of New York City. At the dinner, the mayor expressed surprise "that there were so many Franco-American philanthropic organizations in existence." The entire crowd of two hundred applauded after White stated "that there could never be a war between the United States and France."¹⁵

At the time, the number of Franco-American societies in New York alone was growing. Among the societies there was the Alliance Française. Organized by a special act of the New York State legislature, a legislature that included Franklin Roosevelt, the membership of the Alliance Française included financiers J. Pierpont Morgan and Andrew Carnegie, former senator Depew, and members of the faculty at Columbia University.¹⁶ In October 1912, the New York Supreme Court also approved the incorporation of the Franco-American Committee, an organization created "to develop and strengthen relations of all kinds between France and this country." The directors of the new committee included Henry White and J. P. Morgan, Jr. but also a group of

¹⁵ "French Diners Cheer For Peace Treaties," The New York Times, February 7, 1912, p. 6. Depew, born in Peekskill on the Hudson in 1834, had been a railroad president, state assemblyman during the Civil War, and U.S. senator. Depew was the principal speaker at the unveiling of the Statue of Liberty. National Cyclopædia of American Biography, Vol. 23 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1933), pp. 96-7.

¹⁶ "Prof. Jordan Decorated," The New York Times, September 27, 1912, p. 7.

philanthropists and financiers prominent in Franklin Roosevelt's world: Henry Van Dyke, W. K. Vanderbilt, A. Barton Hepburn, and George Foster Peabody.¹⁷

With the directors that it possessed, the formation of the Franco-American Committee could not have escaped Franklin Roosevelt's attention and interest. Like Roosevelt, Henry Van Dyke was the scion of a proud colonial Dutch family and the son of a New York railroad president and financier.¹⁸ W. K. Vanderbilt, whose brother lived up the road from Hyde Park, was director of the Metropolitan Opera Company, a horse racing and yachting enthusiast, and a generous contributor to Columbia and Vanderbilt Universities and the American hospital in Neuilly. Several years later, Vanderbilt founded and funded the Lafayette Escadrille, a group of American volunteers who flew for France prior to United States entry into the Great War.¹⁹ New York City banker and philanthropist A. Barton Hepburn was a scholarly writer on financial and economic subjects and an active member of the chamber of commerce.²⁰ George Foster Peabody, another financier and philanthropist, had served as the chairman of the Democratic National Committee and was chairman of the first New York State Conservation Commission between 1910 and 1915. During that time he became a close friend of Franklin Roosevelt, who chaired the State Forest, Fish and Game Committee. After refusing several of Woodrow Wilson's nominations, in 1916, Peabody became the vice chairman of New York City's Federal Reserve Bank. A Georgian by birth, is was

¹⁷ "A New Bond With France," The New York Times, October 25, 1912, p. 12.

¹⁸ National Cyclopædia of American Biography, Vol. 23, p. 113.

¹⁹ National Cyclopædia of American Biography, Vol. 30 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1943), pp. 15-6.

²⁰ National Cyclopædia of American Biography, Vol. 23, pp. 100-1.

Peabody in 1924 who urged Roosevelt to try the therapeutic waters of Warm Springs, Georgia, and he was active in promoting the Warm Springs Foundation until to his death in 1938.²¹

The election of Woodrow Wilson in November 1912 did not arrest the growing affinity that influential Americans had for France. Although a Republican appointee, Ambassador Myron T. Herrick in Paris offered his assurance that Wilson's election "will have no effect on the foreign policy or the economic relations of America with France, which make of her almost a sister nation."²² The Paris press, however, was less restrained than Herrick. *Le Temps*, "voicing the unanimous sentiments of France," declared, "A man of great worth has been elected to preside over the destinies of a great nation."²³ In light of the fact that the French press had been so critical of Theodore Roosevelt only a few years earlier, the comments of the French press in late 1912 must have further confirmed in the minds of many Americans the extent of the progressive awakening in France.

During the first week in office in March 1913, President Woodrow Wilson and his cabinet unanimously agreed to the need for a public statement outlining the essence of the administration's foreign policy. In what Secretary Daniels considered a "singularly clear and impressive declaration," Wilson announced, "We can have no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests or

²¹ National Cyclopædia of American Biography, Vol. 27 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1939), pp. 64-5.

²² "Herrick Hedges," The New York Times, November 7, 1912, p. 7.

²³ "Wilson Of Great Worth: Temps Thus Calls Victor," The New York Times, November 7, 1912, p. 7.

ambition.”²⁴ Applying that formulation to Europe, it seems evident that members of the Wilson administration perceived a clear distinction between the autocratic oligarchy in power in Germany and a progressive, patriotic, and republican France. That attitude formed the basis of the administration’s critical view of Imperial Germany and its favorable, sympathetic reception of the French Republic.

II.

After arriving in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 1913, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt quickly developed a close, personal relationship with key figures in the British and French embassies. Cousin Theodore Roosevelt’s friendships facilitated the process. The elder Roosevelt’s circle of friends in the capital included Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, a former secretary in the embassy in Washington, D.C. who returned as ambassador from Great Britain in 1913, and the long-serving French ambassador, Jules J. Jusserand.²⁵ Both embassies made Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt welcome. In addition to their contacts with the ambassadors and their wives, she recalled that “we did get to know a great number of the younger members of the embassy staff quite well, and with some of them we have always kept in touch.” Eleanor Roosevelt and Marie de Laboulaye, the wife of

²⁴ Entry for March 11, 1913 in Josephus Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921, edited by E. David Cronon (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 67.

²⁵ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. 234-6, 263-4. The fact that the Roosevelt’s moved into the house of Theodore Roosevelt’s sister, Mrs. William Sheffield Cowles or Auntie Bye, on N Street probably helped.

the second secretary of the French embassy, “became great friends.”²⁶ What developed was a unique working and social relationship between the Roosevelt family and the two diplomatic missions. For example, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt’s children took dancing lessons at the British embassy sponsored by Lady Spring-Rice, and games of field hockey and baseball organized by Franklin Roosevelt mixed members of the British embassy, such as future British ambassador Sir Ronald Lindsay, with the Roosevelt children and their friends.²⁷ On a more formal level, it was not uncommon for Franklin Roosevelt to dine with the British ambassador, and every Friday Eleanor Roosevelt called on the wives of diplomats.²⁸ When Sara Delano Roosevelt visited Washington, she made a point of calling at the British and French embassies.²⁹

The events of 1914 served to reinforce favorable attitudes toward France and suspicion of Germany in the United States and directly affected how Americans viewed the outbreak of war in Europe that August. On Independence Day, 1914, while newspaper columns debated the assassination of an Austrian archduke that had taken place in Sarajevo a week earlier, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan announced that “the finishing touches” had been applied to an arbitration treaty between the United States and

²⁶ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. 263, 236. Other friends included Sir Arthur and Lady Willert, then a correspondent for the London Times, the future Lady Vansittart, and Aurthur Murray.

²⁷ James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, Affectionately, F.D.R.: A Son’s Story of A Lonely Man (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), pp. 72, 69.

²⁸ See for example Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, undated early 1915, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 267; [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 209.

²⁹ See, for example, entry for May 4, 1918, Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, Diaries 1912-1922, Box 68, Papers of Sara Delano Roosevelt, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

its sister republic, France. Bryan commented that the so-called French peace treaty would soon be transmitted to the Senate along with a similar Anglo-American treaty.³⁰

Ultimately, the existence of those conciliation treaties with France and Britain, and the absence of a similar agreement with Imperial Germany, had some bearing on sympathy in the United States, and especially within the Wilson administration, for the Allied cause.³¹

In late August 1914, the first month of the Great War in Europe, in a full page interview in the *New York Times*, the German ambassador to the United States expressed his regret for what he identified as “a general American hostility toward Germany.” Hoping to counter American attitudes, Count Johann von Bernstorff commented, “I cannot too strongly emphasize the error of the view which seems so general here—the view that Germany, gone mad with lust for power and gain, has declared war on the world.” Suggesting that people in the United States had only received a slanted British view of the war after Britain cut the transatlantic cable, the ambassador argued that Germany’s aims were entirely defensive and that the sympathy of the American people should be with Germany.³² Eleanor Roosevelt assessed the German ambassador’s appeal as a failure in a letter to a former schoolmate from Germany. She observed, “I think Count Bernstorff has been unfortunate in talking too much at first” and that “he has

³⁰ “French Treaty Ready,” The New York Times, July 4, 1914, p. 6.

³¹ Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, tenth edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980), p. 546.

³² Edward Marshall, “Count Von Bernsdorff Gives Germany’s Point of View,” The New York Times, August 30, 1914, section IV, p. 1.

alienated many who felt he was trying to appeal to the popular sympathy over the heads of the [U. S.] Government.”³³

The letters to the editor following the German ambassador’s appeal likewise showed little acceptance of von Bernstorff’s reasoning. Citing the German bombing of “the sleeping women and children of Antwerp,” one reader rejected the characterization of German aims as defensive. He countered, “Germany[,] in the lust of success[,] slays the innocent and the defenseless.” Another found no “proof of German friendship for America” that von Bernstorff had lauded. He instead recalled the aggressive action of the German Asiatic Squadron against Admiral George Dewey in Manila Bay and the German arms flowing to the antagonistic Huerta government in Mexico. The writer recounted in detail a version of the events of April 1914 off Vera Cruz when nineteen Americans died attempting to prevent a German merchant ship from unloading its cargo of guns and ammunition. Although United States action had prevented the cargo from being landed at Vera Cruz, the German ship, which the reader argued “had been taken over by the Government in Berlin,” was able to land its deadly cargo in another port following the diplomatic intervention of Argentina, Brazil, and Chili.³⁴

The association of Germany with the Victoriano Huerta government in Mexico strengthened Woodrow Wilson’s suspicions of German intentions. Huerta having come to power in a coup, President Wilson had likened the regime in Mexico to a group of cold-blooded murderers, and he withheld diplomatic recognition of the Huerta

³³ Eleanor Roosevelt to Carola von Passavant, May 14, 1915, quoted in Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, pp. 203-4.

³⁴ “Victims and Victors” and “Germany’s Friendship,” The New York Times, August 31, 1914, p. 6.

government on the progressive grounds that it did not represent the Mexican people. “My ideal,” Wilson confided, “is for an orderly and righteous government in Mexico; but my passion is for the submerged eighty-five per cent of the people of that Republic who are now struggling toward liberty.”³⁵ Certainly, overt German assistance for Huerta further convinced Wilson that the government in Berlin pursued anti-democratic aims that reflected neither the wishes of the Mexican people nor those of the German people.

To Wilson’s ambassador in Berlin, the domination of Prussian autocracy in Germany seemed complete before the outbreak of war in 1914. Arriving in Germany in 1913, James W. Gerard, observed, “Prussia, which has imposed its will, as well as its methods of thought and life on all the rest of Germany, is undoubtedly a military nation.” The power in Imperial Germany, according to Gerard, rested not only in the officer corps and the Prussian military system but also in “the class of nobles in Prussia who owns the army.” Gerard likened the selection process for German officers to an exclusive club where the members, in that case all of the officers of a particular regiment, had the power to “black-ball” officer candidates. He observed that in practice the system essentially reserved admission to the ranks of professional officers to the nobility. Although Gerard perceived the existence of antagonism in German society between those professional military officers and the civilian population, he emphasized the general reluctance of civilians to protest the arrogant behavior of Prussian officers and their complete submission to “the devils of autocracy and of war.” Furthermore, from his perspective, the intentions of those “advocates of the old military system of Germany” were not

³⁵ Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, tenth edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980), p. 555.

peaceful, having already decided between December 1913 and May 1914 “in favor of a European war.”³⁶

From the progressive point of view, people either abdicated power because they had relaxed their vigilance, or their power was taken away from them by plotting, corrupt “interests.”³⁷ Furthermore, because progressives feared that the “interests” would conspire to consolidate and expand their economic and political power, thereby establishing virtual monopolies, they tended to view the aspirations of Imperial Germany in a similar manner. Consistent with that formulation, Ambassador Gerard believed that “fear” of their neighbors had actuated “the mass of Germans” prior to 1914, allowing them to be dominated by a military autocracy owned by “the class of nobles in Prussia.”³⁸ The American ambassador believed the ambitions of the Prussian upper class to be insatiable. Gerard observed that the Prussian autocracy promised the German people a war that would bring “not only security but riches untold and the dominion of the world.”³⁹

The progressive American perspective was that Germany represented an economic threat to world commerce. Since the 1890s, Germany had made major encroachments on the foreign trade of other countries, particularly Britain. It seemed as though Germany’s “industrial armies were going to occupy the broad fields of international commerce with the same restless energy with which her battalions marched from Saarbruck[en] to Sedan

³⁶ James W. Gerard, My Four Years in Germany (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1917), pp. ix, 59-61, 70.

³⁷ Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, pp. 202-3.

³⁸ Gerard, My Four Years in Germany, p. 59.

³⁹ Gerard, My Four Years in Germany, p. ix.

a quarter of a century ago.”⁴⁰ In 1919 Woodrow Wilson surmised, “If Germany had waited a single generation, she would have had a commercial empire of the world.”⁴¹ Although the United States had hoped to remain neutral in the World War, the Wilson administration perceived German commercial gains as a distinct threat. In early 1917, Secretary Daniels warned that German efforts to control trade “by unfair and monopolistic methods” would force the countries of the world to stand together in self-defense.⁴²

To many progressives, however, Germany also posed a military as well as an economic threat to the United States. German economic expansion, many surmised, not only laid the foundation for future political influence but also for possible military intervention. Observers in the United States believed the military staffs of Imperial Germany had possessed plans for war with the United States for years. Assessing in 1887 “what is known of the methods of administration” in Germany, James Russell Soley in the Navy Department surmised,

that the General Staff of the German Admiralty...have a plan of operations with the details of the campaign already prepared, carefully modified in accordance with every variation for the better or the worse in our effective force, and ready to be put in operation at a few hours notice.⁴³

⁴⁰ “The Secrets of Germany’s Industrial Success,” Scientific American, vol. LXXV, no. 13 (September 26, 1896), p. 246.

⁴¹ Woodrow Wilson address in Rome, January 4, 1919 in Woodrow Wilson, International Ideals: Speeches and Addresses made during the President’s European Visit, December 14, 1918, to February 14, 1919 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), p. 59.

⁴² Entry for February 27, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 100-1.

⁴³ James Russell Soley, “Our Naval Policy—A Lesson From 1861,” Scribner’s Magazine, vol. 1, number 2, February 1907, pp. 224-5.

Apparently, similar views persisted in the Navy and War Departments. In 1909-1910, the War Department drafted plans for defeating a German attack and portrayed German economic expansion in Latin America and the Far East as well-planned moves that would produce war.⁴⁴ The contemporary view was that German economic penetration provided a foundation for future political, and ultimately military, hegemony.

From the very first stages of the Great War in Europe, Franklin Roosevelt and his family favored Britain and France. On August 2, 1914, the day before Germany declared war on France, and two days before German armies crossed the Belgian frontier and Britain declared war on Germany, Roosevelt stated his preference for the outcome of the war. He noted, “Rather than a long drawn-out struggle I hope England will join in and with France and Russia *force peace at Berlin!*”⁴⁵ Five days later, he added, “Everybody here feels that this country as a whole sympathizes with the allies against Germany.”⁴⁶ At home, Eleanor Roosevelt comforted her English and French domestic servants whose relatives in Europe had been called into military service.⁴⁷

Given the close relationship between the Roosevelts and the British embassy in Washington, D.C., Franklin Roosevelt’s enthusiasm for the British cause is not surprising. Roosevelt’s background further strengthened his affinity with Britain. Raised a staunch Episcopalian by parents who befriended English gentry during their visits to

⁴⁴ Daniel M. Smith, The Great Departure: The United States and World War I, 1914-1920 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 11.

⁴⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 2, 1914, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 246.

⁴⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 7, 1914, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 246.

⁴⁷ Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 202.

Europe, Roosevelt's extended kinship network of cousins stretched into Britain. In his immediate family, Eleanor Roosevelt had gone to school in England, and her father's older sister Anna, Auntie Bye, had lived in London as hostess for Franklin's half-brother James Roosevelt Roosevelt, the widowed first secretary of the U.S. embassy, when she met and married the American naval attaché there. James R. Roosevelt later remarried and lived in retirement with "his enchanting English second wife" as Sara Delano Roosevelt's Hyde Park neighbor.⁴⁸

While not as deeply rooted as their family ties with Britain, the Roosevelts displayed solid sympathy for France after 1914. To a certain extent, that sympathy derived from the fact that France was a British ally. On a more basic level, in 1914 Franklin Roosevelt had several Howland and Forbes relatives living in Paris. Family support for France, however, was by no means a foregone conclusion. For instance, Sara Delano Roosevelt described her sympathies during the Franco-Prussian War as having been "thoroughly German." In contrast, she recalled that at the time her father "was absolutely French." After 1914, however, she found no such differences of opinion in the family. By then, she had come to share her father's enthusiasm for the French cause and thought that everyone else in the United States did so as well between 1914 and 1918.⁴⁹

France, it seemed to the Roosevelts, possessed a new vitality in 1914 that the nation had lacked in the Franco-Prussian War. Clearly, the Roosevelts accepted the notion of a

⁴⁸ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. 115, 234; Joseph Alsop, FDR, 1882-1945: A Centenary Remembrance (New York: Viking Press, 1982), pp. 31, 40.

⁴⁹ Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorandum, July 24, 1931, p. 10, Delano I, Genealogy, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

spirit of popular patriotism motivating French actions. Franklin Roosevelt's aunt, Dora Delano Forbes, a resident of Paris, expressed admiration for the French fighting spirit and the "sacred union" proclaimed by President Poincaré. In a letter to her nephew written one month after the outbreak of the war, she related that "it is wonderful to see the French[,] their current quiet patriotism united and with no factions now."⁵⁰ In April 1915, she wrote again following her visit to a French military hospital. She found that "it was distressing and pitiful to see the wounded and suffering, so many head and face and eye wounds. Great portions shot-away forever—It brings the horror very near[,] but there is not 'a word' of complaint[,] all want to get well to go back and fight again—"⁵¹

Although President Wilson had asked Americans to remain neutral in the European War, Roosevelt's ties to the British cause and sympathy for France made him apprehensive that he would be able to comply with the president's request. One night while dining with Ambassador Spring-Rice, Roosevelt realized that the German ambassador, Count von Bernstorff, was sitting at the next table. From the perspective of members of the administration, Bernstorff was "an affable though dangerous antagonist." State Department counselor and Secretary of State Robert Lansing recalled, "I felt that it was always necessary to be on my guard in talking with him and to be extremely cautious in whatever I said because I knew that he would take advantage of the least slip of the

⁵⁰ Dora Delano Forbes letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 3, 1914, Box 17, Folder 16 "Forbes, Dora Delano. 1892-1940," Correspondence: Family Members, Roosevelt Family Papers Donated by the Children, FDRL.

⁵¹ Dora Delano Forbes letter to Sara Delano Roosevelt, April 15, 1915, Box 17, Folder 16 "Forbes, Dora Delano. 1892-1940," Correspondence: Family Members, Roosevelt Family Papers Donated by the Children, FDRL.

tongue and utilize it later.”⁵² After the dinner Roosevelt commented, “I just *know* I shall do some awful unneutral thing before I get through!”⁵³

The widespread belief among progressives that Germany had aggressive designs in the western hemisphere made it difficult for them to be objective about United States neutrality despite Wilson’s appeal. Following the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, Theodore Roosevelt believed that “the German General Staff has carefully considered the question of hostilities with America” and suggested that their plans called for “the seizure of some of our great coast cities and the terrorization of those cities.”⁵⁴ Kinsman Franklin Roosevelt harbored similar fears of German aspirations in August 1914. Anxious about German naval activity and subversion, Franklin Roosevelt appraised, “The Germans may be doing more than we suspect.”⁵⁵ His wife Eleanor recalled the reports of German submarines along the coast and of one having landed its officers, and Sara Delano Roosevelt relayed that “the big gray building of the German Brothers across the river from Hyde Park (North of it) is full of ammunition.”⁵⁶

President Wilson not only feared that “something might happen on the high seas,” he also believed that German subversives were hard at work in the Western Hemisphere.

⁵² Robert Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1935; repr. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), p. 356.

⁵³ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, undated early 1915, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 267

⁵⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, America and the World War (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), pp. 119-20.

⁵⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 7, 1914, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 246.

⁵⁶ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 242; Sara Delano Roosevelt letter quoted in Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 203.

Wilson observed that German propagandists were in Mexico “fomenting strife and trouble between our countries.”⁵⁷ Recalling the mood in Washington, D.C. in 1916, Eleanor Roosevelt reflected that “there was a sense of impending disaster hanging over all of us.”⁵⁸

As the war in Europe continued, members of the Wilson administration began to fear increasingly widespread subversion by the Central Powers in the United States. In mid 1915, Wilson authorized the U.S. Navy to take over the operation of two German-owned radio transmitting stations in New Jersey and on Long Island.⁵⁹ At the same time, evidence received by the State Department from British sources implicated the Austro-Hungarian and German diplomatic missions in the United States with spying and fomenting strikes, forcing the recall of Ambassador Constantin Dumba and Germany’s military attachés.⁶⁰ Lansing believed that von Bernstorff, “a dangerous man” who “required constant watching,” was responsible for “handling various propaganda and activities launched by German agents in this country” but “was too clever to leave any proofs of his share in them.”⁶¹ Ambassador Jusserand warned Franklin Roosevelt in 1915 that because German subversion was “certainly even worse than the public knows, too

⁵⁷ Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), pp. 159, 186.

⁵⁸ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 242.

⁵⁹ Entry for June 28, 1915 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 100-1.

⁶⁰ Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980, tenth edition), pp. 582-3.

⁶¹ Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, pp. 357-8.

many precautions can not be taken.”⁶² In a cabinet meeting in early 1917, Wilson expressed his concern about German “plots” in Cuba and related a story from Ambassador Gerard. According to Wilson, the German foreign secretary, Gottlieb von Jagow, told Gerard that in the event that the United States entered the war against Germany that it would “find that there are 500,000 German reservists ready to take up arms for [their] mother country & you will have civil war.”⁶³ Wilson also surmised that Germany might find a pretext to seize a naval base in Cuba as a “most convenient” base for submarines to operate against the United States.⁶⁴ Later that year, following United States entry into the war, Wilson publicly accused Germany of having designs on the Americas and asserted that “their sinister and secret diplomacy has sought to take our very territory away from us.”⁶⁵

One product of the progressive American viewpoint was the increasing perception of the war in Europe as the struggle between two incompatible political philosophies. The logical extension of such a view was the belief that there could be no neutrals in modern, industrial struggles in the future. From early in the war, Theodore Roosevelt believed that

⁶² J. J. Jusserand to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 6, 1915, “Jusserand, J.J.”, Correspondence, Personal Files, Box 51, Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-20, FDRL.

⁶³ Entry for February 27, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 106.

⁶⁴ Woodrow Wilson to Robert Lansing, February 6, 1917, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, vol. 1, The World War: Period of American Neutrality (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 594.

⁶⁵ Woodrow Wilson message to Congress, December 4, 1917, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1926), p. xvi.

the war in Europe represented a political struggle with moral implications. He asserted that “if one side was right this country must throw its strength on the side which was right.” His niece recalled that “a neutral position was a difficult position for him to hold for any length of time.”⁶⁶

Increasingly, Woodrow Wilson also viewed the war as a global struggle between competing and diametrically opposed ideologies rather than as a military contest between European states. Although he had urged the American people to remain neutral, German treatment of Belgium “stirred his passionate indignation” and by 1916 Wilson seems to have chosen sides in favor of the Allies.⁶⁷ Rather than a war between states and alliance systems, immediately after the Great War, Wilson portrayed the conflict as

a war between systems of culture—the one system the aggressive system, using science without conscience, stripping learning of its moral restraints, and using every faculty of the human mind to do wrong to the whole race; the other system reminiscent of the high traditions of men . . . struggling toward the right and seeking above all things else to be free.⁶⁸

To American progressives the war in Europe took on Darwinian significance as a struggle between nations and ideologies. Franklin Roosevelt viewed military instruments of power only effective if they reflected national will and determination. He argued “that money[,] in spite of what the bankers say[,] is not an essential to the conduct of a war by

⁶⁶ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 231.

⁶⁷ Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him, p. 186; Woodrow Wilson’s comments at the municipal building, Turin, Italy, January 6, 1919 in Woodrow Wilson, International Ideals: Speeches and Addresses made during the President’s European Visit, December 14, 1918, to February 14, 1919 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), pp. 84-5.

⁶⁸ Woodrow Wilson Sorbonne speech, December 21, 1918 in International Ideals, p. 17.

a determined nation.”⁶⁹ From his perspective, a determined people would always be “able to find money with which to carry on war.”⁷⁰ The implication of his viewpoint was that the military power of governments that did not have the backing of their people would be fragile. Such governments would be unable to sustain a war against a resolute, democratic opponent.

III.

Franklin D. Roosevelt arrived in Washington in March 1913 to begin his duties as the assistant secretary of the navy. During the 1912 presidential campaign, Roosevelt had actively supported Woodrow Wilson’s election bid and impressed party leaders as being “a singularly attractive and honorable courageous young Democratic leader.”⁷¹ Prior to Wilson’s inauguration, Roosevelt had made it known that if asked to serve in the new administration that he preferred the post in the navy department that his distinguished cousin had held previously.⁷² For Roosevelt, however, the position of assistant secretary

⁶⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 2, 1914, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 239-40.

⁷⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 215.

⁷¹ Entry for March 6, 1913 in Josephus Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921, edited by E. David Cronon (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 4.

⁷² Entry for March 15, 1913 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 10. Prior to the nomination of Franklin Roosevelt as the assistant secretary of the navy, Daniels checked with the senators from New York State to see if he would be acceptable. Republican Senator Elihu Root cautioned Daniels that Theodore Roosevelt’s “fifth cousin (once removed in political affiliation) might have T.R. qualities” namely an insistence “about being the lead horse in any team.” Root observed, “Whenever a Roosevelt rides,

was not an end in itself. Roosevelt entered the administration imbued with the progressive spirit, displaying the drive and enthusiasm to accomplish “great work . . . for the public good.”⁷³

From the onset, the members of the Wilson administration had lofty ambitions. They were, according to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, “sincerely desirous of promoting the peace of the world and to that end they were prepared to lead or inaugurate movements that will result in hastening the day when war shall be ended.”⁷⁴ That is not to say, however, that the administration either ruled out the United States going to war or rejected any use of American military power. Early in his administration, Wilson delineated his position with respect to war, refusing to totally reject war as an instrument of national policy. He emphasized, “We must not have war except in an honorable way.”⁷⁵

Military preparedness directly supported the administration’s foreign policy goals, and Franklin Roosevelt quickly became one of the administration’s most consistent advocates for military preparedness. Roosevelt’s primary concern during the summer of 1914 was the readiness of the United States navy for war. Although Roosevelt expected German intrigue and subversion in the western hemisphere, he did not believe that the German military posed as much of a direct threat to the United States as the Japanese navy did.

he wishes to ride in front.” Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace—1910-1917 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 127.

⁷³ Entry for March 9, 1913 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 5-6.

⁷⁴ Entry for April 8, 1913 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 26.

⁷⁵ Entry for May 16, 1913 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 66.

Nevertheless, he did not want to take any chances. As the European capitals declared war in 1914, he confided to his wife that “it is *my* duty to keep the Navy in a position where no chances, even the most remote, are taken.”⁷⁶

To counter the “political and sectional” pressures to divide the fleet between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in the summer and fall of 1914, Roosevelt enlisted the assistance of Admiral Alfred T. Mahan and Theodore Roosevelt. Answering his nephew’s request for articles, Theodore Roosevelt replied, “All right! I will do that. I will get at it as soon as possible.”⁷⁷ Franklin Roosevelt confided to Mahan, “I wish it were possible to speak quite frankly, and in public, about the excess of our danger in the Pacific over that in the Atlantic.”⁷⁸ Mahan complied with Roosevelt’s request, preparing an article for *North American Review* and providing an interview with the *Saturday Evening Post*. With the outbreak of war, Mahan warned the assistant secretary that “the war fever is extremely contagious” and advised, “I venture to submit that the fleet should be brought into immediate readiness, and so disposed as to permit of very rapid concentration, ready to proceed when desired.”⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Franklin D Roosevelt to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 2, 1914, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 239.

⁷⁷ Theodore Roosevelt to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 23, 1914, Elting E. Morison, ed., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. 7, The Days of Armageddon, 1909-1914 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 779.

⁷⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Alfred T. Mahan, May 28, 1914 and July 17, 1914, Correspondence Box 53, “Mahan, Alfred T.,” Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

⁷⁹ Alfred T. Mahan to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 31 and August 3, 1914, Correspondence Box 53, “Mahan, Alfred T.,” Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

Mahan's attitudes toward the belligerent powers mirrored Roosevelt's own thinking. "As I see it," Mahan confessed during the first week of the war, "all our interests favor British success." Two weeks later, Mahan wrote to Roosevelt again because, Mahan admitted, he knew "no one else in the Administration to whom I should care to write." The admiral offered, "My own sympathies have been strongly against Germany, because I have believed her definitely the state responsible for the general war." He added, however, that he loved "fair play" and detected "disingenuousness" in the Japanese actions in the Pacific.⁸⁰

In addition to the clamor to split the fleet, in early 1915 domestic pressures to cut the federal budget threatened the level of military readiness that Roosevelt sought. In response to those pressures, President Wilson considered cutting at least one battleship from the navy and reducing the budget of the War Department to five million dollars.⁸¹ In that climate, military expansion seemed unlikely at best. Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels recalled that "at first against odds" he and his assistant secretary labored to attain the goal of their three-year program of 1915, to have the strongest navy in the world. Of Roosevelt, Daniels observed, "There was nothing in naval efficiency that did not command his interest."⁸²

The budget threat to his preparedness program in 1915 forced Franklin Roosevelt to elaborate clearly and to present his ideas about military, particularly naval and aeronautic,

⁸⁰ Alfred T. Mahan to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 4 and 18, 1914, Correspondence Box 53, "Mahan, Alfred T.," Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

⁸¹ Entry for January 22, 1915 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 91.

⁸² Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace—1910-1917 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 129.

preparedness. He responded to the situation in a distinctly progressive manner by taking the issue to the people. Admiral Mahan having passed away in the fall of 1914, Roosevelt wrote a series of articles between 1915 and the spring of 1917. Writings by his kinsman Theodore Roosevelt once again lent credence to his views. The intent of the articles was to protect the existing size of the U.S. Navy and also generate support for further increases in tonnage. In his first article, Franklin Roosevelt appealed to the “people of the country [who] are beginning to take an intelligent interest in a reasonable preparation against any sudden or unwarranted attack.” Although he considered the battleship “the backbone of a fleet,” he argued for the creation of a balanced force that also included scouting vessels, aircraft, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and supply ships. Roosevelt warned that the United States was “far behind other nations,” particularly in scout vessels and aircraft. To highlight that deficiency and the danger that it posed to the United States, he noted that during a recent war game held by the navy, an “attacking fleet,” by implication the German Imperial Navy, eluded the defending naval force and made a successful landing in the Chesapeake Bay.⁸³

Theodore Roosevelt took a similar tack in an article intended to sway “our congressmen and, above all, our people,” arguing that with the U.S. Navy there had been “a great falling off relatively to other nations” under the Wilson administration. He too advocated a balanced fleet, built over the next two to three years that included not only “cruisers and great fighting craft” but also submarines, destroyers, and “air-ships.” He asserted, “The navy of the United States is the right arm of the United States and is

⁸³ Franklin D. Roosevelt article, “War at Sea and its Weapons,” published September 27, 1915, Writing and Statement File, Box 40, Folder 5, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

emphatically the peacemaker.” After citing the efficiency of German cruiser and submarine operations during the first year of the war, Theodore Roosevelt expressed his opinion that army forts constituted an ineffective defense and that the navy was not prepared to accomplish the offensive operations vital for the defense of the continental United States.⁸⁴

In the articles that followed, Franklin Roosevelt and his kinsman pursued three consistent themes that built upon their initial arguments. The first was the primacy of the navy. Taking a cue from the former president’s article, Franklin Roosevelt commented that “the average citizen has come to realize that the primary safety of the nation rests with the Navy.”⁸⁵ He further declared the army’s system of coastal defenses to be inadequate and asserted that the “country need have nothing to fear” if the navy is equipped in the correct proportions.⁸⁶ In addition, Theodore Roosevelt added that the first step necessary to mitigate disaster and prevent future wartime disgrace would be for the United States to “immediately strengthen its navy and provide for its steady training.”⁸⁷ His perspective, shared by his younger “cousin,” was that military preparedness served

⁸⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, “Our Peacemaker, The Navy,” in America and the World War (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), pp. 164-7, 171, 173.

⁸⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt article, “Memorandum on the Relation of the Navy to the Farmer,” September 7, 1916, Writing and Statement File, Box 40, Folder 5, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁸⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt article, undated, “Since the commencement of the Great War in Europe . . . ,” Writing and Statement File, Box 40, Folder 5, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁸⁷ Theodore Roosevelt, America and the World War (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), p. xiv.

two purposes. It served both as “a partial insurance” to prevent the outbreak of war and as “a partial guarantee that if war comes” the nation “will certainly escape dishonor.”⁸⁸

Franklin Roosevelt’s second major theme was that “comprehensive and modern plans” drawn up by professionals would correct the “dangerously weakened condition” of American defenses.⁸⁹ He asserted that men such as he “have lately realized . . . the shortcomings of our preparation.” Citing science and the “facts” of “the profession of war on land and sea,” he claimed that it was imperative that “the aeronautic arms of the Army and Navy be increased . . . a hundredfold.”⁹⁰ Several months later, he propounded that only “partisans or narrow-minded-specialists” would dispute his position on aeronautic matters. As “the first practical step” toward progressive efficiency, he favored a program of national defense based on “all the scientific knowledge of military experts.”⁹¹

Roosevelt further urged the American people to accept the scientific naval construction program proposed by professionals and authorities such as himself, rather than give credence to the speculations of laymen, the “cranks” as well as “well-meaning people” who lack “sufficient knowledge,” about the needs of “scientific warfare.”⁹² In Theodore

⁸⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, “Preparedness Against War,” in America and the World War, p. 174.

⁸⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt article, “Memorandum on the Relation of the Navy to the Farmer,” September 7, 1916, Writing and Statement File, Box 40, Folder 5, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁹⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt article, “For September [1915] Number of ‘Flying’,” Box 40, Folder 6, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁹¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt article for “Aerial Age Weekly,” March 1916, Box 40, Folder 8, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

⁹² Franklin D. Roosevelt article, undated, “Since the commencement of the Great War in Europe . . .,” Writing and Statement File, Box 40, Folder 5, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

Roosevelt's writings, "incompetents" such as Secretary of State Bryan and Secretary of the Navy Daniels received particular scorn. The former president predicted that their actions like the actions of many political appointees before them, "the clergymen, college president's, editors, and humanitarians," would result in military disaster. As a remedy, he urged that Congress "summon before its committees the best naval experts and provide the battleships, cruisers, submarines, floating mines, and aircraft that these experts declare to be necessary for the full protection of the United States."⁹³ In private, Franklin Roosevelt had expressed similar views about the secretaries of state and the navy. He confided, "These dear good people like W.J.B. and J.D. have as much conception of what a general European war means as Elliott has of higher mathematics."⁹⁴

The third theme centered on the belief that naval service improved citizenship. Men that enlisted in the navy, Franklin Roosevelt suggested, returned home "in every way better citizens than when they went in -- physically stronger, mentally more alert, and in general cleaner and finer specimens of American manhood."⁹⁵ His cousin Theodore agreed. The former Rough Rider and president observed that military service provided young men the opportunity to develop the habits that would enable them to efficiently perform their "civic duties in a free democracy" and thereby "increase our social and

⁹³ Theodore Roosevelt, "Preparedness Against War," in America and the World War, pp. 182, 201-3, 206-8.

⁹⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 2, 1914, quoted in Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 202.

⁹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt article, "Memorandum on the Relation of the Navy to the Farmer," September 7, 1916, Writing and Statement File, Box 40, Folder 5, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

industrial efficiency.” Theodore Roosevelt noted, however, that the military service and preparedness that he advocated was not “militarism” but efficiency for the well being of the nation.⁹⁶ Franklin Roosevelt made a similar distinction between militarism and progressive efficiency, placing himself among the far-sighted men who advocated the later course. For example, in an effort to preserve naval service and preparedness after the Great War, he explained to an audience, “I’m not the least bit, as you know, of a militarist, but I believe that we’ve got to tell the truth to the country—”⁹⁷

Franklin Roosevelt’s advocacy of military preparedness in 1915, furthermore, taught him the political significance of such an approach. By late 1915, switching from his earlier position favoring reduction of the battleship fleet, Wilson began urging increases in the army and navy, seeking support among Democrats for his policies toward the war in Europe. No doubt, Theodore Roosevelt’s attacks against Wilson’s preparedness record accounted for part of Wilson’s reversal from his previous stand. The position that Wilson took, however, also allowed him to overcome Bryan’s influence in the Democratic Party. Bryan had warned of the danger of military preparations, to which Wilson countered, “We have in mind to be prepared, but not for war, but only for defense.” Solely with the preparedness issue, Wilson, by February 1916, had established primacy among the Democrats, winning the support of all but two Democratic Senators and over three-quarters of the Democrats in the House.⁹⁸ Wilson had used the issue to place himself in a

⁹⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, “Preparedness Against War,” in America and the World War, pp. 183, 210.

⁹⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt speech at St. Stephen’s Church, Lynn, Massachusetts, April 11, 1920, Master Speech File Number 118, FDRL.

⁹⁸ John Milton Cooper, Jr., The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1983), pp. 297-9.

powerful position for the coming presidential campaign. His secretary recalled that by “demanding preparedness,” Wilson “had cleverly outwitted his enemies,” namely “the pacifists whose feelings had been nurtured by Bryan” and the Republican Party, to win a resounding victory in the 1916 campaign.⁹⁹

Franklin Roosevelt certainly recognized the significance of the election of 1916. In the election, Wilson received nearly three million popular votes over his tally of 1912. The campaign was also significant because it created a Democratic coalition that included nearly all independent progressives, many leaders of the Progressive Party repudiating Theodore Roosevelt for Wilson and the left wing of the progressive movement joining Wilson’s ranks en masse. Significantly, the campaign resulted in the Democratic Party becoming the advocate of domestic reform and produced the fusion of progressivism with the peace issue.¹⁰⁰ Although early returns predicted a Republican victory, Wilson’s election demonstrated in Franklin Roosevelt’s mind “that the American people cannot always be bought.” In 1916, he declared Election Day to have been “the most extraordinary day” in his life.¹⁰¹ On a more personal level, the 1916 campaign marked a deeper appreciation for the primacy of domestic politics and the growing influence of Woodrow Wilson on Franklin Roosevelt as well.

IV.

⁹⁹ Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), pp. 240-1, 247.

¹⁰⁰ William A. and Arthur S. Link, American Epoch: A History of the United States Since 1900, Vol. 1, War, Reform, and Society, 1900-1945 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), pp. 112-4.

¹⁰¹ Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 205.

The Great War in Europe provoked controversy in Washington, D.C. over the direction that United States policy should take. Twenty years later, Eleanor Roosevelt suggested that the controversy reflected “differences between Theodore Roosevelt’s philosophy and that of President Wilson and his Administration in general.”¹⁰² The conflict, however, was not drawn along the neat, partisan lines that she recalled. Clearly, Woodrow Wilson did not accept the necessity of United States intervention in the war until April 1917. Prior to that time, he gradually came to appreciate the view that a decisive German victory in Europe, although unlikely, would represent a danger to the United States. Although he justified greater expenditures on the navy and army after late 1915, his goal was to avert trouble on the high seas and protect American economic interests in the Western Hemisphere. Sympathetic to the Allied cause, he believed that benevolent neutrality on the part of the United States would check the spread of war and military autocracy across the Atlantic. Wilson’s advisor Edward M. House, who went by the honorary title of colonel, initially advised maintaining United States neutrality. By mid 1915, however, Colonel House recommended a policy of strong opposition to Germany, even at the risk of war. In contrast, from the onset of the war, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan favored pursuing United States neutrality as a moral example to the world so that the administration might eventually be able to mediate the struggle and restore peace.¹⁰³

¹⁰² [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 230.

¹⁰³ Smith, The Great Departure, pp. 16-7, 21-7.

Opposition to the policy of benevolent, pro-Allied neutrality pursued by Wilson came from several quarters and increased after the sinking of the passenger liner *Lusitania* by a German submarine in May 1915. German actions, particularly the invasion of neutral Belgium, embellished by an effective British propaganda organization, enabled American newspapermen and other influential Americans, many of them Rhodes scholars, to convey British views to a shocked American public. For its part, the skeptical American public generally came to accept as fact most British fabrications of German atrocities, particularly stories of German soap factories that used human corpses, of a crucified Canadian, and of Belgian babies with their hands cut off.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, fully in touch with the British and French views, Franklin Roosevelt saw it as unfortunate that the American people displayed “a singular unwillingness” to accept fully all official British and French accounts of German atrocities and wanton destruction.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, some German military actions needed no embellishment from pro-Allied spokesmen to shock the American public. The brutality of submarine warfare, aerial bombardment, and the employment of poison gas seemed to go beyond the accepted bounds of civilized warfare and shook progressive faith in legal restraints on German barbarity. German strategic bombing provides a case in point. In late August 1914, amid reports of German Zeppelin raids on Antwerp, the editors of *The New York Times* predicted that “the German military authorities would hesitate long before deciding to

¹⁰⁴ Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980, tenth edition), pp. 566-7.

¹⁰⁵ Entry for July 30, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

repeat over London the performance that has terrorized Antwerp.”¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, German actions soon proved their predictions wrong. In January 1915, German Zeppelins initiated a strategic bombing campaign against Britain and particularly against London. The Zeppelin raids continued for the next two and a half years until German fixed-wing bombers took over the campaign.¹⁰⁷ Consistently, the eastern press called for a stronger United States response to those outrages.

In the press and in public, one of the fiercest critics of the Wilson administration in late 1914 and 1915 was Theodore Roosevelt. Because the former president considered the German invasion of neutral Belgium a “breach of international morality,” he attacked the administration for allowing “our own selfish ease” to prevent the United States from fulfilling its “explicit obligations to small neutral nations when they are deeply wronged.” The apparent timidity of President Wilson drew Roosevelt’s particular criticism and hostility, and he maintained that diplomatic action by the administration in late July 1914 “might possibly have resulted in either putting a stop to the war or in localizing and narrowly circumscribing its area.” Roosevelt saw the war in Europe as “terrible and evil” but believed that the United States had to take a stand.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, he damned

¹⁰⁶ “Why Zeppelins Will Not Attack London,” The New York Times, August 31, 1914, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ Larry H. Addington, Patterns of War Since the Eighteenth Century, second edition (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 152.

¹⁰⁸ John Milton Cooper, Jr., The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1983), pp. 280-5.

Wilson and his policies with the comment, “Dante reserved a special place of infamy in the inferno for those base angels who dared side neither with evil nor with good.”¹⁰⁹

From Theodore Roosevelt’s perspective, the struggle in Europe was a timeless one that pitted the forces of reaction and autocracy against the peaceful and democratic aspirations of the people. German ideology and actions convinced him that Imperial Germany represented autocracy. Roosevelt reaffirmed his affection for German patriots such as Gerhard von Scharnhorst and the soldier-poet Theodor Körner, and noted, “As regards Germany, my stand is for the real interest of the mass of the German people.” Roosevelt believed that ninety per cent of the German people lived in fear, oppressed by a Prussian autocracy that numbered less than ten per cent of the population. Peace was not possible with Imperial Germany, he contended, because of the Prussian aristocracy’s acceptance of an ideology that recognized no international morality, only force. He considered German actions in Belgium in 1914-15 to be analogous to Turrene’s brutal treatment of the Palatinate, Oliver Cromwell’s conquest of Ireland, and Napoleon’s despotism in Spain, Prussia, and throughout the German states. Roosevelt believed that France, faced with such a threat, acted rightly in 1914 by taking a stand against Germany. Roosevelt conceived the war in Europe as being part of the broader history of men struggling for progress and liberty, and he thought that the war might ultimately result in the growth of democracy in Europe.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, America and the World War (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), p. xi.

¹¹⁰ Theodore Roosevelt, “The Belgian Tragedy,” “Preparedness Against War,” and “Utopia or Hell?,” in America and the World War (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), pp. 17, 20, 22-3, 25, 37, 39, 200, 232-3; Theodore Roosevelt letter to Hugo Münsterberg, October 3, 1914, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. 8, The Service

Clearly Roosevelt believed that he had a responsibility to criticize Wilson's policy toward the war. Wilson's failure to take a firmer stand, Roosevelt thought, not only reflected timidity but also might result in the defeat of the forces of democracy and progress. He commented, "I regard the Wilson-Bryan attitude of trusting to fantastic peace treaties, to impossible promises, to all kinds of scraps of paper without any backing in efficient force, as abhorrent."¹¹¹

Significant opposition to Wilson's policy also existed within the administration itself. Much of that opposition coalesced around Robert Lansing, the counselor of the State Department. Wilson's response to the sinking of the *Lusitania* prompted the resignation of William Jennings Bryan in June 1915, and Lansing replaced Bryan as the secretary of state. Although recognizing that "chief officials" of the administration and leading members of Congress favored continuing neutrality, Lansing believed that the United States must "be prepared to risk everything" to prevent either Germany winning or breaking even. The German government, he believed, was "utterly hostile to all nations with democratic institutions." Evidence of German agents in Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribbean convinced Lansing that Germany hoped to paralyze the United States into inaction in the event of another *Lusitania* outrage; he concluded "democracy throughout the world is threatened." Lansing further believed that in a negotiated settlement, one in which Germany would be allowed "to break even," Germany would use the opportunity to prepare with "its usual vigor and thoroughness" to resume "its attack on democracy" in

He Can Render, Ed., Elting E. Morison (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 822-4.

¹¹¹ Theodore Roosevelt letter to Hugo Münsterberg, October 3, 1914, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. 8, The Service He Can Render, Ed., Elting E. Morison (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 824.

the future. In the meantime, he believed it essential that American public opinion “be prepared for the time . . . when we will have to cast aside our neutrality and become one of the champions of democracy.”¹¹²

In addition to Lansing, other officials in the Wilson Administration held views comparable to those of the new secretary of state. Among those in the State Department and foreign service that were strongly pro-Ally and believed that German victory endangered the United States were William Phillips and Frank L. Polk.¹¹³ Franklin Roosevelt also shared their views. It seems natural that he would, particularly since the views of his two friends coincided with those of his cousin Theodore Roosevelt. Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt described Assistant Secretary of State William Phillips and his wife Caroline as “intimate friends” and “old friends of ours.” The two men attended Harvard together, and Eleanor had known the former Caroline Astor Drayton since her visits to St. Moritz as a youth.¹¹⁴ During the Roosevelt’s honeymoon in 1905, Frank Polk sailed with Franklin and Eleanor across the Atlantic. In Washington, the Roosevelts came to know Frank Polk, the counselor of the State Department, and his wife Livy quite well.¹¹⁵ Working in close proximity in the old State, War, and Navy Building, Franklin

¹¹² Memorandum entitled “Consideration and Outline of Policies,” July 11, 1915, reprinted in Robert Lansing, The War Memoirs of Robert Lansing (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1970), pp. 19-21.

¹¹³ Smith, The Great Departure, p. 21.

¹¹⁴ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. 76, 198-9, 223, 239; Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, July 14, 1914 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, pp. 222-3.

¹¹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to Sara Delano Roosevelt, June 11, 1905 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 7; Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 233.

Roosevelt's friendship with Phillips and Polk brought him into personal contact with Lansing and his views.

As early as August 1915, Roosevelt and Lansing seem to have shared similar views about United States policy and the war in Europe. Franklin Roosevelt's wife and mother expressed similar attitudes as well. Roosevelt met with Secretary Lansing two days after a German submarine apparently torpedoed the liner *Arabic*. Although President Wilson wanted to postpone taking any action until all of the details had been ascertained, Roosevelt noted, "I personally doubt if I should be so polite."¹¹⁶ Eleanor Roosevelt declared the incident "An outrage" and wondered "whether there are to be more words or action of some sort over the Arabic." Sara Delano Roosevelt related to her son, "I feel a little as T.R. feels, in fact a good deal." She added that "one thing" Wilson "must remember—the time for dealings with German criminals is over. Diplomatic relations with Germany are henceforth impossible."¹¹⁷ A couple days later, Lansing wrote the president expressing his opinion that the usefulness of the United States "in the restoration of peace would certainly not be lessened by a state of war between this country and Germany, and it might even be increased."¹¹⁸ Although Lansing considered the severance of diplomatic relations, Wilson's methods seemed to triumph, and the

¹¹⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, August 21, 1915 in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, p. 283.

¹¹⁷ Letters by Eleanor Roosevelt and Sara Delano Roosevelt quoted in Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, pp. 204-5.

¹¹⁸ Letter from Robert Lansing to Woodrow Wilson, August 24, 1915, reprinted in Robert Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1935; 1970 reprint ed.), p. 45.

German government yielded to United States representations, offering to pay an indemnity and assuring that further attacks against passenger liners would not occur.¹¹⁹

V.

In January 1917, the situation in Europe seemed bleak and prospects for peace increasingly remote. From Berlin Ambassador Gerard reported the “most depressing” mood. He observed, “All hands seem cross.” Gerard relayed that the Kaiser had stated “that he did not expect peace now” and believed that Germany would defeat any major British offensive in the spring. Gerard sketched a picture of total military control in Germany that subverted all vestiges of liberalism in the government. He appraised that the Imperial German supreme commander Field Marshal Paul von Beneckendorff und Hindenburg “was the real ruler of Germany.” According to Gerard’s sources, the Kaiser “was losing his mind” and, having been reduced to little more than a figurehead, “spent all his time praying and learning Hebrew.” In addition, Hindenburg supposedly “censored” any remarks by Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg and had his spies watching Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz. Gerard also noted that “the Germans are violating all the pledges in Belgium” and have instituted “an absolute reign of terror” marked by “Sudden and arbitrary arrests,” deportations, and confiscation of food. He related that Hindenburg’s chief of staff General Erich Ludendorff had demanded the German actions in Belgium as “a military measure.” Assessing the possibility of Germany resuming submarine warfare, Gerard believed that Hindenburg controlled that

¹¹⁹ Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980, tenth edition), pp. 580-1.

policy and that he might resort to “reckless submarine war” to offset the impact of “any substantial defeats in the field.”¹²⁰

At the end of January 1917, the Wilson administration received word that Germany would resume unrestricted submarine warfare in February in the war zone around the British Isles. Contemplating the German message, Wilson feared that it would lead to war. He told his secretary, “The break that we have tried so hard to prevent now seems inevitable.”¹²¹ Secretary of State Lansing believed that if Germany adopted a policy “to renew unrestricted submarine warfare” that all hope for a constructive dialogue that might lead to peace would “vanish.” Lansing thought that unless the United States took “a strong position” that the German government would only be encouraged “to act with ruthlessness.” In response to “the danger which seems imminent,” Lansing asserted “that the wisest course is to adopt a firm and uncompromising position as to the right of merchant vessels to arm for defense.”¹²²

Considering the decision of the German government to resume unrestricted submarine warfare, Lansing noted, “If our people only realized the insatiable greed of those German autocrats at Berlin and their sinister purpose to dominate the world, we would be at war today.” The defeat of the Allies, he believed, “would mean the triumph of Autocracy over

¹²⁰ Robert Lansing to Woodrow Wilson, February 23, 1917 with enclosure James Watson Gerard to Robert Lansing, January 3, 1916[1917], The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 40, November 20, 1916—January 23, 1917, Arthur S. Link, et. al., editors (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 664-555.

¹²¹ Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), pp. 254-255.

¹²² Robert Lansing to Woodrow Wilson, January 31, 1917, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, vol. 1, The World War: Period of American Neutrality (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), pp. 581-2. Hereafter cited as The Lansing Papers.

Democracy.” His perspective convinced him that it was a matter of time before the United States would be “in this war against the Kaiser and his military gang who rule over Germany.”¹²³ Lansing also believed that “the establishment of democratic institutions throughout the world . . . would be impossible if Prussian militarism after the war controlled Germany.”¹²⁴

On February 3, 1917, Wilson severed diplomatic relations with Germany. His administration, however, was less certain as to what subsequent steps should be taken.¹²⁵ In a cabinet meeting on February 2, Wilson had “said that he didn’t wish to see either side win” but had contrasted German brutality toward neutrals with British confiscations of “property.” According to Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, the president expressed his desire “to see the neutrals unite” but acknowledged that it “would put some of the small powers in a delicate position.” Wilson concluded “that nothing should be done now,” preferring to wait for “the ‘overt act’ by Germany” which would enable him to ask Congress for the power to respond.¹²⁶

During cabinet meetings in February, the debate turned to whether the United States should convoy or arm its merchant ships. Daniels apparently argued against convoying and in favor of dispersion. Determined to avoid “any act that would look like hostility” to

¹²³ Robert Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1935; 1970 reprint ed.), pp. 208-9.

¹²⁴ Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, p. 214.

¹²⁵ Robert Lansing to Woodrow Wilson, February 2, 1917, The Lansing Papers, vol. 1, pp. 591-2.

¹²⁶ Franklin K. Lane to George Whitfield Lane, February 9, 1917, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 41, January 24—April 6, 1917 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 183-4.

Germany, Wilson decided against convoying because it represented “a double” hazard that endangered not only the merchant ships but also risked an engagement between escorting American warships and German submarines. The president authorized a statement telling ship owners “that they *might* arm” their ships but believed that the United States government could not provide “guns and gunners” unless it received “new power from Congress.”¹²⁷

In January 1917, craving action, Roosevelt had taken an inspection tour of San Domingo and Haiti. Eleanor Roosevelt viewed her husband’s visit to Haiti, an island not entirely pacified by the Marines, as an effort to “do something with the spice of risk in it.”¹²⁸ During that tour, he suddenly received a cable notifying him that Ambassador von Bernstorff had been given his papers. The cable also requested Roosevelt’s immediate return to Washington. Roosevelt had expected that the summons marked an end to the procrastination and indecision that he perceived in Wilson’s policies. He was mistaken. Roosevelt later commented, “When I returned to the capital I expected to see the nation mobilized for military action. Frankly, I was astonished to see that we were apparently doing nothing.”¹²⁹

Upon his return to Washington Roosevelt found an impasse and immediately sought a solution that would enable the administration to adopt a policy of armed neutrality in a

¹²⁷ Franklin K. Lane to George Whitfield Lane, February 9, 1917, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 41, January 24—April 6, 1917 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 183-4 and entry for February 25, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 105.

¹²⁸ Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 206.

¹²⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt speech at Chautauqua, New York, August 30, 1919, Master Speech File Number 101, FDRL.

matter of days. Apparently taking a cue from the arguments of his uncle James Russell Soley for pursuing armed neutrality under executive order rather than Congressional authorization, Roosevelt prepared a memorandum that he requested Daniels forward to Wilson. Roosevelt asserted “that an intolerable situation is beginning to arise” because the only suitable guns were in the hands of the government, and ships would not leave port unless they had protection. He confessed that some guns could be “condemned” and sold as obsolete but rejected that “subterfuge” based on the age and quality of the suitable 6-inch guns in the U.S. Navy inventory. Roosevelt, instead, advocated loaning the guns to the ship owners. He asserted, “Under the law, however, guns may be *loaned* provided a suitable bond be given.” Roosevelt envisioned that with presidential authorization armed merchant ships “could be made ready to sail” after as little as “four or five days’ work.”¹³⁰

Roosevelt’s arguments seemed to have swayed Wilson’s thinking but not as far as Roosevelt hoped. At the time Wilson, House, and Lansing favored pursuing a policy of armed neutrality similar to that of Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, and Austria during the Revolutionary War, of the Baltic powers during the Napoleonic Wars, and of the United States against France in 1798. On February 23, the cabinet debated arming merchant ships and whether such a course required Congressional authorization. After the

¹³⁰ Josephus Daniels to Woodrow Wilson, February 10, 1917, and enclosure Franklin D. Roosevelt to Daniels, February 10, 1917, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 41, January 24—April 6, 1917 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 189-90.

meeting Daniels assessed a shift in the president's thinking. He noted that "Wilson believed that he had that authority but wished the power of Congress behind him."¹³¹

On February 26, 1917, Wilson appeared before a joint session of Congress and asked for the power to arm merchant ships. Wilson argued that "there may be no recourse but to *armed* neutrality, which we shall know how to maintain and for which there is abundant American precedent."¹³² Although the House of Representatives voted 403 to 14 to approve Wilson's request, a filibuster by twelve Senators blocked Wilson's request for Congressional authorization. Congress adjourned without action on March 4. Wilson's advisor Colonel House bitterly noted that a "small band of Senators" had used "the arbitrary rules of the Senate to defeat the wishes of the majority." In progressive terms, Wilson characterized his political opponents in the Senate as a "little group of willful men" who represented "no opinion but their own."¹³³

After his bid in Congress failed, Wilson ordered the arming of merchant ships under his executive authority. On March 6, Wilson called on the Navy Department to discuss "arming ships." Several days later, Wilson met with Daniels at the White House. Wilson

¹³¹ Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace—1910-1917 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 594. The argument for armed neutrality as an alternative to war was laid out by European historian Carlton Joseph Huntley Hayes. See Edward M. House to Woodrow Wilson, February 8, 1917 with enclosure, and Robert Lansing to Wilson, February 10, 1917, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 41, January 24—April 6, 1917 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 164-7, 185.

¹³² Woodrow Wilson address to a Joint Session of Congress, February 26, 1917, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 41, January 24—April 6, 1917 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 283-7.

¹³³ Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926), pp. 454-8 and Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace—1910-1917 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), pp. 594-5.

related that he had decided to arm the ships but “wished it all kept quiet.” Daniels, no doubt assisted by Roosevelt, had the regulations already prepared and ready for the president’s approval.¹³⁴ Due to Wilson’s reluctance to make any public announcement that might provoke the German government, on March 12 the State Department notified the embassies and legations in Washington that the United States “determined to place upon all American merchant vessels...an armed guard for the protection of the vessels and the lives of the persons on board.”¹³⁵ On March 13, after reviewing the final orders with Roosevelt, Daniels sent them to the president, secretary of state, and attorney general for their approval. Daniels implementing instructions to the U.S. Navy officers commanding the armed contingent on each merchant ship also admonished them “not to mention a word of your instructions.”¹³⁶

Although consistent with Wilson’s intent, the secret orders presumably lacked the public resolve that Lansing and Roosevelt favored. In March 1917, fearing that Wilson would “maintain his policy of inaction,” Lansing outlined his thoughts in a memorandum to the president and Lansing argued for a declaration of war against Germany, the “enemy of liberalism.” Such a public declaration, Lansing believed “would give moral

¹³⁴ Entries for March 6 and 8, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 109-110.

¹³⁵ Department of State to the Argentine Embassy, March 12, 1917, File No. 763.72/3541a, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917, Supplement 1, The World War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 171.

¹³⁶ Entry for March 12, 1917 in the Diary of Josephus Daniels, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 41, January 24—April 6, 1917 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 403.

support to the Entente Powers” and “put heart into the democratic element in Germany, who are already beginning to speak boldly and show their teeth at their rulers.”¹³⁷

In response to the inaction Roosevelt perceived, he candidly expressed his views both with members of the administration and with the administration’s most vocal critics. In conversations with Colonel House in March 1917, Roosevelt attributed the “principal weakness of [the] Navy” to the procrastination of Secretary Daniels and his refusal to let the department “make plans with France and England and study their methods.”¹³⁸

Roosevelt also felt comfortable debating the merits of the administration’s policies toward Germany among a circle of Republican critics that included Elihu Root, General Leonard Wood, J. P. Morgan, and Theodore Roosevelt. At one such meeting in early March 1917, the position that Franklin Roosevelt took is clear; he advocated a more vigorous course for American policy than Wilson followed and demanded further increases in the army and navy. He noted in his diary, “I backed T.R.’s theory.”¹³⁹ Later that same month, Roosevelt also defended General Wood’s public criticism that “America could be taken” because it “had no army and no navy to defend itself.”¹⁴⁰

To his credit, Roosevelt also brought up his views with Secretary Daniels and President Wilson. In February and March 1917, Roosevelt hoped to improve the readiness of the navy for a war that he believed the United States might to soon enter.

¹³⁷ Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, pp. 233-5.

¹³⁸ Entries for March 6 and 11, 1917, Diary 1917, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

¹³⁹ Entry for March 11, 1917, Diary 1917, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

¹⁴⁰ Entry for March 23, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 120.

Military preparedness, he believed, would not automatically lead to war.¹⁴¹ Following a brief tour of East Coast facilities, Roosevelt noted, “Told J.D. things not satisfactory [in] Boston and worse [in] N.Y.” Unfortunately, from Roosevelt’s perspective, “He said nothing.” In addition to inertia in the readiness for war of the U.S. Navy, the administration was still in the process of drafting presidential instructions to arm merchantmen to implement the policy of armed neutrality that Roosevelt advocated. Roosevelt hoped that the president would take action without “equivocation.”¹⁴²

Briefly serving as acting secretary with Daniels out of town, Roosevelt requested an appointment with the president to urge a higher level of preparedness. Roosevelt hoped to get the Atlantic Fleet into port in order to bring it to peak efficiency and to prevent German submarines from being able to sink the battleships at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. An “enthusiastic” Roosevelt carried his “plea into high – very high circles.” “In fact,” he recalled, “I went all the way to the top.” Wilson, however, refused Roosevelt’s request. Nevertheless, Wilson’s reasons for apparent inaction seemed to have left an impression on Roosevelt, and, after meeting with the president, he came to view Wilson’s efforts as intentional and studied rather than equivocating. Wilson commented that such a move might be seen as “an act of war,” precisely the kind of signal that he consciously wanted to avoid sending. Roosevelt related that Wilson told him, “I want history to show not only that we have tried every diplomatic means to keep out of the war; to show that the

¹⁴¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt speech at Chautauqua, New York, August 30, 1919, Master Speech File Number 101, FDRL.

¹⁴² Entries for March 9 and 11, 1917, FDR’s Diary, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

war has been forced upon us deliberately by Germany, but also that we have come into the court of history with clean hands.”¹⁴³

VI.

The United States entered the Great War in April 1917. Woodrow Wilson’s message to Congress on April 2, 1917 reflected his thoughts about the nature of the war and his perspective of the German government and people. On that occasion, Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war and made a clear distinction between the German people and their government. He asserted that the United States had “no quarrel with the German people” and that the American attitude toward them was one of “sympathy and friendship.” Furthermore, although the German government waged what he considered “warfare against mankind,” Wilson made it clear that he believed that the Kaiser’s government had acted on its own “impulse” not the popular will. As Wilson saw it, the

¹⁴³ Franklin D. Roosevelt speech at Chautauqua, New York, August 30, 1919, Master Speech File Number 101, FDRL. Edward M. House to Woodrow Wilson, February 13, 1917, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 41, January 24—April 6, 1917 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 214-5. Frank Friedel argues that in 1941 Roosevelt found himself in a position similar to Wilson’s and was “reluctant to take the final steps to bring the nation into war.” Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), p. 29. My assessment is that Roosevelt took a different lesson from Wilson’s 1917 actions. Rather than seek to avoid war as Wilson had done by not doing anything that somehow might be construed as antagonistic, Roosevelt followed the prescription offered by his uncle James Russell Soley. Far from leading directly to war, Roosevelt believed that more advanced naval preparations and the implementation of a policy of armed neutrality might enable the United States to avoid entering the European War against Germany.

fight was not only “for the ultimate peace of the world” but also to bring about “the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included.”¹⁴⁴

With an American declaration of war, Theodore Roosevelt’s public criticism of the administration came to an end, and he expressed views similar to those of Wilson. Consistent with his progressive perspective, Roosevelt characterized the conflict as “a war for liberty and democracy against the ruthless militaristic tyranny of the Prussianized Germany of the Hohenzollerns.” He observed that far from the civilized application of military power, on the battlefields of the Western Front “Germany has re-introduced from the dark ages poison gas and liquid fire, so as to kill her enemies with torture.” He declared that the United States was fighting for an “overwhelming victory” over “the tyrannous Prussianized autocracy which now menaces the entire peace-loving world.” Presaging the policy of unconditional surrender, he urged that the United States not stop “until we have brought down the whole fabric of Prussianized militarism.”¹⁴⁵

Given the comments of Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, it is not surprising that Franklin Roosevelt expressed similar views after United States entry into the war. Both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt accepted accounts of German atrocities as authentic.¹⁴⁶ He believed that he had a responsibility “to warn the United States” about

¹⁴⁴ Woodrow Wilson’s message to Congress, April 2, 1917, reprinted in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, vol. 2, Since 1914 (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1989, 3rd edition.), pp. 51-5.

¹⁴⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, The Foes of Our Own Household (New York: George H. Doran, 1917), pp. 274, 276, 297, 303.

¹⁴⁶ Entry for July 30, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL; [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 242.

“the great dangers” facing the country.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, at Chautauqua, in July 1917, he announced to his audience, “The United States is not safe for your children if Germany wins the war.”¹⁴⁸ Clearly, Franklin Roosevelt accepted the notion that the United States had entered the war “to liberate Germany and the world from the domination of Prussian Junkerdom.” Prussia dominated the old Germany and posed a threat to the liberal world. “[T]he ‘Junker’ class, the mortal enemies of liberalism and the sworn devotees of autocracy, militarism and Pan-Germanism” controlled the Kaiser’s actions during World War I and the direction of German foreign policy during the decade prior to 1914.¹⁴⁹ In that respect, Roosevelt reflected the view advertised by the administration that the purpose of the war was the destruction of “MILITARISM AND KAISERISM.”¹⁵⁰

Wilson’s next message to Congress in December 1917 demonstrates the extent that progressivism shaped his administration’s conduct of the war. In terms of domestic reforms, progressives believed that they could restore power to the people through “the education of public opinion” and by awakening “the popular conscience.” The creation of “an enlightened public opinion” then would enable the people to reclaim the power that they had lost or abdicated and, at the same time, refashion the instruments of government

¹⁴⁷ Speech at Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, New York, August 30, 1919, Master Speech File No. 101, FDRL.

¹⁴⁸ Roosevelt comments at the Speakers’ Training Camp for Patriotic Education, Chautauqua, New York, July 7, 1917, Master Speech File Number 72, Speech Files, FDRL.

¹⁴⁹ Notes for a speech (1917-18), Master Speech File Number 83, FDRL.

¹⁵⁰ Joseph P. Tumulty memorandum to Woodrow Wilson, November 3, 1918, Series 2, Reel 101, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Presidential Papers Microfilm, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

to guarantee popular sovereignty.¹⁵¹ Wilson applied the same prescription to the American conduct of the war. As he saw the problem, “the sinister masters of Germany” continued to deceive the people of Germany. “Prussian military and commercial autocracy,” furthermore, could not be trusted to either wage war within the bounds of international law or negotiate a future peace. He argued that the United States “can discuss peace” only “when the German people have spokesmen whose word we can believe.” The main focus of Wilson’s strategy would be to wage a war to educate the German people by providing “the truth” as the “only possible antidote” to the “falsehoods that have kept the German people in the dark.”¹⁵² That strategy of reaching the German people, the administration believed would be successful because as Lansing put it, “The easiest man in the world to fool is a German officer.”¹⁵³

VII.

The ideology of progressive reformers exerted a major impact on how the Wilson administration viewed Wilhelmine Germany and, after April 1917, how it waged war to overthrow it. Perceiving the German people and the German government as two separate entities, the administration envisioned a strategy designed to educate and inspire the German people to overthrow their government and replace it with a democratic system.

¹⁵¹ Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, p. 202.

¹⁵² Wilson’s message to Congress, December 4, 1917, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917, pp. ix-xii.

¹⁵³ Entry for March 15, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 114.

In so doing, the administration took an approach to war that shaped how the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt would respond to another war in Europe twenty-two years later. Wilson's overall strategy for the defeat of Imperial Germany was clear: educate and develop the popular conscience of the German people in order for them to reclaim their power from their Prussian "masters" and refashion their government along democratic lines.

The United States government was less certain how it should implement Wilson's strategic vision for the defeat of Imperial Germany. Army Chief of Staff General Peyton C. March noted that after the United States entered the war that "the Administration was not entirely clear in its own mind what our role in the struggle should be."¹⁵⁴ Some in administration circles thought that the downfall of the Imperial German government could take place at little direct cost to the United States. In April 1917, one Marine Corps brigadier general offered his prediction to the secretary of the navy that Germany "cannot hold out very much longer because people lack food."¹⁵⁵ In retrospect, Eleanor Roosevelt noted that "many foolish people like myself said that only our financial resources would be needed and that the only branch of service which would be called upon to fight would be the Navy." Others envisioned sending an army to Europe, but not immediately.¹⁵⁶

Walter Lippmann of *The New Republic* had asserted to President Wilson that any army "raised would probably be unready to fight before the war was drawing to a close" but

¹⁵⁴ Peyton C. March, *The Nation at War* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1932; Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1970), p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Entry for April 12, 1917 in Daniels, *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels*, p. 133.

¹⁵⁶ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, *This Is My Story* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 247.

that it would “give the country a sense of security.”¹⁵⁷ General March observed that “many military men, even, supposed that our assistance, as far as men were concerned, would be limited to a show of the flag by a small force.”¹⁵⁸

From the administration’s perspective, American soldiers would not be needed on the Western Front for their combat potential but for their symbolic, moral impact both at home and abroad. Along those lines, editors of the Scripps-McRae league advocated that the administration “send an army to France” or do something “to stir up our people.”¹⁵⁹ Eleanor Roosevelt recalled the contemporary belief that “the sight of new uniforms and of fresh men at the front would restore” Allied “morale.”¹⁶⁰ General March recalled that no one then in authority “completely grasped the fact that if we did not get men to France by the million, instead of by the thousand, the war would unquestionably be won by the Central Powers.”¹⁶¹ Ultimately, the task fell to the French mission that arrived in the United States on April 25, 1917 to convince the Wilson administration to dispatch large numbers of soldiers to France immediately.

The Vice President of the Council of Ministers, René Viviani, an eloquent Socialist with an excellent command of English, lead the French mission to the United States; *Maréchal* Joseph Joffre, the hero of the Marne, accompanied him. Their message to the

¹⁵⁷ Walter Lippmann to Woodrow Wilson, February 6, 1917, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 41, January 24—April 6, 1917 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 134-5.

¹⁵⁸ March, The Nation at War, p. 2.

¹⁵⁹ Entry for April 19, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 137.

¹⁶⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 247.

¹⁶¹ March, The Nation at War, p. 3.

American people and the Wilson administration was clear: “France wants American troops on the Western Front and wants them at once.” In pursuit of that goal, the mission spent nearly a week in Washington meeting administration officials, cabinet members, and Congressmen. Escorted by Ambassador Jusserand, Viviani and Joffre attended a boisterous, cheering session of the Senate and later visited the House of Representatives; they also met with President Wilson. After the arrival of a similar British mission lead by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Arthur J. Balfour, both delegations conferred, which led to further meetings with administration officials.¹⁶²

The Roosevelt family played a major role in meeting and entertaining the French mission and assisting them broadcast their appeal for assistance. Their Washington social circles and ties with the British and French embassies guaranteed the Roosevelts would socialize with both the British and French missions during their visit. Eleanor Roosevelt noted that after the United States entry into the war that she and her husband “were less and less concerned with social life except where it could be termed useful or necessary to the work which had to be done.”¹⁶³ The Roosevelts thought that the French mission was important. Upon their arrival to the United States, Franklin Roosevelt greeted Viviani, Joffre, Marquis Pierre de Chambrun and the others in the French mission at Hampton Roads, Virginia.¹⁶⁴ Roosevelt’s cousin Warren Robbins from the State Department

¹⁶² “France Wants Our Military Forces Now to Brace Allies and Shake German Line; Envoys Urge Action, Viviani Sees Wilson,” The New York Times, May 1, 1917, pp. 1-2 and “French Visitors Hailed in Senate,” The New York Times, May 2, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁶³ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 245.

¹⁶⁴ C. H. McCarthy memorandum to Eleanor Roosevelt, April 25, 1917 with enclosed draft press release, General Correspondence: France, Interdepartmental Correspondence,

escorted the party and was responsible for their comfort. In Washington, Eleanor Roosevelt remained “very busy” entertaining members of the French and British missions seeking American cooperation.¹⁶⁵ The Roosevelt’s were among the government officials who sailed down the Potomac to Mount Vernon with Joffre, Viviani, and Balfour to lay a wreath on George Washington’s tomb.¹⁶⁶ The Roosevelt’s close friend William Phillips escorted the British mission.¹⁶⁷ In Washington, Viviani and Joffre stayed with diplomat Henry White, a former American minister in Paris and Theodore Roosevelt’s representative at the Algeciras Conference.¹⁶⁸

When Franklin Roosevelt met Joffre and Viviani at Hampton Roads, he urged them to request the fullest assistance from the United States.¹⁶⁹ Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter Alice and her husband Congressman Nicholas Longworth made a similar point to de Chambrun, their cousin by marriage.¹⁷⁰ The French leaders quickly complied and called for the almost immediate dispatch of United States soldiers. Eleanor Roosevelt recalled

Official Files, Box 14, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

¹⁶⁵ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 246.

¹⁶⁶ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), p. 88.

¹⁶⁷ “British Envoy’s Arrival,” The New York Times, May 12, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Crowded Hours: Reminiscences of Alice Roosevelt Longworth (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934), p. 248.

¹⁶⁹ Nathan Miller, F.D.R.: An Intimate History (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1983), p. 139.

¹⁷⁰ Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Crowded Hours: Reminiscences of Alice Roosevelt Longworth (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934), p. 248.

that “the first plea made by the French mission was that some American soldiers be sent to France in July.”¹⁷¹ Viviani asked President Wilson to send American troops within two months. In a talk to the War College and in discussions with the president and the secretary of war, Joffre made an immediate appeal for troops as soon as possible, even if only a division.¹⁷²

The William Phillipses hosted a luncheon that included the Roosevelts, their cousin Alice and her husband Nicholas Longworth, and Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane and his wife Anne. At the luncheon, Joffre made the French desire for United States troops explicit. The marshal stated, “You should send 25,000 troops at once, then again 25,000 and again and again, just as fast as possible.” Praising Joffre’s “fair words,” Franklin Roosevelt insisted “on action *at once*. Action that will give something definite—definite ships, definite men—on a definite day.”¹⁷³ On April 30, Phillips forwarded the State Department to Roosevelt such a detailed request from the French vice admiral seeking United States naval cooperation.¹⁷⁴ By April 30, furthermore, Lane, Treasury

¹⁷¹ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 247.

¹⁷² Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Crowded Hours: Reminiscences of Alice Roosevelt Longworth (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934), pp. 248-9.

¹⁷³ Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, p. 208.

¹⁷⁴ William Phillips memorandum to Roosevelt, April 30, 1917 and Admiral Chocheprat’s Note: U.S. Government’s Cooperation to French Naval Requirements, General Correspondence: France, Interdepartmental Correspondence, Official Files, Box 14, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

Secretary William Gibbs McAdoo, and Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston reportedly were in favor of satisfying Joffre's plea.¹⁷⁵

Increasing support for Joffre from both inside and outside of the administration pressured Wilson to grant the French request. According to the press report following a cabinet meeting on May 1, many in the cabinet favored granting the French appeal; although, Wilson had not indicated his position.¹⁷⁶ Amid growing cabinet and bipartisan congressional support to honor the French plea for United States soldiers, Wilson's critic Theodore Roosevelt publicly came out in favor of supporting Joffre's wishes. Hoping to be at the head of a contingent of between one and four American divisions in France, Roosevelt stated, "I most earnestly hope that the request of General Joffre to the American people that we, at the earliest possible moment, send American troops to the front will be granted."¹⁷⁷

Wilson's actions quickly undercut Roosevelt's bid. On May 2, 1917, the press announced that the Wilson administration assured the French mission that it would grant their plea to have an American division in France as soon as sufficient transportation was available.¹⁷⁸ The following day, the press reported it unlikely that Theodore Roosevelt

¹⁷⁵ "France Wants Our Military Forces Now to Brace Allies and Shake German Line; Envoys Urge Action, Viviani Sees Wilson," The New York Times, May 1, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ "Peace Speech in Berlin Tomorrow; Chancellor to State Aims 'Clearly;' Call for Troops Gains Favor," The New York Times, May 2, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ "Roosevelt Hails Joffre's Advice," The New York Times, May 1, 1917, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ "Army to France Soon as Vessels Can Be Procured," The New York Times, May 3, 1917, pp. 1-2.

would be leading the American troops.¹⁷⁹ Also on May 3, both Viviani and Joffre visited Wilson. For an hour Wilson and Joffre discussed a number of technical issues, with Joffre offering the president his opinion as to what should be done. Wilson agreed to Joffre's request that the American general who was to command in France arrive in advance of his army. It is also likely that during this meeting Wilson agreed with Joffre's position that American divisions complete their intensive training in France rather than delay deployment until fully trained and prepared as advocated by Secretary of War Baker and members of the General Staff. Afterwards Joffre noted that he had been favorably surprised by Wilson's promptness in accepting his views and by the degree to which Wilson seemed to be a practical strategist conversant with military operations.¹⁸⁰ In addition, Viviani's delegation secured an immediate loan of \$ 200,000,000 and a monthly loan of \$ 160,000,000 that would start in July.¹⁸¹

With the formal aspect of its mission largely accomplished, on the afternoon of May 4, the French mission departed Washington on a ten-day tour of the United States. In a private railroad car provided by the State Department, Viviani and Joffre visited Chicago,

¹⁷⁹ "Army to France Soon As Vessels Can be Procured," The New York Times, May 3, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), pp. 298-9. War Department General Staff reluctance to support Joffre's proposal for immediate deployment to France is evident in "Peace Speech in Berlin Tomorrow; Chancellor to State Aims 'Clearly;' Call for Our Troops Gains Favor," The New York Times, May 2, 1917, p. 1 and "Army to France Soon as Vessels Can Be Procured," The New York Times, May 3, 1917, pp. 1-2. After he was ordered to Washington in early May, the press correctly speculated that Major General John J. Pershing would command the force destined for France. "All American Forces to Make One Big Army," The New York Times, May 10, 1917, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, The Decline of the Third Republic, 1914-1938, trans. Anthony Forester (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 33.

Kansas City, St. Louis, Abraham Lincoln's tomb in Springfield, Illinois, before going on to Philadelphia and New York, West Point, Boston, Baltimore, and then back to Washington for a farewell on May 15.¹⁸² Throughout the visit of the French mission, crowds met Joffre with great enthusiasm.¹⁸³ Following their tour through the Mid West, the members of the French mission received an overwhelming reception from the people of New York City. The *New York Times* reported that the Frenchmen "found such a welcome as the city had never before accorded to any man or group of men." Although the weather was windy with intermittent rain on May 10, 1917, many thousands waited for hours to glimpse the French mission and Maréchal Joffre. The paper assessed that "no demonstration in the city's history ever brought forth the number of people that came out yesterday to look at the victor of the Marne."¹⁸⁴ The city held a reception for Viviani and Joffre in a mansion on Fifth Avenue that same day. Determined that her grandchildren should meet Joffre, Sara Delano Roosevelt took Anna, James, and Elliott from Hyde Park to Fifth Avenue just to introduce them to the French soldier. In spite of the children having whooping cough, the old *général* gave each of the children a kiss and treated them and their grandmother with great kindness. An awestruck Sara Delano Roosevelt also

¹⁸² The itinerary for the trip is detailed in "Army to France Soon as Vessels Can Be Procured," *The New York Times*, May 3, 1917, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸³ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, *This Is My Story* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 246.

¹⁸⁴ "French War Envoys City's Guests; See in New York's Warm Welcome New Hope for a Glorious Victory," *The New York Times*, May 10, 1917, p. 1.

related to Franklin and Eleanor that “the perfectly charming brave Joffre” was extremely complementary about her son.¹⁸⁵

The next evening, more than one thousand prominent New Yorkers honored the delegates of both the French and the British missions with a dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria. The mayor of New York was the host, and his Committee to the British and French commissions included J. P. Morgan and Bernard M. Baruch. In addition, the audience boasted former President Theodore Roosevelt and his successor William H. Taft, former presidential candidates Charles Evans Hughes and Alton B. Parker, the governor of New York, a United States senator, and Major General Leonard Wood. Speeches by Viviani and Balfour and the presence of Roosevelt evoked clamorous enthusiasm from the crowd, particularly when Roosevelt and Joffre shook hands. Eloquently, Viviani praised the United States, “The soul of America is so great and noble that it is fitting that America should arise to fight for the cause of freedom and justice.” In contrast, Viviani told his audience that the philosophy of Germany, and the force behind the German army, was “brutal and savage.” Noting the tension in Germany, he remarked, “The kultur of Germany is all very well so long as its interests are not crossed, but when they are, it is like a wild beast.” Theodore Roosevelt spent the dinner seated next to Joffre, engaged in a deep discussion in French.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, Affectionately, F.D.R.: A Son's Story of a Lonely Man (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1959), pp. 79-80. Also of some use are [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. 248-9 and James Roosevelt and Bill Libby, My Parents: A Differing View (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1976), p. 42.

¹⁸⁶ “Balfour and Viviani Welcome US as Ally in the War for Civilization; Stir Dinners to Wildest Enthusiasm,” The New York Times, May 12, 1917, p. 1.

To a generation of Americans who had followed the scandals of the Dreyfus Affair and sympathized with the *Dreyfusards*, *Maréchal* Joffre must have seemed an ideal officer to represent a revitalized French Republic. Staunchly republican, anti-clerical, and progressive, Joffre was a Freemason who openly ate meat on Good Friday. In 1911, he had been selected as the Chief of the French General Staff less for his tactical or strategic acumen than for his qualities as a “good Republican.” Nonetheless, observers of Joffre’s bearing and demeanor found that he was “unmistakably a soldier.” His victory in 1914 during the First Battle of the Marne made him one of the most popular men in France.¹⁸⁷ It seems particularly fitting that among Joffre’s party when he came to the United States in 1917 was Major Dreyfus.¹⁸⁸

VIII.

United States entry into the war and the French request for the dispatch of American soldiers to France forced the Wilson Administration to consider how it would raise an army of over one million men. It was a major task, one inconceivable to the War Department and the General Staff at the time. In April 1917, the United States had fewer than 200,000 soldiers under arms; it was, in the words of one senior officer, “scarcely

¹⁸⁷ De la Gorce, The French Army, pp. 86-7, 107, 160-1 and Alistair Horne, The Price of Glory: Verdun, 1916 (New York: MacFadden Books, 1964), pp. 19, 29-30.

¹⁸⁸ U.S. State Department draft press release, circa April 25, 1917, General Correspondence: France, Interdepartmental Correspondence, Official Files, Box 14, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL. Alfred Dreyfus had been reinstated as a major in 1906 and awarded the Legion of Honor. During the Great War, he returned to active service and ended the war as a lieutenant colonel.

enough to form a police force for emergencies within the territorial limits of the United States.” The Regular Army boasted a total strength of 127,588 and 66,594 National Guardsmen in Federal service, previously activated due to trouble with Mexico.¹⁸⁹ Henry L. Stimson, William H. Taft’s Secretary of War, estimated that in April 1917 the United States Army could field a mobile force of about 24,000 soldiers with sufficient ammunition for a day and a half in a modern battle.¹⁹⁰ A woefully inadequate force considering that just during the Battle of Verdun in 1916, French and German casualties amounted to 420,000 dead and 800,000 wounded.¹⁹¹

Previous efforts during the Wilson administration to improve the preparedness of the United States Army had met with meager results, at best. During the summer of 1914, 1915, and 1916, Major General Leonard Wood ran Plattsburg camps to provide rudimentary officer training for civilian leaders, ultimately training ten thousand reserve officers. Stimson’s successor in the War Department, Lindley L. Garrison, had hoped to build a large, effective reserve force that could avoid the local politics and unpreparedness of the National Guard. Lindley had urged a tough line against Germany and intervention in the war. During 1916, a presidential election year, Wilson rejected Lindley’s plan for a “Continental Army” in favor of congressional supporters of the National Guard. Believing Wilson to be a half-hearted advocate of preparedness, Lindley resigned in 1916, and the administration took no further action to improve the state of the

¹⁸⁹ Peyton C. March, The Nation at War (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1932; Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1970), pp. 1, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 86.

¹⁹¹ Alistair Horne, The Price of Glory: Verdun, 1916 (New York: MacFadden Books, 1964), pp. 320-1.

Regular Army before it entered the war.¹⁹² Instead of Lindley's plan, Wilson had come out in favor of a different approach to preparedness that included funding for a "navy second to none" and expansion of the National Guard to 400,000 men. Nevertheless, in May 1917, Congress passed a bill to raise a mass army by conscription and recruitment of volunteers, approximately one-third would be Regular Army, one-third National Guard, and one-third the National Army. Existing regular and guard regiments became part of newly formed divisions and prepared for transport to France. Captain George C. Marshall, a division staff officer in the First Division, the first sent to France, noted that the members of the division staff met each other at sea and then had to be told the organization of their new unit.¹⁹³

It was during the visit of the French mission and the General Staff's initial attempts to form combat divisions that Theodore Roosevelt publicly proposed to raise a force of up to four volunteer divisions and take them to France. The former Rough Rider argued that the request of Marshal Joffre and the French mission "best could be realized by permitting him to take volunteers to the trenches of France."¹⁹⁴ An earlier request by Roosevelt to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker in February 1917 to raise a single division met with no action.¹⁹⁵ Roosevelt explained his desire to Ambassador Jusserand,

¹⁹² Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 86-8 and John Milton Cooper, Jr., The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1983), pp. 289-90.

¹⁹³ Mark A. Stoler, George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), pp. 33-5.

¹⁹⁴ "Roosevelt Hails Joffre's Advice," The New York Times, May 1, 1917, p. 2.

¹⁹⁵ Theodore Roosevelt to Newton D. Baker, February 7, 1917 and Baker to Roosevelt, February 9, 1917, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 8, The Service He Can

“I intend to do everything that is in me to serve in a manner that will be of most benefit to my people, to France, and to Belgium, and to the Allies generally, and to humanity.”

Roosevelt continued, “I believe that the best service I can render as an ex-President of the United States, is to be sent with my division to the front, just as soon as it is possible to get my men in shape....”¹⁹⁶ On April 10, 1917, Theodore Roosevelt met with President Wilson to make his request again. Although Wilson would not commit to the venture, Roosevelt believed that on the whole the interview had been “satisfactory.”¹⁹⁷ Franklin Roosevelt gave his enthusiastic support to Theodore Roosevelt’s attempt. Despite additional support for Roosevelt’s proposal from members of Congress, French ambassador Jusserand, and Georges Clemenceau, Wilson rejected the proposal. Backed by the War Department, Wilson justified his refusal on the grounds that Roosevelt’s actions would strip valuable officers away from the divisions that would be formed as part of the national army. Franklin and Eleanor saw their dejected uncle after Wilson’s decision became evident. Eleanor Roosevelt recalled, “I think the decision was a bitter blow from which he never quite recovered.”¹⁹⁸

The officers of the organization that Theodore Roosevelt proposed to field would have come largely from the ranks of former Rough Riders, officers he had known in Cuba, and

Render, ed. Elting E. Morison (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 1151.

¹⁹⁶ Roosevelt to Jean Jules Jusserand, February 23, 1917, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, vol. 8, The Service He Can Render, ed. Elting E. Morison (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 1157.

¹⁹⁷ Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Crowded Hours: Reminiscences of Alice Roosevelt Longworth (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934), pp. 245-6.

¹⁹⁸ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 250.

from members of the New York National Guard. Among the twenty men who were hand chosen by Roosevelt were William J. Donovan, Henry L. Stimson, and Frank Knox. As early as 1916, Stimson, a former secretary of war, had helped Roosevelt develop tentative lists of officers to lead the units he intended to raise. Following his meeting with Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt gave up his plan, and on May 21, 1917 he released Donovan, Stimson, Knox, and the others for other service.¹⁹⁹

Given Theodore Roosevelt's active encouragement, the allure of military service was strong on the Roosevelt family throughout the Great War. During the summer of 1917, Eleanor's brother Hall Roosevelt and her cousin Quentin, Theodore Roosevelt's youngest son, enlisted in the aviation branch together.²⁰⁰ Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. joined the First Infantry Division, the first United States division to sail to France; his brother Archie quickly followed. Their other brother Kermit served with the British Army in Mesopotamia and later transferred to the American Army in France. While Woodrow Wilson urged Franklin Roosevelt to run for Governor of New York, kinsman Theodore Roosevelt urged his nephew to get into the war.²⁰¹ Throughout 1917 and 1918, Theodore

¹⁹⁹ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 92; Richard Dunlap, Donovan: America's Master Spy (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1982), pp. 48-9.

²⁰⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 251.

²⁰¹ Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), p. 30; James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), p. 64. Although the former president's hopes to raise and command a force of volunteer divisions had been frustrated, Army Chief of Staff General Peyton C. March was sympathetic to his wish to have all of his sons in active United States service. In April 1918, March assisted the appointment to captain of Kermit Roosevelt, then serving with the British Army in Mesopotamia, and his reassignment to the United States Army in France. Peyton C. March, The Nation At War (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1932; repr., Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1970), pp. 345-6.

Roosevelt's ideas fundamentally shaped Franklin Roosevelt's views of wartime service, leadership, and duty. The elder Roosevelt's martial judgment provided a powerful frame of reference for his nephew during the Great War and throughout his future.

Franklin Roosevelt pined to serve in uniform. Soon after United States entry into the war, Roosevelt told Daniels "that he wished to enter the armed forces." Considering the impact of Theodore Roosevelt's experiences as a Rough Rider on his subsequent political rise, Daniels believed that his assistant "thought actual fighting in the war was the necessary step toward reaching the White House." Although President Wilson told Daniels that Franklin Roosevelt's "only and best war service is to remain where he is," the assistant secretary lobbied the president to make a personal appeal.²⁰² Rejecting Wilson's suggestion that he run for governor, in mid 1918 Franklin Roosevelt told the president that if he left the Navy Department "it could only be for active service."²⁰³ Wilson refused Roosevelt's request to resign and serve in uniform. In the summer of 1918, a persistent Roosevelt managed to take an inspection tour of the Western Front.

IX.

In retrospect, it becomes evident that the course of the war during 1918 had a major impact on how Franklin Roosevelt and his generation viewed both German and American power. By late 1917, the Central Powers seemed triumphant almost everywhere: Russia

²⁰² Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace—1910-1917 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 130.

²⁰³ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Woodrow Wilson, July 18, 1918, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 48, May 13–July 17, 1918, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 563-4.

had left the war, the Italian front had collapsed, the major French offensive of the summer had disintegrated and there seemed no impetus for a successful Allied offensive on the Western Front. After the winter lull, March 1918 witnessed the initiation of a succession of German offensives that would last until July 1918 and reach within thirty-five miles of Paris. The offensives, however, exhausted all German reserves of manpower and morale, and the initiative on the battlefield passed to the Allies and the United States. The experience of those Americans committed to battle after mid 1918 proved to be a unique and particular one. Having gambled and committed all of the divisions in its strategic reserve in May and June 1918, Germany had no forces with which to stem the advance of the armies of the Allied and Associated powers, infused with large, fresh American divisions, in the autumn of 1918. In Europe to tour the front, Roosevelt perceptively noted in late July 1918, “The past month has I think clearly marked the turning point of the war.”²⁰⁴

Not even Roosevelt, however, predicted the speed of the German collapse in the autumn of 1918. After his trip to the front, he had hoped to return to the United States, resign his position as assistant secretary of the navy, and join a battery of naval railway guns in Europe as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy.²⁰⁵ Events, however, moved too swiftly. Although German power seemed at its apex in June 1918, by October and early November, the will of German soldiers and civilians to continue the war had evaporated, and the mass movement for peace assumed the proportions of a social

²⁰⁴ Entry for July 30, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

²⁰⁵ Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of Peace—1910-1917 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 130 and Eleanor Roosevelt, This is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. 270.

revolution.²⁰⁶ The suddenness of the German collapse undoubtedly came as a shock to Roosevelt. He landed in New York City with influenza and pneumonia in September 1918, and, after recovering, he returned to Washington in mid October to finalize his reports. Unfortunately for his aspirations, in October word also arrived from Germany that it would discuss peace terms.²⁰⁷

Roosevelt's visit to the front in 1918 reinforced his conceptions of German and French soldiers. German morale, he believed, was fragile. Years later, he observed, "The facts of the year 1918 are proof that a mighty German army and a tired German people can crumble rapidly and go to pieces when they are faced with successful resistance."²⁰⁸ In contrast, French *poilus* epitomized intelligence and determination. Roosevelt rated French sentries as "noticeably more alert" than their counterparts and was impressed with the "two ferocious looking Poilus armed with rifles" who escorted him during his visit. Seeing a group of dirty, tired German prisoners along the road, he offered, "They did not impress me as being physically unfit, but there is an awful contrast between the amount of intelligence in their faces compared with the French Poilus." That night, observing a

²⁰⁶ Robert O. Paxton, Europe in the Twentieth Century (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), pp. 146-9.

²⁰⁷ Eleanor Roosevelt, This is My Story, pp. 267-70 and Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to Admiral Herbert O. Dunn, December 19, 1918, Master Speech File Number 79, FDRL. Although nearly 1,500,000 German soldiers died on the Western Front alone, FDR seems to have largely attributed the rapid German collapse to economic difficulties brought about by the British blockade of the Central Powers. See for example FDR's faith in "international economic and non-intercourse boycott . . . as the principle weapon to be used against recalcitrant" nations in his 1923 proposal for the Bok Peace Award. "Roosevelt, Franklin D. Bok Peace Award: A Plan to Preserve World Peace," Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

²⁰⁸ Navy Day Radio Address, Mayflower Hotel, October 27, 1941, Master Speech File Number 1389, FDRL.

French division being pulled out of the line near Chateau Thierry, he commented that “these Poilus after many days of constant fighting and shell fire still looked awake and intelligent, very different from the stolid, stupid look on the faces of the German prisoners.”²⁰⁹ Nowhere in Roosevelt’s account of his travels in France is there any indication of a contemporary awareness of the mutinies that immobilized the French army the previous summer.

Roosevelt’s experiences during his tour validated his views of sea power and further convinced him that air power might enable civilization to avoid the horrors of the Western Front Again. Concerning naval activity and the implementation of the blockade, he appraised offensive operations and coastal bombardment to be very effective and assessed that improved patrolling and escorting, “with which I had something to do in the summer of 1917,” had made the waters around Britain safe again. In northern France, he visited several U.S. Navy aero squadrons that would soon be operational. He saw first hand the effect of German bombing raids. After inspecting the devastation caused by German raids at several airfields and in French towns, he noted the blast radius of the latest 800 to 1200 pound German bombs and saw the potential of heavier bombs. He confidently believed that the United States “happens to have an answer” in the form of a 1750 pound bomb slated to be dropped by American night bombers. He envisioned the great potential of heavy bombs dropped behind the front lines on transportation facilities, “ammunition dumps, air dromes and military objectives.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Entry for August 4, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

²¹⁰ Entry for August 3, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

Roosevelt also noted the seemingly indomitable spirit of French public officials that he observed and heard about in France. He praised the dedication of local French officials and public servants who remained at their posts even “during the ‘touch-and-go’ days of 1914.” He hypothesized that the French people “seem to lose their heads even less than the Anglo-Saxons.” Although he consistently lauded the intelligence and tenacity of the French soldier, Roosevelt directly attributed French success during the Great War to France’s Radical leaders, particularly Georges Clemenceau. Roosevelt met Clemenceau in August 1918 and declared him to be the “greatest civilian in France.”²¹¹

Clemenceau fueled the imagination of American progressives. His early militant republicanism brought him in conflict with the regime of Napoleon III, and Clemenceau spent several years in the United States as a teacher and journalist prior to returning to France in 1869. His political career began as mayor of Montmartre after the overthrow of Napoleon III. A vigorous and stormy politician, his skills as a duelist and debater won him the sobriquet, “The Tiger.” Despite a reputation for extreme Radicalism earned in the Chamber of Deputies in the early Third Republic, the Clemenceau of the late 1890s and early 1900s was someone with whom progressives could relate. After failing to win reelection in 1893, Clemenceau dedicated himself to journalism and became a passionate *Dreyfusard*. In 1898, he published Émile Zola’s sensational open letter denouncing the French Army’s conspiracy against Captain Alfred Dreyfus and the Republic. He returned to parliament in 1902 as the Radical Party donned the mantle of progress in France.

During Clemenceau’s first term as President of the Council of Ministers, or Prime

²¹¹ Entry for August 2, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL. Roosevelt also noted the absence of Clemenceau at a lunch given by President Raymond Poincaré at the Elysee Palace in honor of Herbert Hoover.

Minister, from 1906 to 1909, he proposed a package of progressive legislation that included the ten-hour workday, an income tax, and pensions for the elderly. Like Franklin Roosevelt, Clemenceau was a Freemason. Prior to his installment as Prime Minister and Minister of War in November 1917 at the age of seventy-six, Clemenceau had been a consistent critic of the government's defeatism and inability to win a decisive victory. He publicly supported initiatives to bolster French morale and determination like Theodore Roosevelt's proposal to deploy and command an American volunteer unit in France. In March 1918, Clemenceau characterized his policy, "Internal policy, I wage war; foreign policy, I still wage war."²¹² The chairman of Wilson's War Industries Board, Bernard Baruch, considered Clemenceau to be a "great Frenchman" with "indomitable will and courage." According to Baruch, in 1917 and 1918 Clemenceau "was the savior of France."²¹³

From Roosevelt's perspective, Clemenceau ably provided civilian leadership to control and direct the French war effort, taking a more involved and personal role than Wilson did in the United States. In Clemenceau's office, the prime minister showed Roosevelt his "big map with all the latest troop movements" and a report detailing the latest progress at the front "up to one hour before." Roosevelt also observed how Clemenceau directed the national effort through the services of trusted agents such as André Tardieu working through a series of ad hoc executive agencies tailored to specific wartime needs. Characterizing Tardieu as the "best executive administrator in the French Cabinet,"

²¹² James F. McMillan, Twentieth Century France: Politics and Society, 1898-1991 (London: Edward Arnold, 1992) pp. 6, 14, 18-20, 74-5.

²¹³ Bernard M. Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 112.

Roosevelt was fascinated how Tardieu essentially had “authority over the Ministers of the other departments” and expected that a good many resented Tardieu’s interference and were jealous of him. The process of executive agencies, however, produced tangible results that benefited United States forces and the coalition war effort; Roosevelt noted, “It is a beautiful and practical plan and it is showing results every day because everyone knows what French Government ‘Red Tape’ still is, and it is even more difficult for an American to untie.”²¹⁴

Closer to the front, Roosevelt visited the headquarters of French *Maréchal* Ferdinand Foch, the commander-in-chief of all the armies of the Allied and Associated Powers in France. Spending an hour with Foch, Roosevelt was impressed with the calmness and complete sense of control evident in the headquarters staffed by “half a dozen officers and perhaps a dozen enlisted men.” Roosevelt noted that as commander-in-chief Foch concerned himself with major results and the objectives of his strategy and with his potential reserves of manpower, guns, and ammunition. He also assessed that in his actions Foch gave “constant and necessary attention” to his political leaders and the national efforts “to keep the Allied Armies in a position to make victory a certainty.”²¹⁵

The trip also provided Roosevelt with an opportunity to pay a visit to *Maréchal* Joffre. The two talked about “the days in May 1917 when our decision to send a really great army to Europe hung in the balance.” Roosevelt assessed that without the efforts of Joffre

²¹⁴ Entry for August 2, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL. In contrast to Tardieu, Roosevelt noted that the Minister for Foreign Affairs “does not carry as much weight as his title would indicate.”

²¹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt address to the Graduating Class of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, June 12, 1935, Master Speech File Number 783, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

and the French mission “that only a small part of the million and a quarter men now in France would be here.” Joffre spoke frankly telling Roosevelt of his discouragement in Washington and the inability of the Secretary of War and the General Staff to provide “any definite statement” of United States plans or anything more than generalizations “as to the numbers of troops, time of departure, program for guns, deliveries of material, etc.[,] etc.” Roosevelt took pride in Joffre’s insistence that it was Roosevelt’s “friendly advice” from the very first day after meeting the French mission at Hampton Roads that “in the end enabled him to obtain the answers for which he had come to America.”²¹⁶

During his tour of the front in the summer of 1918, Franklin Roosevelt never recognized the fragile nature of morale in the French Army. Roosevelt saw, instead, only the indomitable spirit of the French *poilu*. The previous year, mutinies had spread throughout half of the French Army following a failed and bloody offensive at Chemin des Dames directed by Général Robert Nivelle. In April and May 1917, after the French Army sustained 110,000 casualties, 40,000 men refused to go to the front. Several regiments had attempted to march on Paris. The French *Grand Quartier Général* recorded mutinies in 113 infantry regiments, twelve artillery regiments, a dragoon regiment, and 25 additional battalion-sized units, in all affecting sixteen French corps.²¹⁷ The French government managed to conceal the extent of the 1917 mutinies, and the American image of the indomitable French soldier remained intact.

²¹⁶ Entry for August 3, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913 -1920, FDRL.

²¹⁷ Paul-Marie de la Gorce, The French Army: A Military-Political History (New York: George Braziller, 1963), p. 127 and James F. McMillan, Twentieth Century France: Politics and Society, 1898-1991, p. 67.

X.

Despite Wilson's rejection of Theodore Roosevelt's plans to raise volunteer divisions for service in France, Franklin Roosevelt remained a staunch believer in Theodore Roosevelt's military abilities. In August 1917, after news arrived that German drives had taken Riga and threatened Petrograd, Franklin Roosevelt announced that if the administration had "sent TR over to Russia with 100,000 men," then, "This would not have happened."²¹⁸ The force Theodore Roosevelt hoped to raise for duty on the Western Front included Henry L. Stimson, Frank Knox, and William J. Donovan, men who considered themselves to be progressive Republicans. Theodore Roosevelt's martial judgment clearly made a lasting impression on his younger kinsman. In the summer of 1940, when Franklin Roosevelt wanted to bolster United States military preparedness and security, he offered cabinet positions to Stimson and Knox.

In 1918, Stimson and Knox each commanded artillery units in France. Both men, however, served with units supporting divisions that only entered combat in active sectors after the German spring offensives of 1918 had been halted. Stimson's combat experience consisted of one month as an observer with the British 51st Division at the front near Cambrai and three weeks in the line commanding an artillery battalion in the 305th Artillery Regiment, 77th Division. Despite the relative quiet of the sectors where he served, Stimson took great pride in the fact that "he was actually in command of troops in the line" and that his unit was "holding our little sector against the Boche line and to that

²¹⁸ Entry for August 21, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 194.

small extent responsible for civilization.”²¹⁹ In early August 1918, Stimson was ordered home, promoted to colonel, and given command of a new artillery regiment being readied at Camp Meade, Maryland for “the great operations being planned for 1919.”²²⁰

Before the Great War, Stimson’s early career brought him into contact with Theodore Roosevelt and ultimately owed a great deal to the former Rough Rider. Fascinated with the American West as a young man, Stimson became a law partner in Elihu Root’s Wall Street firm in 1893 and first met Theodore Roosevelt the following year. In the wave of excitement over the outbreak of war with Spain in 1898, Stimson joined a cavalry troop in the New York National Guard, serving with the troop for nine years. Root became President Theodore Roosevelt’s secretary of war in 1899, and while in the presidency Roosevelt referred to Root’s former law partner as “Sergeant Stimson” and in 1902 hailed him as “young Lochinvar.” In December 1905, Roosevelt called Stimson to the White House and subsequently appointed him to the post of United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York. When President William H. Taft offered Stimson the position of secretary of war, Stimson replied that he had to confer with four people first: his wife, his father, his law partner, and Theodore Roosevelt. At the state convention in 1910, Theodore Roosevelt nominated Stimson to run for governor of New York.

Although the campaign of 1912 and Stimson’s loyalty to Taft caused a rift between Stimson and Theodore Roosevelt, the rift largely mended by late 1915 after the outbreak

²¹⁹ Entry for July 11, 1918, Henry L. Stimson Diaries, IV:147-8, Yale University Library.

²²⁰ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 97-9.

of war in Europe and the criticism that both men had for Wilson's handling of United States foreign policy.²²¹

Shared interests and mutual acquaintances brought Franklin Roosevelt into direct contact with Stimson. It is likely that one of Stimson's assistants as U.S. Attorney in New York, Felix Frankfurter, first introduced Stimson to Franklin Roosevelt.²²² Theodore Roosevelt also constituted a powerful link between the two. In 1909, Theodore Roosevelt asked Stimson "to act as his personal counsel and advisor" and their "families saw a great deal of each other" after Roosevelt returned from Africa, living only eight miles apart. Occasional contact between Franklin Roosevelt and Stimson probably occurred due to the proximity of the Stimson residence with Oyster Bay. For instance, in September 1911 Secretary of War Stimson and former Rough Rider General Leonard Wood went for a

²²¹ "Memorandum of interesting (to me) occasions & events in my life during the past few years—Begun Jan 17th 1909," "Personal Reminiscences, 1911-1912," and "Previous Relations With Colonel Roosevelt," microfilm edition of the Henry L. Stimson Diaries, I:1-4, II:8-19, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut. See also Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 91 and Godfrey Hodgson, The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson, 1867-1950 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), pp. 7-8, 52-3, 58-9, 61.

²²² Godfrey Hodgson, a British journalist and observer of American politics, credits Frankfurter with introducing Franklin Roosevelt and Stimson; however, he suggests that the first meeting took place between the two men in January 1933. See Hodgson, The Colonel, pp. 61, 166-7. Stimson's diary suggests that he met Theodore Roosevelt's nephew much earlier. See "Previous Relations With Colonel Roosevelt," microfilm edition of the Henry L. Stimson Diaries, II:12, 19, Yale University Library. In 1910, Theodore Roosevelt prodded both men to run for New York state office, Stimson for governor and Franklin Roosevelt for the state Senate. During the 1912 presidential campaign, Felix Frankfurter, then serving with the Bureau of Insular Affairs, earned Theodore Roosevelt's praise as one of the "associates and counselors" that he would like to have "in this great cause for which I am fighting." Theodore Roosevelt to Paul A. Ewert, July 5, 1912, Elting E. Morison, ed., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. 7, The Days of Armageddon, 1909-1914 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 570-2.

long horseback ride with Theodore Roosevelt and his nephew.²²³ Coincidentally, Theodore Roosevelt prodded both progressives into New York politics in 1910. The former president nominated Stimson to be governor of New York; while, Franklin Roosevelt ran for state senator.²²⁴

Franklin Roosevelt's criticism of Wilson's policies prior to United States entry into the Great War, his support for Theodore Roosevelt's theories, and his sessions with Republicans publicly critical of the Wilson administration brought him into direct contact with Stimson's Wall Street partner Elihu Root, General Wood, and, presumably, Stimson himself.²²⁵ Stimson considered Theodore Roosevelt's "personal crusade in favor of a strong American stand against Germany" to have been the former president's greatest service to his country.²²⁶ In May 1917, when Theodore Roosevelt abandoned his plans to raise four volunteer divisions, he released Stimson who subsequently served at the War College in Washington, D.C. before joining the 77th Division that autumn.²²⁷

²²³ "Previous Relations With Colonel Roosevelt," microfilm edition of the Henry L. Stimson Diaries, II:12, 19, Yale University Library.

²²⁴ Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990) p. 18; James MacGregor Burns, The Lion and the Fox: Roosevelt, 1882-1940 (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984) pp. 31, 34.

²²⁵ Entry for March 11, 1917, Diary 1917, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

²²⁶ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 91.

²²⁷ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 92-4.

Reflecting the attitudes of progressive America, Stimson characterized France as “still standing nobly on guard for us and for civilization.”²²⁸ Stimson believed that the war in Europe was a direct result of “the Prussian doctrine of state supremacy” and the theory “that all rights belonged to the state.” The world, Stimson perceived, was “divided between those who believed in the individual and democracy and those who believed in the state and autocracy.” Although submarine attacks had been an immediate cause for the United States to enter the war, he believed that “the basic enemy was Prussianism.”²²⁹ In Stimson’s mind, the Great War had become a conflict between political ideologies, ideas, and national will.

Stimson’s experiences on the Western Front shaped his views of the combatants and the dynamics of the war. He found French soldiers “inspiring” and noted that “British and French morale seems perfectly good and they are confident.”²³⁰ Stimson believed that the French character was particularly adept at responding to temporary battlefield setbacks. During a major German offensive on the Somme in late March 1918, he observed, “Only the French seem calm.” Stimson added, “It is really a sign of their superior knowledge of military affairs that they take the rather startling situations calmly and make their dispositions as if it were all in a day’s work.”²³¹ In contrast, Stimson believed that

²²⁸ Entry for May 1, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:91, Henry Lewis Stimson Papers, manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut.

²²⁹ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 87, 89.

²³⁰ Entries for February 17 and March 28, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:52 and 76, Yale University Library.

²³¹ Entry for March 31, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:77, Yale University Library.

German and Austrian morale was much more fragile than that of either France or Britain. He envisioned that a successful defense against German and Austrian offensives might be sufficient to turn their people against continuing the war. If the Allies could “check” offensives by either Germany or Austria, then it would “be fatal to them.”²³² He predicted that if the German offensives of mid 1918 could be stopped then “the crisis will be over.”²³³ Stimson surmised “that if the Boche ever cracked he would crack badly[,] and if he gets a good sock dolager of a set back this summer . . . that he will go up in the air.”²³⁴ Several days later he reported the German offensive on Paris stopped and offered, “From now on he will decline and, I hope, decline rapidly.”²³⁵ Despite Stimson’s optimism about a rapid German decline, he saw little prospect that the end of the war would come in 1918 even though the effect of an unsuccessful offensive “on Germany will be tremendous.”²³⁶

Stimson admired the French soldiers he encountered and praised their martial qualities. He contrasted American soldiers who “looked vigorous and young and powerful” with their French counterparts “who looked older and rather worn although showing a fine

²³² Entry for May 1, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:92, Yale University Library.

²³³ Entry for July 4, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:143, Yale University Library.

²³⁴ Entry for July 25, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:159, Yale University Library.

²³⁵ Entry for July 31, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:162, Yale University Library.

²³⁶ Entry for July 19, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:153, Yale University Library.

spirit and elan.”²³⁷ Stimson, who had lived in Paris as a boy, noted with pleasure his encounters and dinners with French officers.²³⁸

Stimson, nonetheless, held a less favorable view of German soldiers. He inherited his father’s disgust for “the martial swagger” of Imperial Germany.²³⁹ Indicative of his attitude, Stimson occasionally referred to German soldiers as “the Prussians.”²⁴⁰ He characterized German soldiers as “those creatures” and blamed the “Boche” for “the blight he has put upon this sad land.”²⁴¹ Unlike the morale of the French, Stimson believed that a sharp battlefield setback would be sufficient to destroy the morale of the German soldiery and people and, ultimately, topple their militaristic and autocratic society. In his thinking, German battlefield setbacks were the mechanism that would lead to the awakening of the German people. Concerning the individual Germans that he believed had been tricked by the autocratic Prussian oligarchy into supporting the war,

²³⁷ Entry for July 4, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:141, Yale University Library.

²³⁸ Entries for April 12, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:85, Yale University Library. For other dinners, see entries for February 15 and 24, and April 2, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:51-2, 58, 80, Yale University Library. Stimson professed admiration for the French. In 1871, his father took the Stimson family to Europe, living initially in Berlin, then Zurich, and finally Paris. Stimson’s father worked under Louis Pasteur in Paris for one year. The Stimson family returned to the United States in 1873. Hodgson, The Colonel, pp. 28, 171.

²³⁹ Hodgson, The Colonel, p. 171.

²⁴⁰ Entry for June 22, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:131, Yale University Library.

²⁴¹ Entries for July 8 and 31, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:144, 162, Yale University Library.

Stimson thought that after a battlefield defeat “his government can no longer hide the truth from him”²⁴²

Like Stimson, William Franklin Knox also served with the artillery during the Great War. Following completion of college in 1898, Frank Knox volunteered for service in the Spanish-American War. He joined the 1st Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, the “Rough Riders,” at Tampa, Florida and fought with Theodore Roosevelt in Cuba. A newspaper reporter and, later, editor and publisher, Knox became politically prominent after the Spanish-American War. In 1910, he became the chairman of the Michigan Republican Party central committee and a political appointee to the board of Indian commissioners the following year. In 1912, he managed Theodore Roosevelt’s campaign for the Republican nomination in the west and subsequently supported him as the candidate for the Progressive Party. When the United States entered the war in 1917, Knox enlisted as a private soldier. He received orders to attend officers’ training school and an appointment as a captain of cavalry. His initial assignment found him serving at Camp Dix, New Jersey as a division personnel officer. In December 1917, Knox earned promotion to major and assignment as the commander of the ammunition train of the 153rd Artillery Brigade, 78th Division. As Knox prepared to deploy to France, Theodore Roosevelt noted, “Lord, how I wish I was going over with you!” In France, Knox served with the 78th Division from May 1918 through the Armistice, participating in the St.

²⁴² Entry for July 31, 1918, Henry Lewis Stimson Diary, IV:161, Yale University Library.

Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives and ultimately being promoted to colonel in the Reserve Corps.²⁴³

Staunchly progressive, Knox's attitudes about the war in Europe mirrored those of Stimson, Theodore Roosevelt, and their interventionist circle. Prior to United States entry into the war, Knox supported Theodore Roosevelt's immediate call for "a big, highly efficient navy and a small, highly efficient regular army" and, ultimately, a system of universal military training; he remained critical of Wilson's foreign policy.²⁴⁴ Knox believed that, if successful, the leaders of Germany would impose "their imperious will on the rest of the world." In Knox's mind, he perceived the enemy to be an "all-powerful" imperial German autocracy, "Kaiserism." He predicted that German victory would result in the complete "submergence of all those principles and those ideals which mean freedom and individual liberty."²⁴⁵

Knox's experiences during the Great War in France were striking similar to those of Stimson as well. On paper, Knox's 78th Division spent thirty-eight days in battle during the Great War, seventeen days in quiet sectors and twenty-one days in an active sector of the Western Front. During its first offensive at St. Mihiel in September 1918, the 78th

²⁴³ National Cyclopædia of American Biography, Vol. F, 1939-42 (New York: James T. White and Company, 1942), pp. 25-6. Theodore Roosevelt letter to Frank Knox, January 31, 1918, The Papers of Frank Knox, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

²⁴⁴ Theodore Roosevelt letters to Frank Knox, October 23 and November 9, 1915 and Knox's copy of Theodore Roosevelt's manuscript for his speech "National Duty and International Ideals," Chicago, April 29, 1916, The Papers of Frank Knox, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

²⁴⁵ Frank Knox speech to American Legion, Columbia, South Carolina, November 11, 1940, The Papers of Frank Knox, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

Division remained in reserve. The division was only committed to combat for four days in November 1918 during the last stage of the Meuse-Argonne campaign.²⁴⁶ The day of the Armistice found Knox and his men in “a little town outside of Verdun . . . all torn to pieces by shell fire and the ground so pock-marked with shell holes.”²⁴⁷

After the war, Colonel George C. Marshall, a future chief of staff of the U.S. Army, commented on the phenomenon that he sensed during the autumn months of 1918. By the end of July, he believed, “The entire aspect of the war had changed.” In consequence, those committed to combat after July 1918 tended to view the conflict much differently. He observed, “A veteran of a single battle like the St. Mihiel is prone to draw some erroneous conclusions.” In sharp contrast to veterans of the First Division involved in earlier fighting and “familiar with the vicissitudes of Cantigny and the terrific fighting at Soissons,” Marshall judged that “the members of a previously inexperienced division considered themselves the victors in a prodigious struggle.”²⁴⁸ Marshall’s comments apply to both Stimson and Knox. Before the end of the war the United States dispatched forty-two divisions to France, nearly 2,084,000 soldiers. Of those forty-two, however, elements of only four divisions, approximately 58,700 soldiers, had been in units committed to active combat prior to July 1918 when German reserves were exhausted.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Leonard P. Ayres, The War With Germany: A Statistical Summary (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919), pp. 108, 113-5.

²⁴⁷ Frank Knox speech to American Legion, Columbia, South Carolina, November 11, 1940, The Papers of Frank Knox, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

²⁴⁸ George C. Marshall, Memoirs of My Services in the World War, 1917-1918 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), pp. 123, 148-9.

²⁴⁹ Leonard P. Ayres, The War With Germany: A Statistical Summary (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919), pp. 32-3, 104-7.

XI.

The fundamental interrelationship between domestic attitudes and wartime strategy in the Wilson administration is evident in the actions of the Committee on Public Information, the CPI, created by executive order only eight days after the declaration of war.²⁵⁰ The chairman of the CPI, George Creel, recognized that “modern war, and this war in particular, necessitate readjustments in the gathering and distributing of news.” In addition to the American people, the CPI planned to reach Germany and disseminate stories that would “exercise a depressing effect on the morale of their people” if they continued to support their government’s war effort.²⁵¹ The CPI’s tasks were two fold: fight “indifference and disaffection in the United States” and undermine militarism, Prussianism, and Junkerism in Germany in order to bring about the establishment of a democratic German government. Creel, furthermore, did not operate in a vacuum. Secretary of War Newton Baker and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels had initially suggested to President Wilson that he appoint Creel to a “Committee of Publicity.”²⁵² Although he served as chairman of the CPI, by Wilson’s order Creel’s committee

²⁵⁰ Letter from Woodrow Wilson to George Creel, May 17, 1917, in Arthur S. Link, ed., The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 42 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 304

²⁵¹ Enclosure “Committee on Public Information Preliminary Statement to the Press,” in letter from Woodrow Wilson to George Creel, May 17, 1917, in Arthur S. Link, ed., The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 42 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 304-13.

²⁵² Entry for April 12, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 133.

included three other members, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy.

Franklin Roosevelt enthusiastically worked with Creel and assisted his efforts at home and abroad.²⁵³ His son James recalled that in 1917 and 1918 his father remained preoccupied “with World War I and politics.” Understandably, the CPI’s difficult work of endeavoring to shape domestic attitudes while simultaneously serving the war effort overseas naturally appealed to Roosevelt. One night, for example, Roosevelt worked in Creel’s office until 2:30 in the morning.²⁵⁴ To shape domestic attitudes, the Secretary of the Navy or in his absence Roosevelt as the Acting Secretary held a press conference “once or twice a day, which was quite a strain.”²⁵⁵ Members of the administration viewed domestic opposition to Creel’s methods as coming from plutocrats and German sympathizers.²⁵⁶ To overcome such opposition, the progressive approach was to educate the people, encourage them to support the war effort, and explain the reasons for United States involvement. The CPI did that with representatives, Four Minute Men, trained at

²⁵³ Roosevelt clearly accepted the CPI’s interpretation of events. See Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), pp. 332-3.

²⁵⁴ James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, Affectionately, F.D.R., p. 111.

²⁵⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt Press Conference #260 – A, December 27, 1935, 10:45 a.m. in Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, vol. 6 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 359-61.

²⁵⁶ Entries for April 16, October 24, and October 26, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 135, 226-7.

special camps such as the Speakers' Training Camp in Chautauqua, New York, where Roosevelt addressed a group in July 1917.²⁵⁷

During his tour in Western Europe, Roosevelt maintained a close working relationship with the CPI. In London in late July 1918, Roosevelt seized every opportunity to reinforce Anglo-American relations in the press and castigated "the representatives of the Committee on Public Information over here" for their inactivity.²⁵⁸ Concerned with the charges Italian socialists were making about the United States being an imperialist country, Captain Charles E. Merriam, the Commissioner to Italy of the CPI, asked Roosevelt to talk to press correspondents and editors. Roosevelt spoke for over forty-five minutes and provided Merriam's best copy of the week.²⁵⁹ In Paris in August, James F. Kerney, the representative of the CPI, enlisted Roosevelt to extol the success of the Allied anti-submarine effort in order to boost French, and damage German, morale. Roosevelt held a press conference on August 21.²⁶⁰ At the conference Roosevelt spoke frankly with French newspaper editors about the U.S. Navy and even related to them that the procedure in Washington was for departments to hold "a conference in the morning for the afternoon papers, and an afternoon conference for the morning papers." Such a system of press conferences, however, was more than Clemenceau was prepared to allow

²⁵⁷ Roosevelt comments at the Speakers' Training Camp for Patriotic Education, Chautauqua, New York, July 7, 1917, Master Speech File Number 72, Speech Files, FDRL.

²⁵⁸ Entry for July 30, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

²⁵⁹ Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), p. 362.

²⁶⁰ Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship, p. 367.

in wartime. Clemenceau, having already modified French censorship rules for Kerney, told Roosevelt, “Oh, you will destroy my government!”²⁶¹

Cooperation between the CPI and the uniformed services stretched from Washington to France. Secretary of War Baker and Navy Secretary Daniels both supported Creel’s efforts.²⁶² Nevertheless, even with secretariat support and cooperation, there were problems coordinating the work of the services and the CPI. In the War Department, the Military Intelligence Division recognized the value of disseminating information and psychological warfare and established a Propaganda Subsection and a Psychological Subsection. The Propaganda Subsection in the War Department had the task of bringing the military point of view to the civilian staff of the CPI as well as channeling calls for American propaganda. Likewise, in France, the army established a psychological section within the general staff of the headquarters, American Expeditionary Force, for propaganda against the enemy. With ambitious enthusiasts in the military and civilian information agencies, disputes arose over blurry lines of jurisdiction, particularly in France. In spite of basic cooperation, there was a recognized need to delineate which organization had primary responsibility in Allied, neutral, and enemy countries. By June 1918 the War Department and the CPI had largely resolved primary and supporting

²⁶¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt Press Conference #260 – A, December 27, 1935, 10:45 a.m. in Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, vol. 6 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 359-61. For Kerney’s role in persuading Clemenceau to allowing CPI activity and products in France, see George Creel, How We Advertised America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920; Reprint edition, New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 292.

²⁶² Entries for April 11, 12, and 16, 1917 in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 132-3, 135. For Secretary Newton D. Baker’s support for the CPI and praise for Creel, see his forward to George Creel, How We Advertised America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920; Reprint edition, New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. xi.

responsibilities in Europe for psychological warfare, the CPI taking the lead in Allied and neutral countries and military intelligence responsible for enemy countries.²⁶³ Working with the psychological section of the AEF, the CPI was able to assert that “by balloons, mortars, and aeroplanes we carried the truth across the firing line into the Central Powers,” showering the enemy with over three million leaflets and pamphlets.²⁶⁴

Under the aegis of the CPI, the Wilson administration also set up what it hoped would be the nucleus for the German government in the future, the Friends of German Democracy. In addition to establishing contacts inside Germany through Berne, Switzerland, the Friends of German Democracy also produced the leaflets that the armed forces showered on German front line soldiers, stressing that the United States was not fighting the German people, only the German militarists. Prodding them to overthrow their government, the leaflets urged, “Arise for a struggle for a free Germany!”²⁶⁵

Unlike the uniformed services, substantially less interest in any cooperation existed between the State Department and the CPI. Although President Wilson regarded his friend George Creel as “progressive,” Secretary of State Lansing believed that Creel displayed “socialistic tendencies” and was overly ambitious to the point of lacking discretion. Depicting Creel as hostile to the State Department and to him personally,

²⁶³ Bruce W. Bidwell, History of the Military Intelligence Division, Department of the Army General Staff: 1775-1941 (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1986), pp. 154-8. The experiences of Captain Walter Lippmann provide the best example of the blurred relationships in France. See Ronald Steel, Walter Lippmann and the American Century (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), pp. 145-9.

²⁶⁴ George G. Bruntz, Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1938), pp. 31-9.

²⁶⁵ George G. Bruntz, Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1938), pp. 35-7.

Lansing claimed that “the policy of keeping the entire control of publicity, so far as diplomatic matters were concerned, in the hands of the Department of State was followed up to the end of the war.”²⁶⁶ Members of the United States diplomatic corps in Europe expressed similar hostility toward CPI representatives. In fact in February 1918, Lansing complained of the CPI’s efforts in Europe to President Wilson. Faced with a choice, Wilson decided to support the efforts of the CPI and bypass the State Department. In going outside of traditional State Department foreign policy channels, Wilson moved toward a new pattern of diplomacy, a method intent on educating and appealing to the mass public opinion of a nation. More than the diplomatic relations practiced by the State Department with heads of state, Wilson’s new diplomacy also concerned itself with diffusing information throughout all levels of society to include opposition groups, labor unions, and the press.²⁶⁷ Focused as it was with cultivating channels outside of the traditional domain of the State Department, Wilson’s new diplomacy provided a powerful example for Franklin Roosevelt who, like Wilson, supported the CPI’s methods and efforts.

For many who later played influential civilian roles in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration, their experiences in the Great War profoundly influenced their perspective of both German and American power. At the time of the Great War, they, like Franklin Roosevelt, considered themselves to be progressives and accepted its basic tenets. Although they served in uniform in 1917 and 1918, men such as Hugh S. Johnson, Felix Frankfurter, Adolph A. Berle, Walter Lippmann, and Henry Morgenthau, Jr. had no

²⁶⁶ Robert Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, pp. 322-4.

²⁶⁷ Gregg Wolper, “Woodrow Wilson’s New Diplomacy: Vira Whitehouse in Switzerland, 1918,” Prologue, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Fall 1992), pp. 230-33, 237-8.

battlefield experience. They based their attitudes on the progressive view of the war propounded by official Washington and shaped by the Committee on Public Information. Sumner Welles worked at the embassy in Argentina. William Bullitt worked for the State Department in Washington, D.C. after serving as foreign correspondent for the *Philadelphia Ledger*. Although Cordell Hull had served in Cuba during the Spanish American War, he spent the Great War in the halls of Congress. Rejected for military service, Harry Hopkins worked at American Red Cross headquarters in the capital. Harold L. Ickes worked for the Illinois State Council of Defense and for the Y.M.C.A. in France. Others, such as William Dodd, the future ambassador to Germany, served among the university professors whose talents the CPI put to use.

XII.

With its stress on will power and psychological factors, the Wilson administration viewed the Great War as more than a military conflict between industrialized countries. Speaking a few weeks after the Armistice, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker announced that military victory “was a composite result.” Instrumental in victory had been not only “the superb heroism of the American soldiers and the veteran soldiers with whom we were associated” but also an “unseen but pervasive and unending flood of ideas.”²⁶⁸ Commenting on the impact of the first United States convoy arriving in France in June 1917, a naval intelligence officer, Captain W. R. Sayles, expressed similar views about

²⁶⁸ Secretary Newton D. Baker’s forward to George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920; Reprint edition, New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. xvi.

the power of symbolic factors and psychological forces. Sayles commented that “the morale of the whole French Nation was such that I believe a delay of two months more in our sending troops,...giving them some visual demonstration that we were really in the war; would have resulted in France capitulating.” Sayles asserted that the first convoy could not have arrived “at a more psychological moment.” He predicated that without a visible show of American troops in France in June 1917 that “France would have speedily been reduced to the same condition of chaos, confusion, and anarchy to which the German Intelligence Departments had brought Russia.”²⁶⁹

Because of that composite view, members of the Wilson administration believed that the war had not been fought solely by those in uniform on the Western Front, but also by the American men and women who supported them. Clearly, the view persisted in the administration that the most decisive aspects of the United States war effort had been influenced and supervised by civilians. When Germany appeared on the verge of collapse in late October 1918 at the height of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, members of the administration were quick to laud the “statesmanship” of President Wilson and “the masterly way in which you have dealt with the situation.”²⁷⁰ Another confided to the president, “The internal collapse in Germany, to my mind, is the direct result of your statesmanship.”²⁷¹ Praising civilian accomplishments during the war, Baker argued,

²⁶⁹ Enclosure to Captain W. R. Sayles memorandum, May 13, 1919, “The Visit of the ‘Joffre’ Mission to the United States and its Result—The First Convoy,” Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

²⁷⁰ L. S. Rowe to Woodrow Wilson, October 29, 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series 2, Reel 101, Presidential Papers Microfilm, LCMD.

²⁷¹ Letter to Woodrow Wilson from the Federal Reserve Board, October 30, 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series 2, Reel 101, Presidential Papers Microfilm, LCMD.

We share with the soldiers who went to France the dignity and glory of having fought as they fought, along a somewhat different front and with not quite the same peril; but we fought with the same spirit, we fought for the same cause, we fought with them²⁷²

Franklin Roosevelt shared Baker's sentiments about the significance of civilian contributions. Several years after the war, in response to a friend preparing a tablet at Groton to honor those who served in the Great War, Roosevelt responded that although he "did not wear a uniform" that his name should be listed with those "in the first division of those who were 'in the service,' especially as I saw service on the other side, was missed by torpedoes and shells. . . ." ²⁷³

Based on contemporary attitudes, the implications for victory in the Great War were clear for many who served. Certainly the United States had overestimated German military power. Although the United States military had planned to have eighty divisions overseas by June 1919 and an additional twenty more by the end of that year, it seemed evident that the United States had misjudged the situation. The German collapse came sooner than anyone anticipated because German morale made its military a fragile instrument. Of the forty-two United States divisions in France prior to the signing of the Armistice, only twenty-seven saw any combat, some entering the line only in November 1918 within days of the end of the war.²⁷⁴ Many thought that more decisive to the final outcome of the war than the mobilization of those divisions was the propaganda

²⁷² Secretary Newton D. Baker's forward to George Creel, How We Advertised America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920; Reprint edition, New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. xvii.

²⁷³ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter quoted in James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), p. 66.

²⁷⁴ Leonard P. Ayres, The War With Germany: A Statistical Summary (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919), p. 25.

campaign and psychological warfare that avoided the enemy's military forces. It seemed evident that a one hundred division American Army was not only unnecessary, but that the United States might have realized greater, and less costly, results with other approaches.

The Great War also played a fundamental and enduring role in the direction of Franklin Roosevelt's thinking about strategy. Although Roosevelt had been a publicist of Mahan's ideas in 1914 and 1915, with United States entry into the war he developed a much more subtle approach to grand strategy than a direct contest of Mahanian battle fleets. Increasingly Roosevelt adopted an asymmetrical strategy, one that favored using an indirect approach to get at an enemy's weakness rather than attack enemy strength. Certainly, the lessons of the CPI, psychological warfare, and the blockade of the North Sea reinforced in Roosevelt's thinking that the most effective use of American power was to strike German weaknesses. His tour of the Western Front would have reinforced those views and very distinctly demonstrated for him the costly impact of a symmetrical strategy that pitted an American Army directly against an enemy army and failed to account for the powerful impact of morale and psychological factors.

To Frank Knox, the Great War also reinforced an important lesson. He believed that American military preparedness was essential because "we may not have the good fortune that we had before to have Great Britain and France hold the lines while we get ready."²⁷⁵ Franklin Roosevelt learned an identical lesson. Roosevelt told his audience in May 1918, "And we shall not soon forget that in this first year of the war that has passed

²⁷⁵ Frank Knox speech for the annual celebration of "Le jour de Sainte-Barbe," Boston, December 4, 1937, The Papers of Frank Knox, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

we have had the actual conflict three thousand miles away and have been protected by the troops of France and Britain while we prepare in safety.” He solemnly predicted, “That will not always happen if future wars come.”²⁷⁶

XIII.

By late September 1918, British, French, and American offenses regained the initiative on the Western Front, tearing holes in the German lines. Historian Frederick Meinecke lamented the fact that “the boundless demands of the Pan-German-militaristic-conservative combine” had dragged Germany “down into this abyss.”²⁷⁷ On October 3, 1918, General Erich von Ludendorff, the first quartermaster-general of the German army, informed his government that Germany had to conclude an armistice immediately.²⁷⁸ Ludendorff had also urged the transformation of the German government into a system that would convince the Allies of its liberalism and representative nature.²⁷⁹ Several days later, Prince Max of Baden, the newly installed German Imperial Chancellor, notified President Wilson that the German government had accepted Wilson’s program “as a basis

²⁷⁶ Roosevelt commencement address at Drexel Institute of Technology, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 1, 1918, Master Speech File Number 75, Speech Files, FDRL.

²⁷⁷ Gordon A. Craig, Germany, 1866-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 394-5.

²⁷⁸ Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army: 1640-1945 (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 341.

²⁷⁹ Gordon A. Craig, Germany, 1866-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 396-8.

for peace negotiations” and requested an immediate armistice.²⁸⁰ Suddenly faced with no obstruction, the three majority parties in the Reichstag, the Social Democrats, the Centre, and the Progressives, supported the new chancellor and enacted a series of immediate reforms. The result was a constitutional transformation that brought democratization, ministerial control by parliament, ended monarchical control of the army, and widened suffrage. Kaiser Wilhelm II, however, stubbornly refused to abdicate.²⁸¹

In October 1918, the Wilson administration had to determine the basis on which the war would end. First, before formally replying to Prince Max’s appeal, Wilson requested clarification as to whether the chancellor represented “the constituted authorities of the Empire who have so far conducted this war” or had acted on his own volition and authority.²⁸² Although several members advocated the “unconditional surrender” of Germany, the majority in Wilson’s cabinet favored an armistice because it would achieve what they thought the United States was fighting for.²⁸³ Key, however, was the belief that the armistice could only be with a government that represented the liberal, democratic German people. No agreement was possible with an “autocratic government in Germany”

²⁸⁰ Speech of the German Chancellor, October 5, 1918, enclosure to File No. 763.72119/3113, Chargé Oederlin to Wilson, October 6, 1918, in U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, supplement 1, The World War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 337-8.

²⁸¹ Gordon A. Craig, Germany, 1866-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 396-8.

²⁸² Secretary of State to Chargé Oederlin, October 8, 1918, File No. 763.72119/2113, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, supplement 1, The World War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 343.

²⁸³ Entry for October 22-3, 1918, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 343.

and that if it remained in power that there should be “no let up until the Kaiser, Von Tirpitz & Co were hung.”²⁸⁴

Discussing the initial German response, Wilson’s cabinet concluded that it was in the interest of the United States to conclude an earlier rather than a later peace. Secretary Daniels noted contemporary belief that if the United States and the Allies continued “to win” that the “selfish aims” of the Allied Powers would increasingly assert themselves.²⁸⁵ Concerned about the selfish interests of Britain and France, Wilson proposed “to go into the Peace Conference armed with as many weapons as my pockets will hold so as to compel justice.”²⁸⁶

American fears of resurgent German militarists also revealed the necessity for an armistice agreement. By October 31, 1918, the Wilson administration believed that an armistice and peace were possible with a liberal German government. Secretary of State Lansing, however, warned “the German military regime has not been eliminated, that it is still all powerful and that it intends to resume control in the event of the failure of the present negotiations.”²⁸⁷ To the Wilson administration, an immediate armistice would serve the purpose of bolstering German liberals against the Prussian militarists responsible for the war while also forestalling Allied assertiveness and selfishness.

²⁸⁴ Entries for October 13 and 14, 1918, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 340.

²⁸⁵ Entry for October 22, 1917, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 343.

²⁸⁶ Entry for October 17, 1918, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 342.

²⁸⁷ Robert Lansing to Woodrow Wilson, October 31, 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series 2, Reel 101, Presidential Papers Microfilm, LCMD.

On November 5, 1918, Secretary of State Lansing sent a communication to the German government announcing that the United States and the Allied governments had authorized the Allied generalissimo, French *Maréchal* Ferdinand Foch, to receive representatives of the German government and communicate armistice terms to them.²⁸⁸ With armistice negotiations underway, Clemenceau reported to Wilson on November 9, 1918, “I regard it as almost certain that they will accept it.” Clemenceau also noted the confusion in Germany and breakdown of German military authority.²⁸⁹ Mutiny swept through the German High Seas Fleet. Soldier and worker councils in Munich proclaimed a Bavarian Republic on November 7, an example quickly followed in Frankfurt, Leipzig, Cologne, and Stuttgart. On November 9, 1918, Prince Max announced that Kaiser Wilhelm II had decided to renounce his throne as king of Prussia and German emperor. That afternoon, events moved beyond the control of Prince Max, so Philipp Scheidemann of the German Social Democratic Party announced the establishment of a German Republic.²⁹⁰ The Kaiser reportedly crossed into Holland the next day.²⁹¹ Later on

²⁸⁸ Secretary of State to Swiss Minister Sulzer, November 5, 1918, File No. 763.72119/3813k, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, supplement 1, The World War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 468-9.

²⁸⁹ Edward House to the Secretary of State for the President, November 9, 1918, File No. 763.72119/9104, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, supplement 1, The World War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 489-90.

²⁹⁰ Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army: 1640-1945 (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 344-8; Donald S. Detwiler, Germany: A Short History (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989, 2nd edition) pp. 168-9.

²⁹¹ Chargé Bliss in the Netherlands to the Secretary of State, November 10, 1918, File No. 862.001W64/39, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, supplement 1, The World War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 491.

November 10, the United States chargé reported that the revolution in Germany had been a “splendid, almost bloodless success in Berlin.” He added that Prince Max had transferred the office of chancellor to Frederick Ebert, the leader of the majority Socialists, who had begun to form a new government.²⁹² On the morning of November 11, 1918, representatives of the German government signed the armistice ending the war.²⁹³

Unable to get into uniform before the Great War ended, Roosevelt nevertheless remained busy during the last month of the war prior to the signing of the armistice. He served for a period as the acting secretary of the navy during which time he provided input into the naval clauses of the Armistice agreement. President Wilson wanted “moderate” terms sufficient to prevent the “renewal of hostilities by Germany but not humiliating beyond that necessity, as such terms would throw the advantage to the military power in Germany.”²⁹⁴ Although the German terms proposed by the Navy

²⁹² Chargé Bliss in the Netherlands to the Secretary of State, November 10, 1918, File No. 862.00/305, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, supplement 1, The World War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 491-2.

²⁹³ Edward House to the Secretary of State for the President, November 11, 1918, File No. 763.72119/9129, U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, supplement 1, The World War (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 492.

²⁹⁴ Woodrow Wilson cablegram to E. House, October 28, 1918 and P. C. March to J. J. Pershing, October 27, 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series 2, Reel 101, Presidential Papers Microfilm, LCMD.

Department seem rather harsh, Roosevelt justified them with the argument that “it will be less difficult for Germany to accept harsh Naval terms than harsh Army Terms.”²⁹⁵

Meanwhile, in addition to armistice negotiations, late October and early November 1918 witnessed closely contested and partisan congressional races in the United States. On October 25, Wilson made an appeal to voters to support the Democratic Party, declaring that the failure to return Democratic majorities in either house would be seen as a repudiation of his leadership. The election, however, resulted in Republican majorities in both houses of Congress.²⁹⁶ The Wilson administration and the leadership of the Democratic Party viewed the election results as the result of a reactionary backlash to their reform efforts at home and abroad. Rather than being the will of the people, Homer S. Cummings, The Vice Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, blamed the outcome on the “lavish use of money” by a corrupt Republican Party. He also noted that the Republican slogans for “Unconditional Surrender” and “No Negotiated Peace” had been surprisingly effective in their “deliberate misrepresentation” of the president’s policy.²⁹⁷ Writing from the office of the Democratic National Committee, Senator Key Pittman of Nevada claimed that “Republican leaders successfully deceived the people of the United States” and had lead them to believe that the president was prepared “to make

²⁹⁵ Franklin Roosevelt undated memorandum for President Wilson, circa late October 1918, in The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 51, September 14—November 8, 1918, Arthur S. Link, ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 486-7.

²⁹⁶ William A. and Arthur S. Link, American Epoch, p. 165.

²⁹⁷ Homer S. Cummings to Woodrow Wilson, November 7, 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series 2, Reel 101, Presidential papers Microfilm, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

easy terms with Germany.”²⁹⁸ The last was a lesson that Franklin Roosevelt apparently took to heart, coming to terms before an enemy was soundly defeated and had surrendered unconditionally was politically risky.

The end of the war and the impending shift of the American economy away from military production also offered a lesson to Roosevelt. In the days immediately following the signing of the Armistice, Wilson saw great benefits from continued military production, far beyond the military value of those munitions. Wilson told his cabinet that what was needed was a gradual demobilization that would “not disturb conditions” in the American economy or society. Keen that American labor should not be idle, he suggested that it was “better [to] make more shells than we need.”²⁹⁹ The lesson was that the domestic political, economic, and social impact of military spending could be more valuable than the military worth of the munitions or hardware purchased.

Additionally, the Great War and its aftermath had the long-term impact of shifting Roosevelt family sympathies toward France and away from Germany. James and Sara Delano Roosevelt had ensured that Franklin Roosevelt received relatively equal exposure to the French and German languages as a child. Initially, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt seem to have followed the example of his parents with their own children; the outbreak of war in 1914 ended that balance. Before the first winter of the war, the Roosevelts had released their German governess, ostensibly because of her sinus problems, and retained only a French governess. During the war, the Roosevelts tried two different French

²⁹⁸ Senator Key Pittman to Woodrow Wilson, November 6, 1918, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Series 2, Reel 101, Presidential papers Microfilm, Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

²⁹⁹ Entries for November 12 and 13, 1918, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 348-9.

governesses for their children, and although both taught the language capably, Eleanor Roosevelt judged that “they were very bad” for her children’s “dispositions.” After the war, the Roosevelts settled on a single, French-speaking, Swiss Protestant governess, Mademoiselle Seline Thiel, from Neuchâtel.³⁰⁰ The result was that the Roosevelt children, unlike their parents, could speak only French, not German. In contrast to his father, Roosevelt’s son James related that he left Harvard in 1928 without a diploma because he failed German.³⁰¹ When Eleanor Roosevelt took her two youngest sons on a tour of France, Belgium, and the Rhineland in 1929, she discovered that they could not understand German at all, and they begged her to take them back to France.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 169, 209, 211, 272 and 343. James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, Affectionately, F.D.R.: A Son’s Story of a Lonely Man (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), pp. 42-3 and Elliott Roosevelt and James Brough, The Roosevelts of Hyde Park: An Untold Story, p. 133. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s governess, Mademoiselle Rosat Sandoz, was also from the Swiss canton of Neuchâtel.

³⁰¹ James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, Affectionately, F.D.R.: A Son’s Story of a Lonely Man (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), p. 110.

³⁰² [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 84-5.

Chapter 4: The Affirmation of a Progressive Worldview, 1919-1928

Every war . . . brings after it a period of materialism and conservatism;
people tire quickly of ideals.

Franklin D. Roosevelt to his son Elliott¹

By the mid 1920s, Franklin D. Roosevelt's worldview coalesced into a coherent perspective and reservoir of strategic thinking. From Franklin D. Roosevelt's progressive perspective, the forces of conservatism, militarism, and imperialism seemed to flourish in the aftermath of the Great War. Faced with the apparent failures of the Paris Peace Conference, Woodrow Wilson's efforts on behalf of the League of Nations, and his own defeat in the election of 1920, Roosevelt deliberated about how to avoid the mistakes he recognized. Throughout his life, Roosevelt considered history to be cyclic in nature. The intervention of the United States in the Great War and Woodrow Wilson's dream of a League of Nations to enforce international peace represented a period of idealism and progress to Roosevelt but at tremendous human cost. There were limits as to how long idealism could be sustained before it would be followed by a period of conservatism and reaction. The postwar era, Roosevelt believed, was one of those periods "when reactions in the march of democracy have set in, and forward-looking progress has seemed to stop."²

Although national progressivism lacked any semblance of a vital, national movement by the 1920 election, Roosevelt labeled himself progressive during his vice presidential campaign. After his election defeat, he continued to characterize himself as progressive,

¹ Elliott Roosevelt and James Brough, An Untold Story: The Roosevelts of Hyde Park (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), p. 212.

² Acceptance Speech to Democratic National Convention, July 19, 1940, Master Speech File Number 1291, Speech File, FDRL.

or increasingly what he called liberal, throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s.³ Roosevelt operated from a remarkably durable and consistent worldview in which he perceived international events from the perspective that groups and national leaders served either as the agents or the opponents of progress. Although he observed that throughout history “the forces of reaction so often defeat the forces of progress,” he could not conceive the forces of reaction as being representative of informed, popular will.⁴ He did not imagine that the governments or groups that he considered reactionary could ever have true popular support. Instead, he perceived that a conservative and reactionary minority, “people who would have the whole of their government put into the hands of a little group,” constantly worked to subvert the will of the people and rob them of their freedom and liberty.⁵

Roosevelt applied his perspective to both domestic and foreign affairs. In his thinking, the postwar years solidified the connection between domestic politics and foreign policy. Roosevelt saw the failure of the League of Nations and the postwar resurgence of militarism and conservatism as the work of reactionaries in Europe and in the Republican Party in the United States. After the Great War, Roosevelt advocated policies to encourage and sustain the efforts of liberal Germans. He criticized the Republican Party for its unyielding stance on war debts and reparations and took personal steps to bolster what he nostalgically saw as liberal, urban, and manufacturing Germany. In the late

³ Acceptance Speech to Democratic National Convention, July 19, 1940, Master Speech File Number 1291, Speech File, FDRL.

⁴ Radio Address to the Young Democratic Clubs of America Meeting in Milwaukee, August 24, 1935, Master Speech File Number 795, FDRL.

⁵ Radio Address to the New York Herald Tribune Forum, October 26, 1939, Master Speech File Number 1250, FDRL.

1920s and early 1930s, he viewed the failure of the Weimar Republic and the rise of National Socialism as symptomatic of the rejuvenation of the forces of conservatism, Prussian militarism, and autocracy.

He perceived similar forces at work in postwar France as well. Those forces manifest themselves during the Paris Peace Conference and the 1920s in French demands for security and reparations payments from Germany. Confident that a strong, progressive leader in France such as Georges Clemenceau had the potential to unite the country, Roosevelt watched as political jealousies and infighting fragmented French wartime unity. Accompanying political and social reaction in France were impulses that Roosevelt saw as French imperialism and militarism. From agitation for a Rhennish Republic and the occupation of the Ruhr, to the treatment of Robert Nivelle, events of the postwar years undoubtedly reinforced Roosevelt's basic *Dreyfusard* distrust of conservative, Catholic French *général*s.

During the postwar years, Roosevelt blended the ideas of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, the two men who had the most profound effect on Franklin Roosevelt's adult life, into his thinking. In the 1920 campaign Roosevelt publicly assumed the reform mantle of Theodore Roosevelt while he also advocated the internationalism of Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations. He emulated their statesmanship. Each had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and the title of peacemaker. They served as a powerful example for a protégé to follow in his public career, and Franklin Roosevelt's proposal for a Society of Nations dominated by the great powers that would preserve or, if necessary, restore world peace reflected both of their influences.

At the same time Roosevelt's thinking about American power matured and became more sophisticated, developing into a comprehensive strategic concept. In the 1920s, Roosevelt considered how the employment of United States power could preserve international peace. Although he had been a consistent advocate of military preparedness since joining the Wilson administration, over time, his thinking came to emphasize international cooperation, suasion, and symbolic measures as effective tools to maintain and restore international peace. International cooperation would take the form of concerted economic sanctions and blockade. He also speculated that symbolic American actions alone might have a salutary effect on international situations. When those tools proved inadequate, rather than dispatch another American Expeditionary Force overseas to fight costly land battles, Roosevelt envisioned a response comprised of sea power, aerial bombing, and public information to complement blockade and economic sanctions.

Roosevelt conjectured that economic sanctions, coercion, and blockade could allow a capable statesman to achieve his foreign policy aims, to include objectives essentially military in nature, without resorting to war or involving active belligerency on the part of the United States. His thinking essentially updated the strategy of armed neutrality. Roosevelt, however, did not believe that military preparedness was unnecessary, and he rejected the idea that military preparedness would inevitably provoke war. Instead he believed that military preparedness served two vital purposes in the United States. First, air and sea power gave credence to economic measures while also dissuading aggressor states. The second was the impact of military spending on the domestic economy. Ever the politician, Roosevelt not only envisioned that military preparedness could secure

important foreign policy objectives, he assessed that it could also provide the engine for domestic prosperity and thereby enhance political prospects.

I.

Following the Armistice, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt traveled to Europe, officially to assist the demobilization and disposition of Navy assets and properties in France. President Wilson had sailed to Europe three weeks earlier for the peace negotiations, and the Roosevelts hoped to glimpse the proceedings. The visit was Franklin Roosevelt's last to Europe for nearly a decade. Fellow passengers on the *George Washington* included Charles Schwab, Bernard Baruch, and Edward N. Hurley.⁶

While the Roosevelts were at sea, they received word that Theodore Roosevelt passed away. Eleanor Roosevelt mused, "The loss of his influence and example was what I seemed to feel most keenly."⁷ Despite the loss, Theodore Roosevelt and his ideas remained a powerful influence on Franklin Roosevelt. Thirteen years later, Franklin Roosevelt noted that Theodore Roosevelt was one of three men in American history "who chiefly stand out for the universality of their interest and of their knowledge."⁸ In retrospect, although he remained a powerful example, the passing of Theodore Roosevelt marked the beginning of a shift in Franklin Roosevelt's thinking about foreign affairs.

⁶ During the Great War, Buruch served as chairman of the War Industries Board and Hurley the chairman of the Shipping agency. As such, both men were part of Wilson's War Cabinet. Steelman Schwab was the head of Wilson's Emergency Fleet Corporation. Bernard M. Baruch, *Baruch: The Public Years* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 95, 85.

⁷ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, *This Is My Story* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 275.

⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Looking Forward* (New York: John Day Company, 1933) p. 11.

Franklin Roosevelt's thoughts on preparedness and foreign policy remained in accord with that of his kinsman throughout his tenure as assistant secretary of the navy. During the war, however, the influence of Woodrow Wilson, particularly with respect to political matters, gradually increased. Following Theodore Roosevelt's death, Wilson's influence grew, and Franklin Roosevelt returned from Europe in February 1919 staunchly supporting Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy and the League of Nations.⁹

Upon their arrival in Paris, the Roosevelts found "many celebrities and all one's friends!"¹⁰ Although it did involve some work, the journey largely consisted of social events in Paris and battlefield tours. From their elegant rooms in the Ritz, the Roosevelts were at the center of a vibrant, post-armistice Paris. Many of the Roosevelt's extended family were also in Paris at the time: Aunt Dora Delano Forbes and Uncle Fred Delano, cousins Fay, Pauline, and Charlie Forbes, Mme. Hortense Howland, Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., his brother Kermit, and Kermit's wife Belle Roosevelt.¹¹ Eleanor Roosevelt exclaimed, "Paris is wonderful."¹²

⁹ Tracing the emergence of Roosevelt's attitudes toward Europe and his "vision" of "partial internationalism," John Lamberton Harper argues that by 1919 Roosevelt possessed an "emerging worldview" that "combined Wilson's antagonism toward European power politics with Theodore Roosevelt's more traditional and punitive ideas about how to keep the peace." John Lamberton Harper, American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean Acheson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 3, 35.

¹⁰ Letter to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 11, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 450.

¹¹ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 278-9; Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 11, 12, 14, and 17, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 450, 451, 452, 457-8.

¹² Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 12, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 451.

There was, however, another side of France in early 1919 that Eleanor Roosevelt increasingly found more disturbing. Her response to the scantily clad women of the Paris nightclubs was to declare that France was “no place for the boys,” particularly her young cousin Sheffield Cowles, serving as an aide to her husband.¹³ Even worse, depressing reminders of the war and the severe casualties were everywhere. Widows in black filled the Parisian sidewalks.¹⁴ Eleanor Roosevelt recalled, “The city itself was unchanged but practically every French woman was dressed in black.”¹⁵ Accompanying her aunt on a visit to a French military hospital, Eleanor recoiled at the sight of the seriously wounded men. She confessed that she “could hardly bear to look at the men with the horrible face wounds.”¹⁶ Next, she and her aunt visited a hospital for those men blinded by the war. Almost speechless, Eleanor Roosevelt also accompanied Edith Wilson, the president’s wife, as she visited soldiers in the American hospital.¹⁷

Two American Army officers drove Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt through the battlefields of the Somme front on January 18, 1919. The route took them through Senlis, Compiègne, Noyon, Ham, St. Quentin, Cambrai, Bapaume, Albert, and Amiens.¹⁸ The journey reinforced Franklin Roosevelt’s images from his battlefield tour several months

¹³ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, February 11, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 469.

¹⁴ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 14, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 452.

¹⁵ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 279.

¹⁶ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, February 8, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 467.

¹⁷ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 279-80.

¹⁸ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 281.

earlier. That night, he reflected, “We have had a very wonderful day and one which we shall never forget.”¹⁹ The tour also left a deep and lasting impression on Eleanor Roosevelt. She recalled, “The picture of desolation fostered in me an undying hate of war which was not definitely formulated before that time.” The experience also strengthened her conviction that war was useless “as a means of finding any final solution to international difficulties”²⁰

Like her husband on his trip to the front in August 1918, Eleanor Roosevelt left the battlefields of the Western Front with an almost idealized portrait of the French soldier in her mind. A soldier the Roosevelts encountered that day certainly strengthened Eleanor Roosevelt’s image of the determination, tenacity, and self-sacrifice of the French enlisted soldier. In the ruined town of Cambrai, the Roosevelts “met a French sergeant with the Croix de Guerre with Two Palms.” Only recently, the heroic sergeant had been reunited with his two little children, who reportedly had been carried off to Belgium in 1914 during the initial German advance. The family lived on the bottom floor of their roofless home, and, nearby, a small school had opened for the few dozen families that had returned to the town.²¹ To Eleanor Roosevelt, sickness seemed rife in France in early 1919 and life hard in the ruined villages. After seeing the conditions, she observed that French soldiers “could stand the hardships better than could our men who were accustomed to greater comforts in their homes and better food and perhaps a less trying

¹⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 18, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 458.

²⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 280-2, 364-5.

²¹ Franklin Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 18, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 460.

climate.” Eleanor Roosevelt later noted that she was particularly impressed with all “the little French soldiers, under-sized and looking undernourished” had accomplished.²²

During his first few days in France, Franklin Roosevelt dedicated his efforts to the demobilization of Navy property. With the end of the war, the French struck hard bargains on settlement claims or stalled demobilization contracts in the obvious hope of getting better deals as United States forces chafed to depart. Roosevelt got involved in what had been fruitless negotiations over a radio station under construction near Bordeaux. To resolve the impasse, Roosevelt went to French minister André Tardieu, one of Clemenceau’s trusted agents. Roosevelt had seen Tardieu in action the previous August and considered him a man who could cut red tape.²³ When Roosevelt threatened to pack up the station and ship it home, Tardieu agreed that the French government would take over the radio station and also pay the United States 22,000,000 francs. Eleanor Roosevelt informed her mother-in-law that Franklin’s “biggest deal is done” and that it was “a big success.”²⁴ The previous negotiator praised Roosevelt as a man who “knows how to handle the French.”²⁵ The incident served to further strengthen Roosevelt’s self-image of his ability to deal with French officials.

That winter, his work in France complete, Franklin Roosevelt also made a brief trip to Koblenz, the last visit to Germany in his life. The word in Paris was that American troops

²² [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 288.

²³ Entry for August 2, 1918, Diary 1918, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

²⁴ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 14, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 453.

²⁵ Nathan Miller, F.D.R.: An Intimate History (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1983), p. 157.

in the Rhineland had been remarkably well treated by the Germans and “billeted in the best rooms,” a distinct contrast to the treatment many American soldiers received in France since the armistice.²⁶ The official purpose of Roosevelt’s trip was to visit and inspect the Marines stationed on the Rhine. It also offered Roosevelt another opportunity to satisfy his fascination with the battlefields of the Western Front. For Roosevelt war remained horrible yet fascinating. Following his inspection tour, Eleanor Roosevelt noted that her husband returned laden with helmets, shell casings, and “all kinds of loot from battlefields and Germany!”²⁷

In addition to passing over the old battlefields, the 1919 inspection tour was memorable for Roosevelt. It constituted his last visit to Germany, and what struck him was the relative absence of tangible signs of the German defeat. Near Koblenz, as his party approached the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein overlooking the Rhine, Roosevelt related to his companions how he had been through the valley several times as a boy by bicycle and boat. Anticipating the sight of the stars and stripes flying over Ehrenbreitstein, Roosevelt was dismayed when they saw no flag above the castle. Incensed, Roosevelt found the officer commanding the sector and demanded to know why the American flag was not flying as a sign to the German people. Unmoved by the officer’s retort that they

²⁶ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 16, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 456.

²⁷ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, February 8, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 467; [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 288.

did not want to upset the German people, Roosevelt immediately took up the matter with General John J. Pershing upon his return to Paris, and Pershing corrected the matter.²⁸

At the Paris Peace Conference, meanwhile, President Wilson also was not satisfied due to his inability to realize his vision for the peace treaty. United States Food Administer Herbert Hoover recalled that one of his preliminary sessions with Allied ministers was “an enlightenment in national intrigue, selfishness, nationalism, heartlessness, rivalry and suspicion, which seemed to ooze from every pore—but with polished politeness.”²⁹

Bernard Baruch, tasked with drafting the economic clauses of the Peace Treaty, recalled, “On most issues, the French were especially obstinate.”³⁰ National interests quickly rose to the forefront. For instance, contrary to American intentions, the Allied blockade seemed bent on starving the German people. Although the British eventually acquiesced, French promises to relax the blockade were only slowly, and partially, followed through. Meanwhile, French luxuries passed through the blockade into Germany; food did not.³¹

American protests brought countercharges of being pro-German from Allied officials and journalists. Himself an object of criticism in French and British journals, Baruch believed that a “concerted campaign of raking criticism” was underway in the French and

²⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt memorandum, May 23, 1942, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1928-1945 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), pp. 1323-5.

²⁹ Herbert Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920 (New York: MacMillan Company, 1952), p. 287.

³⁰ Bernard M. Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 101.

³¹ Bernard M. Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 100.

British press targeted against President Wilson and his advisors.³² Harold Nicolson, a member of the British delegation, concurred with Baruch. On January 26, 1919, he noted, “Feeling in Paris is turning against Wilson and the Americans.” The following day, at a luncheon offered by the French press, he “gathered a vivid impression of the growing hatred of the French for the Americans.” He added, “Wilson shares this growing unpopularity.”³³ Nicolson labeled the attacks in the press against Wilson as “dreadful” and “most unfair.”³⁴ Because of the strict censorship that the French government exercised over French newspapers, Wilson believed that the attacks against him had the tacit approval of the French government.³⁵

In addition to the personal attacks in the open press, Wilson’s meetings behind closed doors with Allied leaders resulted in bitter quarrels and relentless demands, “evidence on every hand of the ignoble, grasping nature of men and nations.”³⁶ As a consequence, Americans in Paris increasingly came to view their country as the “only nation that approached unselfishness.”³⁷ Hoover believed that because the United States had been

³² Bernard M. Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 126-7.

³³ Diary entries for January 26 and 27, 1919 in Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking 1919 (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965) pp. 249-50.

³⁴ Diary entries for February 11 and March 16, 1919 in Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking 1919 (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965) pp. 261 and 285.

³⁵ Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) p. 79n68.

³⁶ Bernard M. Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 126-7.

³⁷ Bernard Baruch comment in entry for April 7, 1919, in Josephus Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921, edited by E. David Cronon (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 385.

“more detached from the war,” American statesmen could rise above the “malign forces” that shackled Allied diplomats.³⁸ Baruch assessed that Allied unity disintegrated with the end of the war, and Allied representatives came to Paris intent on vengeance and spoils.³⁹ Wilson suggested that the French intentionally obstructed proceedings in an attempt to break him down, an attitude he described as “damnable.”⁴⁰ To make matters worse, by late January 1919, there was a growing suspicion that the French hoped “to mark time” until Wilson returned to the United States several weeks later; after which, “the French may be able to rush the others into decisions.”⁴¹

Following the armistice, the American pro-French disposition that existed during the war seemed to wither. The post-war inflation raging in France caused many problems. Eleanor Roosevelt noted that in Paris “the prices are worse than New York for everything.”⁴² Many soldiers interpreted increasing post-war prices as a reflection of greed and thanklessness on the part of the French merchants; consequently, they had neither understanding nor forgiveness for the French people. Anti-French attitudes among American soldiers also seem to have been a symptom of the growing bitterness of many

³⁸ Herbert Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920 (New York: MacMillan Company, 1952), p. 438.

³⁹ Bernard M. Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 96.

⁴⁰ Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) p. 283.

⁴¹ Diary entry for January 23, 1919 in Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking 1919 (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965) p. 247.

⁴² Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 11, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 450.

veterans still chaffing to return home many months after the armistice.⁴³ Eleanor Roosevelt observed, “The one cry on every side is ‘we want to go home’ and they say only the troops actually in Germany are at all contented.”⁴⁴

While in Paris, the Roosevelts believed that they had a duty, associated with the task of demobilization, to call on French public officials. They met with Tardieu and Georges Leygues, the Minister of Marine, and lunched with scores of French admirals and naval captains.⁴⁵ Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt also left calling cards for President Raymond Poincaré at the Elysée Palace.⁴⁶ Later, Poincaré received the Roosevelts formally, and they paid their respects.⁴⁷ The encounter, it seems, was little more than a formality. In contrast to his political rival Clemenceau, Poincaré, an austere, conservative Republican, did not make much of an impression on the Roosevelts. Rather than refer to Poincaré’s residence as the Elysée, Eleanor Roosevelt called it the “Palais Murat,” having associated the building with its previous occupants from the First Empire, Maréchal Joachim Murat

⁴³ Frank Freidel, Over There: The Story of America’s First Great Overseas Crusade (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990, revised edition) pp. 222, 226-7, and 232.

⁴⁴ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 11, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 449.

⁴⁵ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 278; Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 11, 13 and 14, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 449, 450 and 452.

⁴⁶ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 15, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 455.

⁴⁷ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 278.

and his wife, Napoleon's sister Caroline Bonaparte.⁴⁸ Franklin Roosevelt's talk with Clemenceau about disarmament made a deeper impression.⁴⁹

The Roosevelts would have concurred with Wilson's nomination of Clemenceau as the chairman of the Paris Peace Conference. Wilson made the nomination as a tribute to the French Republic and the tragic suffering it endured during the war. Wilson, however, also intended the nomination as a tribute to Clemenceau himself. Prior to the beginning of the Peace Conference, Wilson announced that he and Clemenceau shared a "brotherhood of heart in these great matters."⁵⁰ Wilson thought that under Clemenceau's leadership France had become one with "all those who love freedom and truly believe in the progress and rights of man."⁵¹

While in Paris, the Roosevelts also managed to stay in contact with French and American friends and political figures from Washington. The Roosevelts met with old friends from the French embassy in Washington, Ambassador Jules Jusserand, the Laboulayes, a former French naval attaché and his wife, and Colonel Fabry, *Maréchal*

⁴⁸ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 20, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 455.

⁴⁹ "Roosevelt Held Out to the Last Minute," The New York Times, October 3, 1928, p. 12.

⁵⁰ Woodrow Wilson address in Paris, January 18, 1919 in Woodrow Wilson, International Ideals: Speeches and Addresses Made During the President's European Visit, December 14, 1918, to February 14, 1919 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), pp. 90-2.

⁵¹ Woodrow Wilson addresses to the French Senate in Paris, January 20, 1919 in Woodrow Wilson, International Ideals: Speeches and Addresses Made During the President's European Visit, December 14, 1918, to February 14, 1919 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), p. 96.

Joseph Joffre's aide during the French mission to the United States in 1917.⁵² Concerning the area around the Avenue des Champs-Élysées and the Tuileries Quarter, it seemed to Eleanor Roosevelt that "everyone had left Washington and congregated there!"⁵³ The Roosevelt's circle included luncheons with Secretary and Mrs. Robert Lansing, with Colonel and Mrs. Edward House, and with Edith Boling Wilson, the president's wife. Among their other friends were Joseph Grew and his wife and journalist Herbert Bayard Swope.⁵⁴ Staying at the Hôtel Crillon, the headquarters of the American delegation in Paris, were many other friends and acquaintances to include Frank Polk, Walter Lippmann, Adolph Berle, William Bullitt, Felix Frankfurter, Norman Davis, James Shotwell, and journalists Ray Stannard Baker, William Allen White, and Lincoln Steffens.⁵⁵

The Roosevelt's returned from France with President and Mrs. Wilson who shared their ideas with their shipboard companions. Concerning the Roosevelts, Edith Boling Wilson reported that she and her husband "found them very delightful companions."⁵⁶ President Wilson made his attitude about Allied political leaders clear to his traveling

⁵² [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, pp. 278-9.

⁵³ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 20, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 455.

⁵⁴ Eleanor Roosevelt to Sara Delano Roosevelt, January 11, 14, 17 and 20, 1919, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 450, 452, 454-5.

⁵⁵ Ronald Steel, Walter Lippmann and the American Century (New York: Vintage Books, 1981) pp. 151-2; Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) pp. 57-8, 438-9.

⁵⁶ Edith Boling Wilson, My Memoir (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1939), p. 240.

companions. Displaying a powerful sense of American exceptionalism, he asserted that “the world considers the United States as the only nation represented in this great conference whose motives are entirely unselfish.”⁵⁷ By the time he landed in the United States, Franklin Roosevelt had become a standard bearer for Wilson’s foreign policy.

II.

Following Wilson’s brief return to the United States from Paris, his proposal for a League of Nations drew public opposition from the Republican dominated Senate. On March 4, 1919, thirty-nine Republican Senators or Senators-elect declared that they would not approve a peace treaty that embodied the League covenant. In the United States, Wilson’s opponents praised the Republican “Round Robin” declaration. Meanwhile, in France, many believed that Wilson and his Fourteen Points had been repudiated and acted accordingly.

Returning to Paris in mid-March, 1919, an alarmed Wilson moved quickly to halt what he believed were efforts to sidetrack the League or compel American concessions. Ultimately, Wilson’s actions resulted in the inclusion of the League covenant as part of the peace treaty. France, however, insisted on equivalent concessions for acquiescing to Wilson’s covenant. Clemenceau’s initial demand was for reparations from Germany to cover the cost of damages. Having seen Germany invade France twice in his lifetime, Clemenceau’s second demand was for security against a resurgent Germany, either by the French occupation of German territory to the Rhine or by the creation of a buffer state

⁵⁷ Dr. Grayson diary entry for February 22, 1919, in The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 55, Arthur S. Link, ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 224.

between France and Germany. Clemenceau, however, had a difficult time dealing with Wilson whom he saw as too idealistic. Because Secretary Lansing and Colonel House both seemed willing to make concessions in Wilson's absence, the French premier told House, "You are practical, I understand you, but talking to Wilson is something like talking to Jesus Christ!"⁵⁸

Wilson reacted strongly to calls for concessions and resisted any compromise. Clemenceau's personal demands to Wilson for compensation and security resulted in "a bitter scene" that ended with the premier storming out of Wilson's residence. Attacks on Wilson by the French press continued. Nevertheless, March and April 1919 were months of hurried compromise in Paris, compromise that upset Wilson. Compromise, however, was essential if the peace treaty and the League covenant were to be signed in June. One of the key Frenchmen responsible for developing compromises was André Tardieu. Following United States entry into the Great War, Tardieu headed the French Mission in Washington, D.C. and during the Paris Peace Conference was, according to Baruch, "one of Clemenceau's most trusted lieutenants."⁵⁹ Tardieu worked behind the scenes as Clemenceau's personal representative to coordinate the efforts of the French delegates and develop acceptable compromises.⁶⁰

Viscerally opposed to compromise, Wilson came to view domestic and foreign critics of his policies, Republican opposition in the Senate, and French demands for reparations

⁵⁸ Quoted in Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980, tenth edition) pp. 606-9.

⁵⁹ Bernard M. Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 101, 103.

⁶⁰ Diary entry for April 9, 1919 in Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking 1919 (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965) p. 307; see also Ibid, pp. 28, 81, 182.

and security as interrelated. Although Colonel House thought that Tardieu was “the one nearly indispensable man at the Conference,” Wilson disliked and distrusted Clemenceau’s plenipotentiary. While Wilson was in the United States, Tardieu had proposed the establishment of an independent Rhennish Republic in the Rhineland for a few years, after which a plebiscite could decide its future, satisfying the principle of self-determination. Wilson already had suspected Tardieu, who had led the French mission in the United States during the war, of being in sympathy with his political opponents. Coming amid the Republican “Round Robin” and at a time when Wilson feared efforts to sidetrack the League or force American concessions, Tardieu’s proposal brought immediate rejection from Wilson who hoped to have his principles accepted in their entirety.⁶¹ The American Ambassador to France, William Graves Sharp, warned Wilson that André Tardieu, “Clemenceau’s chief leader of intrigue,” had been “in almost constant communication . . . with all of the intense partisan Republican opponents of the President.”⁶²

Wilson’s admiration for Clemenceau did not extend to other French politicians. Wilson distrusted the French politicians that he likened to machine “bosses” in the United States. Wilson thought “that the rank and file of the French people themselves are all right, but that they are under the absolute domination of the political element.” Rather than forfeit all hope for the French people, Wilson believed that with “the proper opportunity” that “the French people would be all right in every way.” Wilson also observed that due to the

⁶¹ Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) pp. 152-4.

⁶² Dr. Grayson’s diary entry for March 19, 1919, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, volume 46, March 17-April 4, 1919, Arthur S. Link, ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 86-7.

machinations of French politicians, the “rank and file people of the United States had turned from being pro-French to being pro-British.”⁶³

In spite of his differences with Clemenceau, Wilson thought Poincaré or one of his representatives would be much worse. Clemenceau had been a moderating and constructive influence. While Wilson suggested that he and Clemenceau shared a “brotherhood” in their general goals, he possessed no such faith in any of Clemenceau’s conservative political opponents. Publicly, when he first arrived in France, Wilson had expressed his “deep personal respect” for Poincaré as “the representative of the great people of France.”⁶⁴ Those attitudes did not last. Several months later, he confided to journalist Ray Stannard Baker his fear that if Clemenceau resigned that the French would probably “get some man like Poincaré in his place.”⁶⁵ In Paris, Wilson developed a view of French politics and leaders that perceived Clemenceau and his Radical Party as the agents of progress; opposing them were the forces of conservatism and reaction in the parties of the center and right. A generation of American progressives, many of whom participated in the peace conference, evidently shared Wilson’s views.

In contrast to the French *poilu* that emerged from the Great War with his image intact, the American view of the French officer corps and conservative Republican political

⁶³ Dr. Grayson’s diary entry for March 19, 1919, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, volume 46, March 17-April 4, 1919, Arthur S. Link, ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 86-7.

⁶⁴ Woodrow Wilson response to Poincaré’s welcome address during a luncheon in Paris, December 14, 1918 in Woodrow Wilson, International Ideals: Speeches and Addresses Made During the President’s European Visit, December 14, 1918, to February 14, 1919 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), p. 3.

⁶⁵ Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) pp. 282, 324.

leadership increasingly dimmed. What emerged was an image of a partisan, politically reactionary, and Catholic group. While Joffre had been widely acclaimed in the United States in May 1917, according to Josephus Daniels, the anti-clerical Joffre had been forced to retire and step aside due to partisan jealousy.⁶⁶ Although Clemenceau's ascent to power later that year managed to keep senior French military leaders under civilian control, it was clear that neither Poincaré nor Foch liked the premier. Wilson was suspicious of Poincaré, Foch, and French *général*s. After visiting battlefields, a resentful Wilson thought that French officers had restrained their troops from cheering for him.⁶⁷ On March 28, 1919, General Tasker H. Bliss, one of the American plenipotentiaries, warned the president that he believed Foch intended to break off the armistice, a move Bliss feared would disrupt the Peace Conference and might lead to a resumption of the war.⁶⁸

During the Peace Conference, Wilson deemed unilateral French efforts to gain security for France at the expense of German territory or unity to be imperialistic and militaristic. *Maréchal* Ferdinand Foch consistently was associated with those efforts. On several occasions in May and June 1919, Clemenceau had categorically rejected the proposals and disavowed the actions of Foch and his subordinate in the Rhineland, *Général* Charles Mangin. The French officers advocated a separate Rhennish Republic and urged the

⁶⁶ Entry for September 18, 1917, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 207.

⁶⁷ Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) p. 78.

⁶⁸ Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) p. 282.

detachment of Baden, Württemberg, and Bavaria from Germany.⁶⁹ Much to the chagrin of President Poincaré, a conservative Republican, and of French military leaders, Clemenceau retained ultimate control over French policy throughout 1919.⁷⁰ Wilson wrote, “Throughout the sessions in Paris it was evident that a militaristic party, under the most influential leadership, was seeking to gain ascendancy in France.”⁷¹

In the end, Wilson accomplished less than he hoped for in Paris, the Treaty of Versailles being a compromise between his Fourteen Points and the particular interests and demands of Allied governments, especially France.⁷² The final treaty signed at Versailles in June proved a disappointment for Wilson. Although the treaty did include the covenant of the League of Nations, it was not what Wilson had envisioned. Toward Germany, he thought the treaty had aspects of a vengeful Carthaginian peace that he hoped to avoid. Wilson had believed that a moderate policy would allow Germany, purged of its militarists, to assume an honorable and prosperous position among the nations of the world. In addition, Wilson believed that the election of a German national constituent assembly, the removal of Prussian military masters, and the maintenance of civil order would give substantial impetus to German moderates and liberals hoping to establish a democratic government. National politics hampered many of his hopes for the

⁶⁹ Paul-Marie de la Gorce, The French Army: A Political and Military History, trans. Kenneth Douglas (New York: George Braziller, 1963) pp. 161-9.

⁷⁰ James F. McMillan, Twentieth-Century France: Politics and Society, 1898-1991 (London: Edward Arnold, 1992), p. 77.

⁷¹ Excerpt from Wilson letter to Senator Hitchcock quoted in “France protests Wilson Charge,” The New York Times, March 12, 1920, p. 2.

⁷² Arthur S. and William A. Link, American Epoch: A History of the United States Since 1900, volume 1, War, Reform, and Society, 1900-1945 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993, seventh edition), p. 166.

reemergence of moderate and liberal Germans.⁷³ Fearing an explosion in Germany if the Allies took too much territory and riches, Wilson told the other heads of state on March 27, “We do not want to destroy Germany and we could not do so. Our greatest mistake would be to furnish her with powerful reasons for seeking revenge at some future time. Excessive demands would be sure to sow the seeds of war.”⁷⁴

At Versailles, concerned about being labeled pro-German by the Allies and “soft” in domestic political circles, Wilson had no direct contact with German liberals and moderates. After receiving a message transmitted from German political leaders, General Tasker Bliss, a member of the American commission, wrote the president that it was “a pity” that Germany “cannot in any way be heard while peace terms are being discussed.” Finally in mid April, the Allied heads of state agreed to arrange a meeting with German representatives. Although the German delegation arrived at Versailles on April 29 and presented their credentials, they sat for over a week. Wilson, Clemenceau, and British Prime Minister David Lloyd George decided that they would not talk with the Germans, presenting the German delegation no opportunity to break their united front. When the statesmen of the victorious powers finally received the German delegates at the Trianon Palace on May 7, 1919, the delegates received a lashing from Clemenceau and a book containing terms. Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German minister of foreign affairs, received the terms and read a German reply that Wilson considered defiant and

⁷³ Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) pp. 46-7, 84, 380.

⁷⁴ Wilson address to the Big Four quoted in Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) p. 255.

offensive. Afterwards, Wilson dismissed the minister as “not frank, particularly Prussian, and stupid.” The next day, Wilson told his French and British counterparts that he regretted that German people had starved because the treaty was not yet ready and that Germany would be forced to sign the treaty in two weeks, enough time for the German government to reconcile itself to the inevitable. To Wilson it seemed incredible that the German people were allowing representatives of the old regime to speak on their behalf. Instead of negotiating with the German foreign office, Wilson envisioned a German public eager for peace that, with a little education, would accept the treaty. He proposed that economic advisers meet with German moderates to explain to the German people that the commission had considered conditions in Germany as it drafted reparation articles.⁷⁵

III.

Following his return from France and with demobilization well underway, Roosevelt’s attention turned almost solely to politics. Intent on keeping himself before the Democratic National Committee and in the public eye, he made a number of speeches in 1919 extolling progressive values and the League of Nations. On March 6, 1919, two weeks after returning from Europe, Roosevelt advocated “the proposed organization of a League of Nations.” He offered “first-hand information” of the attitude of American servicemen in Europe, saying that they “wanted a peace signed that will carry with it a

⁷⁵ Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) pp. 46-7, 260-1, 387-93, 402-3, 410.

pact that would help the civilization of the future.” Roosevelt added, “That is why every man over there is supporting a League of Nations.”⁷⁶ Later that month, Roosevelt praised the veterans in rousing, progressive terms and predicated “that anarchy and lawlessness and the doctrines of destruction will have but short shrift in any American community.”⁷⁷ He also credited the war with making the United States “at last one unified nation, . . . speaking one tongue, thank God, maintaining a common liberty and recognizing the high purpose of service” for “all mankind.” American unity, Roosevelt suggested, “was why the German line gave way at last” the previous autumn. From his perspective, President Wilson was laboring “to solve the great problems of humanity so that nations may not again be torn by conflict.”⁷⁸ Roosevelt remained committed to progressive policies at home and abroad. “We are progressive,” he proudly told his listeners in Chautauqua, New York.⁷⁹ At the Democratic National Committee meeting, Roosevelt captured his listeners with an attack on the Republican Party for following the reactionary “Old Guard” and urged that his party continue to be “a progressive Democracy.”⁸⁰ Increasingly in 1919 and 1920, Roosevelt came to view the Republican Party as a reactionary opponent of reform minded Democrats and Independents.

⁷⁶ Roosevelt speech, March 6, 1919, Baltimore, Maryland, printed in Baltimore American, March 7, 1919, p. 11, Master Speech File No. 85, FDRL.

⁷⁷ Roosevelt speech, March 24, 1919, Baltimore, Maryland, printed in Baltimore American, March 25, 1919, p. 16, Master Speech File No. 87, FDRL.

⁷⁸ Roosevelt speech, March 24, 1919, Baltimore, Maryland, printed in Baltimore Sun, March 25, 1919, p. 11, Master Speech File No. 87, FDRL.

⁷⁹ Roosevelt speech, August 30, 1919, Chautauqua, New York, Master Speech File No. 101, FDRL.

⁸⁰ Joseph Alsop, FDR, 1882-1945: A Centenary Remembrance (New York: Viking Press, 1982) p. 93.

Roosevelt's efforts to remain in the public eye succeeded, and during the 1920 campaign, the Democratic Party nominated Roosevelt as the vice presidential running mate for nominee Governor James M. Cox of Ohio. Roosevelt advocated a platform of progressivism at home and abroad. In his acceptance speech given on the porch of his Hyde Park home, Roosevelt suggested that the two major problems facing the next administration were United States "relations with the world" and the critical need for "organized progress at home." Domestic progress, Roosevelt asserted, required a fundamental reorganization of "the archaic shortcomings of our governmental machinery." In foreign affairs, he advocated a peace treaty that included a League of Nations. Touting the League as the basis for "peace that will last," Roosevelt argued that "the method and machinery by which the opinion of civilization may become effective against those who seek war is at last within the reach of humanity." To the critics arguing that the League would surrender United States sovereignty he offered the characterization, "It is not anti-national, it is anti-war."⁸¹

Cox and Roosevelt initially announced their campaign aims following a meeting with President Wilson. They made it clear that they considered the League of Nations to be the primary issue of the campaign. Roosevelt told the press that there was "a problem" in American relations "with other countries and a definite solution is not to be avoided." In front of Wilson, the candidates pledged themselves to "the ratification of the League of Nations in a form that will not cancel America's usefulness and influence in the League."⁸²

⁸¹ Roosevelt's acceptance speech at Hyde Park, 1920, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 500-508.

⁸² "Cox and Roosevelt Define Their Aims," The New York Times, July 21, 1920, p. 1.

During the election campaign of 1920, Roosevelt believed that the United States was entering the cycle of conservative reaction that historically follows a period of reform and progress. Roosevelt also made it clear that he considered his ticket to be a part of “an unhalting march of progress.”⁸³ Governor Cox labeled Republican candidate Warren G. Harding a reactionary and asserted that the “special interests” behind Harding were “seeking to reverse the order of advance and turn to rout the Progressive victories that have been won.”⁸⁴ Nonetheless, election for Cox and Roosevelt in 1920 was a long shot; Wall Street betting commissioners gave two and one-half to one odds that Republican candidate Warren G. Harding would win.⁸⁵ In a progressive jab at Harding’s penchant for campaigning from home, Roosevelt described Harding as an “out of touch” and “mysterious figure” under the control of “the bosses of his party.” Roosevelt suggested that, in contrast to his opponent, “Whatever the results of the election, I shall feel that I have acted on the square with the American people.”⁸⁶ Seeing the campaign and his political future as part of the broader sweep of history, Roosevelt stated, “In the long run the true statesman and the honestly forward-looking party will prevail.”⁸⁷

⁸³ Roosevelt’s acceptance speech at Hyde Park, 1920, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 500-508.

⁸⁴ “Cox in California Portrays Harding as a Reactionary,” The New York Times, September 18, 1920, p. 1 and “Cox and Roosevelt Define Their Aims,” The New York Times, July 21, 1920, p. 1.

⁸⁵ “Bet at 2 ½ to 1 on Harding,” The New York Times, July 21, 1920, p. 1.

⁸⁶ “Cox and Roosevelt Define Their Aims,” The New York Times, July 21, 1920, p. 1.

⁸⁷ Roosevelt’s acceptance speech at Hyde Park, 1920, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 500-508.

Franklin Roosevelt and James Cox portrayed their Republican opponents as reactionaries disloyally pandering to German voters. Cox charged that “pro-German elements” were backing Harding in hope of scrapping the League of Nations covenant and obtaining a separate peace between the United States and Germany.⁸⁸ Several days later, commenting on Harding’s German supporters and his attitude toward the League, Cox alleged that Harding was guilty of “the most stupendous conspiracy the world has ever seen.”⁸⁹ Roosevelt accepted Cox’s views. After the election, Roosevelt told Josephus Daniels that even “the German” who had been his mother’s gardener for twenty years voted for Harding because of a letter that he had received from Germany.⁹⁰ During the campaign, Roosevelt charged that Harding’s campaign managers were “attempting to secure the hyphenated vote” by “making special appeals to the small but very dangerous element which was not loyal during the war.” In Roosevelt’s mind, the Republican Party had repudiated completely the progressive legacy of Theodore Roosevelt and instead was “doing deliberately the things which Theodore Roosevelt gave the last years of his life to stamp out.”⁹¹

The Republican Party’s apparent repudiation of Theodore Roosevelt’s ideals convinced Franklin Roosevelt that he should inherit the mantle of his kinsman rather than

⁸⁸ “Cox Hints Johnson Got Harding Pledge,” The New York Times, September 26, 1920, p. 14.

⁸⁹ “Cox Backs League in Verbal Duels with Pro-Germans,” The New York Times, September 29, 1920, p. 1.

⁹⁰ Entry for November 13, 1920, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 564-5.

⁹¹ “Roosevelt Charges Play to Alien Vote,” The New York Times, September 23, 1920, p. 4.

anyone in the Republican Party. Throughout the country, Cox and Roosevelt portrayed themselves as the progeny of Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party of 1912. In California, Cox praised Theodore Roosevelt's running mate, California Senator Hiram Johnson, and argued that Johnson battled the same foes of reaction in 1912 that opposed Cox in 1920.⁹² Meanwhile, in Hartford, Connecticut, Franklin Roosevelt linked Harding to a senator that had received payments from Standard Oil during his kinsman's presidency, suggesting that he was continuing his kinsman's efforts to eliminate corruption in major American corporations.⁹³ Of the Republicans who had opposed Wilson's League of Nations, Roosevelt asserted that any "man who opposes concrete reforms and improvements in international relations is of necessity a reactionary, or at least, a conservative in viewing his home problems."⁹⁴

Given the rhetoric, it is not surprising that the election campaign of 1920 caused a rift in the Roosevelt family between the Hyde Park Roosevelts and their the Oyster Bay cousins. The personal criticism of Franklin Roosevelt by the children of Theodore Roosevelt distanced Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt from their Oyster Bay relations. During the fall of 1920, Alice Roosevelt Longworth and Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., both active in the Republican Party, publicly campaigned for Harding.⁹⁵ Theodore Roosevelt,

⁹² "Cox in California Portrays Harding as a Reactionary," The New York Times, September 18, 1920, p. 1.

⁹³ "Roosevelt Calls for Independence," The New York Times, September 18, 1920, p. 7.

⁹⁴ Roosevelt's acceptance speech at Hyde Park, 1920, in F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 504.

⁹⁵ Joseph P. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1971), p. 254.

Jr. resented cousin Franklin Roosevelt's characterization of himself as the heir of Theodore Roosevelt's political legacy. Addressing a troop of former Rough Riders, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. labeled his kinsman "a maverick" that "does not have the brand of our family."⁹⁶

On election day, Harding came away with a landslide victory over Cox, amassing over sixteen million popular votes to Cox's nine million. The Republican Party also swept the House and Senate, gaining impressive majorities. Eleanor Roosevelt recalled, "The election was an overwhelming defeat which was accepted very philosophically by my husband, who had been completely prepared for the result."⁹⁷ Roosevelt's comments during the campaign of 1920 show philosophical acceptance to be a product of his progressive views. Roosevelt doubted whether the country would elect a Democrat president until the Republicans had brought about "a serious period of depression and unemployment." "Every war," he observed, "brings after it a period of materialism and conservatism; people tire quickly of ideals, and we are now but repeating history."⁹⁸

IV.

In January 1920, the French National Assembly failed to elect Clemenceau to the presidency, and he withdrew into retirement. An underground campaign by Aristide Briand, reminding Catholic deputies of Clemenceau's anti-clericalism and fostering

⁹⁶ "Raps Franklin Roosevelt," The New York Times, September 18, 1920, p. 7.

⁹⁷ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story, p. 320.

⁹⁸ Elliott Roosevelt and James Brough, An Untold Story: The Roosevelts of Hyde Park (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), p. 212.

concerns about the future sovereignty of the parliament, succeeded in denying him the presidency of the Republic.⁹⁹ Seeing in Clemenceau's exclusion the triumph of the "militaristic party," on March 8, 1920, Wilson observed, "They were defeated then, but are in control now."¹⁰⁰ On April 1, 1920, in a letter to the House of Representatives, President Wilson, suspicious of the intentions of the Allied Supreme Commander and the aspirations of French *général*s for a French satellite in the Rhineland, stated "that Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch has no authority over United States troops in German territory."¹⁰¹

To the Wilson administration, after the departure of Clemenceau from office in early 1920 and the defeat of the Versailles Treaty in the United States Senate on March 20, 1920, French political and military leaders seemed particularly unrestrained in their imperialistic, reactionary designs. In response to German military actions in the Ruhr basin and German troops entering the neutral zone, a violation of Article 42 of the Treaty of Versailles, the French government demanded an immediate German withdrawal on April 2, 1920. Absent German compliance, French troops occupied Frankfurt, Offenbach, Hanau, Darmstadt, Bad Homburg, and Dieburg on April 6.¹⁰² In Koblenz, State

⁹⁹ McMillan, Twentieth-Century France: Politics and Society, 1898-1991, p. 92; Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, The Decline of the Third Republic, 1914-1938, trans. Anthony Forster (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. 90.

¹⁰⁰ Excerpt from Wilson letter to Senator Hitchcock quoted in "France protests Wilson Charge," The New York Times, March 12, 1920, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ "Our Rhine Force is Not Under Foch," The New York Times, April 2, 1920, p. 14.

¹⁰² "French Quickly Occupy German Cities; Frankfort Quiet Under Heavy Guard; Berlin Government Denounces Move," The New York Times, April 7, 1920, pp. 1-2.

Department representative Pierpont B. Noyes, the American Rhineland Commissioner, “formally disassociated himself from any action” involving the French occupation.¹⁰³

The French occupation of Frankfurt and Darmstadt drew mixed reaction. Although the British Prime Minister stated that the action met with the disapproval of the Allied governments, the governments of Poland and Belgium publicly announced their approval. From Sumner Welles’ perspective, the action seemed to violently incense public opinion in the United States. The result was that in Britain and the United States, French demands for strict German compliance with the Treaty of Versailles often were seen as being motivated by imperialistic, territorial ambitions.¹⁰⁴ Not everyone in the United States, however, reacted unfavorably to the French action. For example, Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge read a group declaration into the Senate record. Criticizing Wilson and his comments about “a militaristic party” in power in France, Lodge declared, “Precautions against the recurrence of armed invasions taken by the victims of repeated German aggressions are justified.”¹⁰⁵

Although the French Army withdrew from Frankfurt and the other occupied cities on May 17, 1920, suspicions remained in Democratic circles of growing reaction and imperialism in Europe. French and British attitudes and actions since the signing of the Treaty of Versailles convinced Wilson that the United States “could not trust” Britain and

¹⁰³ “Withdrew Our Support,” The New York Times, April 7, 1920, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Sumner Welles, The Time for Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944) p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ “Lodge Reads to Senate Criticism of Wilson,” The New York Times, May 4, 1920, p. 3.

France.¹⁰⁶ Wilson commented to Daniels that they both knew of the hatred of British leaders toward Germany and their selfishness.¹⁰⁷ The previous summer, Secretary Daniels had characterized Lloyd George as a Tory bent on imperialism and militarism.¹⁰⁸ In Washington, French proposals to give the League of Nations a permanent military force seemed a thinly veiled effort to make the League an instrument of French imperial power. Meanwhile, through the summer of 1920, France and Britain scrambled to establish protectorates over Turkey's former possessions in the Middle East: Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Arabia.¹⁰⁹

In November 1920, French *Général* Robert Nivelle visited Navy Secretary Daniels in Washington, D.C.¹¹⁰ Self-confident, cultured, and elegant, Nivelle possessed an almost hypnotic allure and a talent for handling politicians. His Protestantism reassured politicians wary of "Jesuit generals." As son of an English mother, he spoke perfect English, an asset during a time of strained Franco-British cooperation. An ardent believer in the doctrine of the attack, Nivelle began the Great War as a colonel and rose rapidly. In May 1916, Nivelle assumed command of the Second Army at Verdun from *Général* Philippe Pétain. In December 1916, the eloquent Nivelle became the French Commander-in-Chief, promoted ahead of Pétain, his immediate superior. Nivelle believed that victory

¹⁰⁶ Entry for May 4, 1920, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 526.

¹⁰⁷ Entry for June 1, 1920, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 536.

¹⁰⁸ Entry for July 9, 1919, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 424.

¹⁰⁹ Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, The Decline of the Third Republic, pp. 102-3, 107.

¹¹⁰ Entries for November 9 and 10, 1920, in Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, pp. 563-4.

was a matter of moral force, and in April 1917, he launched an attack against the Chemin-des-Dames. The costly offensive that bore his name broke the French Army, and mutinies broke out in over half of the regiments. In the aftermath, Pétain became Commander-in-Chief of the mutinous French Army with Nivelle relegated to Algeria as the governor-general. Nominated to the Supreme War Council in 1920, Nivelle represented France at the tercentenary of the *Mayflower*.¹¹¹

Daniels referred to Nivelle as “the only Protestant General in France” and believed that the impressive Nivelle had been discriminated against solely because of his religion and republican political orientation.¹¹² The views of Daniels were probably representative of those held by many in the administration who perceived the ouster of Nivelle in 1917 to have been the result of the reactionary political and religious attitudes of the French officer corps rather than due to any battlefield leadership failure on Nivelle’s part. Indeed, because the Wilson administration had no contemporary awareness or understanding of the costly failure of the Nivelle Offensive on the Chemin des Dames and the subsequent mutinies throughout the French Army, Nivelle’s removal reinforced American suspicions of reactionary, Catholic French senior officers. The fact that both of Nivelle’s successors, Pétain and Foch, were Catholic would have served to validate the perspective in Washington, D.C.

It was only in 1919 that Roosevelt and the Navy Department first learned of the extent of mutiny in the French Army in 1917 after Nivelle’s failed offensive. Rather than

¹¹¹ Alistair Horne, *The Price of Glory: Verdun, 1916* (New York: McFadden Books, 1964), pp. 228-9, 232, 313-6, 324-5; Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, *The Decline of the Third Republic*, pp. 46-9.

¹¹² Entries for November 9 and 10, 1920, in Daniels, *The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels*, pp. 563-4.

revising earlier perceptions about the sterling morale of the French soldier or the qualities of Nivelle, American naval leaders viewed the incident as the result of German subversion, an “offensive by the German Intelligence Department, the real method by which they still hoped to win the war.” In a report forwarded to Roosevelt, the former naval attaché in Paris noted that France in 1917 had fallen into “the condition of anarchy and demoralization” due to “the skillful guidance of the German Intelligence bureaus.” According to the attaché, French politicians proved ineffective against the “German propagandists” and “enemy agents” in France that had sapped “the morale of the French people, and especially the morale of the French Army, that was going and going rapidly.” Only the arrival of the first American troop convoy and the subsequent accession to power in late 1917 of Clemenceau changed the perilous condition in France. Clemenceau’s accession, the attaché asserted, “once and for all broke the grip which Germany had on French politics.”¹¹³ The report left intact the sterling American image of the French soldier. It also reinforced American attitudes about the power and effectiveness of propaganda and subversion while directly attributing French political turmoil to German subversion.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Enclosure to Captain W. R. Sayles memorandum, May 13, 1919, “The Visit of the ‘Joffre’ Mission to the United States and its Result—The First Convoy,” Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

¹¹⁴ In the assessments of the Wilson administration, the situation in France in 1917 was not the only time during the Great War that German subversives collaborated with foreign reactionaries to the advantage of Germany. Assessments of the collapse of Rumania, for example, reflected a similar interpretation. In the summer of 1916, Rumania had entered the war on the Allied side, only to be crushed by the Central Powers before the end of the year. Edward M. House relayed to President Wilson the assessment that “the Roumanian fiasco” had been the result of collusion between Germany and “the corruption of high Russian officials who permitted Germany to over-run that country by a preconcerted plan.” Edward M. House to Woodrow Wilson, January 22, 1917, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 40, November 20, 1916—January 23, 1917, Arthur S.

V.

Following his defeat in the 1920 election, Roosevelt accepted a job as the vice president of the Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland, in charge of running the New York office.¹¹⁵ Many of his activities, even at work, had a political rather than a strictly commercial bent. He saw the period as an interlude in his political career while the Republicans either made good or failed. Throughout this period, he still considered himself a progressive. Increasingly, however, he began to use the terms liberal and progressive interchangeably. During the summer of 1921, he answered partisan charges in the Senate alleging the Wilson administration of military mismanagement. August 1921 brought a much-prized vacation on Campobello Island. It turned out to be a tragic vacation when Roosevelt contracted poliomyelitis.¹¹⁶

Following a period focused almost exclusively on rehabilitation and recuperation, by mid 1922 Roosevelt's interests returned to domestic politics and United States foreign relations.¹¹⁷ Interspersed with those interests were trips to Georgia and Florida in constant

Link, et al., editors (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 540. The similarities between those Great War interpretations and the Roosevelt administration's assessment of the French defeat in 1940 are striking.

¹¹⁵ Statement by Franklin D. Roosevelt, released for morning papers, February 23, 1928, Miscellaneous Memoranda, Fidelity and Deposit Co. of MD, Subject File, Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹¹⁶ James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt, vol. 1, The Lion and the Fox, 1882-1940 (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984) pp. 86-7, 89.

¹¹⁷ James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt, vol. 1, The Lion and the Fox, 1882-1940 (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984) pp. 88-9. Burns argues that polio did not alter Roosevelt's personality or his attitudes. Burns believes that the illness

pursuit of therapy and a possible cure. His mobility restricted by heavy braces and crutches, rather than being a direct participant in events as he had while assistant secretary of the navy, Roosevelt became more of an observer. Each morning he began his day reading newspapers, focusing initially on the editorials and political commentaries. During his months of therapy in the waters of Warm Springs, Georgia, he had his wife send copies of *The New York Times* and *The New York World*. By the time he entered the White House in 1933, Roosevelt's daily procedure for digesting the morning and evening papers had become systematic.¹¹⁸ Eleanor Roosevelt contrasted her husband's approach with that of Woodrow Wilson who received only select newspaper clippings that filtered the news. She observed that her husband dedicated time every day "for his study of the press, particularly the opposition press," in order to stay informed "on all shades of opinion in the country." Beyond his morning and evening rituals with the newspapers, he spent much of his time reading, primarily history and biography. His wife rated her husband an assiduous reader who "devoured books," often at the rate of a book a day, and invariably captured the author's points.¹¹⁹

"strengthened already existent or latent tendencies in his personality." Biographer Ted Morgan, however, takes a fundamentally different view. In contrast to Burns, Morgan asserts that polio marked a dividing point in Roosevelt's life, essentially creating "two Franklin D. Roosevelts." Morgan portrays Roosevelt as having different values before the illness. Before the illness, Morgan finds Roosevelt to have been a vindictive, self-interested, and opportunistic fraud who chose expediency over principle. Burns, *The Lion and the Fox*, p. 89; Ted Morgan, *FDR: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), p. 258.

¹¹⁸ Grace Tully, *F.D.R. My Boss* (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), pp. 76-7; Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin*, p. 316.

¹¹⁹ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt* (New York: Da capo Press, 1992), pp. 101-2; Entry for August 6, 1940, Joseph P. Lash Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, The Papers of Joseph P. Lash, FDRL.

In 1921 André Tardieu published a book that could not have escaped Roosevelt's attention. With a forward by Edward House and an introduction by Clemenceau, Tardieu's book, *The Truth About the Treaty*, recounted the postwar setbacks, failures, and recriminations that had been of "no benefit to anyone except the German reactionaries." He believed that "the conservative spirit of the Senate has reasserted itself" and that its failure to ratify the Versailles Treaty encouraged German noncompliance. Tardieu assessed that "German militarism lives in the spirit" and predicted a future "war which will be sought by the Pan-Germanists" unless Britain, France, and the United States united to stop them. From his point of view, the absence of allied unity and its negative impact on enforcement of the Versailles Treaty would allow the reactionary nature of Germany "in all its insidious and penetrating forms" to recover. He predicted "all the old perils of before will arise again for all of us, with bankruptcy in the bargain." He assessed that although the "pillars of Allied victory" were the British fleet and the French army, the Allies could not have conquered Germany without the overwhelming assistance of the United States. The solution that Tardieu advocated for the future was the preservation of the victorious coalition of the Western Front, "The union of the three democracies—France, Great Britain and the United States—is the fundamental guarantee of world peace."¹²⁰

In his introduction to Tardieu's book, Clemenceau added further reinforcement to his lieutenant's themes. Although he acknowledged that in the victory of 1918 France required "the splendid aid of trusty Allies," Clemenceau argued that the role of the allied coalition did not end with the German armistice. He urged that the coalition of 1918

¹²⁰ André Tardieu, *The Truth About the Treaty* (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1921), pp. 435, 437, 461-2, 469-72, and 476.

“maintain its full effect in peace by the continuation of our common undertakings.” He asserted that merely winning the war was not sufficient for an enduring peace in the postwar. Stating “the miracle of the war won demanded an even greater miracle—the miracle of a peace organized,” from Clemenceau’s perspective, an enduring peace first required a common plan. He acknowledged that peace can naturally “lead to the slackening of our will,” but characterized as worthless any peace treaty unless it was enforced. Believing that positive change in Germany could be effected through a process of continual evolution, he maintained that to be effective the treaty would require sustained enforcement efforts on the part of each member of the allied coalition, gradually remaking German civilization “little by little.” Because they were “unable to fathom” that they had been defeated in the war, the German people remained susceptible to the same ancient evils that made them “aspire to hegemony,” particularly since Germany constituted “a civilization grafted upon the survival of barbarism.” Victory, Clemenceau observed, came with the “responsibility in the most noble effort to achieve a lasting peace by the sole forces of Right.”¹²¹

Although not a participant, Roosevelt undoubtedly followed Clemenceau’s 1922 visit to the United States with keen interest. Clemenceau arrived in the United States on November 18, and after visiting New York, Washington, Chicago, and Boston, he departed on December 13, 1922. Wilsonians greeted the former prime minister with great enthusiasm. Roosevelt’s friends Frank Polk, Bernard Baruch, Colonel Edward House,

¹²¹ Georges Clemenceau, Introduction to André Tardieu, The Truth About the Treaty (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1921).

and Ambassador Jules Jusserand greeted Clemenceau, made his arrangements, and escorted him during his visit.¹²²

During his visit, Clemenceau made two stops that would have intrigued Franklin Roosevelt. The first was to his kinsman's home at Oyster Bay. Clemenceau visited Theodore Roosevelt's home Sagamore Hill on Long Island because he "wished to study the environment which had produced so great an American." At Theodore Roosevelt's grave, Clemenceau accompanied by Polk, House, Baruch, and General John J. Pershing laid a wreath. One of the escorts told the press that Clemenceau then paused in a silent tribute "at the grave of the man who had been his personal friend and who he revered as one of the greatest Americans."¹²³

Clemenceau's second visit was to see Woodrow Wilson. Although their relationship at the Paris Peace Conference had been stormy at times, Wilson and Clemenceau parted in June 1919 on the best of terms; Clemenceau confided to Wilson's physician, "I feel that I am saying good-bye to my best friend."¹²⁴ They met again for the last time on December 6, 1922. Clemenceau described the meeting as "affectionate, of more than the utmost cordiality, as between friends." During the visit Clemenceau praised Wilson for his instrumental role in the creation of "newly liberated," independent states in Eastern

¹²² "Clemenceau's Ship in the Harbor Now," The New York Times, November 18, 1922, pp. 1, 3; "Mission Complete Tiger Bids Adieu," The New York Times, December 13, 1922, pp. 1, 3; "Clemenceau Races Through City Again," The New York Times, December 13, 1922, p. 3.

¹²³ "The 'Tiger' Pilgrim to Roosevelt Tomb, Up at 4, in Bed at 8," The New York Times, November 20, 1922, pp. 1, 7.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Arthur Walworth, Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1986) p. 433.

Europe. Clemenceau also tried to play down the defeat of the Versailles Treaty in the U.S. Senate and the withdrawal of American soldiers from the Rhineland. He stated, “There can be no estrangement of French and American hearts.” Elaborating his belief that both countries shared the same democratic ideals, Clemenceau told Wilson, “We hold no malice for your leaving us.” Clemenceau also suggested that perhaps the time had come for to revise the Monroe Doctrine to include parts of Europe as well. The next day, Clemenceau was scheduled to speak at Chautauqua, one of Franklin Roosevelt’s occasional forums.¹²⁵

Franklin Roosevelt undoubtedly was very receptive to the ideas expressed by Clemenceau during his visit, particularly since many of Clemenceau’s arguments coincided with Roosevelt’s views. The former prime minister believed it imperative that Britain, France, and the United States stand together; his mission in the United States was to try and make that a reality. He suggested, “there can be no entente in Europe unless America is in it.” Clemenceau, however, did not advocate a return of American soldiers to the Rhine. Instead, he argued that merely a gesture from the United States would be sufficient to force Germany into compliance with the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. He told his audience in Boston, “What we want is nothing—a gesture, something to make Germany understand [but] without [Americans] coming back in arms in Europe.” Clemenceau asserted that the true nature of France and the French Army was democratic,

¹²⁵ “Tiger and Wilson Recall Old Times in Cordial Reunion,” The New York Times, December 7, 1922, pp. 1, 4.

not militaristic or imperialistic. He remarked, “When I think that we are charged with being militarists and imperialists—excuse me—I laugh.”¹²⁶

Clemenceau vigorously argued for American involvement in Europe. Acknowledging the bitter history of relations between France and Germany, Clemenceau observed, “I have no illusions about the history of my country.” In recognition of the periodic power of the forces of militarism and reaction, he continued, “I am pleading for an American influence in Europe that will protect Germany against France, if necessary, no less than France against Germany.” Although he acknowledged the American fear of foreign entanglements, he noted that Americans and Europeans “all come from the same blood.” He exhorted his audience, “Think of your dear old Pilgrims, your cavaliers, your Huguenots!” Sharing the same blood, in Clemenceau’s mind, meant that France and Britain in unity with the United States shared a collective responsibility for “the civilized world.” Concerning the power of American influence in Europe, he suggested that the moment the United States made its desires known “all the threats coming from Germany will stop.”¹²⁷

Clemenceau’s visit and his message drew adverse, hostile reactions from the quarters that Roosevelt considered reactionary. The initial opposition to Clemenceau’s visit came from the French government under the reins of Prime Minister Poincaré. Through a variety of sources, Poincaré’s government relayed its “official opposition” to the visit. Poincaré’s government cautioned that Clemenceau, “a private citizen, should not be

¹²⁶ “Tiger Tells Boston Entente Needs Us,” The New York Times, November 24, 1922, pp. 1, 2.

¹²⁷ “America Can End It, Clemenceau Said,” The New York Times, November 24, 1922, p. 2.

accepted as an official French spokesman.”¹²⁸ In the U.S. Senate, Clemenceau’s plea drew particularly intense criticism from the Republicans who had been irreconcilable toward the League of Nations and the Versailles Treaty. The “irreconcilables” argued that Clemenceau was responsible for the current misery in Europe and that United States enforcement of the Versailles Treaty would only “add misery and suffering to Europe.”¹²⁹

In contrast to the Senate criticism, Wilsonians saw Clemenceau as a moderating influence at the Paris Peace Conference. Rather than subscribe to the arguments coming out of the Senate, they believed that during the conference Clemenceau held in check the vengeful militarism and imperialism of Poincaré, Foch, and their circle. American involvement in Europe, they believed, was necessary to hold those forces in check and prevent them from crushing the liberal spark in the infant German Republic.

VI.

A proposal that Roosevelt drafted in 1923 clearly reflects the impact of Clemenceau’s ideas and the depth of Roosevelt’s continued interest in European peace and progress. In May 1923, editor and publisher Edward M. Bok proposed a nation-wide contest for a plan by which the United States could cooperate with other countries to achieve and preserve world peace. Eleanor Roosevelt worked as a member of Bok’s policy

¹²⁸ “Clemenceau Visit Opposed in France,” The New York Times, November 18, 1922, p. 17.

¹²⁹ “Senators Denounce Clemenceau’s Plea,” The New York Times, November 23, 1922, pp. 1, 3; “Tigriphobia at Washington,” The New York Times, November 24, 1922, pp. 1, 6.

committee.¹³⁰ What her husband developed was a plan for a new permanent international organization, armed with the tools it needed for decisive action, and, unlike the existing League of Nations, clearly independent of the Quai d'Orsay. In 1944, Franklin Roosevelt recalled that his plan "was in many aspects similar to the new plan for the United Nations."¹³¹ The plan reveals a depth and complexity in Roosevelt's strategic thinking and demonstrates the degree to which his ideas coalesced in the 1920s.

Roosevelt never submitted his proposal. After his wife became a member of Bok's jury for the award, Roosevelt shelved his proposal to avoid any potential embarrassment or perception of impropriety.¹³² Roosevelt's plan combined the humanitarian and egalitarian attributes of Wilson's League of Nations with the responsibility that Theodore Roosevelt believed that the great powers had to preserve peace. Roosevelt's proposal became a synthesis of the ideas of the two men most influential to his thinking about the role of the United States in world affairs.¹³³

¹³⁰ Joseph P. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1971) pp. 282-3.

¹³¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt memorandum, Quebec, September 15, 1944, and Roosevelt memorandum January 19, 1944, attached to a copy of "A Plan to Preserve World Peace: Offered for 'The American Peace Award'," Folder 46, Bok Peace Award 1923 or 1924, Box 41, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹³² Franklin D. Roosevelt memorandum, Quebec, September 15, 1944, and Roosevelt memorandum January 19, 1944, attached to a copy of "A Plan to Preserve World Peace: Offered for 'The American Peace Award'," Folder 46, Bok Peace Award 1923 or 1924, Box 41, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹³³ Wilson's health had declined steadily since he left the White House; he died on February 3, 1924.

As Roosevelt drafted his entry for the Bok Peace Award, Poincaré's occupation of the Ruhr was ongoing, having been launched on January 11, 1923. The American press painted a grim picture of the current leadership in France. Poincaré, according to *The New York Times*, "believes he has a master grip on the reparations situation and he intends to keep it, no matter who gets squeezed, until Germany capitulates." The newspaper asserted that Poincaré's actions did not have popular support in France. The author noted, "It would be a mistake to say that M. Poincaré has all Frenchmen behind him." Nevertheless, *The New York Times* observed that with the French parliament in recess that there were no reins on the prime minister.¹³⁴

Weighing the problems in Europe, Roosevelt noted the great anxiety caused by the inability of the nations of the world "to restore order in the economic and social process of civilization" or to put an end to war. He asserted American history, national self-interest, and the "high purpose to help mankind to better things" all justified United States participation with other nations to end war. He also argued for a continuous United States involvement with other nations rather than a gathering "hastily summoned in time of threatened crises." His "Plan to Preserve World Peace" acknowledged that the U.S. Senate would not currently, "or probably for many years to come," allow the United States to enter the League of Nations. He also assumed that no plan to guarantee world peace could succeed without United States participation.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ "Say Poincare Won't Give Way," The New York Times, July 5, 1923, p. 7.

¹³⁵ Foreword and Note Preliminary to Summary, "Roosevelt, Franklin D.--Bok Peace Award: 'A Plan to Preserve World Peace'," Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL. Another copy is in folder 46, Bok Peace Award 1923 or 1924, Box 41, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

Roosevelt's plan was to retain "all that is best in the existing League, including the great humanitarian and economic enterprises of the League" while changing the structure of the League and the obligations of member states.¹³⁶ As a first priority, he thought that his proposed Society of Nations needed a powerful executive, not just an assembly of equals. His proposal preserved the General Assembly of the League but added a standing Executive Committee always ready to deal "with any matter affecting the peace of the world." Unlike the existing League machinery, Roosevelt's proposed Executive Committee could call the assembly into extra-ordinary or special sessions. The core of the Executive Committee would be the "so-called 'Great Powers'" of France, Britain, and the United States augmented by Great War Allies Italy and Japan. Representatives of six small nations elected by the Assembly would round out the Executive Committee. Roosevelt thought that the Executive Committee should sit "in practically continuous session" in order that it might "obtain immediate action in the event of unlooked for crises" and routinely exercise executive powers in the name of the Society of Nations.¹³⁷ Roosevelt's proposed Executive Committee reflected the theoretical influences of Theodore Roosevelt's advocacy for the cooperation of the Great Powers to preserve international peace and, in practice, of the regular sessions of the Supreme Council during the Paris Peace Conference.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Summary, "Roosevelt, Franklin D.--Bok Peace Award: 'A Plan to Preserve World Peace'," Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

¹³⁷ Articles 3, 4, 5, and 6, "Roosevelt, Franklin D.--Bok Peace Award: 'A Plan to Preserve World Peace'," Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

¹³⁸ The United States, France, Britain, Italy, and Japan comprised the Supreme Council or the Council of Ten in Paris and met on a continuous basis for nearly five months. See Margaret MacMillan, Paris, 1919 (New York: Random House, 2001), pp. 53-8.

In an apparent counter to French and, to a lesser extent, British obstinacy, militarism, and imperialism, decisions of the Executive Committee would require the assent of two-thirds of the members, a provision that Roosevelt believed would prevent one or two “recalcitrant nations” from blocking “the will of the great majority.” Although initially established in Geneva, Roosevelt offered that the meetings of the Assembly and the Executive Committee could “be held in other places to suit the convenience of the members” and, presumably, to prevent any European capital from developing a disproportionate influence over the Society of Nations.¹³⁹

Roosevelt also hoped to give his proposed organization the machinery and power to settle disputes or to deal with aggressor states. In accord with many existing treaties between the United States and other countries, he called for arbitration of “all disputes which cannot be satisfactorily settled by diplomacy.” In an obvious reference to Poincaré’s occupation of the Ruhr, Roosevelt argued that arbitration would also “apply to the case of demonstrations made by one nation against the other for the purpose of collecting financial debts.” Nations, Roosevelt envisioned, would refer their grievance to the Society of Nations rather than “taking direct action.”¹⁴⁰

To deter war and punish aggressor states, Roosevelt, taking a lesson from the Great War, proposed the application of economic pressure, “the severance of all trade or financial relations, and the prohibition of all intercourse.” He admitted that the “so-called economic and non-intercourse boycott” amounted to “an untried experiment,” but he

¹³⁹ Articles 3, 4, 5, and 6, “Roosevelt, Franklin D.--Bok Peace Award: ‘A Plan to Preserve World Peace’,” Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

¹⁴⁰ Articles 12 and 13 and Final Note to Plan, “Roosevelt, Franklin D.--Bok Peace Award: ‘A Plan to Preserve World Peace’,” Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

believed that it offered “great possibilities as a deterrent of war and of aggressive acts.”¹⁴¹ The Society could, he suggested, tailor or postpone some of those measures to best facilitate attaining its goals or to minimize losses to its members. Unlike Article X of the League of the Nations that provoked intense Senate opposition, in Roosevelt’s proposal, if the Society deemed that military force might be necessary to restore international peace, then it would recommend such action and invite members to contribute armed forces.¹⁴²

Clearly, when Roosevelt referred to contributing military forces, he envisioned that contribution to consist primarily of naval and air forces, bolstered by a campaign of public information, rather than the deployment of an American Expeditionary Force or AEF. His thinking about military force reflected his lessons from the 1917 and 1918 period. During the Great War, he had been impressed with the work of the Committee on Public Information and the impact of psychological factors on morale. Roosevelt also believed that the cooperation of the U.S. Navy with the capital ships of Britain and France had played a decisive role in the economic blockade of Germany. After the war, he attributed the U.S. Navy with a key role in the subsequent collapse of the power of Imperial Germany.¹⁴³ Therefore, in 1919 and the early 1920s, he advocated continued

¹⁴¹ Final Note to Plan, “Roosevelt, Franklin D.--Bok Peace Award: ‘A Plan to Preserve World Peace’,” Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL.

¹⁴² Articles 15 and 16, Summary, and Final Note to Plan, “Roosevelt, Franklin D.--Bok Peace Award: ‘A Plan to Preserve World Peace’,” Box 3, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, FDRL. Roosevelt’s ideas for the League to have an enforcement mechanism may have been influenced by the arguments of Léon Bourgeois, who Clemenceau selected to assist in drafting the League of Nations covenant, for the League to possess an international police force and a military staff.

¹⁴³ Speech at Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, New York, August 30, 1919, Master Speech File No. 101, FDRL. Although nearly 1,500,000 German soldiers died on the

appropriations for the navy. He noted with dismay the dangerous attitude in Congress “that all wars are over.” Arguing that he was “not the least bit... a militarist,” he urged that the Congress allocate money to keep officers and men from leaving the service and to “help feed some of the wives and children of the navy.”¹⁴⁴ Naval appropriations would also enable the navy “to carry out their program for the development of the airplane.” Having seen its potential in 1918, as early as 1919, Roosevelt publicly asserted that the airplane “will be one of the great factors in all future wars.”¹⁴⁵ Certainly, what Roosevelt envisioned in 1923 was not another AEF, but rather an air and naval force intended to enforce international economic sanctions and, presumably in conjunction with a campaign of public information and psychological warfare, defeat aggressor states.

VII.

Although attuned to the potential of technology in future wars, Roosevelt never thought deeply about the political movements and ideologies emerging in Europe as a result of the Great War and its aftermath. He had no understanding of the nationalist, anti-Semitic direct-action groups flourishing in Germany in the early 1920s or the nature

Western Front alone, Roosevelt seems to have largely attributed the rapid German collapse to economic difficulties brought about by the British blockade of the Central Powers.

¹⁴⁴ Speech at St. Stephens Church, Lynn, Massachusetts, April 11, 1920, Master Speech File No. 118, FDRL.

¹⁴⁵ Franklin Roosevelt press interview, June 26, 1919, “Must Develop Aero, Says F.D. Roosevelt,” Poughkeepsie, New York, Evening Star and Enterprise, Folder 62, Box 40, Writing and Statement Files, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

of fascism emerging, particularly among veterans, in Italy and France. Roosevelt's progressive outlook led him to view new ideologies such as National Socialism and fascism as manifestations of older, pre-existing ideologies and forces. Frances Perkins, who had known Roosevelt since his term in the New York Senate, averred that Roosevelt "never could understand or comprehend dictators."¹⁴⁶ Like many other liberal-progressives, his thinking merely equated those groups with monarchists, imperialists, Tories, reactionary Republicans, and the forces of wealth, aristocratic privilege, and big business.¹⁴⁷

Roosevelt tended to see National Socialism and fascism through the lens of the Whig and progressive historians of his youth, equating current political manifestations in Europe with past events. As he explained it, his ancestors had struggled "to throw off a fascist yoke" during the American Revolution.¹⁴⁸ In a 1925 review of Claude Bowers' *Jefferson and Hamilton*, Roosevelt noted that running through his mind as he thought of the year 1800 was "the constantly recurring thought of parallel or at least analogous situations existing in our own generation." Roosevelt related his anger when people denied "that the forces hostile to control of government by the people as a whole ... which existed in the Crisis of 1790-1800 should still be a threat in our day/and land."

¹⁴⁶ Frances Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York: Viking Press, 1946) pp. 34-5, 156.

¹⁴⁷ Tennessee Wilsonian Cordell Hull, for example, believed that the alternative to the "progress" of world democracy was "the lapse of the world back to the control of hereditary and arbitrary kings, dictators, and other autocrats." Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, volume 1 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948) p. 127.

¹⁴⁸ Stenographer's copy of Roosevelt's informal, extemporaneous remarks before the Daughters of the American Revolution, April 21, 1938, Master Speech File No. 1131, FDRL.

Roosevelt characterized Federalist Alexander Hamilton as the true aristocrat, a “convinced opponent of popular government,” and “a virtual dictator” who with the assistance of “the monied class” had supreme control over the American government. Roosevelt added, “With Hamilton were the organized compact forces of wealth, of prestige, of commerce, of the press.” The militaristic Hamilton also had the support of the U.S. Army and President George Washington who was with him “at heart.” Perhaps it was with the European situation in mind that Roosevelt confided, “I have a breathless feeling too as I ---- wonder if a century and a quarter later the same contending forces are not again mobilizing.”¹⁴⁹

Roosevelt, likewise, failed to comprehend nuances or even salient differences between parties on the left of the political spectrum. While Roosevelt carefully followed domestic politics, speeches, and attitudes of Democrats and Republicans across the country, Frances Perkins did not think that he either read substantially or thought deeply about what she termed “unorthodox political groups.” Perkins noted that even after perusing a Socialist Party handbook, Roosevelt never fully understood “what the Socialists were driving at.”¹⁵⁰ He muddled distinctions between Whigs, liberals, Democrats, Social Democrats, Radicals, Socialists, Bolshevists, and Communists.

Rather than perceive a host of political parties, groups, and ideologies, Roosevelt saw a dichotomy between the agents of civilization and progress and the forces of conservatism and reaction that opposed them. Reviewing Bowers’ *Jefferson and Hamilton*, he noted

¹⁴⁹ Typed copy of long-hand, “Review of Claude Bower’s [sic] book, Jefferson and Hamilton November 19, 1925,” folder 64, Box 41, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁵⁰ Frances Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York: Viking Press, 1946) pp. 34-5, 156.

that Thomas Jefferson was “the natural democrat against the natural aristocrat,” Hamilton. Roosevelt argued, “Jefferson could count only on the scattered raw material of the working masses.” Equating the 1790s to current political groups, from Roosevelt’s progressive perspective, Jefferson, Sam Adams, James Madison “and all their lieutenants and all their followers were called anarchists and atheists and traitors - modern words like Bolshevik and socialist and radical had not yet come to men’s tongues.”¹⁵¹ Bowers, a Hoosier Democrat who believed that there was “a fundamental and irreconcilable difference in the two parties,” thought that Roosevelt’s review hit “the nail on the head with a resounding whack in its application of the lessons of the Jeffersonian period to the problems of today.”¹⁵²

The 1920s served to affirm Roosevelt’s progressive view of history that maintained a powerful grip on his thinking and his understanding of current and previous events. A draft introduction to a history of the United States that Roosevelt wrote in 1924 demonstrates that his historical perspective had remained virtually unchanged since his days in Harvard. Clearly his experiences during the intervening twenty years had served to validate and confirm the progressive ideas of his schooldays. The work that he drafted in 1924 covered the progress of civilization from the Middle Ages to the colonization of North America and the struggle between the agents of progress and the forces of reaction, aristocracy, and imperialism. In his thinking, the period through the fourteenth century

¹⁵¹ Typed copy of long hand, “Review of Claude Bower’s [sic] book, Jefferson and Hamilton November 19, 1925,” folder 64, Box 41, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

¹⁵² Claude Bowers to Franklin Roosevelt, December 2, 1925, folder 64, Box 41, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

was “a mad kaleidoscopic scramble for power and plunder” by kings, overlords, barons, and bishops, rival Popes, and a politicized Catholic Church.¹⁵³

In contrast to the forces of reaction, aristocracy, and imperialism, Roosevelt thought that “events of truly great significance to the future of civilization” also took place during the centuries of the Middle Ages. Those included the growth of towns in which the inhabitants had a voice in their government, improvements in roads and ship construction, renewed interest in geography after the Crusades, and the signing of the Magna Carta. He asserted that by the early fifteenth century more people than ever before were discussing “the rudiments of science and art and letters and government,” modern civilization was emerging. In Roosevelt’s mind, Columbus was an “agent of his time” who represented an era where, despite the emergence of the absolute monarchy under Louis XI and the desire for new kingdoms by European rulers and princes, “the imagination of thousands in Europe was on fire.”¹⁵⁴

With the exception of the English colonization of North America, Roosevelt viewed the European race for colonies as a manifestation of the forces of imperialism, militarism, and reaction. Roosevelt portrayed Spanish colonization on behalf of “His Most Catholic Majesty” as “a false glory,” bent solely on “exploitation” and producing only a hybrid race that was “part cavalier, part Indian, later on in part negro.” Similarly, Roosevelt

¹⁵³ Roosevelt’s draft “history of the United States,” in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, volume 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 546-552. Although he asserts that Roosevelt’s draft contained no “new or original ideas,” James MacGregor Burns finds that the fragment reveals “a marked socio-economic interpretation.” Burns, The Lion and the Fox, p. 89.

¹⁵⁴ Roosevelt’s draft “history of the United States,” in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, volume 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 546-552.

portrayed French efforts prior to the establishment of English colonies in North America as little better, afraid of competition and focused on fishing, fur trapping, and trading with Indian tribes. Roosevelt observed that the French left few historical records and nothing that he could characterize as “sound and permanent colonization.” He noted that, in sharp contrast to Spanish and French imperialistic exploitation, the English came to North America as permanent colonizers whose efforts advanced the course of civilization.¹⁵⁵

What is impressive about the draft history written while Roosevelt was boating around the Florida Keys is the extent that it remained consistent with the progressive interpretations of his college days. The draft reveals Roosevelt’s historical perspective to have been a synthesis of the progressive interpretations of his Harvard professors, particularly Frederick Jackson Turner and Silas M. Macvane, and Whig or progressive histories such as Francis Parkman’s *Montcalm and Wolfe* and Theodore Roosevelt’s *The Winning of the West*. Rather than repudiate his progressive perspective during the Great War or its aftermath, the events of the intervening twenty years since Roosevelt left

¹⁵⁵ Roosevelt’s draft “history of the United States,” in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters*, volume 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), pp. 546-552. John Lamberton Harper argues that Roosevelt had a general “animus toward European imperialism” and makes no distinction between Roosevelt’s attitude toward English colonialism and British involvement in the subsequent wave of European imperialism in the nineteenth century. Harper suggests that Roosevelt oscillated between Theodore Roosevelt’s “view that Britain was America’s indispensable partner” and Woodrow Wilson’s view of British imperialism as “a malign force.” John Lamberton Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean Acheson* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 26-7, 37. My view is that Roosevelt drew a clear distinction between the permanent settlements that constituted English colonization in North America and Australia, which represented the advance of civilization, and the later, more exploitive, British imperial ventures in Africa and Asia.

Harvard and his opportunity for reflection in the 1920s further confirmed the progressive world view of his youth.

VIII.

With the retirement of Clemenceau from French political life, Roosevelt hoped for the emergence of a liberal successor from the ranks of progressive French moderates. Radical Edouard Herriot was among the French political leaders who seemed to have promise. Certainly, the similarities of Herriot's proposals to reform the League with aspects of his own proposal for the Bok award must have intrigued Roosevelt. While Roosevelt was formulating his proposal for the Bok Peace Award, Herriot drafted a protocol to the League of Nations that called for compulsory arbitration in the event of conflict and sanctions against violators. British elections, however, brought down the British government and ended Herriot's hopes for his "Geneva protocol."¹⁵⁶ While in power from June 1924 to April 1925, Herriot followed an agenda based on antimilitarism, anticlericalism, and the expansion of individual opportunity through education improvements. His government was a mixture of Radicals and French Socialist Party members known as the *Cartel des Gauches*, a political alliance reminiscent of the coalition formed between the two parties at the turn of the century during the Dreyfus Affair.¹⁵⁷ It seems natural that Herriot was the type of French political leader that Roosevelt believed the United States needed to assist and encourage.

¹⁵⁶ Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, The Decline of the Third Republic, pp. 117-8.

¹⁵⁷ Robert O. Paxton, Europe in the Twentieth Century (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985, second edition) pp. 258-9.

As prime minister replacing Poincaré in 1924, Herriot and his *Cartel des Gauches* cabinet had inherited a difficult financial situation caused by Poincaré's occupation of the Ruhr. Grippled by runaway inflation, Germany halted reparations payments, a move that increased French anxiety since reparations were intended to finance reconstruction and pay American loans. The depreciation of the franc and the accompanying financial panic, brought Herriot's Radical-Socialist government to power. Herriot's cabinet, however, made matters worse, concealed the gravity of the problem it inherited, and alienated treasury bondholders with Socialist rhetoric calling for severe measures against capital. The result was a run on the franc, and by early 1925, Herriot's government drew vigorous attacks from Poincaré and right-wing deputies.¹⁵⁸ In an argument that would have appealed to American progressives, Herriot and the Radicals voiced their suspicions that conservative financiers subverted their efforts, having erected "a wall of money" against the republic.¹⁵⁹

To Roosevelt it seemed that the greedy, shortsighted policies of the U.S. Senate and the Coolidge administration demanding repayment of war debts benefited the forces of reaction in France while hampering the agents of liberalism in both France and Germany. From his perspective, Republican reaction had prevented United States entry into the League of Nations and now threatened the course of democracy in Europe. On the subject of the debts plaguing France in particular, Roosevelt argued that both the Harding and Coolidge administrations lacked even a "general plan of settlement based on the reconstruction and stabilization of a torn Europe." Echoing Clemenceau, he suggested

¹⁵⁸ Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, The Decline of the Third Republic, pp. 94-8.

¹⁵⁹ Robert O. Paxton, Europe in the Twentieth Century (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985, second edition) p. 259.

that what France needed for the task of rehabilitation was “words of sympathy, of encouragement, of hope, of cooperation” from the United States. Rather than such kindness, Roosevelt argued that the Republicans only responded with a “cold dismissal.” Commenting on the lack of Republican vision and understanding, Roosevelt predicted that, unless European morale could be strengthened, in the long run even the United States “itself would be involved in the general financial ruin that would follow.”¹⁶⁰

Without relief home or abroad, Herriot handed in the resignation of his cabinet on April 26, 1925. Six Radical-Socialist ministries followed in the next fifteen months, and the franc fell to about one-tenth of its pre-war value. Finally, in July 1926, Poincaré obtained a majority in the chamber and became prime minister. Once in power, Poincaré managed to stabilize the franc by the end of the year. Poincaré’s financial success compared with the *Cartel’s* own failed efforts, undoubtedly confirmed the suspicions of Herriot and the Radical-Socialists that their programs had been blocked by the great economic powers, businessmen, and the right-wing press, particularly a number of Catholic newspapers.¹⁶¹ The suspicions of Herriot and his coalition undoubtedly resonated with liberals in the United States.

¹⁶⁰ Roosevelt speech on Republican Attitude Toward War Debts, 1926, Master Speech File No. 252, FDRL. That same year, Clemenceau issued an open letter to President Calvin Coolidge in which he warned that differences between France, Britain, and the United States “threaten to have a serious effect on the future of the civilized world.” Clemenceau decried the “money peace” of the Dawes Plan and the commercial greed that seemed to guide Coolidge’s administration in its dealings with debtors such as France. Georges Clemenceau open letter to Calvin Coolidge, August 26, 1926, reprinted in Georges Clemenceau, *Grandeur and Misery of Victory*, translated by F. M. Atkinson (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1930), pp. 424-6.

¹⁶¹ Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, *The Decline of the Third Republic*, pp. 98-9; Robert O. Paxton, *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, p. 260; James F. McMillan, *Twentieth Century France*, pp. 95-6.

Likewise, the situation in the Weimar Republic and the apparent resurgence of the forces of Prussian militarism, reaction, and wealth gave liberal Americans cause for concern. In the mid 1920s, although the agents of liberalism maintained nominal control, the Weimar Republic seemed threatened. In 1923, the republic had been threatened by the French occupation of the Ruhr and the hyperinflation that destroyed the value of the mark, by separatist movements in Bavaria and the Rhineland, and by Communist and right wing rebellions. The German government ultimately stabilized the situation but at a cost, and a sense of crisis hung over the Weimar Republic. With few options available to restore order, the German government had been forced to turn to the Army. While the Weimar Republic survived the challenges of 1923, it continued to move to the right. In 1925, the death of Social Democratic *Reichspräsident* Ebert brought the election of Imperial Field Marshal Paul von Beneckendorff und Hindenburg for a seven-year term. To liberal observers, the election of Hindenburg, the German supreme commander for the later half of the Great War, signaled the growing power of conservatives and reactionaries in Germany. Furthermore, in sharp contrast to the increasingly impoverished German middle-class, large cartels and trusts benefited from the economic stability and parliamentary weakness of the mid-1920s. Formed in 1926, the steel combine *Vereinigte Stahlwerke* produced half of German steel; munitions manufacturer Krupp produced the rest. Chemical manufacturer I. G. Farben became the largest corporation in Europe.¹⁶² It seems natural that American progressives viewed the forces

¹⁶² Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945 (London: Oxford University Press, 1955) pp. 415-6, 420; Robert O. Paxton, Europe in the Twentieth Century, pp. 261-7; Donald S. Detwiler, Germany: A Short History (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989, second edition) p. 182.

gathering in Germany, the emergence of trusts and the resurgent power of Prussian militarists and conservatives, as manifestations of forces that they had opposed before.

Sumner Welles advocated bolstering liberal elements in Germany and was among those that shared Roosevelt's criticism of the Republican foreign policy of the mid 1920s. Welles thought that the remaining "bare vestige of the old German liberalism of 1848" needed be encouraged by the Allies, thus making it easier for the new republic to succeed. Welles believed that the Republican attitude toward war debts, coupled with American trade barriers, contributed to unemployment in Europe, wrecked the German middle-class, and ultimately encouraged Germany "to adopt its autocratic economic policy." Looking back eighteen years later, Welles lamented that the Coolidge administration had done nothing to strengthen the forces of liberalism in Europe and to bolster "the few weak elements in Germany which were working for a peaceful co-operation with the world." He believed that the election of Hindenburg, the weakening political power of the Social Democrats in the parliament, and the emergence of huge business cartels, represented a setback for liberal, democratic elements in the Weimar Republic. In retrospect, contemplating the ultimate failure of the republic, Welles thought that by 1926 "the forces set upon revenge and Pan-Germanism had already regained far too much of a hold on the body politic."¹⁶³

Despite the considerable difficulties facing the Weimar Republic, Roosevelt hoped that the democratic, intellectual, urban, manufacturing Germany would reemerge. In the absence of Republican policies to encourage those elements, Roosevelt took his own steps. His son James observed that "Germany was a country that intrigued father" and

¹⁶³ Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), pp. 9-11, 28-9, 46.

when the Weimar Republic had trouble maintaining the value of the mark, his father speculated in German marks and joined a Canadian corporation that bought stock in eighteen German utilities, chemical companies, and light industries.¹⁶⁴ While financial investment was certainly one goal of Roosevelt's ventures, his efforts seem intent on fostering the progressive goal of restoring industrial competition and forestalling the formation of economic oligarchies. Declaring "the highly centralized economic system" to be "the despot of the twentieth century," Roosevelt perceived a need to restore the competitiveness of small enterprises.¹⁶⁵ To that end, in 1927 Roosevelt became one of the organizers of the International Germanic Trust Company, an organization "engaged in furthering the industrial development of Germany and in promoting international goodwill through established channels." For the next year, he served as a director of both the International Germanic Trust Company and the International Germanic Company.¹⁶⁶

IX.

Although he diligently followed foreign affairs and pursued economic ventures, Roosevelt's primary interest remained domestic politics. In early 1928, Roosevelt

¹⁶⁴ James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, Affectionately, F.D.R.: A Son's Story of a Lonely Man (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), p. 181 and Elliott Roosevelt and James Brough, An Untold Story: The Roosevelts of Hyde Park (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), p. 223.

¹⁶⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt speech before the Commonwealth Club, Palace Hotel, San Francisco, California, September 23, 1932, Master Speech File No. 0522, FDRL.

¹⁶⁶ Harold G. Aron to Roosevelt, July 9, 1927 and Roosevelt to Julian Gerard, January 27, 1928, International Germanic Trust Company, Box 23, Subject File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business, and Personal Papers, FDRL.

announced that he was “almost completely recovered from infantile paralysis” and prepared to take an active role in that year’s political campaigns. Consequently, Roosevelt dropped from the directorship of the International Germanic Trust Company, the International Germanic Company, and the American Construction Council.¹⁶⁷ In addition to supporting Democrat Al Smith’s presidential campaign, in the autumn Roosevelt was nominated for the governorship of New York.

Despite his preoccupation with domestic politics, in mid 1928 Roosevelt offered a critique of the foreign policy of the previous two Republican administrations. Roosevelt thought that nine years of Republican foreign policy had contributed little toward progress and solving the problems of the world. He declared, “During these nine years we have stood still.” He suggested that even the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-22 was ineffective “because we assumed that a mere signature was enoug[h] and no machinery was set up to finish the work.” Roosevelt acknowledged that the American public did not want membership in the League of Nations. Roosevelt, however, went on to praise

the great effectiveness of the League in many matters which do concern us, international health work, improvement of labor conditions, aid to backward peoples, the improving of education, the clarification of international law, and assistance to world trade. Best of all, it offers a common round table where threats against the peace of the world can be discussed and divergent views compromised.

¹⁶⁷ “Franklin D. Roosevelt Quits Several Posts,” The New York Times, February 23, 1928, p. 34.

He suggested that even without United States membership in the League, that the United States should provide “a larger share of sympathetic approval and official help” to the League than accorded by the Harding and Coolidge administrations.¹⁶⁸

Roosevelt expressed similar views after his nomination for the governorship, arguing that the League “has its faults, but it has brought about improvements in a great many things.” He particularly lamented the Republican attitude toward war debts. He commented, “The people of Europe speak of us as money-grabbers and self-seekers, and think we are concerned only with our own pocketbooks.” As an alternative, Roosevelt offered that an “internationally minded” Democratic foreign policy would allow the United States “to resume our friendship with the other nations and to assume again the position of moral leadership.”¹⁶⁹

It is also clear that Roosevelt’s perspectives of France and Germany solidified prior to his final trip to France in 1931. At the beginning of May, he received word that his mother had been hospitalized in Paris for influenza during a visit with her sister Dora Delano Forbes. He cancelled his plans to vacation at Warm Springs, Georgia, and sailed for France with his son Elliott in tow.¹⁷⁰ Roosevelt spent ten days in France before sailing back to the United States for a governors’ conference. In Paris, Roosevelt stayed at the fashionable George V. He commented that during the trip he planned to visit his mother

¹⁶⁸ “Dissect Diplomacy Under Republicans,” The New York Times, June 11, 1928, p. 23.

¹⁶⁹ “Roosevelt Held Out to the Last Minute,” The New York Times, October 3, 1928, p. 12.

¹⁷⁰ “Roosevelt Makes Plans to Sail on Wednesday But Has Not Yet Decided on Trip to Mother,” The New York Times, May 3, 1931, p. 1; “Roosevelt Will Go to Mother in Paris,” The New York Times, May 5, 1931, p. 3.

in the American Hospital in Neuilly, talk with French officials, and “see a large number of friends.” Former Ambassador Jusserand, Georges Leygues, and André Tardieu were among the French officials and acquaintances from the Great War that he met with in Paris. Roosevelt also took his son Elliott on a tour of the “devastated regions” of the Western Front around Belleau Wood and Chateau-Thierry.¹⁷¹

Upon his return from France, Roosevelt expressed guarded optimism about overall conditions in France. Roosevelt made the overall assessment, “Things are not going full speed in France.”¹⁷² Consequently, he thought symbolic American gestures remained important to the French people. Following a visit to the United States display at the French Colonial Exhibition in Vincennes, Roosevelt urged that the American colonial exhibit remain standing after the exposition closed as “a permanent expression of Americanism” and an example of the “truly American character.”¹⁷³

Nevertheless, he assessed that conditions in France “are much better than in most European countries.” He expressed interest in the French system of unemployment insurance and suggested it worthy of further study. Roosevelt particularly praised the progress of agricultural recovery in the areas devastated by the Great War. In addition to progress rebuilding smashed farms, Roosevelt credited Tardieu, the current Minister of Agriculture, with enacting a tariff that allowed the French to stabilize agricultural prices

¹⁷¹ “Roosevelt in Paris to See Ill Mother,” The New York Times, May 14, 1931, p. 11; “Roosevelt Visits French Exposition,” The New York Times, May 15, 1931, p. 8; “Roosevelt On Way Home,” The New York Times, May 23, 1931, p. 5; “Roosevelt Returns, Praises Farm Tariff,” The New York Times, May 28, 1931, p. 22.

¹⁷² “Roosevelt Returns, Praises Farm Tariff,” The New York Times, May 28, 1931, p. 22.

¹⁷³ “Roosevelt Visits French Exposition,” The New York Times, May 15, 1931, p. 8.

and keep the country out of a more serious economic depression. He also believed that aid to agriculture by the French government had helped stabilize business. Roosevelt particularly noted how the French government was striving for “a good balance” between industry and agriculture.¹⁷⁴

During his conversations with Tardieu and other French officials, Roosevelt certainly ascertained the turmoil in French politics. Tardieu’s political standing in 1931 undoubtedly would have given him cause for consternation since the progressive elements in France were not united and were, in fact, working against each other. After

¹⁷⁴ “Roosevelt Returns, Praises Farm Tariff,” The New York Times, May 28, 1931, p. 22. From Roosevelt’s praise for Tardieu’s initiatives it is clear that André Tardieu was the type of French politician that Roosevelt admired. Evidently, the lessons of the 1931 visit were not lost on Roosevelt, and during his first Hundred Days in the White House he strove for a similar balance in the United States with the creation of the National Recovery Administration (NRA) and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA). Arguably, Tardieu’s massive public works and rural electrification initiatives provided a prototype for similar New Deal programs. In 1914, Tardieu was elected to the Chamber of Deputies and entered military service. Wounded and medically retired from military service in 1916, after the United States entered the war he headed the French War Commission in the United States until November 1918, purchasing and shipping over \$3,000,000,000 worth of supplies to France. Tardieu, a former civil servant and influential journalist, possessed a powerful, arrogant personality and a brilliant intellect. Tardieu, like Georges Mandel another of Clemenceau’s trusted lieutenants, had expressed his admiration for the Anglo-American political system and hoped to reform the antiquated French system along two-party lines. Tardieu, furthermore, shared Clemenceau’s dream of creating a strong French executive and reducing parliamentary control. Following Clemenceau’s retirement in 1920, Tardieu spent the first half of the 1920s ostracized from politics; in the meantime, he advocated the modernization of the French economy along American lines and the adoption of the Taylor system of scientific management. In 1928, he became minister of the interior in a Poincaré cabinet. From 1929 to 1932, Tardieu served variously as president of the Council and as minister of the interior, agriculture, and war. As prime minister, Tardieu launched an unemployment insurance program and announced a large-scale program of public works. Tardieu proposed not only the modernization of French agriculture and industry but also the building of schools, hospitals, and houses, and the electrification and spread of telephone communications across the countryside. “Andre Tardieu, 68, Ex-Premier, Dead,” The New York Times, September 18, 1945, p. 23; Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, The Decline of the Third Republic, p. 176; James F. McMillan, Twentieth-Century France, pp. 89, 101, 103-4.

Tardieu became prime minister in November 1929, Radicals had refused to serve in Tardieu's cabinet, and despite his progressive initiatives, the French Left labeled him an authoritarian bent on the destruction of French democracy. Furthermore, the vast majority of French politicians did not share his belief that the French parliamentary system needed overhauling, and members of the Senate remained worried that Tardieu would restrict them to a purely technical role. French politicians displayed no inclination to accept Tardieu's proposed changes and reform a system that Roosevelt considered archaic.¹⁷⁵ From Roosevelt's perspective, the forces of conservatism and reaction in France seemed to have dominated the antiquated French political process.

During his trip to Europe in 1931, Roosevelt only visited France, but, afterwards, he thought that economic and political conditions in France were substantially better than conditions in neighboring Germany. Roosevelt confided to a fellow New York Democrat that "the very difficult economic conditions" in Europe disturbed him. He added that because those conditions fostered authoritarian regimes, the world was "in a period of very real danger to our type of civilization."¹⁷⁶ Since 1925 Field Marshal Hindenburg had remained *Reichspräsident*. By all accounts, with the end of the German economic boom in 1929, the political extremes made huge gains and broad domestic support for a German foreign policy of cooperation vanished. Adolf Hitler's National Socialists, or

¹⁷⁵ In December 1930, the Senate ousted Tardieu, and he became minister of agriculture. Although, Tardieu served as prime minister again from February to May, 1932, little came of Tardieu's initiatives. With the failure of the "Tardieu experiment," he became a harsh critic of the French parliamentary system. Totally incapacitated by a stroke in 1939, he died in 1945. "Andre Tardieu, 68, Ex-Premier, Dead," The New York Times, September 18, 1945, p. 23. Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, The Decline of the Third Republic, pp. 176-7; James F. McMillan, Twentieth-Century France, pp. 89, 103-4.

¹⁷⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt letter to Elisabeth Marbury, June 9, 1931, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, volume 1, 1928-1945 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), p. 195.

Nazis, emerged as a major party in the September 1930 elections, having received major support, according to Welles, from business interests, “the greedy, the Tories and the shortsighted.”¹⁷⁷ In the 1930 parliamentary elections, the Nazis jumped from twelve to 107 seats in the *Reichstag*.¹⁷⁸

Roosevelt never returned to Germany, and his earlier experiences in Germany became increasingly fictitious, almost mythic, in their character. What becomes apparent, however, is the extent that Roosevelt accepted those nostalgic accounts and that they became an enduring part of his mature worldview. For instance, his son James recalled that the story of his father’s bicycle trip in Germany with his tutor grew with the telling. James noted that his father would boast to his sons how he had been arrested by German authorities four times in a single day for stealing cherries, wheeling his bicycle into the waiting room of the train station, riding his bicycle in town after dark, and running over a goose. James recalled, “As the years went by, he improved bit by bit on this story, finally insisting that the goose had ‘committed suicide’ by sticking its neck through the spokes.”¹⁷⁹ At other times, Roosevelt’s story was that he had been arrested for bicycling down the wrong side of the street.¹⁸⁰ Concerning his visit aboard the Kaiser’s yacht

¹⁷⁷ Sumner Welles, *The Time For Decision* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944) pp. 29-30.

¹⁷⁸ Robert O. Paxton, *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, p. 339.

¹⁷⁹ James Roosevelt and Sidney Shalett, *Affectionately, F.D.R.: A Son’s Story of a Lonely Man* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), p. 21. Sara Delano Roosevelt’s diary noted the departure of her son and his tutor “with their bicycles.” Several days later she observed, “They visited Heidelberg, Baden Baden, and Strasburg and had a nice trip.” See entries for August 14 and 17, 1896 in Sara Delano Roosevelt Diary, 1880-1897, Box 67, Roosevelt Family Papers, FDRL.

¹⁸⁰ Grace Tully, *F.D.R. My Boss* (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), p. 70.

Hohenzollern in 1901, Roosevelt omitted the fact that he had bowed to the German emperor and instead developed, and continued to embellish, a tale in which he had crept into the Kaiser's stateroom and stole a pencil from the royal writing desk.¹⁸¹ The fictionalized account bolstered Roosevelt's professed credentials as a dedicated opponent of Prussian autocracy and militarism; his romantic fabrications allowed him to distance himself from his earlier praise of Kaiser Wilhelm in the 1903 Harvard *Crimson*.

Consistent with his own view of himself as an agent of reform, Roosevelt portrayed himself as an opponent of the autocratic and militarist Prussian upper class, the forces of reaction in Germany. Certainly his claim to the King of England in 1918 that he had seen the "first stages" of German preparations "of the war machine" contained a bit of braggadoccio at the time.¹⁸² Nonetheless, after years of embellishment, Roosevelt seems to have adopted his romanticized conceptions about the Imperial Germany of his youth. He later claimed that as a schoolboy he personally had witnessed the militarization of Germany between "1888 or 89" and 1896, saw railroad employees and students uniformed, watched students taught to march, and observed the centralization of

¹⁸¹ Roosevelt's son Elliott recounted the tale and noted that "if so, that particular trophy has not yet turned up amongst the Hyde Park memorabilia." Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters*, volume 1, *Early Years* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947), p. 458. One account holds that the prize pencil bore the Kaiser's tooth marks. See Frank Friedel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), p. 58.

¹⁸² Entry for July 30, 1918, Diary, Personal Files, Box 33, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

government power in Berlin.¹⁸³ In Roosevelt's case, his mind seems to have blurred the facts of his youth to fit his mature conception of Germany.

X.

Accepting the Democratic Party's nomination for president in the fall of 1932, Roosevelt belied his progressive and internationalist perspective. He stated, "Ours must be a party of liberal thought, of planned action, of enlightened international outlook, and of the greatest good for the greatest number of our citizens."¹⁸⁴ He told his listeners during the campaign that "we can still believe in change and progress." He argued that from the perspective of progress there were "only two general directions" that people and governments could take in Europe and the United States. Roosevelt postulated that Alexander Hamilton exemplified the autocratic approach, "was impatient of slow-moving methods," and had "surrendered to the belief that popular government was essentially dangerous and essentially unworkable." He stated that in 1932 the Republican Party represented Hamilton's approach, as did governments in Europe that were "building towards a dominant centralized power." On the other hand, pitted in a duel against the forces of autocracy, Roosevelt believed that Thomas Jefferson and the Democratic Party

¹⁸³ Roosevelt Presidential Press Conference, Number 922, February 23, 1945, Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, volume 25, 1944-1945 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), p. 62.

¹⁸⁴ Burns, The Lion and the Fox, p. 139.

of 1932 exemplified the democratic approach in which “a system of government and economics exists to serve individual men and women.”¹⁸⁵

According to Sumner Welles, before taking the oath of office, Roosevelt already had developed the general lines that he intended United States foreign policy to take during his presidency, having “studied every aspect of American foreign relations during those years” prior. Welles praised Roosevelt’s qualifications as president to conduct American foreign affairs, particularly Roosevelt’s education, his training and experience in government, and his personal knowledge of Europe. Describing Roosevelt’s progressive worldview, Welles observed that, above all else, Roosevelt possessed an “almost intuitive understanding of the great forces which control human relations.”¹⁸⁶ Clearly, well prior to his inauguration on March 4, 1933, Franklin Roosevelt had developed a coherent, progressive perspective of France and Germany and a durable blueprint for American foreign policy and military strategy. His worldview provided him a consistent foundation upon which to base his future policies, actions, and strategic views as president.

¹⁸⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt speech before the Commonwealth Club, Palace Hotel, San Francisco, California, September 23, 1932, Master Speech File No. 0522, FDRL.

¹⁸⁶ Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 50.

Chapter 5: Implementing his Worldview: France, Germany, and the Second World War in Europe, 1933-45

...I have an unfortunately long memory and I am not forgetting either our enemies or our objectives.

Franklin D. Roosevelt to Henry L. Stimson,
1935¹

Examining President Franklin D. Roosevelt's wartime decisions and strategic direction within the context of his background, experiences, and perspective provides a deeper appreciation for the foundation, depth, and consistency of Roosevelt's thinking and his fundamental goals. The worldview that Roosevelt developed before he entered the White House shaped and influenced his strategic thinking toward the Second World War in Europe. As war threatened in the 1930s, Roosevelt's response to events in Europe and toward the war that broke out in September 1939 reflected his views of France and Germany and his enduring progressive frame of reference. Likewise, that progressive perspective shaped his major wartime decisions and policies for waging the war after formal United States entry into the war in December 1941. Roosevelt's worldview also guided his strategic decisions intended to shape postwar France and Germany.

Within the context of Roosevelt's worldview and his strategic concept, a consistent pattern becomes apparent in his wartime decisions. Roosevelt was a wartime leader whose previous experiences provided him with an enduring frame of reference, and he deliberately patterned his leadership after the examples of his earlier years. In his actions, he intentionally drew from the lessons of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and incorporated those lessons into his strategic thinking. Franklin Roosevelt's secretary

¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Henry L. Stimson, February 6, 1935, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 2, March 1934-August 1935 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 397-8.

recalled that he strove to be the type of president that Theodore Roosevelt would have praised as active, using his “constitutional powers to the hilt in order to do what the nation expected of him.” His secretary judged that “there was always the influence of what T.R. had done as President.”² At the same time, he adhered to the doctrine of Wilson that presidential success “lay in the extent to which he chose to lead the nation, not only as head of state and head of government, but as its political leader.” In addition to patterning his actions after and blending the ideas of his two predecessors, he also attempted to avoid the pitfalls that Wilson, in particular, had encountered. His daughter, Anna Roosevelt Boettinger, commented in December 1943 “that her father long had it on his mind to avoid the mistakes of Woodrow Wilson and ... had done it to a remarkable degree.”³

Roosevelt’s actions, however, reflected more than the influence of particular people, they embodied the ideas and attitudes that had informed his emerging worldview, namely the lessons and experiences of his youth, the ideas in the books he read and courses he took, and contemporary intellectual currents such as Social Darwinism and progressivism. Throughout his adult life, he viewed contemporary and historical events as part of the advance of civilization marked by the constant struggle between the agents of reform and progress and the reactionary forces of conservatism, autocracy, and imperialism. That outlook caused him to blur fundamental distinctions between his

² Grace Tully, F.D.R.: My Boss (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), pp. 59, 71.

³ Entry for December 14, 1943, in Henry A. Wallace, The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946, edited by John Morton Blum (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), p. 279.

adversaries and opponents at home and abroad until they fit his overall dichotomy.⁴

Consequently, Roosevelt equated political opponents of his policies with foreign adversaries.

He applied that worldview to the events of the Great War and the postwar era, and he thought deeply about how to avoid the mistakes he perceived. Those lessons informed his policies and actions as he sought the reemergence of liberal Germany and, after June 1940, republican France. The result was a remarkable degree of consistency in Roosevelt's policies and strategic direction throughout the Second World War. Roosevelt aptly described his coherent strategic focus in the White House with his comment to Henry L. Stimson in 1935, "I have an unfortunately long memory and I am not forgetting either our enemies or our objectives."⁵

Motivated by much more than military expediency, Roosevelt pursued a broad political agenda. He waged a war to defeat Nazi Germany and also to create the enduring conditions for a peaceful postwar world. What follows is not intended to be a narrative of the Second World War. It illuminates the role of Roosevelt's worldview in his actions, policies, and strategic direction for the United States as wartime president. In so doing, it

⁴ The election campaign of 1940 reveals how Roosevelt's thinking tended to equate both domestic and overseas opponents in his overall struggle of democracy versus fascism. For instance, Harold L. Ickes recorded that Roosevelt developed "the theory on which we will undoubtedly run the campaign, namely, that Willkie represents a new concept in American politics--the concept of the 'corporate state.'" Roosevelt claimed that Willkie's concept was also the theory behind the fascism of Mussolini's Italy and practically no different than the "nazism of Germany." Entry for June 30, 1940 in Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 3, The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 223.

⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Henry L. Stimson, February 6, 1935, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 2, March 1934-August 1935 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 397-8.

provides a deeper appreciation for a little known or studied aspect of Roosevelt's thoughts and behavior.

I. Roosevelt and the Resurgence of Prussian Militarism, Conservatism, and Autocracy

Consistent with his progressive worldview, Roosevelt believed that the government of Adolph Hitler represented a triumph of the forces of reaction, *Junker* conservatism, and Prussian militarism and a disconcerting setback to German liberalism. As he entered the White House, Roosevelt saw continuity between the newly installed government of Adolph Hitler and the militarist, oligarchic Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Figures that Roosevelt associated with Prussian imperialism and reaction held power in Berlin in early 1933. Aging imperial Field Marshal Paul von Hindenberg, part of the command team that launched the German offensives on the Western Front in 1918, occupied the German presidency. The previous chancellor, Baron Franz von Papen, had become the vice-chancellor in the Hitler government. A nobleman and former Imperial *Garde Kürassier* officer, von Papen had served as the German military attaché in the United States during the first two years of the Great War. Secretary of State Lansing had demanded the recall of the imperious von Papen and his naval counterpart in December 1915 after they were implicated in German espionage and sabotage plots.⁶ Recalling the efforts of von Papen and his associates, Eleanor Roosevelt noted that during the Great War the German

⁶ Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, p. 583. Lansing believed that German Ambassador Count von Bernstorff “in all probability directed these enterprises” but was able to hide his role successfully, allowing the military and naval attachés accept the blame. Robert Lansing, *War Memoirs of Robert Lansing* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1935; repr. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), p. 357.

attachés had “succeeded in thoroughly arousing the antagonism of the American people by spying into American affairs.”⁷ The German foreign minister was Baron Konstantin von Neurath, a professional diplomat and former member of the imperial German Foreign Service who had occupied his current office since June 1932. Prussian Minister of the Interior Herman Goering served as minister without portfolio in the new cabinet. Industrialist Alfred Hugenberg, the former director of Krupp, served as minister of economics. Among those who publicly supported Hitler was Prince August Wilhelm, the son of Kaiser Wilhelm II.⁸ Roosevelt told the French ambassador, “Hitler is a madman and his counsellors, some of whom I personally know, are even madder than he is.”⁹

Although Roosevelt’s energy during his first term was focused on economic recovery, he followed events in Germany and sought to influence events in Europe. Starting in May 1933, Woodrow Wilson provided the conscious inspiration for many of Roosevelt’s policies and actions. For instance, believing that the German government would disrupt the Geneva Disarmament Conference, on May 16, 1933 Roosevelt dispatched a cable to the heads of state involved in the Geneva conference and the London Economic Conference. Roosevelt’s goal was to prevent the break up of the disarmament conference and also to suggest the direction that the negotiations should continue.¹⁰ Roosevelt

⁷ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This Is My Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 243.

⁸ “Ex-Kaiser, 74, Celebrates in High Spirits; Writes of Homesickness for Germany,” The New York Times, January 28, 1933, p. 1.

⁹ Roosevelt quoted by Ambassador Paul Claudel, April 5, 1933, in Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), p. 113.

¹⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, On Our Way (New York: John Day Company, 1934), p. 115. Nevertheless, when questioned by the press as to whether the disarmament message had

envisioned that his message would build upon the pledge made by President Woodrow Wilson at Mobile, Alabama in October 1913 that “the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest.” Roosevelt noted “that the definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention.”¹¹

Roosevelt’s message seemed to validate views in his administration of the power of United States moral suasion in international affairs. Roosevelt thought that his message had the effect “of pouring oil on troubled waters.”¹² To Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Roosevelt confided his belief that his message had averted a war.¹³ Secretary of State Cordell Hull believed that Roosevelt’s message “had some influence with Hitler” because he responded in a conciliatory manner, rather than announcing German rearmament as anticipated.¹⁴

Roosevelt’s sources reinforced his views of Germany. One was Samuel R. Fuller, Jr., a former naval reserve officer who knew Roosevelt during the Great War, who had

been directed chiefly at Germany, Roosevelt obtusely replied, “No, the whole world.” Franklin D. Roosevelt Press Conference, May 16, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 129. Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Heads of Nations Represented at the London and Geneva Conferences, May 16, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 126-8.

¹¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, On Our Way (New York: John Day Company, 1934), pp. 132-3.

¹² Franklin D. Roosevelt, On Our Way (New York: John Day Company, 1934), p. 115.

¹³ Entry for May 22, 1933 in the Henry Morgenthau, Jr. diary, quoted in Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), p. 114.

¹⁴ Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, vol. 1 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948) p. 227.

extensive business ties in Germany and the Netherlands. Fuller conveyed to Roosevelt his impressions and declared Hitler to be “a successful dictator” who was “fully organized and in full power.” He assessed that in Germany “all personal liberty, as we know it here, has gone.” Ominously Fuller offered, “To us, it seems also that Germany, a nation which loves to be led, is again a marching nation; and so a danger.”¹⁵ Roosevelt’s ambassador in Berlin, Professor William Dodd, assessed that “armament and training for war are major interests” in Germany, tendencies that he believed were “contrary to all liberal philosophy.”¹⁶ The withdrawal of Germany from the Geneva Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations marked the apparent triumph of the forces of militarism and big business. Dodd suspected collusion with arms manufacturers and was disconcerted by

¹⁵ Samuel R. Fuller, Jr. to Roosevelt, May 11, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 173-6.

¹⁶ William E. Dodd to Roosevelt, August 12, 1933, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 358-9. Roosevelt’s past influenced his choices of ambassadors, and he initially chose to fill the ambassadorships in Berlin and Paris with Democratic Party faithful who reflected his progressive aspirations, rather than foreign service careerists. Roosevelt originally offered the post in Berlin to James M. Cox, his running mate from the 1920 election. After Cox declined for family reasons, Woodrow Wilson’s advisor Edward House recommended Dodd, a professor of history at the University of Chicago who had received his doctorate in 1900 from the University of Leipzig. Jesse I. Straus of New York accepted the appointment to the Paris embassy. Straus, the president of Macy’s and a major campaign contributor in 1932, was the nephew of Oscar Straus, Theodore Roosevelt’s secretary of labor and commerce and the first Jew to rise to cabinet level in the United States government. Franklin Roosevelt’s offer of the Paris post to Straus, furthermore, reflected his deep sympathy with the anti-clericalism of the French Left. Clearly, Roosevelt viewed the French Revolution, the laicization of the state, and the emancipation of Jews as a progressive advance for civilization in France. In their youth both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt followed the case against Captain Alfred Dreyfus, the only Jewish officer on the French general staff, with great interest. The figures that they admired had championed progressive anti-clericalism in education, in the army, and in political life: Mlle. Marie Souvestre, *Maréchal* J. J. C. Joffre, and Clemenceau.

Hitler and his circle. The ambassador reported, “Liberal and intellectual Germany is very uneasy, but it dares not speak out.”¹⁷ Harvard law professor Felix Frankfurter wrote from England appraising Roosevelt of “the violence and madness now dominating in Germany.” Frankfurter observed that “the present rulers of Germany” ascribed “to the gospel of force and materialism.” Frankfurter further related that Hitler’s withdrawal from the Geneva Conference was largely the result of domestic considerations. According to Frankfurter’s sources, Hitler’s action was “an effort to divert attention from economic difficulties” and from “internal dissensions.”¹⁸

The assessments of Fuller, Dodd, and Frankfurter merely reinforced Roosevelt’s own assessment of National Socialism. Power in Germany, Roosevelt believed, was concentrated in the hands of an oligarchy consisting of the conservative upper class, Prussian militarists, and industrialists.¹⁹ According to Roosevelt’s progressive frame of reference, in a fascist or Nazi system control was in the hands “of infinitely small groups of individuals” who subverted the will of the people and did not allow “a single one of the democratic sanctions that we have known.”²⁰ Although proud of his historical

¹⁷ William E. Dodd to Roosevelt, October 28, 1933, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 442-3.

¹⁸ Felix Frankfurter to Roosevelt, October 17, 1933, “Roosevelt, Franklin D. 1933” Container 97, Reel 60, General Correspondence, The Papers of Felix Frankfurter, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

¹⁹ Radio Address to the New York Herald Tribune Forum, October 26, 1939, Master Speech File Number 1250, FDRL. See also excerpts from May 10 and 14, 1930, Donald Day, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Own Story (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), pp. 128-9.

²⁰ Stenographer’s copy, Graduation Exercises University of Virginia, June 10, 1940, Master Speech File Number 1285, Franklin D. Roosevelt Speech Files, FDRL.

background, Roosevelt's education and perspective naturally led him to view fascism and National Socialism as current manifestations of previous, reactionary political systems. He asserted, "When you come down to it, there is little difference between the feudal system and the fascist system."²¹ Consistently, Roosevelt refused to recognize that fascism or National Socialism could have popular support. In his mind, there were "only two general directions" that governments could take: "government for the benefit of the few" or "government for the benefit of the many."²² In 1934, he noted that the inspiration for fascism derived "from a class or a group or a marching army" rather than being a popular manifestation. He specifically challenged the assertion that the narrow, restrictive nationalism of fascism and Nazism could be "supported by the overwhelming mass of the people themselves." Instead, he argued that the danger to world peace that those movements represented derived from a very small, but extremely powerful, group of individuals rather than from the population itself.²³ Militarism, he believed subverted the liberal impulse, and Roosevelt ominously related to the press that "the Germans are drilling, the school children are drilling...."²⁴

Rather than give up on liberal Germany, Roosevelt harbored the hope "that German sanity of the old type that existed in the Bismarck days when I was a boy at school in

²¹ James A. Farley, Jim Farley's Story: The Roosevelt Years (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), p. 128.

²² Franklin D. Roosevelt, Looking Forward (New York: John Day Company, 1933), p. 17.

²³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, On Our Way (New York: John Day Company, 1934), pp. ix-xii, 134.

²⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt Press Conference, August 25, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 375.

Germany will come to the front again.”²⁵ Dodd confided, “My interpretation of this is that all liberal Germany is with us—and more than half of Germany is at heart liberal.”²⁶

Roosevelt accepted Dodd’s assessment and envisioned the continued existence of a liberal, educated, urban, German middle class, a group he tended to characterize as “the people.” Considering the situation in Germany, Roosevelt observed “that in every country the people themselves are more peaceably and liberally inclined than their governments.”²⁷ In October 1933, he told a group that “the very great majority of the inhabitants of the world” are opposed to territorial expansion, imperialism, and domination at the expense of their neighbors.²⁸

As Roosevelt saw the problem, the leaders in power in Nazi Germany kept the German people in the dark. The solution, in Wilsonian fashion, therefore was to go over the heads of Germany’s leaders and the powerful special interests and address the German people directly. Frankfurter informed the president that “highly educated Germans” were completely barred from all knowledge of the outside world and that “all channels of light are shut from them.” Frankfurter urged Roosevelt to broadcast directly to the people of

²⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt to George H. Earle, December 22, 1933, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 3, p. 379.

²⁶ William E. Dodd to Roosevelt, October 13, 1933, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 424-5.

²⁷ Roosevelt to Arthur Murray, April 14, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 54-5.

²⁸ Roosevelt address to the Third Annual Women’s Conference on Current Problems, October 13, 1933, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 423-4.

Germany because “no other voice in the world would carry as much weight as yours.”²⁹

Meanwhile, Dodd expressed his conviction that in Europe “the educated and even uneducated people are in the main with us, only they are forbidden from saying anything.” He believed that one remedy was for the people of Europe to have the American principles of Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln put before them as clearly as possible.³⁰

To deal with what he considered the imperialistic and autocratic impulses that threatened world peace, Roosevelt advocated a progressive approach intended to supplement and implement the efforts of Woodrow Wilson to educate the peoples of the world, rather than address political leaders, business executives, and financial autocrats.³¹ Roosevelt believed that the United States could wield a powerful moral force. He asserted through “constant education and the stressing of the ideals of peace that those who seek imperialism can be brought in line with the majority.”³² His desire to reach and educate the German people prompted Roosevelt to have a German edition of his book *On Our Way* published in Berlin in 1934.³³

²⁹ Felix Frankfurter to Roosevelt, October 17, 1933, “Roosevelt, Franklin D. 1933” Container 97, Reel 60, General Correspondence, The Papers of Felix Frankfurter, LCMD.

³⁰ William E. Dodd to Roosevelt, October 13, 1933, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 424-5.

³¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, On Our Way (New York: John Day Company, 1934), p. 132.

³² Roosevelt address to the Third Annual Women’s Conference on Current Problems, October 13, 1933, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 423-4.

³³ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Unser Weg (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1934). Frankfurter initially had urged a broadcast “in German.” In December 1933, however, Ambassador

II. The Strategic Concept for the Defeat of Germany and the Drive for Preparedness, 1936-1939

As Germany threatened the peace of Europe in the late 1930s, Roosevelt's worldview provided the foundation of his strategic approach for the defeat of Nazi Germany. His progressive frame of reference influenced how he perceived events in Europe and in the United States. As he campaigned for reelection in 1936, Roosevelt saw the contest as part of a larger "struggle with the old enemies of peace," which had grown powerful, resurgent, and increasingly united.³⁴ Believing that war would be disastrous for civilization, Roosevelt earnestly pledged to keep the United States out of war while simultaneously taking actions to enhance the military preparedness of the United States and hasten the defeat of Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime.

In Roosevelt's response to the crisis in Europe, his strategic thinking reflected the concepts that had coalesced in his mind by the mid 1920s. The Great War convinced him war represented a bloody and destructive setback to civilization and progress. Roosevelt returned to Chautauqua on August 14, 1936 and, recalling his visit to the Western Front, announced, "I hate war." Chautauqua, however, did not mark a departure for Roosevelt. Throughout the address, his internationalist message was consistent with the strategic

Breckinridge Long reported the problems with trying to listen to one of FDR's radio addresses in Fascist Italy, and Long's comments may have induced FDR to stick with the printed word. See Breckinridge Long to Roosevelt, December 8, 1933, in Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 1, January 1933-February 1934 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 516-7.

³⁴ Grace Tully, F.D.R.: My Boss (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), pp. 214-5.

views that developed from his Great War experience. The president made it clear that he and his administration were “not isolationists except insofar as we seek to isolate ourselves completely from war.” Instead, Roosevelt sketched the internationalist approach that his administration had taken towards the prevention of war. Although they had come “to nought,” Roosevelt claimed that his administration had “cooperated to the bitter end” at the Geneva disarmament conference, sought an international treaty to deal with the international arms trade, and participated at the London Naval Conference in hope of naval limitations.³⁵

Roosevelt continued those themes in his quarantine speech, given in Chicago on October 5, 1937, and intended “to persuade the people that this country should make a definite and positive effort to preserve the peace.” Accompanying Roosevelt’s drive to preserve peace in Europe was a complementary impulse to enhance the preparedness of United States naval and air forces.³⁶ Roosevelt asserted, “It is my determination to adopt every practicable measure to avoid involvement in war.” The president, however, made it clear that while his administration was “adopting such measures as will minimize our risk

³⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt address, August 14, 1936, Chautauqua, New York, Master Speech File No. 889, Franklin D. Roosevelt Speech Files, FDRL.

³⁶ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This I Remember (New York: Harper and Row, 1949), p. 208. Despite primarily dealing with domestic matters in the autumn of 1937, two sources seem to have fueled the need for the quarantine speech in Roosevelt’s mind. One was a stream of State Department reports on the Sino-Japanese War charging Japan with violating the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The other was American newspaper accounts of the meeting between Hitler and Mussolini in Munich on September 25. Presidential secretary Grace Tully recalled that Roosevelt read accounts of the staged and highly militaristic Hitler-Mussolini meeting while on the train enroute to Chicago and “rather glowered at the pictures of the two little men.” Grace Tully, F.D.R.: My Boss (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), pp. 229-230. Telegram from Cordell Hull to Geneva, September 28, 1937, Master Speech File No. 1093, FDRL.

of involvement” that there was no such thing as “complete protection in a world of disorder in which confidence and security have broken down.”³⁷

Rather than resorting to intervention with military force, his reflection on the lessons of the Great War convinced Roosevelt that economic sanctions could serve as powerful international tools to maintain peace. To effectively use such tools, furthermore, would require international cooperation between the nations “who want to live in peace under law and in accordance with moral standards that have received almost universal acceptance through the centuries.”³⁸ In December 1937, Roosevelt called attention to the fact that a 1933 statute gave him “very wide powers—in effect the right to impose economic sanctions ‘in order to prevent war.’” Rather than unilateral action, however, the president cautioned that the United States should only impose sanctions “after consultation and in co-operation with the other democratic powers,” namely France and Britain.³⁹

Following up on his quarantine speech, in October 1937, Roosevelt considered making a public appeal for international cooperation. Roosevelt conceived issuing a message calling for all governments to reach an agreement on the fundamental rules of international conduct, the most effective means of reducing armaments and promoting economic security, and measures to guarantee respect for humanitarian concerns in the event of war. According to Sumner Welles, the president believed that even if the

³⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt dedication of the Outerlink Bridge over the Mouth of the Chicago River, Chicago, Illinois, October 5, 1937, Master Speech File No. 1093, FDRL.

³⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt dedication of the Outerlink Bridge over the Mouth of the Chicago River, Chicago, Illinois, October 5, 1937, Master Speech File No. 1093, FDRL.

³⁹ Entry for December 18, 1937, in Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 274.

European powers did not make any progress toward disarmament, the effort would have had the salutary effect of uniting all governments, with the exception of Germany and Italy, behind United States efforts to maintain peace. Roosevelt also thought that the proposal might “have a tonic effect upon the smaller countries of Europe” and upon “the great democracies,” France and Britain, who “during the preceding three years ... had surrendered all initiative and all semblance of leadership.” If Britain and France halted Germany and Italy, Roosevelt believed that German and Italian support to Japan would stop and that a weakened Japan would be forced to make peace with China. Roosevelt’s proposal was consistent with his fundamental strategic goals, and Welles noted that Roosevelt “felt that the rousing of public opinion on a world scale would in itself be productive of practical good and would have instant repercussions on the German and Italian peoples.”⁴⁰ In the final respect, Roosevelt’s motivation reflected the conclusion reached by Wilson’s secretary James Tumulty that President Wilson’s notes had sown “the seed of dissention that ruined German morale at home.”⁴¹ A further sign of the impact of the Great War, Roosevelt hoped to deliver his international appeal on Armistice Day. At the insistence of several of his advisors, however, Roosevelt delayed releasing his appeal and after the *Anschluss*, the union of Germany and Austria, he sensed that the opportunity had passed.⁴²

⁴⁰ Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), pp. 64-7.

⁴¹ Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), p. 278.

⁴² Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), pp. 67-9.

Although he hoped for international cooperation, Roosevelt also highlighted the importance of United States military preparedness. In his advocacy of preparedness, Roosevelt resolved not to repeat what he characterized as Woodrow Wilson's mistake by "refusing to permit the American fleet to be brought back from Guantanamo Bay in order to be put in shape for the world war that seemed to be inevitable."⁴³ Echoing the arguments made by kinsmen James Russell Soley and Theodore Roosevelt and his own advocacy for preparedness in 1913, the president informed Congress that the international situation compelled the United States to think of its own security. The president rated the armed forces inadequate and argued that they required substantial increase. He specifically asked for funds for the army to procure antiaircraft artillery and ammunition and for the navy to build two additional battleships, two additional cruisers, and increase its current building plan by twenty percent. Roosevelt sought increases to provide coastal protection, air defense for communities far from the coast, and the ability to "keep any potential enemy many hundred miles away from our continental limits."⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Roosevelt considered how best to wage a successful war against Nazi Germany. In September 1938, during the crisis between Germany and Czechoslovakia over the Sudeten region, Roosevelt laid out for his cabinet a comprehensive strategic blueprint for defeating Germany that had coalesced from the lessons he distilled from the Great War and his deliberation about how to reduce the terrible human cost of another

⁴³ Entry for July 11, 1933, in Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 1, The First Thousand Days, 1933-1936 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 61.

⁴⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt message to Congress, January 28, 1938, Master Speech File No. 1110, FDRL. Concerning arguments for naval preparedness to avert war and for security, see James Russell Soley, The Blockade and the Cruisers (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895 edition) and Theodore Roosevelt, America and the World War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915).

Western Front. The president noted that first he would get “word to the German people if he could” that the “territorial integrity of Germany was not threatened and would not be infringed upon.” Such an announcement, Roosevelt predicted would not only allay the apprehensions of the German people, it would also serve to undermine their support for the Hitler regime in power. He offered that the next step would be to “announce that every frontier of Germany would be closed tight regardless of consequences.” While the British fleet bottled up the German navy, the countries surrounding Germany would be induced to join the economic boycott or face rationing. Rationed countries, Roosevelt explained, “would be allowed to import only sufficient foods and other supplies to provide for the needs of their own population based on their consumption before the war.” Such a program, the president believed would prevent any excess supplies from being re-exported into Germany. With the economic boycott and blockade in place, Roosevelt would wage war principally from the air. He shared his assessment “that with England, France, and Russia all pounding away at Germany from the air, Germany would find it difficult to protect itself even with its present preponderance in the air.” Tellingly, Roosevelt expressed the “opinion that the morale of the German people would crack under aerial attacks much sooner than that of the French or the English.” In contrast to the terrible cost of the Great War, Roosevelt perceived great advantages from his proposed strategy, asserting that it “would cost less money, would mean comparatively few casualties, and would be more likely to succeed than a traditional war by land and sea.”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Entry for September 18, 1938, Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 469.

Roosevelt dreaded the impending outbreak of war in Europe and saw the conflict as detrimental to the advance of civilization. The intervention that Roosevelt envisioned, however, did not include wading in with military force but with moral and material support instead while the United States pursued partisan neutrality. In a letter to William Phillips, the president suggested that ninety percent of the American people were anti-German and anti-Italian. Believing Wilson's appeal that the American people remain neutral in thought as a mistake, he added, "I would not propose to ask them to be neutral in thought...."⁴⁶ Roosevelt believed that the industrial output of the United States could "flow to England and France by way of Canada and otherwise" even if the administration "had to enforce our neutrality laws." Roosevelt told the cabinet, "In carrying out our neutrality laws we would resolve all doubts in favor of the democracies."⁴⁷ To that end, he assembled a group, to include members of the State Department, the Treasury Department, the Securities Exchange Commission, and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, to examine the economic weapons available to employ against Germany and assist France and Britain. According to Adolph Berle, the group "undertook to outline a set of documents implementing the 'neutrality' of the United States, but in the sense that this neutrality was primarily to assist 'the Democracies'."⁴⁸ Rather than the impartial neutrality advocated by Woodrow Wilson in 1914, the result was closer to the traditional

⁴⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Phillips, September 15, 1938, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 3, pp. 810-11.

⁴⁷ Entry for September 24, 1938, Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 474.

⁴⁸ Adolph Berle memorandum to Sumner Welles, March 21, 1939, Box 73, "Welles, Sumner (1938-42)," State Department Subject File, 1938-45, Berle Papers, FDRL.

policy of armed neutrality pursued by the United States during the Quasi War, suggested by James Russell Soley, or attempted belatedly by Wilson in March 1917.

Consistent with the belief that the dispatch of an American Expeditionary Force or AEF had been a mistake, Roosevelt discouraged any thought of the United States sending another AEF to fight in Europe. To Roosevelt, however, the sympathy, moral, and economic support of the United States represented another matter wholly different than deploying military force. Unlike Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt proposed to make the moral support of the United States evident to France and Britain. Hoping to bolster the governments of France and Britain, Roosevelt confirmed, “I would strongly encourage their natural sympathy while at the same time avoiding any thought of sending troops to Europe.”⁴⁹

Several days after outlining his strategy to his cabinet, Roosevelt made an appeal for continued negotiations in the Czech crisis. Eleanor Roosevelt recalled, “All through the Czech crisis in 1938 he continued his attempts to save the peace, through appeals to Hitler and the heads of other countries.”⁵⁰ During the crisis, she pondered “the French reservists leaving” for the front in 1914 and commented on the stupidity of nations resorting to war again.⁵¹ Meanwhile, Franklin Roosevelt sought to forestall the slide toward another war; he confided that he “wanted to avoid the mistake that Wilson made

⁴⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Phillips, September 15, 1938, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 3, pp. 810-11.

⁵⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, This I Remember (New York: Harper and Row, 1949), p. 208.

⁵¹ Entry for September 20, 1938, in [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt's My Day: Her Acclaimed Columns, 1936-1945, edited by Rochelle Chadakoff (New York: Pharos Books, 1989), p. 97.

in 1914.” Roosevelt thought that Wilson might have averted the outbreak of the war if he “had expressed himself vigorously” and timed his message better.⁵² First, Franklin Roosevelt sent a series of appeals to the heads of state of the contending countries. As war seemed almost unavoidable, he directed subsequent appeals to Hitler and Mussolini. Rather than simply dispatch messages prepared by the State Department for his approval, Roosevelt took a central role in the process. Throughout the crisis, Sumner Welles and Adolph Berle continued to draft and revise presidential messages, while Roosevelt personally revised, edited, and dictated. Berle noted that “the President certainly wanted action.” Roosevelt’s secretary recalled “that the President had a tigerish devotion to his conviction that negotiations, however, protracted, were preferable to warfare and he felt that even the egomaniacal dictators would not be insensible to such appeals.”⁵³ In that respect, Roosevelt seems to have found his inspiration in the actions of kinsman Theodore Roosevelt in 1905 as mediator of the Russo-Japanese War or in bringing about the Algeciras Conference.⁵⁴

The course of events in September 1938 convinced Roosevelt that he had avoided the 1914 mistakes of Wilson and, after the manner of Theodore Roosevelt, played a decisive

⁵² Entry for September 30, 1938, Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 481.

⁵³ Grace Tully, F.D.R.: My Boss (Chicago: Peoples Book Club, 1949), pp. 233-4 and Adolph Berle memorandum to Sumner Welles, October 5, 1942, Box 73, “Welles, Sumner (1938-42),” State Department Subject File, 1938-45, and entries for September 27 and 30, 1938, The Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL.

⁵⁴ For Theodore Roosevelt’s role as mediator and negotiator, see Lewis L. Gould, The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1991), pp. 179-84, and 189-91; and Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956; paperback edition, 1989), pp. 267-314, 357-89.

role in preventing Hitler from invading Czechoslovakia and preserving peace in Europe. During the Munich conference, Roosevelt “was enthusiastic about the good reception” of his first message to Hitler, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, and others.⁵⁵ He was more pleased with his second message to Hitler and Mussolini. Ambassador William Bullitt communicated to the president, “Your second telegram to Hitler was a masterpiece.”⁵⁶ A year after the Munich conference, Roosevelt recalled that his messages to Hitler and Mussolini had been particularly effective. He confided, “And I think the message prevented Hitler from marching as he doubtless intended.”⁵⁷ Following the settlement, Eleanor Roosevelt characterized her husband’s message as “grand and so well timed.”⁵⁸

By the late 1930s, Roosevelt equated conditions in Germany with those during the Great War. Roosevelt and his closest advisors believed that Nazi Germany teetered on the verge of internal collapse with the German people intentionally kept in the dark by their Nazi and militarist masters.⁵⁹ George Messersmith, the United States minister in Austria

⁵⁵ Entry for September 27, 1938, The Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL.

⁵⁶ William C. Bullitt to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 28, 1938, Correspondence of William C. Bullitt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and R. Walton Moore, FDRL.

⁵⁷ Jim Farley, Jim Farley’s Story: The Roosevelt Years (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), pp. 197-8.

⁵⁸ Eleanor Roosevelt letter to Anna Roosevelt, 3 October 1938, Mother and Daughter: The Letters of Eleanor and Anna Roosevelt, edited by Bernard Asbell. (New York: Fromm International, 1988), pp. 105-106.

⁵⁹ George S. Messersmith memorandum, “Comparing Briefly Certain Aspects of the Situation in Europe in 1914 and 1936,” September 10, 1936, pp. 21-22, “Messersmith, George S. 1936-37,” Reel 53, Container 83, General Correspondence, The Papers of Felix Frankfurter, LCMD. William E. Dodd to R. Walton Moore, April 18, 1936, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 3, September 1935-January 1937 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 290-1.

and the former consul general in Berlin, concluded, “Economically, financially, and in spite of the apparent activity, industrially also, Germany [is] fa[r] weaker than in 1914.” He added that “there is unquestionably greater social discontent in Germany today than there was in 1914.” Meanwhile, Dodd reported, “The masses of German people, in so far as I have been able to contact with them, are very displeased, but not able to say a word.” Apparently, Roosevelt also accepted the assessment that the fully mobilized German economy was on the verge of collapse and that the German people were on the verge of revolt. Believing incorrectly that Germany was fully mobilized for war by 1936, the president rated German power as extremely fragile and the German economy at the breaking point, equating the situation in Germany with that of 1917 and 1918.⁶⁰ He hoped that the Nazi regime might collapse before it could launch a major war. The result, Roosevelt anticipated, would be a restoration of the liberal Germany that he nostalgically recalled from his youth.

⁶⁰ As German rearmament continued, assessments of Germany by members of the Roosevelt administration increasingly accepted the notion that although Germany was strong militarily, its power was extremely fragile. Ambassador William Dodd adjudged that the German government was desperate “to save Germany from economic disaster.” William E. Dodd to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 19, 1936, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 3, September 1935-January 1937 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 390-2. American military attachés supported the view of Germany mobilized for war. In October 1936, the military attaché in Berlin forwarded a report to the War Department assessing the changes in the German economic system since the ascent of Hitler. The attaché believed that the German development of production facilities for synthetic fuels indicated full wartime mobilization of the German economy. He claimed that the “German concept of a self-sufficient nation is almost exactly similar to our concept of a nation industrially mobilized for war.” The attaché concluded, “Germany in peace time engages in an enormous program of industrial mobilization so as to make herself self-sufficient in war.” Military Attaché, Berlin, Military Intelligence Division Report No. 14,932, Germany (Economic), Subject: Petroleum, October 22, 1936, Box 625, Military Intelligence Division Correspondence, 1917-41, Records of the WFGS, Record Group 165, National Archives, Federal Record Center, Suitland, Maryland.

After *Kristallnacht*, the vicious anti-Jewish pogrom carried out by the Nazis, Roosevelt moved to strengthen American sea and air power into a weapon that he thought would deter foreign aggressors. Mindful of Wilson's refusal to bring the fleet to readiness, Roosevelt directed the U.S. Navy to form a strong Atlantic squadron. In addition, consistent with his view of the efficacy of both naval and air power in comparison to large ground forces, he moved to enhance the Army Air Corps and give it greater strategic potential. Roosevelt held a conference at the White House on November 14, 1938 that included WPA administrator Harry Hopkins, Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, and Major General H. H. Arnold, the chief of the Air Corps. Roosevelt explained "the necessity for having a large mass of airplanes in being, together with a large productive capacity to be available as a striking force to back United States foreign policies." Arnold noted that in reference to Hitler, the president believed that a well-equipped army of 400,000 men would not serve as a deterrent "whereas as heavy striking force of aircraft would." Not satisfied with American medium bombers, the president also directed the development of a long-range strategic bomber. Conscious of the time it had taken the United States to mobilize in 1917 and 1918, Roosevelt reminded his audience that the United States took over a year to get a large army into action in France during the Great War. He insisted that the United States "must not be caught napping again." Roosevelt explained that he envisioned "a sufficiently large air force to deter anyone from landing in either North or South America."⁶¹

⁶¹ H. H. Arnold memorandum for the Chief of Staff, November 15, 1938, Special Conferences, November 14, 1938, PPF 1P, President's Personal File, FDRL. Roosevelt not only appreciated the impact of his proposed aircraft program on deterring aggressor

As war threatened to break out in Europe, Roosevelt's strategic thinking reflected the progressive ideas of twenty-five years earlier that Germany and the concept of Pan-Germanism represented an economic and military threat to the world, brought up to date with his appreciation for the potential of air power. On January 31, 1939, Roosevelt called the Senate Military Affairs Committee to a meeting in the White House. He confided that he wanted the American people "to gradually realize" the "potential danger" that European dictators represented. Roosevelt outlined his thoughts about the strategy that he believed Hitler to be following and told the Senators, "Beginning about three years ago, there was rather definite information as to what the ultimate objective of Hitler was," namely "a policy of world domination between Germany, Italy and Japan." Roosevelt assessed that if France, Britain, and the other independent nations of Europe decided to fight Hitler that it could not be assumed that they would defeat Germany and Italy. He added, "the best opinion is that it is a fifty-fifty bet." He suggested that Hitler and Mussolini could win by wiping out the French and British air forces in a short time. He offered that if the Allies were driven under ground by German air attacks and were not be able to get the munitions or aircraft that they needed "to keep the fight going, the chances are they would have to yield." With the military force of France and Britain

states, he also anticipated the positive effect of military spending on the domestic economy of the United States. Against the backdrop of the crisis over the Sudetenland, military procurement programs provided the president with an attractive and immediate outlet for government spending. In late 1938, Roosevelt authorized an Army Air Corps of 7,500 combat aircraft and called for the United States to produce 20,000 planes per year, a move that would have generated major industrial expansion and activity. He also began to consider the favorable impact that orders from abroad for aircraft might have on American industries. Nevertheless, Congressional critics who did not perceive any direct threat to the United States in the late 1930s expressed doubts about the need for additional aircraft and showed little support for Roosevelt's production goals. Henry H. Arnold, Global Mission (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), pp. 97, 157-9, 163, 169, 173, 177-83, 194.

rendered nonexistent, the next step in Hitler's domination of Europe would be for "all the small nations" to "drop into the basket of their own accord because it is silly for them to resist." He postulated the next step, "Africa automatically falls." According to the president, Nazi Germany would then demilitarize those nations. Although they would be left with their flag and the guise of sovereignty, Roosevelt explained that the result would be total economic and military domination of the defeated countries. Roosevelt predicated that following the domination of Europe and Africa that "the next perfectly obvious step" would be for Hitler to look west across the Atlantic and move against Central and South America. The president solemnly characterized the problem facing the United States, "It is the gradual encirclement of the United States by the removal of first lines of defense."⁶²

Roosevelt perceived civilization at stake in the impending war. Committed to preventing a German victory while continuing to hope that the Hitler regime might collapse before another devastating war broke out in Europe, Roosevelt averred that there were two aspirations at work in his foreign policy. He commented, "The first – from our point of view – the first is the hope that somebody will assassinate Hitler or that Germany will blow up from within." He noted that the "other attitude" at work was that the United States "must try to prevent the domination of the world – prevent it by peaceful means." Roosevelt went on to describe the policy of the United States would be one of "self-protection" rather than being neutral. Although he intended to prevent any munitions from going to Germany, Italy, or Japan, the president asserted, "I will do everything I can to maintain the independence of these other nations by sending them all they can pay for

⁶² Franklin D. Roosevelt conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, January 31, 1939, Special Conferences, PPF 1P, President's Personal File, FDRL.

on the barrelhead... Now, that is the foreign policy of the United States.” Roosevelt told the Senators that he supported the initiative by the French government to spend five million dollars in the United States on aircraft. Roosevelt explained that his administration wanted “France to continue as an independent nation” and that “if France yields and England yields, there won’t be any independent nation in Europe or Africa or anywhere else.” He suggested that the strength of American democracy required that France and England maintain their independence. Roosevelt stated, “I am frankly hoping that the French will be able to get the fastest pursuit planes we can turn out.” He added, “And I hope to God they get the planes and get them fast and get them over there in France. It may mean the saving of our civilization.”⁶³

Hitler occupied all of Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939.⁶⁴ The situation was what Berle had characterized several months earlier “as the beginning of a Napoleonic sweep over Europe.”⁶⁵ On that afternoon, Berle spent more than an hour with Roosevelt; Germany was one of the major topics of discussion. In violation of his assurances at the Munich conference, Hitler had moved into Czechoslovakia earlier that day. Berle noted the mood, “During the day, the news of Hitler’s annexation of Bohemia and Moravia came in, giving rise to considerable of a state of mind.” Berle assessed that because of Hitler’s actions the State Department was “rapidly getting to the boiling point,” and he

⁶³ Franklin D. Roosevelt conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, January 31, 1939, Special Conferences, PPF 1P, President’s Personal File, FDRL.

⁶⁴ Entry for February 20, 1939, The Diary of Adolph Berle and Adolph A. Berle memorandum, March 16, 1939, Box 55, “Berle – Memoranda – 1938-44,” State Department Subject File, 1938-1945, Berle Papers, FDRL.

⁶⁵ Adolph Berle memorandum, November 4, 1938, Box 55, “Berle – Memoranda – 1938-44,” State Department Subject File, 1938-45, Berle Papers, FDRL.

gathered that Roosevelt felt the same way. Berle, however, was surprised to discover that Roosevelt “was not particularly bothered by” the German action. Rather than indifference to Hitler’s aggression, the president’s attitude stemmed from his belief that “the economic and organization stresses and strains of taking in eastern Europe will make the going increasingly hard” for Nazi Germany.⁶⁶ Roosevelt’s concept was one that he repeated that summer in his commencement address at West Point. He told the graduates that “the military strength of a country can be no greater than its internal economic and moral solidarity.”⁶⁷

The failure of Wilson in 1914 to avert war in Europe and Theodore Roosevelt’s success in 1905 preventing war between the major powers continued to guide Roosevelt’s actions, and in April 1939, he dispatched another a progressive appeal to Europe.⁶⁸ The president drafted the initial message and forwarded it to the State Department where a group led by Welles and Berle worked revisions. The message that emerged combined “a polite diplomatic communication to Hitler and Mussolini” that reflected Theodore Roosevelt’s message to the Kaiser with “a manifesto to the German and Italian people” in Wilsonian fashion over the heads of the dictators.⁶⁹ After several days of drafts, Roosevelt and Welles finalized the message to Hitler and Mussolini on April 14. Berle noted the president’s central role, “The authorship of the President’s address to Mussolini

⁶⁶ Adolph Berle memorandum, March 16, 1939, Box 55, “Berle – Memoranda – 1938-44,” State Department Subject File, 1938-45, Berle Papers, FDRL.

⁶⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt West Point Commencement, West Point, New York, June 12, 1939, Master Speech File No. 1229, Speech File, FDRL.

⁶⁸ Entry for April 15, 1939, The Adolph A. Berle Diary, Berle Papers, FDRL.

⁶⁹ Adolph A. Berle memorandum, President’s draft of April 10, 1939, entry for April 11, 1939 and entry for April 13, 1939, The Adolph A. Berle Diary, Berle Papers, FDRL.

and Hitler is distinctly and definitely his own. No one added anything to it other than the necessary technical development of the ideas which he himself had definitely worked out.” On April 15, the White House released Roosevelt’s message to Hitler and Mussolini to the press. The administration simultaneously “put into effect the arrangements previously made to have it broadcast widely so that it would be received by as much of the German and Italian public as could possibly be reached.”⁷⁰

From the perspective of Roosevelt and his advisors, the mid April message to Europe averted immediate war once again. Four days after the broadcast of the message, Berle assessed “that the plan of giving wide radio publicity to the President’s message has had some effect in Italy and in Germany.” He observed “that the rising tide of public opinion” in Germany after the broadcast “compelled publication of the message” in the German press. He also thought that the impact of the message on the German people had dissuaded Hitler from “an immediate and contemptuous rejection” of Roosevelt’s appeal to respect the territorial integrity of nations.⁷¹ Confident that his actions had delayed the

⁷⁰ Entry for April 15, 1939 and White House press release No. 147, April 15, 1939, The Adolph A. Berle Diary, Berle Papers, FDRL.

⁷¹ Entry for April 19, 1939, The Adolph A. Berle Diary, Berle Papers, FDRL. In retrospect it is clear that Roosevelt’s appeal to Hitler and Mussolini and the people of Germany and Italy was not as successful as the Roosevelt administration believed. The German and Italian press vilified the appeal. Although Roosevelt’s message generally provided a boost to French and British morale, it had the unintended effect of weakening the position of the Baltic and Eastern Europe states with respect to Germany. Donald C. Watt, How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938-1939 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), pp. 261-4. In addition, Roosevelt’s appeal did not delay any planned German attack against the Netherlands or France. Instead, in May 1939, Hitler announced his decision to attack Poland. He proclaimed at a conference on May 23, “Further successes cannot be obtained without the shedding of blood.” Document L-79, International Military Tribunal, Trials of the War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10, vol. 2, The Medical Case, The Milch Case (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 387-8.

outbreak of war in Europe, Roosevelt considered dispatching an ambassador to Germany “in the near future,” upgrading relations from the chargé level. Roosevelt selected Breckinridge Long, a student of Woodrow Wilson’s at Princeton, for the position.⁷²

Roosevelt complemented his progressive appeals to Europe with further efforts during the summer of 1939 to generate support for preparedness in the United States. Roosevelt believed that while Germany and Italy had spent a great deal of their money on their militaries, their economies had grown weaker and their power was extremely fragile. He asserted that because of their economic condition the two countries had already reached the conclusion “that their economic solution lies in conquest” and aggression. Having shown the inevitability of conflict, the president outlined what he thought “would happen if Germany and Italy won an European War.” He asserted that an unprepared United States “would be out of the picture entirely” and unable to influence the course of German domination. Roosevelt thought that the first step would be the immediate disarmament of the French army and the British fleet. The result, according to the president, would be the “complete domination of Europe.” With the French army and British fleet out of the way, Roosevelt portrayed “a German conqueror” dominating the remainder of Europe and seizing their colonies. Although he averred that Germany was “not quite ready to take on the United States” directly, an indirect German approach through South and Central America could happen by coercion rather than war. The result

⁷² With the outbreak of war in Europe, Long took charge of a Special Division in the State Department to handle emergency matters arising out of the war. Hugh Wilson was assigned as his assistant. Entry for September 2, 1939, Breckinridge Long, The War Diary of Breckinridge Long: Selections From the War Years 1939-1944, Fred L. Israel, ed. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 1, 3.

would be German economic domination followed by the demand that their armies and navies be put under the control of German officers.⁷³

Consistent with his strategic conception for air and sea power to complement economic warfare, the military preparedness that Roosevelt envisioned in 1939 did not involve a potential American Expeditionary Force. At a press conference, the president was asked if he would resort to conscription in the event of a war in which the United States decided to participate. Although the U.S. Army contained about 400,000 men at the time, he replied that there were no plans “for an Army of more than a million men.” Roosevelt proceeded to clarify his comment, “In other words, it is an honest fact that our Army plans do not contemplate ever having to raise more than a million men.”⁷⁴ Certainly, the drastic increase in the size of the U.S. Army Air Corps already proposed by Roosevelt would account for the bulk of those additional 600,000 men.

With Germany threatening war in August 1939, Roosevelt again attempted to forestall the outbreak of the conflict. The president approved statements addressed to Hitler, King Victor Emanuel of Italy, and the president of Poland. President Roosevelt next issued a call to resolve the German-Polish situation by either negotiation or arbitration. The president of Poland accepted the substance of Roosevelt’s appeal, but Hitler failed to reply. Roosevelt expected war.⁷⁵

⁷³ Franklin D. Roosevelt presidential press conference number 557A, June 23, 1939, Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, vol. 13, 1939 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), pp. 461-3.

⁷⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt presidential press conference number 540-A, April 20, 1939, Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, vol. 13, 1939 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), pp. 316-7.

⁷⁵ Entry for August 26, 1939, Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 701.

Sensing Europe on the verge of war, Roosevelt remembered “what had happened at the time of the last world war.” He directed specific actions to avoid Wilson’s mistakes and assist the democracies against Germany. In the case of a declared war, the Department of Justice and the State Department would delay getting the declaration of neutrality to the president for signature. In the meantime, the War and Navy Departments were to contact aircraft manufacturers and munitions makers. The manufacturers would quickly ship available aircraft and munitions either to Canada or beyond the three-mile limit. Roosevelt also instructed the military departments not to raise any questions “if airplane manufacturers wanted to ship planes intended for American delivery to England or France on pending orders.” Hoping to hinder the German merchant marine, Roosevelt instructed the Treasury Department to require clearance papers in American ports. The president envisioned that German boats attempting to depart without the papers be halted by force. He also directed that marines be ready to board all German merchant ships in American ports for the purpose of “protecting property.” In actuality, he intended for the marines to be on board to prevent the crews from disabling their vessels as had happened to German merchantmen during the Great War. In the event that an undeclared war broke out, Roosevelt instructed that the United States would “permit the sale of war munitions and materials to any nation that can come and buy them.” He reasoned that since the Royal Navy would have swept the German merchant marine from the seas such a policy would “be to the decided advantage of Europe and France.”⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Entries for August 26 and 29, 1939, Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 700-2, 704-5, and 715.

III. A Reappraisal of Roosevelt and the European War: Isolationist and Interventionist, 1939-1941

A survey of Roosevelt's strategic thinking prior to United States entry into the Second World War reveals that the choice of Roosevelt either as an isolationist and reluctant belligerent or as an ardent interventionist seeking to enter the war by almost any means presents a false dichotomy. Rather than being either, Roosevelt embodied strains of both of those views into a coherent and consistent approach toward the situation in Europe. Although his actions seemed to draw the United States inexorably into deeper involvement in the European War, Roosevelt continued to pursue his goal of keeping the United States out of the war. Rather than dissembling, Roosevelt charted a steady and rational foreign policy and strategic concept that derived from his worldview. His wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, judged that her husband's actions in 1939 and 1940 were "only a continuation of the line of action he had begun to follow as far back as 1936."⁷⁷

Following the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Roosevelt pursued a policy intended to keep the United States out of the European War as a formal belligerent and bring about the defeat of Hitler's Nazi regime. While implementing a policy of armed neutrality that favored the Allies, the Roosevelt administration looked for opportunities to act in pursuit of two primary goals: bring about the defeat of Nazi Germany and avoid active United States participation in the war as a combatant. Hoping to fundamentally influence the outcome of the European War, Roosevelt and his administration thought that they could bring about an internal collapse in Germany

⁷⁷ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), p. 211.

similar to the events in October and November 1918 that had hastened the sudden end of the Great War. In theory, if Nazi Germany's militaristic expansion could be checked, and word got to the German people, they would respond to military setback by rising up against their autocratic Prussian masters and deposing them. The result, Roosevelt suggested, would be a restoration of the liberal Germany that he nostalgically recalled from his youth. He confided

that there's no reason on God's earth why the Germans shouldn't again become the kind of nation they were under Bismarck. Not militaristic. They were productive; they were peaceful; they were a great part of Europe. And that's the kind of Germany I would like to see.⁷⁸

United States intervention in the Great War and the views of kinsmen Theodore Roosevelt and James Russell Soley also provided an example for Roosevelt's neutrality policies as president. The earlier arguments of Theodore Roosevelt, demanding United States intervention against Imperial Germany as a moral imperative for civilization against the terrible evil represented by the forces of reaction, conditioned Franklin Roosevelt's thinking about neutrality. Theodore Roosevelt argued that administrations had to take a side when civilization was at stake. Although Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration avoided active combat in the European War for several years, it was not strictly neutral. Less than two weeks after Germany invaded Poland, Roosevelt expressed his complete agreement with Jim Farley's assessment that even without the United States the being a formal belligerent "we are to all intents and purposes in a state of war."⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Oral History interview with John Franklin Carter, February 9, 1966, FDRL.

⁷⁹ James A. Farley, Jim Farley's Story: The Roosevelt Years (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), p. 195.

Similarly, in early 1940, Eleanor Roosevelt noted, “As a matter of fact we are already in a war—an economic war and a war of philosophies.”⁸⁰

Immediately prior to the outbreak of the European War, Roosevelt resolved to not repeat the mistakes of Woodrow Wilson concerning neutrality. He commented that he planned “to remind the American people” of Wilson’s caution when the Great War broke out “to be neutral not only in deed but in thought.” Roosevelt, however, rejected Wilson’s approach and deemed it “impossible in a situation such as exists in Europe today for a fair-minded people to be neutral in thought.”⁸¹ After the European War broke out, Roosevelt addressed the American people by radio on September 3, 1939. The president professed that he hated war and stated, “I hope that the United States will keep out of this war. I believe that it will.” Acknowledging that events in Poland were far away, he cautioned against adopting an isolationist view. While not isolationist, Roosevelt also did not contemplate United States military intervention in the European war. The president announced, “Let no man or woman thoughtlessly or falsely talk of America sending its armies to European fields.” Roosevelt noted that a neutrality proclamation was being prepared in accordance with the Neutrality Act and traditional United States foreign policy that reached back to the presidency of George Washington and a long-standing tradition of armed neutrality. In contrast to Wilson’s 1914 approach, Roosevelt was quick to declare that he would not ask the American people to remain neutral in thought, and he stated, “This nation will remain a neutral nation, but I cannot ask that every American

⁸⁰ [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, The Moral Basis of Democracy (New York: Howell, Soskin and Company, 1940), p. 46.

⁸¹ Entry for August 26, 1939, Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 704-5.

remain neutral in thought as well.”⁸² Roosevelt deliberately pursued opportunities to aid France and Britain with munitions, aircraft, and supplies.

On September 4, Roosevelt discussed the question of United States neutrality with his cabinet. With British and French declarations of war against Germany, the cabinet decided to issue the customary neutrality declaration. According to Ickes, however, Roosevelt “was not in so much of a hurry to issue the proclamation required under the Neutrality Act.” Roosevelt wanted to provide Britain and France with “all the opportunity to export munitions of war, none of which could be exported after this proclamation was once issued.”⁸³

Attitudes in the Roosevelt administration about the fragile nature of German strength persisted after the outbreak of the European War, and conditions in Germany were believed to be comparable to those of 1918. In September 1939, Roosevelt predicted either a German victory or the distinct possibility that “there will be a revolution in Germany itself” by June 1940.⁸⁴ He was not alone. In the State Department, Breckinridge Long noted, “It looks to me as if there was trouble brewing in Germany.”⁸⁵ Likewise, in late October 1939, a report from the Department of Commerce noted “the German economic situation now is comparable to the conditions of 1917 rather than to those of

⁸² Franklin D. Roosevelt radio address on neutrality (Fireside No. 14), September 3, 1939, Master Speech File No. 1240, Franklin D. Roosevelt Speech File, FDRL.

⁸³ Entry for September 9, 1939, Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 715

⁸⁴ Entry for September 16, 1939, Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 3, The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 9.

⁸⁵ Entry for October 11, 1939 in Fred L. Israel, ed., The War Diary of Breckinridge Long: Selections from the Years 1939-1944 (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 27.

1914.”⁸⁶ Central to that assessment was the belief that Germany had “already transformed her economy into a government controlled war economy” well before 1937, that “Germany has no more possibility of [economic] expansion,” and that with its labor fully mobilized “by all available voluntary and compulsory means” that “a certain decline in labor productivity” was already evident.⁸⁷ Military intelligence reports from Europe complemented the perceptions held in the Interior, State, and Commerce Departments and in the White House.⁸⁸ Together, the attaché reports suggested that economic embargo and blockade would be extremely effective measures against Germany.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Europe on the Eve of the War, October 26, 1939, p. 10, Industrial Economics Division, Box 114, Secretary of Commerce, Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, FDRL.

⁸⁷ Europe on the Eve of the War, October 26, 1939, pp. 4, 5, 8, and 9, Industrial Economics Division, Box 114, Secretary of Commerce, Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, FDRL

⁸⁸ The Army attaché in London reported that his sources indicated “that the supply of gasoline for military aircraft and mechanized vehicles in Germany was now estimated to be sufficient for approximately two or three months operations only.” He also believed that the Nazi-Soviet Pact would not alleviate the German fuel shortage since Soviet production barely met the requirements of the Soviet military. Military Attaché London, Report No. 40403, September 13, 1939, Subject: Supply, File No. 2655-B-356, Military Intelligence Division, Box 1572, Record Group 165, National Archives. In October 1939, the attaché in Berlin reported that the German conquest of Poland only increased the limited German supply of raw materials by about five percent. Reportedly, the poor transportation infrastructure in Poland would impair any possible benefits coming to Germany from the Soviet Union. Military Attaché Berlin, Report No. 16,907, October 3, 1939, GERMANY (Economic) Subject: The Effect Upon Germany of the Occupation of Poland, File No. 2655-B-390, Military Intelligence Division, Box 1572, Record Group 165, National Archives.

⁸⁹ The administration assessment that the Germany economy had been fully mobilized in the 1930s was inaccurate. Hoping to achieve his objectives without a protracted, general war, it was not until 1942 that Hitler placed the German economy on a war footing. Prior to economic mobilization in 1942, Hitler chose to use, rather than expand, the existing German industrial base, and between 1933 and 1938, only about ten percent of the German gross national product was spent on armaments. Although Hitler clearly wanted war in 1939, he was not prepared for a general war. The German submarine fleet was not particularly strong and the capital ships of Germany’s future battlefleet were still in the

Although Germany opened new offensives against Denmark and Norway in April 1940, some American observers recalled the situation in the summer of 1918 and saw reason for guarded optimism. The month before, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Betty Stark, provided Roosevelt with his assessment that the blockade had produced under-nourishment in Germany, a condition that “tends to undermine the nerves and morale of the entire population.” Stark believed “either oil or finances, or both, may be deciding factors, and perhaps to this should be added morale. Any one or any combination of these could bring on peace without a definite military decision having been reached.” He estimated that, without new offensives, German stocks might last until the spring of 1941.⁹⁰ Not only would a renewed offensive deplete scarce German resources, it recalled the desperate German offensive on the Western Front in the summer of 1918. During the first week of May, Ambassador William Bullitt reported that there was “no undue despair” in Paris because “People remember too well that until the month of August 1918 it appeared that Germany was winning the war.”⁹¹

Evidently, the German attack on the Western Front in the summer of 1918 influenced how Roosevelt viewed the Battle of France in May and June 1940. Roosevelt, furthermore, became more optimistic after the Dunkirk evacuation exceeded all

process of being built. Albert Speer, Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs, Trans. Richard and Clar Wilson (New York: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 165-6, 189-229. See also Burton H. Klein, Germany's Economic Preparations for War (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959) pp. 17-20, 76-82.

⁹⁰ Admiral H. R. Stark, “Rough Informal Estimate of the Foreign Situation,” March 1, 1940, folder: Navy: Jan-Mar 1940, Departmental File, Box 58, President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

⁹¹ William C. Bullitt letter to R. Walton Moore, May 6, 1940, “Bullitt, W. C. 1940-1941,” Group 55, Box 3, R. Walton Moore Papers, FDRL.

expectations. At a cabinet meeting on June 9, the president surmised “that if the French can hold out for three weeks they will be able to win against the Germans.”⁹² That same day, Berle noted that even if the Germans emerged as the “masters of the situation” that “they will be in such bad shape economically” that they will have to open up peace initiatives.⁹³ As Berle noted at the end of June, “By all tests and standards that we know, a personality like Hitler’s and a movement like that which he has instituted, smashes up in time.”⁹⁴

In the wake of the Battle of France, Roosevelt crafted a course for his administration to bring about a German collapse while avoiding the need for formal United States military intervention. Consistent with that strategic concept, Roosevelt announced in July 1940, “That we will not use our arms in a war of aggression, that *we will not wage war in Europe[,] Africa or Asia* is known not only to every American but to every government in the world.”⁹⁵ To Roosevelt, the key was to maintain pressure on Germany until it collapsed upon itself. Economic sanctions and blockade formed the centerpiece of that pressure. With regard to American and British policy, he believed “that the only way out of the difficulties of the world was by the starving of the people of Europe, particularly in

⁹² Entry for June 9, 1940, in Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 3, p. 202.

⁹³ Entry for June 9, 1940, Adolph A. Berle Diary, Box 212, Berle papers, FDRL.

⁹⁴ Entry for June 30, 1940, Adolph A. Berle Diary, Box 212, Berle Papers, FDRL.

⁹⁵ Italics handwritten in the original by Roosevelt. Draft of Roosevelt’s Message to Congress, Second Appeal--Additional Defense Appropriation, July 10, 1940, Master Speech File Number 1289, Speech File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

regard to their supply of fuel to carry on the war.”⁹⁶ Roosevelt’s newly appointed secretaries of War and Navy, Henry Stimson and Frank Knox, concurred. Stimson noted that the “war was going to be decided by fuel and that Germany was really very short of fuel.” He predicted that German oil and other essential supplies “would be exhausted . . . in the autumn.”⁹⁷ Knox concurred with Stimson’s views and argued, “war today has become a war of food and oil.” He reasoned that because “Europe has insufficient supplies of both,” the “only chance for ultimate success” rested upon “the maintenance of that blockade.”⁹⁸

In a deliberate effort to avoid the type of problems that Wilson faced, Roosevelt closely controlled his policy. Roosevelt told Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes that he intentionally tried to be the kind of president “who kept track of everything.” He resolved to avoid the administrative failures of Wilson “who let his Cabinet run the show.” Roosevelt believed that “Wilson literally didn’t know what was going on”

⁹⁶ Entry for July 19, 1940, Henry Lewis Stimson Diaries, XXX: 24-5, microfilm edition, Reel 6, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; entry for June 18, 1940, Adolph A. Berle Diary, Box 212, Berle papers, FDRL. At the end of May 1940, the Ministry of Economic Warfare depicted a highly vulnerable German economy, over stretched to the absolute limit of its power. The British maintained that German strength was brittle and that “by April 1941, she would be down to one million tons of oil. This was her dying out figure in the last war.” Entry for May 24, 1940 in Hugh Dalton, The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1940-1945, edited by Ben Pimlott (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1986), p. 20. In the middle of the Battle of France, British military chiefs reported to the cabinet, “Germany might still be defeated by economic pressure, by a combination of air attack on economic objectives in Germany and on German morale and the creation of widespread revolt in her conquered territories.” “British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality,” May 25, 1940, W.P. 40(168), CAB 66/7, PRO, Kew.

⁹⁷ Entry for July 18, 1940, Henry Lewis Stimson Diaries, XXX: 23, microfilm edition, Reel 6, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut.

⁹⁸ Speech to New England Council, Boston, November 14, 1940, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, The Papers of Frank Knox, LCMD.

because he had “left everything” to his subordinates.⁹⁹ To avoid Wilson’s mistakes, improve his span of control, and aid in formulating and condensing information, Roosevelt established the executive office of the president soon after the German invasion of Poland. The next day he remarked, “Don’t think that I am not watching everything with an eagle eye.”¹⁰⁰

Roosevelt also sought to preclude some of the partisan politics that had plagued Wilson and contributed to his own defeat in the election of 1920. During the war, Wilson had refused to consider bringing Republicans into his cabinet and creating a “super-cabinet.”¹⁰¹ Roosevelt, however, discussed such a move as early as September 1939.¹⁰² During the Battle of France, Roosevelt brought Republicans Stimson and Knox into his administration and later added William Donovan as his Coordinator of Information. In 1917, Theodore Roosevelt had selected all three to serve in the volunteer force he proposed to take to France.

⁹⁹ Entries for July 5 and June 5, 1940 in Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 3, The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 232, 201.

¹⁰⁰ The Reorganization of the Executive Office of the President, Executive Order No. 8248, September 8, 1939, in The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1939: War—And Neutrality, edited by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), pp. 490-506. Entry for September 9, 1939 in Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 721. Roosevelt also reduced the ability of the Secretaries of War and Navy to plan and conduct operations outside of his knowledge by placing the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Naval Operations, and their planning staffs directly under the executive office of the president.

¹⁰¹ Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), p. 263 and 265.

¹⁰² Entry for September 9, 1939 in Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 2, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 718.

Reflecting his strategic thinking formulated in the period immediately following the Great War, Roosevelt envisioned a strategic concept based on economic sanctions, naval blockade, moral suasion in the form of propaganda and psychological warfare, and air power to contribute to the defeat of Nazi Germany. The result would be to eliminate the need for the United States to enter the European War as a ground combatant. Roosevelt, however, remained committed to military preparedness, largely in the form of air and naval forces, to support his policy of armed neutrality or in the event that the United States entered the war. Always sensitive to his base of political support, in September 1940, Roosevelt remarked that naval preparedness was the only form of rearmament that was politically feasible. “American mothers don’t want their boys to be soldiers,” he observed, “so nothing really big can be done at present about expanding the Army. But the Navy is another matter; American mothers don’t seem to mind their boys becoming sailors.”¹⁰³

Confident in his strategic approach, Roosevelt remained optimistic about the prospect of a German defeat. “There isn’t the slightest doubt in my mind that Hitler will be defeated,” he told Jim Farley on January 4, 1941, “but it will take more than a year to do it.”¹⁰⁴ Keeping Britain in the war presented a challenge. Recognizing that Britain’s precarious financial resources and the desperate shipping situation in the Atlantic could undermine the British ability to resist beyond the summer of 1941, the Roosevelt administration acted to keep Britain in the war until Germany collapsed. In January 1941,

¹⁰³ Robert Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), p. 68.

¹⁰⁴ James A. Farley, Jim Farley’s Story: The Roosevelt Years (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), p. 340.

the administration proposed the Lend-Lease Bill that it portrayed as an “aid to democracies” bill. The administration intended that Lend-Lease would maintain freedom in the United States by aiding the Allies and also keeping the United States out of the European war as an active combatant.¹⁰⁵ On March 11, 1941 Roosevelt signed into law “An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States” and subsequently designated Harry Hopkins, who was living in the White House, “to advise and assist” him “in carrying out the responsibilities placed upon” him by the act.¹⁰⁶ Hopkins viewed his new duties liberally and enjoined government representatives serving on the Lend-Lease liaison group to “concentrate on ‘licking Hitler’, whether or not it comes strictly under ‘lend-lease’.”¹⁰⁷

With the passage of Lend-Lease, Berle judged that by early 1941 United States foreign policy “really moved into another phase of things, a semi-belligerent phase.” He perceived that United States policy had undergone “a steady drift into a deep gray stage in which the precise difference between war and peace is impossible to discern.” Consistent with the concept of armed neutrality, Berle rejected the thought that the president’s policy meant that war was inevitable. He averred, “Curiously enough, I am

¹⁰⁵ Despite vocal opposition, Lend-Lease passed by 60 votes to 31 in the Senate and 317 to 71 in the House of Representatives. Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980, tenth edition), pp. 721-3.

¹⁰⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Harry Hopkins, March 27, 1941, “Franklin D. Roosevelt,” Box 214, Special Assistant to the President, 1941-1945, The Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, FDRL.

¹⁰⁷ Lynn R. Edminster to Harry Hopkins, May 22, 1941, “Ideas About the War,” Box 158, Special Assistant to the President, 1941-1945, The Papers of Harry L. Hopkins, FDRL.

not sure that it means war, necessarily.”¹⁰⁸ To bolster the administration’s case for not adhering to strict neutrality, Attorney General Robert Jackson advanced the argument “that ‘neutrality’ does not imply impartiality where somebody else starts an unjustified war.”¹⁰⁹

Rather than a shooting war between the United States and Nazi Germany, Roosevelt’s advisors anticipated a “political rather than military” contest between the leaders of the two countries. It was a viewpoint colored by their liberal-progressivism. As a result, in the Roosevelt administration psychological factors, morale, leadership, and suasion seemed to take on greater importance in comparison to conventional military armaments and ground forces. Clearly linked to the ideas that had driven the progressive activities of the Committee on Public Information, Roosevelt even suggested that George Creel be brought into the administration to “do the same job on propaganda that he did during the last war.”¹¹⁰ In their calculus of national strategic power, presidential advisors believed that Roosevelt’s mystique and moral influence, “the myth of Roosevelt,” constituted “a moral strength which would be worth many divisions when the ultimate showdown comes.” They believed that Germany acknowledged that United States power had produced the German defeat in 1918 and thought, as a result, Germany hoped to avoid any direct confrontation that might bring the United States into the European War. They thought that the administration’s aggressive neutrality backed by military force had

¹⁰⁸ Entry for March 9, 1941, *The Diary of Adolph Berle*, Adolph A. Berle Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

¹⁰⁹ Berle characterized Jackson’s argument as consistent with the international law theories of the seventeenth century Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius. Entry for March 13, 1941, *The Diary of Adolph Berle*, Berle Papers, FDRL.

¹¹⁰ Entry for February 8, 1941 in Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, vol. 3, *The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 426.

dissuaded German aggression and prevented conflict between the United States and Germany. Berle summed up the attitude in the spring of 1941 and noted, “I think the Germans simply do not want war with us.”¹¹¹

The success of German submarines in the North Atlantic in 1941 confronted the Roosevelt administration with a challenge. The administration’s Lend-Lease efforts would be of little use if American-made war material and munitions did not reach British forces. Similar to Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt took a broad view of the Monroe Doctrine and during the election of 1940 noted this his policy was to “vigorously support the Monroe Doctrine for the protection of the American Hemisphere.”¹¹² In 1941, Roosevelt extended the area covered by the Monroe Doctrine eastward into the middle of the Atlantic. In April, the United States occupied Greenland. Roosevelt subsequently justified the action by stating “we are applying to Denmark what might be called a carrying out of the Monroe Doctrine” to prevent the potential transfer of Greenland to Germany.¹¹³ He also extended the naval reconnaissance patrols that had been operating in the Atlantic since September 1939 from approximately 300 miles off the coast to over

¹¹¹ Entries for February 14 and March 9, 1941, the Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL. Berle’s assessment was not new. For instance, Admiral Harold R. Stark, the Chief of Naval Operations, had assessed in March 1940, “Germany will make every effort to avoid friction [with] the United States which might endanger [sic] our neutrality.” Admiral Harold R. Stark, Rough Informal Estimate of the Foreign Situation, March 1, 1940, Folder: Navy: Jan-Mar 1940, Departmental File, Box 58, President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL. On a similar note, in 1906, Theodore Roosevelt assessed that Germany “respects the United States only in so far as it believes that our navy is efficient and that if sufficiently wronged or insulted we would fight.” Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956; paperback edition, 1989), p. 394.

¹¹² Franklin D. Roosevelt notes filed June 1940, Democratic Platform, Speech File (No Number), FDRL.

¹¹³ Franklin D. Roosevelt press conference, April 15, 1941, in The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1941: The Call to Battle Stations, edited by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), pp. 117-120.

1,000 miles “for the safety of the Western Hemisphere” and to fulfill “the obligation we have under the Monroe Doctrine.” When asked about the possible limit of the patrols, Roosevelt replied, “As far on the waters of the seven seas as may be necessary for the defense of the American hemisphere.”¹¹⁴ The naval patrols radioed the locations of German submarines to British warships and aircraft. He also issued orders for American ships to be convoyed to Iceland, an order soon expanded to include neutral ships and, ultimately, British ships. At Iceland, U.S. Navy escort destroyers turned Lend -Lease convoys over to the Royal Navy for the remainder of the voyage to Britain.¹¹⁵

The maturing military contacts between the United States and Britain led to a strategic conference in Washington, D.C. from January 29 until March 29, 1941. The conference, the first of the American-British Conversations, produced a fundamental agreement on grand strategy known as ABC-1. In the Pacific, the two countries would maintain a policy of deterrence against Japan, and, in the event of United States entry into the war, the Allied priority would become securing the Atlantic and the defeat of Germany and Italy. Although United States planners considered that a major invasion of Europe might be necessary, Roosevelt endorsed a joint strategy for victory over Germany that rested on complementing the British blockade with strategic bombing and subversion on the continent.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile Roosevelt and his advisors resisted acknowledging any

¹¹⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt press conference, April 25, 1941, in The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1941: The Call to Battle Stations, edited by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), pp. 132-135.

¹¹⁵ Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980, tenth edition), pp. 723-4, 728-30.

¹¹⁶ Maurice Matloff and Snell, Edwin M., Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942, vol. 3 of the series The United States Army in World War II: The War Department (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), pp. 33-48.

requirement for a large American ground force to Europe again. Other forces would substitute for another AEF. By May, based on Stimson's directives, the War Department understood that the basic United States policy during the period of so-called "neutrality" was that "British forces are to be considered as an American Expeditionary Force."¹¹⁷ General Marshall, meanwhile, found Roosevelt unreceptive to his requests to increase the size of the U.S. Army, and in the fall of 1941, Roosevelt actually favored decreasing the size of army ground forces in favor of air and naval forces.¹¹⁸

In the spring of 1941, one of Roosevelt's intelligence analysts reaffirmed his basic formula for Allied victory over Germany. To crack the political power of the Nazis over Germany, John Franklin Carter thought several things had to happen. First, the Anglo-American Allies had to check Nazi success much as had happened along the Marne River in 1918 and "Put an end to the series of German political and military victories." Meanwhile, the Allies would continue to bomb German cities, wrecking German morale, industry, and transportation infrastructure. Carter believed the financial system in Europe was demoralized, the labor supply inadequate, and the transportation system "heavily overloaded" and, consequently, "the weakest part of the entire German war-economy."¹¹⁹ Blockade, Carter reasoned, remained a most effective weapon. He assessed that the

¹¹⁷ Estimate of the Situation on Aid to Britain, May 19, 1941, 4323-31, War Plans Division General Correspondence, 1920-1942, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165, National Archives.

¹¹⁸ Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 624.

¹¹⁹ John F. Carter, Second Interim Report Submitted by John Franklin Carter: Political Conditions in Nazi Germany; Economic Conditions in Nazi Germany; Reactions of American Businessmen to Nazi Germany, March 31, 1941, Box 97, "Carter, John F.: Mar.-Oct. 1941," President's Secretary's File, FDRL.

“weakest element in German Europe is the Nazi Party” and the strongest was the German army. Carter argued that the victories of the German army had been instrumental in increasing “respect for the Party’s political leadership” and “popularizing the regime.” Nevertheless, Carter perceived substantial fissures in the Nazi system. Heavy losses in the German army, Carter reported, had led to mutinies and the refusal of soldiers “to support invasion plans for England.”¹²⁰ By late September, Roosevelt received further indications that Hitler’s regime was in trouble. The director of Naval Intelligence sent Roosevelt a report on sagging civilian morale and factional strife in Germany. Concerning German morale, the report judged that “heavy bombing by the British during the last two months has had a decided effect upon the German civilian morale.”¹²¹

In September 1941, Roosevelt considered arming merchant ships, the solution he had advocated in early 1917. Although noting that the Neutrality Act specifically forbid providing arms to merchant ships, he observed to the press that during “the so-called quasi-war against France in 1798” many armed merchantmen “beat off French privateers.” He added that in accordance with international law, merchant ships achieved similar results during the War of 1812 against British attacks.¹²² The following month, Roosevelt requested that Congress repeal the Neutrality Act and authorize him to arm

¹²⁰ John F. Carter, Second Interim Report Submitted by John Franklin Carter: Political Conditions in Nazi Germany; Economic Conditions in Nazi Germany; Reactions of American Businessmen to Nazi Germany, March 31, 1941, Box 97, “Carter, John F.: Mar.-Oct. 1941,” President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

¹²¹ Captain A. G. Kirk, Director of Naval Intelligence memorandum for Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 26, 1941, Navy Department: 1934-Feb. 1942, Box 4, Safe File, President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

¹²² Franklin D. Roosevelt press conference, September 23, 1941, in The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1941: The Call to Battle Stations, edited by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), pp. 393-6.

merchantmen. In November both houses of Congress removed the major restrictions of the 1939 Neutrality Act, allowing American merchantmen, armed and unarmed, to go anywhere legally and carry any cargo.¹²³ On November 20, Knox proclaimed “that our vessels will be armed in two weeks.”¹²⁴

In his cabinet, Stimson, Knox, Ickes, and Morgenthau chafed under the president’s restraints that prevented greater military intervention by the United States.¹²⁵ Roosevelt, however, apparently had no intention of asking Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. Roosevelt seems to have remained committed to the belief that armed neutrality would suffice to achieve his aims without having to resort to war. His strategy seemed to be working. Roosevelt observed that Hitler “knows he is racing against time” and that having “heard the rumblings of revolt among the enslaved peoples,” knows that the days in which he may achieve total victory are numbered.” In late October, in preparation for a Navy Day address, Roosevelt drafted,

I can say however that neither I nor any responsible officer of our government or of our military and naval establishments thinks that the defeat of Hitler *requires a costly expedition which will start on Fifth Avenue with colors flying and end in a victory march down Unter den Linden over the dead bodies of German women and children.* The defeat of Hitler can be accomplished by means considerably more practical than that.¹²⁶

¹²³ Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980, tenth edition), p. 731.

¹²⁴ Entry for November 20, 1941, Breckinridge Long, The War Diary of Breckinridge Long, ed. Fred L. Israel (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 224.

¹²⁵ Frank Friedel, Franklin Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), pp. 394-5.

¹²⁶ Italics represent Roosevelt’s handwritten notes in the original. Franklin D. Roosevelt Navy Day radio address, October 27, 1941, Second Draft with Notes, Master Speech File No. 1389, Speech Files, FDRL.

In the Navy Day Address he delivered October 27, 1941, Roosevelt declared “the existence of a state of unlimited emergency” and announced that “we Americans have cleared our decks and taken our battle stations” against Hitler and Hitlerism. The president noted that he disregarded comments by Hitler that Nazi Germany had no global aspirations. In order to stop the global march of Hitler, Roosevelt declared that the “primary task” of the United States was to provide “more and more arms for the men who are fighting on actual battlefronts.” Pledged to “the destruction of Hitlerism,” the president announced that American ships would get through under protection of the U.S. Navy. Referring to the “facts of the year 1918” as “proof that a mighty German army and a tired German people can crumble rapidly and go to pieces when they are faced with successful resistance,” Roosevelt outlined his strategic concept for the destruction of Hitler and Prussian militarism,

The first objective of that defense is to stop Hitler. He can be stopped and can be compelled to dig in. And that will be the beginning of the end of his downfall, because dictatorship of the Hitler type can live only through continuing victories and increasing conquests.¹²⁷

In the fall of 1941, members of the Roosevelt administration were hopeful. Knox seemed confident that the United States would master the German submarine threat in the North Atlantic, and while waiting for authorization to arm merchant ships, he reported that “we have the guns ready and the crews trained.” The situation in Europe seemed positive as well. Berle assessed that the German forces in the Soviet Union were “obviously risking everything” in a desperate gamble. Based on reports of German losses, Berle noted, “It seems increasingly clear that the German operations in Russia are

¹²⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt Navy Day radio address, Mayflower Hotel, October 27, 1941, Master Speech File No. 1389, Speech Files, FDRL. By the spring of 1942, Berle began to doubt the authenticity of the map cited by Roosevelt, and Berle suspected that British Intelligence had crafted the map.

approaching disaster.”¹²⁸ On November 17, 1941, William Donovan reported to Roosevelt that the German people already were experiencing greater hardships in the current war than they had during “the years 1914-1918.” The Coordinator of Information noted “that a considerable number” of Germans were “extremely frightened” of British air raids and that German losses in the Soviet Union had produced “a staggering blow” on the German home front. German morale seemed to be weakened and at low ebb. Recalling the phenomenon of 1918, Donovan assessed, “One major setback or even prolonged slaughter and the German will to sacrifice and to conquer might hang dangerously in the balance.”¹²⁹

On the evening of December 7, 1941, following the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines, Roosevelt dictated the war message that he read to Congress the next day. Eleanor Roosevelt attended her husband’s message to Congress and, noting the “curious sense of repetition” she felt as she reflected on Wilson’s message in 1917. From her perspective, the Japanese attack on the United States had been an act of pure desperation carried out as part of “German strategy.”¹³⁰ Franklin Roosevelt chose not to request a declaration of war against Germany and Italy and continued to pursue a policy of armed neutrality in the Atlantic. Nonetheless, following the Japanese attack, Roosevelt told his cabinet several times that he expected Germany to declare war on the United

¹²⁸ Entry for March 9, 1941, The Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL; Frank Knox to John G. Winant, November 10, 1941, General Correspondence: 1941, The Papers of Frank Knox, LCMD.

¹²⁹ William J. Donovan to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 17, 1941, Coordinator of Information: 1941, Box 128, Subject File, President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

¹³⁰ Entry for December 9, 1941, in [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt’s My Day: Her Acclaimed Columns, 1936-1945, edited by Rochelle Chadakoff (New York: Pharos Books, 1989), p. 226.

States.¹³¹ Perhaps Roosevelt had two motivations for waiting. By not asking Congress to declare war, he could continue to delay, and perhaps avoid altogether, United States entry into the European War. In addition, waiting for a German declaration of war on the United States, would allow Roosevelt to achieve Wilson's goal of being judged by definitive historians as having had clean hands.¹³²

With the declaration of war on the United States by Hitler and Mussolini on December 11, Roosevelt's hope of avoiding United States entry into the European War came to an end.¹³³ Roosevelt informed Congress that German "forces endeavoring to enslave the entire world are *now* moving towards this hemisphere." The Roosevelt administration, however, interpreted the German declaration of war as an act of desperation by a regime coming apart and hoping to save its grip on power through further expansion. As if expressing a sense of relief, he asserted that the German quest for world dominance "long known and long expected" had finally "thus taken place." That day, Roosevelt requested that Congress "recognize a state of war between the United States and Germany" in the struggle between "the forces of justice and of righteousness" and "the forces of savagery and barbarism."¹³⁴

¹³¹ Entry for December 14, 1941 in Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 3, The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 664.

¹³² Franklin D. Roosevelt, Extemporaneous, Informal Remarks at Dinner of the Trustees of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Inc., Washington, D.C., February 4, 1939, in The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1939: War—And Neutrality, edited by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), pp. 117-8.

¹³³ On Hitler's long-range goals and his decision to declare war on the United States, see Gerhard L. Weinberg, World in the Balance: Behind the Scenes of World War II (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1981), pp. 68-9, 89, 90-3.

¹³⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt message to Congress, Declaration of War on Germany, December 11, 1941, Master Speech File, No. 1402, Speech File, FDRL.

IV. The Fall of France and Roosevelt's French Policy, 1940

After the German invasion of France and the Low Countries on May 10, 1940, Roosevelt's worldview had a fundamental impact on how he interpreted events in France and responded to the Franco-German Armistice a month and a half later. Ever since his visit to the Western Front in 1918, Roosevelt retained an idealized image of the French soldier: fierce, intelligent, and tenacious. When properly led, those soldiers would never surrender. As Roosevelt saw it, the failures of the French *poilu* resulted from the shortcomings and weakness of their political leaders and could not be attributed to the quality of the individual soldier. He recognized the political difficulties in France and the inherent lack of political unity in a system often marked by turmoil and constantly subjected to the dangerous influences of French reactionaries and German subversion. The strongest example in Roosevelt's mind was Georges Clemenceau. Roosevelt also acknowledged that it was possible for a strong republican statesman to emerge in France and master the political situation. Clearly, the postwar Naval Intelligence interpretation of the 1917 mutinies in the French army constituted an enduring reference for Roosevelt. Reportedly, German subversion and agents in France and propagandists under skillful German guidance had caused anarchy and demoralization in the army and throughout French society and politics. Those conditions remained until Clemenceau returned to power and broke the German hold on French politics.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Enclosure to Captain W. R. Sayles memorandum, May 13, 1919, "The Visit of the 'Joffre' Mission to the United States and its Result—The First Convoy," Franklin D. Roosevelt: Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, FDRL.

In June 1940, Roosevelt's ambassadors in France merely reinforced his preconceptions. On June 10, 1940, as German forces approached Paris, the French government evacuated the capital for the Loire valley. Several days prior to that departure, however, Ambassador William Bullitt theatrically opted to remain in the capital.¹³⁶ Intent on remaining in Paris, Bullitt increasingly lost touch with the intentions of the French government during its last days in Paris.¹³⁷

During May, the first phase of the battle had not gone well for the Belgians, Dutch, French, and British. German successes left some in the White House in a gloomy mood; what Eleanor Roosevelt and her personal staff had "banked on was an int'l socialist revolution in all countries." They agreed, according to the first lady's assistant Joseph Lash, that such a revolution "was unlikely if Hitler won!"¹³⁸ The president, however, became more optimistic after the evacuation at Dunkirk exceeded all expectations. The second phase of the German offensive began on June 5, and at a cabinet meeting on June

¹³⁶ Bullitt compared his actions with those of Elihu Washburne and Myron Herrick. Washburne served as American minister during the Siege of Paris and Commune in 1870-71. Herrick, Taft's ambassador, remained in France until the outset of the World War in 1914. Herrick stayed in Paris in 1914 during the Battle of the Marne although the French government evacuated to Bordeaux. Bullitt to Secretary of State for the president, June 12, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/3691 3/14, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives. Entry for June 13, 1940, Berle Diary, Roosevelt Library. An ailing Ambassador Straus returned to the United States in August 1936, tendered his resignation in order to recuperate, and died of cancer on October 4, 1936. Well-educated, confident, and sophisticated, Philadelphia patrician William C. Bullitt had previously served as President Roosevelt's first ambassador to the Soviet Union.

¹³⁷ Bullitt's decision had future repercussions for the Roosevelt administration's relations with the French during the war. In Paris, General Charles de Gaulle recalled that Bullitt's farewell left the leaders of the Third Republic with the tragic impression "that the United States no longer had much use for France." Charles de Gaulle, War Memoirs, vol. 1, The Call to Honour, 1940-1942, trans. Jonathan Griffin (New York: Viking Press, 1955), pp. 60-61.

¹³⁸ Entry for May 27, 1940, Joseph P. Lash Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, The Papers of Joseph P. Lash, FDRL.

9, the president surmised “that if the French can hold out for three weeks they will be able to win against the Germans.”¹³⁹ Although Bullitt’s previous report recalling the mood in August 1918 probably reinforced the president’s thinking, it seems evident that to Roosevelt the situation in France was analogous with that in 1918 at the height of the German offensive on the Western Front.

Roosevelt’s assessment on June 9 explains his response to the French appeal that he received the next day. On the night of June 9, the Canadian minister accompanied by the American military attaché met with the recently appointed French military chief *Général* Maxime Weygand. In Bullitt’s absence, the minister telegraphed his report to Ottawa with the request that it be relayed to Roosevelt. Weygand characterized the situation as “very critical and not hopeful.” The *général* asserted that his soldiers “will continue fighting as long as the men have arms.” Consistent with the images of the fierce *poilu* of the Great War, Weygand expressed “nothing but admiration for his men who are fighting without hope of having any rest.” Acknowledging that all French reserves had been committed, Weygand stated, “As heavy casualties occur on both sides Germany will still have considerable strength when France [is] completely exhausted.” Weygand believed that the United States could provide hope in two ways. The first was the delivery of promised United States war material, particularly field guns and aircraft. Weygand’s second request was for the United States to enter the war. He asserted, “Long resistance impossible unless the United States declares war immediately. Germany would then reconsider her position and such action on the part of the United States would make

¹³⁹ Entry for June 9, 1940, in Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, vol. 3, *The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 202.

Allied victory possible....” The Canadian minister noted that Weygand’s remarks could only be summarized in one way, “Those who can help must do so now.”¹⁴⁰

Confident three more weeks of French resistance would bring about a German defeat, Roosevelt probably viewed Weygand’s concerns as the natural response of military leaders in combat with a desperate German adversary. It is not surprising that Roosevelt did not take the action Weygand urged and enter the war. From Eleanor Roosevelt’s perspective, a major factor restraining the United States from sending an AEF to France was the inordinate length of time it would take to prepare one.¹⁴¹ Given the president’s predictions about the timing of a German collapse, it is clear that he thought the dispatch of an AEF would be too late to make any contribution to the Battle of France. Meanwhile, he believed American rhetoric and material support would bolster French political will. Furthermore, in retrospect, it seems that Weygand’s request probably struck Roosevelt as entirely natural for a newly appointed commander. Once again, the situation on the Western Front seems to have provided an enduring frame of reference for Roosevelt. To observers in Washington in 1940, Weygand seemed to be in a situation analogous to that of *Maréchal* Ferdinand Foch who proven victorious in 1918. In April 1918, several weeks after the initiation of the great German offensives of 1918,

¹⁴⁰ Telegram from the Canadian Minister in France to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, June 10, 1940, enclosed in a memorandum from Sumner Welles to Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 12, 1940, Box 2, France, Safe File, President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

¹⁴¹ Entries for May 10, May 27, and June 3, 1940, Joseph P. Lash Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, Lash Papers, FDRL.

Foch became General-in-Chief of all Allied Armies in France.¹⁴² At the time, Weygand served as Foch's chief of staff.

Having resolved to remain in Paris, Bullitt requested that Tony Biddle, the United States ambassador to the Polish government in exile, assume his mission to French government after it left Paris. An army intelligence officer in the Great War, Biddle believed that German successes in Poland fundamentally relied on subversion and espionage. In his report to Roosevelt, Biddle assessed that Polish infantry and cavalry had “proved themselves superior” to the individual German soldiers they encountered. Rather than soldier skill, German success resulted in Poland because “the German High Command applied their entire ‘bag of tricks’,” namely the subversion methods that they had perfected in the Spanish Civil War. Biddle observed that Polish minorities “had served as fertile ground for the skillful and effective subversive machinations of German agents previous to the conflict.” He continued, “In fact, elements thus organized in advance of the conflict, proved valuable aids to the German totalitarian form of campaign in terms of internal sources of information as well as agents in fomenting internal unrest and division during the course of the conflict. Biddle described a mature and pervasive German espionage web throughout Poland that effectively communicated with German air and ground forces throughout the campaign. He noted that “in many cases” those agents “commanded key positions in the communications as well as other fields.” He also reported that parachutists cut communications, spread rumors in Polish communities,

¹⁴² In 1918, many political leaders had hoped unrealistically that the elevation of Foch would halt the German offensives immediately. Nonetheless, the situation along the front remained extremely critical for months as Foch desperately strove to stabilize Allied lines against further German attacks. James B. Agnew, C. Reid Franks, and William R. Griffiths, The Great War (West Point, New York: United States Military Academy, 1984), pp. 254-5, 278, and 372.

“and in many cases, disguised in Polish officer’s uniforms, intercepted and countermanded military orders.” In Biddle’s mind German spies were practically everywhere.¹⁴³ To a striking degree, the tenor and conclusions of Biddle’s report of the Battle of Poland reflect the persistence of the intelligence assessments and conclusions of the Great War during which Biddle had served as an intelligence officer.

Unfortunately, Biddle also lacked the intimate knowledge of the French political scene that Bullitt possessed which would have enabled him to grasp fully the dynamics in the French government. Distance and roads packed by refugees exacerbated Biddle’s lack of familiarity. Biddle departed Angers by automobile on June 10 to assume his "Special Mission" near the French government displacing in the direction of Tours.¹⁴⁴ It was four days, however, before Biddle finally established direct contact with the French government. On the morning of June 14, as the French government prepared to evacuate Tours for the Bordeaux region, Biddle finally made personal contact with the French Prime Minister, Paul Reynaud. Finding Reynaud “in a state of profound depression and anxiety,” Biddle reported ominously to Roosevelt “the possible collapse of the French armies was a question not of days but of hours.” Reynaud observed “that the situation in which the French Army now found itself was worse than the situation of the German Army when it surrendered in 1918.” Biddle relayed Reynaud’s assessment that the only

¹⁴³ Anthony J. Drexel Biddle report for Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Factors Contributing to Poland’s Defeat” and “Military Aspects of the Polish-German Conflict and Lessons to be Learned Therefrom,” Report on the Polish-German Conflict, Box 48, Poland: Biddle Report: 10/16/38 – 9/19/39, Diplomatic Correspondence, President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL. Anthony J. Drexel Biddle was a businessman, sports enthusiast, and socialite, whose Democratic Party connections and support for Roosevelt brought him appointments as ambassador to Norway in 1935 and Poland in 1937.

¹⁴⁴ Biddle to Secretary of State, September 10, 1940, 123 Biddle, Anthony J. D., Decimal File 1940-1944, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

hope for continued French resistance, to include continuing the fight from North Africa, relied on an immediate declaration of war by the United States. According to Reynaud, France would be able to continue the fight at sea and from North Africa only if it seemed that victory, no matter how distant, remained possible.¹⁴⁵

The situation in France resulted in major delays in communications between Roosevelt and France. For instance, as the French government evacuated south to Bordeaux on June 14, Biddle, who inexplicably did not travel with Reynaud, received a telegram from Roosevelt for the prime minister. Biddle relayed the message south, and the prefect at Angoulême handed Reynaud a copy when the prime minister stopped in the town.¹⁴⁶ Rather than reply to Reynaud's appeal, the message from Roosevelt replied to an earlier message Reynaud had dispatched before departing Paris on June 10. Many days out of touch, Roosevelt's message seemed to be a response to the urging of Weygand of June 9 rather than the desperate appeal of Reynaud five days later. Roosevelt encouraged Reynaud to keep fighting and noted that he was "particularly impressed" by Reynaud's previous "declaration that France will continue to fight on behalf of democracy even if it means slow withdrawal, even to North Africa and the Atlantic." Not realizing that his vision of continued and effective French military resistance in France was illusory, the president pledged more supplies and noted that Allied resistance had "profoundly

¹⁴⁵ 740.0011 European War 1939/3768, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives. A. J. Biddle to the Secretary of State, June 14, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/3790, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives.

¹⁴⁶ A. J. Biddle to the Secretary of State, June 14, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/3771, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives; Paul Reynaud, In the Thick of the Fight, 1930-1945, trans. James D. Lambert (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), p. 510.

impressed the American people.” The French fleet, Roosevelt reminded Reynaud, also represented significant military potential to continue the fight against Germany. He noted, “Naval power in world affairs still carries the lessons of history, as Admiral Darlan well knows.”¹⁴⁷

At noon on June 15, Biddle cabled Roosevelt after having received no reply to Reynaud’s appeal. Biddle again notified the president of the increasingly critical situation. “Decisions of the gravest importance,” Biddle noted, hinged on the president’s reply to Reynaud’s plea. Biddle, however, seemed to believe that the battle could continue and that a move headed by Minister of the Interior Georges Mandel, who had been one of Clemenceau’s lieutenants, might immediately overthrow the Reynaud government. Biddle, however, seems to have misread the dynamics within the French cabinet. The ambassador, who had little prior contact with the French government, suggested that Mandel, if successful, would probably set up a new government and continue the fight from North Africa.¹⁴⁸ Five hours later Biddle cabled the president again to clarify the alternatives under consideration by the Reynaud government. The ambassador asserted that the French could either “move to North Africa and continue the fight” or “sue for peace which would of course be unconditional.” Biddle, furthermore, remained completely out of touch with the military situation, a condition exacerbated by

¹⁴⁷ President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull intended to reassure the French government, albeit privately and without any formal obligations. Biddle’s instructions demanded that “it must be made entirely clear that the message is personal and private and not for publication.” Cordell Hull to Freeman Matthews, June 13, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/3770A, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives.

¹⁴⁸ A. J. Biddle to the Secretary of State for the president, June 15, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/3691 6/14, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives.

the attachés of the embassy remaining in Paris with Bullitt. Naively, Biddle referred to “a French evacuated Army in Africa” as if such a force remained a serious possibility.¹⁴⁹

Roosevelt hoped for continued French resistance overseas in order to delay a German operation against the Western Hemisphere and to exacerbate the conditions that would precipitate the internal collapse of Germany. Following a conversation with Roosevelt on June 10 during the Battle of France, Jay Pierrepont Moffat recorded, “According to the President, no nation need ever surrender. There are occasions when a nation can no longer fight and must adopt a policy of nonresistance... How? First, by dispersing the navy around the globe....”¹⁵⁰ Those factors explain another dimension of Roosevelt’s animosity toward French leaders after the Battle of France. On June 15, Roosevelt told the British and French ambassadors that, in his opinion, France would be better off if it allowed Germany to occupy all of Metropolitan France, not ask for an armistice, and the government, part of the French army, and the fleet continued the struggle overseas. The president declared that the prospects of an Allied victory were “quite good” because

¹⁴⁹ A. J. Biddle to the Secretary of State, June 15, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/3691 7/14, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives. By June 15, however, the scheme to evacuate an army to North Africa, like a similar plan for the army to hold out indefinitely in a “Breton Redoubt,” were fantasies built on assumptions that the German offensive had invalidated. André Beaufre, 1940: The Fall of France, trans. Desmond Flower (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), pp. 206-207; Charles de Gaulle, War Memoirs, vol. 1, The Call to Honour, 1940-1942, trans. Jonathan Griffin (New York: Viking Press, 1955), pp. 66-68, 74-76; Paul Reynaud, In the Thick of the Fight, 1930-1945, trans. James D. Lambert (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), pp. 494, 503n3, 512; and Auphan and Mordal, Jacques, The French Navy in World War II, trans. A. C. J. Sabalot (Annapolis, Maryland: United States Naval Institute, 1959; reprint, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 93. Although the schemes for a Breton Redoubt and an army evacuated to Africa were overcome by rapidly moving events, the French government still could have evacuated to North Africa and continued the war. Significant uncommitted combat forces remained in the French colonial empire after the Battle of France.

¹⁵⁰ Entry for June 10, 1940, in Jay Pierrepont Moffat, The Moffat Papers, ed. Nancy H. Hooker (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 310-311.

Germany would collapse under the pressure of the blockade. It was essential, for that reason, that the French fleet not fall into German or Italian hands.¹⁵¹

Around midnight on the night of 16-17 June, Reynaud proposed that *Maréchal* Philippe Pétain, his deputy prime minister, be named his successor, and French President Albert Lebrun charged Pétain to form a new government for the purpose of ascertaining what the German armistice terms would be. In Washington, the Roosevelt administration immediately assumed that the French government had fallen under the influence of German subversion and was in the process of unconditional surrender to Germany. Roosevelt had observed that “our sympathies lie with those nations which survive the attack or remain ready to defend themselves if attacked.”¹⁵² On June 17, before the French armistice delegation even received the German terms, he issued an Executive Order freezing French assets.¹⁵³

Ever since his duties in France during the Paris Peace Conference, Roosevelt believed that he could deal with the French and that his comments held great weight. Consequently, Roosevelt dispatched a strong message to the new French government on June 17. The president stated that United States already had made clear its views regarding the disposition of the French fleet. If the French government failed to honor those wishes and permitted the French fleet to fall into “the hands of her opponents,” Roosevelt declared, then it would “permanently lose the friendship and good-will of the

¹⁵¹ Llewellyn Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, vol. 1 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), pp. 270-271.

¹⁵² Franklin D. Roosevelt notes filed June 1940, Democratic Platform, Speech File (No Number), FDRL.

¹⁵³ Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, vol. 1 (New York: MacMillan, 1948), p. 791.

Government of the United States.”¹⁵⁴ After delivering Roosevelt’s message to Admiral Jean Darlan and the Council of Ministers on June 18, Biddle reported that it had a “highly salutary effect at this juncture.”¹⁵⁵ On the following day Biddle cabled to Roosevelt that the situation had become “more encouraging on the maintenance of a free Government and salvation of the fleet for which we here have worked so hard: your ‘hard’ message did the trick.” Despite Biddle’s estimate, the message from Roosevelt did not improve the situation in the French government. Not only did the president’s cable have little influence on the decisions of French leaders, the incident left the Roosevelt administration with the mistaken belief that tough rhetoric alone could influence the French government.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, a French delegation signed the Franco-German Armistice at Compiègne on June 22, 1940. The Franco-German armistice ending the Battle of France went into effect on June 25, 1940.

The failure of the French government to remain an active belligerent in June 1940 condemned those French leaders in Roosevelt’s mind. Believing that the war was being fought “to cleanse the world of ancient evils,” Roosevelt rejected the notion that any

¹⁵⁴ Cordell Hull to consul at Bordeaux, June 17, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/2691 5/7A, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 2, General and Europe (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), p. 456.

¹⁵⁵ A. J. Biddle to the Secretary of State, June 18, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/2691 6/7, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 2, General and Europe (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), p. 457.

¹⁵⁶ In contrast to Biddle’s assessment, Sir Ronald Campbell, the British ambassador in France, instead found that Roosevelt’s message had left the French government “very indignant.” The French government considered Roosevelt’s statement to be “intolerable interference” by a neutral country, especially one that had “failed to come up to their expectations.” A. J. Biddle to the Secretary of State, June 19, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/3691 13/14, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives. Llewellyn Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, vol. 1 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), pp. 297-298, 322.

compromise was possible with Hitler. He later wrote, “There never has been – there never can be – successful compromise between good and evil.”¹⁵⁷ Already skeptical about the state of leadership in France, the armistice convinced Roosevelt that the forces of reaction had seized power and that their actions served Hitler either directly or indirectly. United States relations with France after June 1940 rested on the fundamental assumption that German subversion abetted by French reactionaries had undermined and overthrown the true France. In a speech Roosevelt approved beforehand, Bullitt observed that German propaganda had lulled “honest French democrats and liberals” into complacency and that “the free nation of France was overthrown” by “high-placed and influential German agents” and “communist and Nazi agents of Germany in each town and village.”¹⁵⁸ Rather than military necessity, Welles believed that “the real cause of the policy pursued by the French Government in its capitulation” had been the subversive actions of men such as Foreign Minister Paul Baudouin who “had succumbed to German influence.”¹⁵⁹ Secretary of State Cordell Hull asserted that France had “come completely and hopelessly under the domination of Hitler and his economic policies of totalitarian

¹⁵⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message on the State of the Union, January 6, 1942, Master Speech File No. 1409, FDRL.

¹⁵⁸ William C. Bullitt address to the American Philosophical Society, Independence Square, Philadelphia, August 18, 1940, Department of State press release, 123 Bullitt, William C./668, Decimal File 1940-1944, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives. For Roosevelt’s sanction and the setting of the speech, see Orville H. Bullitt, ed., For The President, Personal and Secret: Correspondence Between Franklin D. Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972) pp. 498-501.

¹⁵⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, Sumner Welles and René Sainte-Quentin, June 24, 1940, 740.00119 European War 1939/434, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 2, General and Europe (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), p. 459.

autarchy.”¹⁶⁰ Roosevelt saw the hand of “Hitler’s propaganda machine” and its ability to spread “falsehood and rumor-mongering” with creating the “defeatism” that led to the French defeat.¹⁶¹ In early July, a review of the foreign situation by the key members of the State Department concluded “that the continent of Europe is now in German hands and...any other idea is simply wishful thinking.”¹⁶²

Information delivered to Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle on July 1 by special messenger from J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reflected the contemporary view of the French defeat. The downfall of France had been the work of the “One Hundred,” a group of prominent social and financial families in France with strong fascist ties. Reportedly, the group included munitions manufacturers such as the Synder family, Pierre Laval, *Maréchal* Pétain, and *Général* Weygand, who supposedly “belongs to a secret society which has strong Fascist tendencies.” Hoover assessed that the French government under German control would be reorganized on the “Nazi pattern” and would, presumably, serve as a German puppet or satellite. The precious equipment that the United States had already furnished for the defense of France, amounting to 400 aircraft, 2,000 airplane engines, and 500 artillery pieces, apparently had fallen directly into German hands. Hoover’s report assessed that the fascist forces in France “were perfectly willing to let Adolph Hitler and his Government

¹⁶⁰ Memorandum of Conversation by Cordell Hull, June 27, 1940, 840.51 Frozen Credits/246, reprinted in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 2, General and Europe (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), pp. 461-2.

¹⁶¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message on the State of the Union, January 6, 1942, Master Speech File No. 1409, FDRL.

¹⁶² Entry for July 7, 1940, microfilm of the Adolph A. Berle Diary, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

take full advantage of the assistance rendered to France by the United States.”¹⁶³ Rather than appreciate the success of German strategy and battlefield leadership in 1940, New Dealer Rexford Tugwell blamed the French defeat on internal forces, “the reactionaries who had brought France into such disrepute.”¹⁶⁴ The British ambassador in Washington bitterly alleged “that no resistance would be made by any of the French naval officers” to “turning over the French warships” to Germany and claimed “that there would soon be in France a completely Fascist French government entirely in sympathy and subservient to the German government.”¹⁶⁵ From France, no reports arrived to confirm or refute the reports in Washington.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Letter from J. Edgar Hoover to Adolph Berle, July 1, 1940, 740.0011 European War 1939/4474, Department of State Decimal File Relating to World War II, 1939-1945, Microfilm Publication M-0982, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶⁴ Rexford Tugwell, The Democratic Roosevelt (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1957), p. 617.

¹⁶⁵ Sumner Welles memorandum of conversation, July 1, 1940, 711.94/1585, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 4, The Far East (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 374-6.

¹⁶⁶ On June 30, 1940 President Roosevelt and the Department of State strove to break the three week silence of Ambassador William C. Bullitt in Paris. Entry for June 30, 1940, The Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL. ¹⁶⁶ The president ended the mission of Biddle as Bullitt’s stand in on June 24. Earlier that day the French government had evacuated Bordeaux, eventually for Vichy. Biddle departed for London to resume his mission near the Polish government-in-exile. Telegram from Cordell Hull to A. J. Biddle, June 24, 1940, 123 Biddle, Anthony J.D./236, Decimal File 1940-1944, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Telegram from A. J. Biddle to the Secretary of State, June 25, 1940, 123 Biddle, Anthony J. D./237 and letter from A. J. Biddle to the Secretary of State, September 10, 1940 in 123 Biddle, Anthony J. D., Decimal File 1940-1944, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives. The staff of the United States embassy in France lay scattered in four separate sections; one remained isolated in Paris, another section waited in Bourdeaux for directions, a third sat at Cande, and the fourth section moved to rejoin the French government at La Bourboule and follow it to Vichy. Report from Robert Murphy in La Bourboule to the Secretary of State, July 5, 1940, 123 Bullitt, William C./663, Decimal File 1940-1944, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

On July 9 and 10, 1940, the French National Assembly met in Vichy and voted to abolish the Third Republic and give Pétain full executive and legislative authority as the Head of the French State.¹⁶⁷ Having characterized the choices as “government by the people versus dictatorship,” “freedom versus slavery,” and “moving forward or falling back,” Roosevelt displayed no sympathy for the new French State.¹⁶⁸ Bullitt returned to the United States and diplomatic relations with the French State devolved to the chargé level, a status commensurate to the relations maintained with Germany since 1938. Sumner Welles noted that since the Pétain government had been appointed in strict accord with French constitutional procedure “[t]he United States could have refused to recognize the Pétain government, it is true—but only on some ground other than legitimacy.”¹⁶⁹ With the abolition of the Third Republic, Roosevelt treated France in the same manner that he treated Nazi Germany. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Army signal corps had already bugged the German embassy and consulates in the United States, and in a cabinet meeting on July 11, 1940, Roosevelt directed that J. Edgar Hoover, “give the French Embassy the same kind of treatment which he is giving the German Embassy.”¹⁷⁰ On July 18, Roosevelt disputed a reference to the French government “as being a free and sovereign state.”¹⁷¹ At a White House dinner, Roosevelt

¹⁶⁷ Robert O. Paxton, Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982 edition), pp. 28-33.

¹⁶⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt Acceptance Speech to Democratic National Convention, July 19, 1940, Master Speech File No. 1291, Speech File, FDRL.

¹⁶⁹ Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 156.

¹⁷⁰ Entry for July 11, 1940, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Presidential Diaries, FDRL.

¹⁷¹ Entry for July 19, 1940 in Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, vol. 3, The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 238-9.

elaborated further. He related “how he bluntly told [the French] Ambassador that [the] Petain govt. was a [t]ool of the nazis and under Nazi duress [and] that his communications with Petain came via Berlin.”¹⁷² Roosevelt maintained “that the sovereignty of France ceased in June of 1940 when President LeBrun disappeared.” To the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Roosevelt later confided his belief that Pétain “was really just a de facto dictator without legal functions and simply exercised control because he was a man whom the people would follow.”¹⁷³

Roosevelt feared that collaboration in France between the Vichy regime and Nazi Germany would undermine the sanctity of the blockade and delay the predicted German collapse. He treated as fiction the armistice division of France into a German-controlled northern area and a southern area under French administration, and he believed it crucial to reinforce the British blockade of France. On July 19, the president announced limitations on oil exports at a meeting with Morgenthau, Welles, Knox, and Stimson. Roosevelt concluded “that the only way out of the difficulties of the world was by the starving of the people of Europe, particularly in regard to their supply of fuel to carry on the war.” He believed that under recent legislation he could act to prevent the shipment of all petroleum supplies “to the Nazi Axis Powers.”¹⁷⁴ Consistent with his assessment of the total German domination of the French government, Roosevelt’s subsequent

¹⁷² Entry for August 6, 1940, Joseph Lash Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, Joseph R. Lash Papers, FDRL.

¹⁷³ Minutes of a Meeting at the White House on Thursday, January 7, 1943, at 1500, “Minutes of Meetings of FDR with Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-1945,” Conferences, Box 29, Map Room, FDRL.

¹⁷⁴ Entry for July 19, 1940, Henry Lewis Stimson Diaries, XXX: 24-5, microfilm edition, reel 6, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library; Entry for June 18, 1940, microfilm of the Adolph A. Berle Diary, Roosevelt Library.

proclamation of July 26 flatly prohibited “the export of petroleum products to France.”¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, because members of the administration believed that France “has fallen under German control,” there was no consensus as to whether any relief supplies from the American Red Cross should be allowed through the blockade for refugees in France.¹⁷⁶

V. Roosevelt and the Restoration of the True France

After the French defeat, Roosevelt sought to restore the victorious coalition of 1918 in order to prosecute another war against German militarism and to establish the conditions for the reemergence of what he considered the true France. Roosevelt’s policies reflected the hope of November 1918 and a vision of progressive, republican France. In 1940 he wrote that his policy was “to aid nations which have been overrun by invaders to reinstate themselves as democracies if and when it becomes clear that they are able to set up new governments wholly free from the control of dictatorships.”¹⁷⁷ Roosevelt maintained contact with the French people, cultivated civilian leaders, and attempted to ameliorate the impact of the forces of reaction on the people of France. Roosevelt also endeavored to prevent Germany from deriving benefits from French collaboration that would nullify the impact of the blockade and enable Hitler to maintain his hold on power. Roosevelt also worked to bring the French military potential in North Africa back into the war on the

¹⁷⁵ Robert Murphy to the Secretary State, 30 July, 1940; Hull to Vichy, received August 3, 1940, “Petroleum,” 1940, box 11, France, Vichy Embassy, General Records, 1940-1942, Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, RG 84, National Archives, Suitland.

¹⁷⁶ Entry for July 3, 1940, The Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL.

¹⁷⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt notes filed June 1940, Democratic Platform, Speech File (No Number), FDRL.

Allied side, what Welles characterized as “the keystone in the strategic design for the defeat of Germany.” The move would block further German expansion and trigger a German collapse.¹⁷⁸ Although the tactics and the methods of the Roosevelt administration shifted with regard to France as the fortunes of war shifted, Roosevelt’s French policy reflected the consistency of his worldview.

Roosevelt hoped to bring France back into the war against Germany; however, by late 1940, the Vichy government seemed bent on full economic and military collaboration with Germany and the French colonies in West and North Africa seemed open to German exploitation. Roosevelt’s dealing with French administrators during the Great War and in France afterwards convinced him that he could deal with the French and that his comments held tremendous sway. A *Dreyfusard*, he had a visceral distrust of the political motives of French *général*s. Consequently, Roosevelt also endeavored to limit the long-term political impact of *Maréchal* Henri Philippe Pétain in Vichy and *Général* Charles de Gaulle at the head of the Free French movement. Roosevelt’s attitude was consistent with Wilson’s dictum, “The politics of generals and admirals must be tabooed.”¹⁷⁹ Because the French people had not chosen either soldier, Roosevelt considered both without sovereignty and did not want to do anything that might prevent the French people from having the opportunity to choose their leaders after the war. When treated with caution, he believed, French military leaders could be used out of expediency to achieve more vital administration goals. Roosevelt’s desire to monitor and forestall French assistance to

¹⁷⁸ Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), pp. 64-7.

¹⁷⁹ Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), p. 267.

the German war effort, to give hope to and maintain contact with the French people, and to encourage elements of the French military to return to the war against Germany motivated the decision to dispatch an ambassador to Vichy and consular agents in North Africa and, ultimately, to invade French North Africa.

Roosevelt took great interest in the reports concerning North Africa, and the implications for action loomed in his mind. The president immediately directed the State Department to summon Robert Murphy, the chargé in Vichy, to the United States for consultation. The September appointment of *Général* Maxime Weygand, the commander in chief of the French army, as the French delegate general with supreme authority in Africa interested Roosevelt. Although Weygand had been involved in the move for an armistice to end the Battle of France, the president hoped that Weygand would lead anti-Nazi action in French North Africa. Roosevelt considered Weygand “an honorable old soldier” who would not tolerate “French subservience to Germany” indefinitely. In his discussions with Murphy, furthermore, the president recalled Weygand’s role in the Great War as Foch’s chief of staff, assessing Weygand’s experience working with a coalition of American, British, and French soldiers to be a great benefit in the current war against Germany. The French African policy of the United States was, in Murphy’s view, “the president’s personal policy.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Murphy commented on Roosevelt’s fascination “with the thought of the Church in world politics” and noted that he “seemed to have exaggerated the bond existing between Catholics because of their religion.” Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), pp. 67-8. Murphy departed Vichy on August 22 and First Secretary H. Freeman Matthews assumed direction of the embassy. Memorandum, August 22, 1940, “123 Murphy,” 1940, box 1, General Records, 1940-1942, Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, RG 84, National Archives, Suitland.

Roosevelt met with Murphy at the White House and outlined his instructions for future United States policy. The relatively independent conditions in North Africa impressed the president. He hoped to cultivate resistance under the leadership of Weygand. Roosevelt viewed Murphy, a Catholic who had served for years in Germany and France, as an ideal emissary to form an intimate relationship with the French *général*. Roosevelt winked at Murphy and told him, “You might even go to church with Weygand!” The president told Murphy that he remained “particularly concerned about the fate of the French fleet.” Roosevelt commented that he did not consider *Général* de Gaulle a major factor in French affairs and that he had a “poor opinion” of de Gaulle’s judgment after his muddled operation against Dakar in French West Africa.¹⁸¹

In Roosevelt’s thinking, de Gaulle was a far cry from republican-minded French Army officers such as *Maréchal* Joseph Joffre or *Général* Robert Nivelle. A *Dreyfusard* at heart, Roosevelt seemed to view de Gaulle as the epitome of the partisan French officer. The fact that de Gaulle’s Third Republic patron had been Reynaud, a man of the French Right, would have validated Roosevelt’s suspicions. Roosevelt later confided to his wife,

¹⁸¹ At the end of their meeting, the president directed Murphy to communicate directly with the White House and avoid “State Department channels.” After the meeting, Murphy asked Under Secretary Welles about the communication arrangement directed by the president. Welles reassured Murphy and stated, “That is the way he often operates.” Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), pp. 68-70. For the State Department, however, the arrangement led to confusion and uncertainty; Berle noted, “We have sent Murphy to North Africa but he did not bother to get any instructions.” Entry for November 26, 1940, *The Diary of Adolph Berle*, Berle Papers, FDRL. In contrast to his poor opinion of de Gaulle, an incident in the middle of January 1941 demonstrates the depth of Roosevelt’s sympathy with the French resistance movement against Germany. The Vichy government requested that the United States return a number of prisoners that had escaped from Devil’s Island and reached Florida and Puerto Rico. Customarily, the United States would have returned those prisoners to the nearest French port, Martinique. Roosevelt, however, blocked any prisoner transfer. He directed Hull to contact the Free French in London so that the prisoners could be enlisted in “the army of Free France” in French Equatorial Africa. Entry for January 19, 1941, in Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, vol. 3, *The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 411.

“General de Gaulle is a soldier, patriotic, yes, devoted to his country; but, on the other hand, he is a politician and a fanatic and there are, I think, in him almost the makings of a dictator.”¹⁸² Tugwell assessed that de Gaulle had “megalomania.”¹⁸³ Although Churchill and Roosevelt shared the fundamental aim of enticing the French colonies in Africa into rejoining the war against Germany and Italy, in 1940 Churchill was de Gaulle’s only patron. Roosevelt, however, refused to commit to French resistance under de Gaulle’s leadership and explored other options.

In addition to sending Murphy as his personal emissary to North Africa, Roosevelt simultaneously dispatched retired Admiral William D. Leahy to Vichy as his ambassador to France. Leahy’s mission constituted a major component of the policy that the United States followed for the next year toward France, Germany, and the European war. Beginning in December 1940, the administration pursued two fundamental objectives that supported Roosevelt’s overall strategy. The first aimed at slowing and opposing French collaboration with Germany. Admiral Leahy served as Roosevelt’s watchdog in Vichy while the president attempted to cultivate French public opinion to oppose French cooperation with Germany. The administration believed that blocking French economic collaboration with Germany and tightening the blockade of continental Europe would fatally weaken an over stretched Germany, perhaps sparking the overthrow of the Nazi regime. The second objective was to encourage the resistance of the French colonies in Africa and bring them back into the war against Germany. Control of the French fleet and

¹⁸² [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), p. 248.

¹⁸³ Rexford Tugwell, The Democratic Roosevelt (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1957), p. 617.

French bases remained a key objective in United States plans and initiatives concerning North and West Africa. The administration placed great faith in its ability to check German expansion into North and West Africa and hoped that renewed French resistance might reverberate among the liberal resistance in Germany.

Leahy's background and experience made him an ideal emissary for Roosevelt to dispatch to a French government under the leadership of the French Right. Given the influence of the Great War on Roosevelt's thinking, it is not surprising that originally he had approached General John J. Pershing, the commander of the AEF who had served with Pétain in the Great War. When Pershing's health precluded him from accepting the president's offer, Roosevelt turned to Leahy, a choice that Pershing strongly endorsed.¹⁸⁴ Roosevelt had known Leahy since his tenure as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. During Roosevelt's second term in the White House, Leahy served as the Chief of Naval Operations from 1937 until his mandatory retirement in 1939. Upon his retirement, Roosevelt selected Leahy to serve as the governor of Puerto Rico but told the admiral that if war broke out he would need him back as an aide and advisor. In Roosevelt's mind, Leahy was "the best man available for this mission."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt to John J. Pershing, November 13, 1940, in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, vol. 2, (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), pp. 1079-80; Pershing to Leahy, November 27, 1940, Leahy Papers, LCMD.

¹⁸⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt telegram to William D. Leahy, November 17, 1940, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD. The son of an Irish-Catholic, Populist lawyer, Leahy was born in Hampton, Iowa in 1875, and grew up in Ashland, Wisconsin. After graduating from the Naval Academy in 1897, Leahy served on the battleship *Oregon* and saw action at the Battle of Santiago. He saw service in the Philippine insurrection and the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion as well as extensive service at sea in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. His assignments gave him first-hand experience with United States intervention in the Pacific, the Caribbean, and Central America. Beginning in 1913, he established a close working relationship with Roosevelt. During the interwar years, he held a succession of destroyer, cruiser, and battleship commands and also served in Washington, D.C. as chief of the navy's bureau of

The appointment of Leahy did not signal an acceptance of the French State by Roosevelt. Instead, it represented an effort by the United States to counter Germany and to promote and bolster resistance against fascism within France. Secretary of State Hull recalled “neither the President nor I had any thought of indulgence toward the Pétain regime.”¹⁸⁶ Noting what he perceived to be monarchical tendencies in the French regime, Roosevelt pointed out to Leahy that “in his decrees” Pétain “uses the royal ‘we’ and I have gathered that he intends to rule.”¹⁸⁷

On December 2, Leahy met with Roosevelt for a long discussion of his duties as ambassador to France. Leahy noted that three main ideas emerged from the conversation. The president instructed Leahy to maintain “close relations...with Marshal Pétain; ...persuade the French not to join in the war with Germany against Britain; and...convince French naval officers” that German use of the fleet or French naval bases would be the end of France.¹⁸⁸ Roosevelt related that he had “been much perturbed by reports indicating that the resources of France were being placed at the disposal of Germany beyond that positively required by the terms of the armistice.” Based on a

ordnance. His career culminated in his assignment as Chief of Naval Operations from 1937 until his mandatory retirement in 1939 at sixty-four; Roosevelt selected Leahy to serve as governor of Puerto Rico upon his retirement. William D. Leahy, I Was There (New York: Wittlesey House, 1950), p. 3; Henry H. Adams, Witness to Power: The Life of Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1985), pp. 5-133; John Major, “William Daniel Leahy,” in Robert W. Lowe, ed., The Chiefs of Naval Operations (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1980), pp. 101-117.

¹⁸⁶ Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, vol. 1 (New York: MacMillan, 1948), p. 852.

¹⁸⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt to William D. Leahy, December 20, 1940, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

¹⁸⁸ Memorandum, December 13, 1940, 123 LEAHY, WILLIAM D./16 1/4, Decimal File 1940-1944, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

progressive fear of reactionary special interests that subvert the people and his appreciation of the impact of German subversion, Roosevelt blamed French collaboration on “the selfish interests of individuals” and on “unrequired governmental cooperation with Germany motivated by the belief in the inevitableness of a German victory.” He averred that in the event of a German victory that, at best, France would be “a vassal state.” As a result, Roosevelt instructed Leahy to stress “that only by the defeat of the powers now controlling the destiny of Germany and Italy can the world live in liberty, peace and prosperity; that civilization cannot progress with a return to totalitarianism.” After expressing concern about the French fleet serving Germany, Roosevelt emphasized to Leahy that with he had followed “the efforts of France to maintain its authority in its North African possessions and improve their economic status.” Roosevelt expressed his “sympathetic interest” in the French efforts in North Africa and directed Leahy to inform the French that the Roosevelt administration was “prepared to assist in this regard in any appropriate way.”¹⁸⁹

Through Leahy’s mission Roosevelt sought an avenue to maintain contact with the people of France and keep alive what he saw as their true democratic character. Leahy called at the White House prior to his departure for Vichy, and afterwards Roosevelt issued a press release emphasizing that Leahy was carrying on the tradition of friendship between the people of France and those of the United States. Although that friendship derived from the Revolution, Roosevelt asserted that it was “welded when the American

¹⁸⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to William D. Leahy, December 20, 1940, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

and French peoples fought side by side on the battlefields of 1918” and that it “must be preserved as one of the pillars of the democratic way of life.”¹⁹⁰

In a manner reminiscent of Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt sought to maintain a link to the French people and preserve the ability to appeal to them over the heads of the self-interested men in authority in Vichy. In August 1940, Roosevelt requested that all letters to him sent to the United States embassy in Paris or Vichy or to the consulates in Bordeaux, Lyon, and Marseilles be collected and sent to him via pouch.¹⁹¹ Leahy further strengthened Roosevelt’s personal contact with the people of France and provided a conduit to former French political leaders in Metropolitan France. In addition, Roosevelt sent a number of “personal messages through secret channels” to many of the French civilian leaders in Metropolitan France. Roosevelt insisted that they would “be of far greater service hastening the restoration of independence in their country if they were to leave France and work for her freedom from outside.” He desired the services of a civilian leader who could enhance “the prestige and effectiveness” of the Free French organization, presumably to subordinate de Gaulle to civilian authority.¹⁹²

In his fireside chat “on national security” delivered over the radio at the end of December, Roosevelt hoped to encourage French popular resistance and counter the idea prevalent in Vichy that there could be any negotiated settlement with Hitler that would

¹⁹⁰ Transcript of White House Press Release, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

¹⁹¹ Robert Murphy memorandum for Cecil M. P. Cross, August 22, 1940, and Cecil M. P. Cross circular letter No. 396 to all American Consular Officers in France, August 30, 1940, “OF 3186 POLITICAL REFUGEES July – Sept. 1940,” Box 3, OF 3186 Political Refugees July 1940 – 1944, Official File, FDRL.

¹⁹² Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 162.

benefit France. The address incorporated suggestions from Free French businessman Jean Monnet. Because they came “from a ‘free’ Frenchman of proved sagacity,” Felix Frankfurter suggested to the president that Monnet’s recommendations “may lend desirable confirmation to your own thinking.”¹⁹³ Simson, who had known Monnet “pretty well” as Secretary of State, also endorsed his “constructive suggestions” for United States policy. Monnet believed that two major objectives existed for the United States: “to prevent France from joining the New Europe” under Germany and “to save North Africa from being acquired by the Germans,” especially the French fleet and its bases. For Monnet, the key to the critical situation lay in the “two forces alive in France and resisting German pressure - one is public opinion, the other North Africa.”¹⁹⁴ In his address, the president claimed that the proposed “new order” in Europe merely represented Nazi tyranny. In addition, Roosevelt labeled French hopes for a “negotiated peace” with the Axis powers as “Nonsense!” To aid countries opposing Axis aggression and resisting incorporation into Hitler’s “new order,” Roosevelt stated that the United States would “be the great arsenal of democracy.”¹⁹⁵

Several initiatives demonstrate the degree of importance Roosevelt placed on the United States cultivating French public opinion. In late November, Berle noted that he had “arranged to get some more information headed in the direction of France” because the French people were “hungry for news” but “will believe none but the American

¹⁹³ It was Monnet who proposed the phrase “arsenal of democracy.” Felix Frankfurter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 19, 1940 and Jean Monnet Memorandum, December 18, 1940, The Papers of Felix Frankfurter, LCMD.

¹⁹⁴ Entry for December 2, 1940, Henry Lewis Stimson Diaries, XXXII: 7, microfilm edition, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut.

¹⁹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt Address, December 29, 1940, Fireside Chat No. 16 – Arsenal of Democracy, Master Speech File No. 1351, Franklin D. Roosevelt Speech Files, FDRL.

news” that they could pick up on short-wave radio. As a result, the administration arranged to quadruple the number of American newscasts to France.¹⁹⁶ Despite the increased volume of programs, not all of the French people could receive the signal, and the administration considered having the British rebroadcast American news programs. On December 24, Under Secretary of State Welles “very confidentially” contacted the British embassy in Washington, probably at Roosevelt’s request. Welles requested the British Broadcasting Corporation rebroadcast American French language news programs to improve their reception in France, Morocco, and French Equatorial Africa. Welles also urged that announcements during the rebroadcast news bulletins make it explicit that the programs were “authentically” American. The Under Secretary cautioned, however, that no reference to the intervention of the United States “should be allowed to become generally known.” Seeing the obvious advantage of honoring Welles’ request, the British Foreign Office forwarded it to the Ministry of Information to work out the technical details.¹⁹⁷

Roosevelt also sought other methods to influence public opinion in France. On New Year’s Eve, Roosevelt contacted Churchill and expressed his belief “that for humanitarian and also political reasons limited quantities of milk and vitamin concentrates for children should be sent to unoccupied France.” Although the president had no intention of weakening the blockade, he finally acknowledged the actual situation

¹⁹⁶ Entry for November 30, 1940, The Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL.

¹⁹⁷ Telegram No. 3251 from Butler, December 24, 1940; Empax 120 from Butler, December 24, 1940; Telegram No. 349, Foreign Office to Butler, January 18, 1941; Minutes, Broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation of French news from the United States, microfilm of FO 371/24263/390-4, British Foreign Office, United States Correspondence, 1938-1945, Public Record Office, Kew.

of France. He commented, “My belief is that it is logical and expedient to make a distinction between occupied and unoccupied territories.”¹⁹⁸

Roosevelt thought that supplies could “be distributed under the strict control and supervision of the American Red Cross” in France in a manner that would not benefit Germany. The president suggested that such a program “would help to win over the French people” and make them hostile to cooperation with Germany. Roosevelt noted, furthermore, that the United States would dispatch only limited quantities of supplies and that those would not “be of any appreciable assistance to Germany” if requisitioned. Committed to the policy of economic warfare, Roosevelt suggested to the prime minister that conditional relief shipments would represent only an isolated, but wise, exception to the blockade and would not jeopardize its enforcement or effectiveness.¹⁹⁹

As Roosevelt considered the situation of France in the strategic context of the European War, he evidently thought that the evacuation of the French government to North Africa could constitute a significant advantage for the Anglo-American war effort. Evacuation of the French government would allow for the British blockade to have greater coherence and effect by removing the anomaly that unoccupied France seemed to represent. In addition to strengthening the blockade, the departure of the French

¹⁹⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, December 31, 1940, in Warren F. Kimball, ed., Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, vol. 1, Alliance Emerging (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 117-8.

¹⁹⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, December 31, 1940, in Warren F. Kimball, ed., Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, vol. 1, Alliance Emerging (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 117-8. The use of the Red Cross would also allow Roosevelt to exercise control over the operation that he would not have been able to do if an independent organization had been selected for the task as recommended by Herbert Hoover. A Red Cross relief effort would allow Roosevelt to evade domestic political criticism from Hoover and tailor the assistance to suit his own objectives.

government would further overextend German power by forcing Nazi Germany to occupy, administer, and feed all of continental France thereby hastening the Nazi collapse. The move would also bring important elements of the French army and navy back into the war against Germany and provide a crucial boost to British military power. In addition, the move, much like Clemenceau's accession to power in 1917, would provide the opportunity to break the apparent grip that Germany had on the French government. As a result, one of Leahy's initial requirements in Vichy was to determine the circumstances under which Pétain would evacuate to North Africa rather than bow to German pressure and coercion. Pétain, however, rejected any thought of evacuation to North Africa. Leahy immediately reported Pétain's inclination to Roosevelt, noting, "He will not under any circumstances abandon continental France and move his Government to Africa."²⁰⁰

Following Pétain's categorical refusal to consider evacuation to North Africa, the Roosevelt administration focused on blocking Vichy collaboration while encouraging French resistance in North Africa to German demands. Weygand became a more crucial figure. On the outset of his mission, Roosevelt had tasked Murphy to discover the extent of Weygand's authority, what the old soldier had in mind for the future, and what "could the United States do to encourage him." Weygand agreed to meet Murphy in Dakar on December 21.²⁰¹ Murphy found Weygand and his staff of admirals, generals, and civilian

²⁰⁰ William D. Leahy to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 25, 1941, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

²⁰¹ "123 Murphy, Robert D." Box 1, 1940: Robert Murphy to Pierre Laval, December 7, 1940, Murphy to Pierre Étienne Flandin, December 17, 1940, Tele 1153 Murphy to the Secretary of State, December 17, 1940. France, Vichy Embassy, General Records, 1940-42, Foreign Service Posts of the Dept of State, RG 84, National Archives, Suitland, Maryland.

governors extremely cooperative and straightforward, and all of them encouraged Murphy to speak with their subordinates in Algeria, Morocco, West Africa, and Tunisia. French officers confidently suggested that they could defend North Africa from the Germans indefinitely with the aid of United States equipment and fuel. Over one hundred thousand soldiers, aviators, and sailors fell under Weygand's command, with nearly double that many in reserve. Murphy judged, however, that shortages in ammunition and heavy equipment prevented their employment in offensive operations. During Murphy's visit, British radio announcements from London, however, made Weygand's staff extremely anxious. The British broadcasts threatened to sabotage French defensive efforts in North Africa by prematurely encouraging German suspicions and counter action.²⁰²

Murphy's mission proved highly successful. He credited his success to the openness of French colonial administrators, both civilian and military, which displayed implicit trust in the United States government. When Murphy departed for Lisbon on January 5, 1941, he carried with him the initial draft of an economic agreement that Weygand had approved. Three weeks later, a directive from the Secretary of State instructed him to return to North Africa and "state to Weygand that the United States Government is prepared in principle to proceed with the matter of extending economic cooperation." The resulting agreement, the Murphy-Weygand Accord, authorized the French to purchase a limited amount of non-strategic supplies in the United States using frozen French credits.

²⁰² Robert Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), pp. 72-81; Hitler remained suspicious of Weygand and ordered the measures that he directed for Operation Attila be maintained. See Germany, Auswärtiges Amt., Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, The War Years, vol. 11, September 1, 1940-January 31, 1941 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 918.

Furthermore, the French would be allowed to ship those goods through the British naval blockade for use in North Africa. The agreement also allowed a system of American “observers” to operate throughout North Africa to monitor the agreement.²⁰³ The belief was that American economic assistance could isolate North Africa from the reactionary influence of Vichy and stiffen resolve in the event of any German intervention.

Although Roosevelt viewed French colonialism as the vestige of an archaic system, consistent with his instructions to Leahy was the belief that it would be even more detrimental to the course of civilization for French colonies in Africa to fall into the hands of Nazis and serve the German war effort. In February 1941, Berle noted the administration assessment that considerable numbers of German “observers” were already in the west African ports of Casablanca and Dakar. Berle “desperately” pondered how the United States could stop the German encroachment into West Africa. He believed that the only effective method would be for the United States to land troops at Dakar and Casablanca, an option he judged “obviously impossible at the moment” due to the meager size of the U.S. Army. As a result, Berle decided that the solution was “to energize, in some fashion, the French North African Government and the French forces,” but he did not know if such a course of action would be possible.²⁰⁴

Other voices in the Roosevelt administration echoed Berle’s assessment. In May, Stimson’s Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy saw great strategic potential in the French colonies in North Africa. McCloy observed,

²⁰³ Robert Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964), pp. 73, 81-3, 89-92. For the text of the Murphy-Weygand economic accord, see William Leahy to the Secretary of State, February 28, 1941, 740.00112 European War 1939/2274, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941, vol. 2, Europe (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government printing Office, 1959), pp. 226-9.

²⁰⁴ Entry for February 14, 1941, The Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL.

The whole situation in North Africa centers around the personality of one man, Weygand. . . . North Africa is the key to the Mediterranean, the East, and the Atlantic. . . . From every angle, Africa presents real possibilities and should not be written off merely because Vichy collaborates.²⁰⁵

That same month, Leahy wrote Roosevelt about “how easy it would be to start the German disintegration with so small an army” deployed to North Africa. Leahy assessed,

A seriously vulnerable point today in the German expansion plan is North Africa, and it is my opinion that a comparatively small army of 250,000 men thoroughly equipped with modern weapons, including aircraft, could, with General Weygand’s poorly equipped force hold North Africa, insure control of the Mediterranean Sea, and shorten the duration of the war by half.²⁰⁶

Consistent with Leahy’s comments, the concept of a preemptive attack to preclude German intervention or block German expansion figured prominently in the Roosevelt administration’s thinking about military operations against French possessions well before the United States formally entered the Second World War. Roosevelt likewise accepted the necessity of such preemptive military strikes to block the forces of reaction, and he seems to have found an enduring lesson in Britain’s bold destruction of the neutral Danish fleet at Copenhagen to keep it from the grasp of Emperor Napoleon. After the fall of France, Roosevelt condoned British action against the French fleet in July and against Dakar in September 1940. Roosevelt and his advisors also accepted that the United States armed forces could play a direct role in preemptive operations. Their thinking reflected Theodore Roosevelt’s broad interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine. Berle acknowledged that the United States had the right to intervene in foreign territory with military force

²⁰⁵ John J. McCloy Memorandum for the Secretary of War, May 17, 1941, 4511-1, War Plans Division General Correspondence, 1920-1942, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165, National Archives.

²⁰⁶ William D. Leahy to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 26, 1941, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

“lest a military enemy should grab it first and make trouble for us.”²⁰⁷ In October 1940, following newspaper accounts that the French government intended to fortify and improve the harbor facilities in their possessions in the West Indies presumably for use by German submarines, Roosevelt ordered the U.S. Navy to plan for an emergency operation against Martinique.²⁰⁸ The Navy Department asked Army Chief of Staff George Marshall “to have ready a force of 5,000 men on 72 hours’ notice for use in Martinique.” Marshall and Stimson believed that the operation was “highly inadvisable” because it would probably ensure that the wavering French colonies in North Africa would fall “head over heels into the arms of Germany.” Apparently, only Stimson’s strong objections against undertaking any adventure without the force needed “to blow the whole French force out of the Islands” diffused the situation.²⁰⁹

In August 1941, at the Atlantic Conference, the British explicitly raised the possibility of American troops participating in a combined operation against French North Africa. The British urged United States intervention into the French colonies on the grounds that the action would defend the Western Hemisphere, prevent German penetration of North and West Africa, and provide a potential base for a joint land offensive against Europe should that be necessary. United States military planners, however, quickly

²⁰⁷ Entry for February 13, 1941, The Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL.

²⁰⁸ “Martinique Pro-British” and “Plebiscite Plan Reported,” New York Times, 3 September 1940; “Vichy to Reinforce West Indies Base,” 1 October 1940. Also New York Times, 2, 3, and 8 October 1940. Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coakley, Global Logistics and Strategy, vol. 4 in the series The United States Army in World War II: The War Department (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 61.

²⁰⁹ Entries for October 30, 31 and November 1, 1940, Henry Lewis Stimson Diaries, XXXI: 91, 96, 100, 101, microfilm edition, reel 6, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

acknowledged that the United States did not yet possess “land forces in adequate strength and suitably equipped for operations in North Africa.”²¹⁰

After the Atlantic Conference, the War Department, with the concurrence of Roosevelt, initiated detailed planning to seize the French territories of North and West Africa. Roosevelt envisioned the potential expansion of the Monroe Doctrine to include Dakar. The resulting plans figured prominently in United States military strategy and relations with the French State for the next year. The War Department considered operations against Dakar and Casablanca and, based on the training, mobilization, and equipment requirements and seasonal weather constraints, recommended “the expedition should not be sent before November 1942.” In a memorandum to the president, Stimson noted the indications “that the French are working feverishly to strengthen the defenses at Dakar,” presumably under German orders. He added, “We must assume that the French forces will fight us.”²¹¹

Perhaps recalling the tenacity of the French *poilu* from his trip to the Western Front, Roosevelt apparently believed that success in North Africa would require the assistance of a respected French senior officer whom the soldiers would obey. In that respect, Weygand offered significant potential for Roosevelt’s aspiration of bringing French military power in North Africa back into the war against Germany. Weygand, who as Foch’s chief of staff had read the armistice terms to the German delegation in 1918, was strongly anti-German. The Roosevelt administration justified the courtship of Weygand

²¹⁰ Maurice Matloff and Snell, Edwin M., Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942, vol. 3 of the series The United States Army in World War II: The War Department (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), pp. 55, 102-3.

²¹¹ Joint Plans - Occupation of Dakar, 4511-5, War Plans Division General Correspondence, 1920-1942, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165, National Archives.

because of his military potential. Welles concurred with the insistence of War Department planners “that every political decision should be made with a primary regard for the success of the military operations, and that consequently the chief purpose of our policy should be to reduce the opposition of the French military and naval establishments in North Africa to the barest minimum.”²¹² The removal of Weygand as delegate general in late 1941, apparently under German pressure, confounded Roosevelt’s concept for North Africa.²¹³

In January 1942, British military leaders and war planners met their counterparts in Washington to review and develop the strategic direction for the war. The group reaffirmed the basic Germany-first grand strategy and validated the view that the defeat of Germany was “the key to victory” because the collapse of Italy and Japan would naturally follow from a German defeat.²¹⁴ In the implementation of the grand strategy, the military planners regarded a joint Anglo-American occupation of French North Africa to be of the highest strategic importance. The planners, however, concluded that the two allies would not possess sufficient resources during the first half of 1942 “to force an entry into French North Africa.” The planners also considered Dakar in French West Africa to be of great strategic importance but assessed it “unlikely that we shall gain free

²¹² Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 164.

²¹³ Entries for 20 and 21 October and December 4, 1941, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

²¹⁴ Washington War Conference American-British Strategy, ABC-4/CS-1, Proceedings of the American – British Joint Chiefs of Staff Conferences Held in Washington, D.C. on Twelve Occasions Between December 24, 1941 and January 14, 1942, Box 1, International Conferences, Record Group 218 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

entry into Dakar” without similar cooperation in French North Africa. As a result, the planners assessed that the earliest the operation could be conducted was in the autumn of 1942 when weather conditions were more favorable and troops were expected to be available.²¹⁵ The planners concluded that the operations against North Africa would require that the United States “receive an actual invitation or reasonable assurance that there will be only token resistance.” The Chiefs of Staff, however, assessed that the planning for the operation had to envision the employment of a large force because “the French authorities would in all probability only issue the invitation if the bait were, in their opinion, adequate.”²¹⁶

Welles recalled that Roosevelt examined the strategic alternatives in early 1942 “toward hastening the defeat of Germany and Italy” and concluded “that North African operations were those best calculated to ensure the achievement of the desired results.”²¹⁷ French cooperation was essential to ensure the success of the operation. From the perspective of the White House, it was imperative “to make satisfactory arrangements with a French figure who had sufficiently strong position with the people of North Africa and the fighting forces, to enable him to over-ride the local situation and cause our own

²¹⁵ Joint Planning Committee Report, Movements and Projects in the Atlantic Theater – For the First Half of 1942, ABC-4/6, January 13, 1942, Proceedings of the American – British Joint Chiefs of Staff Conferences Held in Washington, D.C. on Twelve Occasions Between December 24, 1941 and January 14, 1942, Box 1, International Conferences, Record Group 218 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²¹⁶ Chiefs of Staff Conference, ABC-4/1, December 26, 1941, Proceedings of the American – British Joint Chiefs of Staff Conferences Held in Washington, D.C. on Twelve Occasions Between December 24, 1941 and January 14, 1942, Box 1, International Conferences, Record Group 218 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²¹⁷ Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 163.

forces to be welcomed as liberators.” De Gaulle was ruled out because he had no authority or following in North Africa and because he was “violently disliked by a large portion of the population.” De Gaulle’s attack on Dakar, furthermore, “showed that his judgment, his military leadership and his sources of information could not be trusted.”²¹⁸

Although it had already excluded de Gaulle from the planned invasion of North Africa, in October 1942 the White House also suspected him of ambitious political intrigues that were not confined to France. John Franklin Carter, an analyst in the executive office of the president, informed Roosevelt that the head of the Free French organization in the United States was scheming to overthrow “FDR and his regime.” Reportedly, working under the conviction “that Roosevelt is eager to be an American Dictator,” Free French agents, with the support of de Gaulle, had become “engaged in an intrigue with John L. Lewis looking to the overthrow of the Administration by a workmen’s revolt.”²¹⁹ Lewis, the president of the United Mine Workers and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, had broken with Roosevelt during the 1940 election and endorsed his Republican opposition. Roosevelt directed Carter to take up the report with the FBI.²²⁰ Already suspecting “that Axis agents have been planted among the Free French, particularly at their various headquarters,” the reports of political intrigue certainly reinforced

²¹⁸ American – De Gaullist Relations, 1942 – 1944 (Notes compiled by Captain Wood), The White House, June 23, 1944, folder 20 “General de Gaulle,” Box 5, Admiral Leahy 1942-1948, Chairman’s File, Record Group 218 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²¹⁹ John F. Carter, Report on Alleged Intrigue Between Free French and John L. Lewis, October 8, 1942, Box 98, “Carter, John F.: Aug.-Dec. 1942,” President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

²²⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt memorandum to John F. Carter, October 15, 1942, Box 98, “Carter, John F.: Aug.-Dec. 1942,” President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

Roosevelt's view that de Gaulle and his organization could not be trusted and validated the exclusion of de Gaulle from the landings in North Africa.²²¹

With Weygand in retirement in southern France and unwilling to oppose Pétain's orders, the administration turned to *Général* Henri Giraud, who had escaped from Germany in April 1942 and was also living in southern France. Reminiscent of Joffre and Nivelle, Roosevelt's choice of Giraud reflected the president's perspective that a French *général* should be nonpolitical, anti-clerical, and remain focused on purely military tasks. A report written in November 1942 assessed that Giraud had earned the reputation of being "a soldier of great courage" and, having escaped during both World Wars from being a German prisoner of war, demonstrated that he had no intention of serving Germany." During the Battle of France, Giraud had been called upon to assume command and rally a French army mauled by the German attack through the Ardennes. Enroute to his new command, he was captured. The contemporary account was that "a French patriot or group of patriots" had financed Giraud's escape from Germany in April 1942, suggesting that he had excellent connections with the resistance on the European continent.²²² As early as November 9, 1942, Roosevelt suggested "that eventually Giraud would have to be removed from command but that possibly he could be retained in a

²²¹ John F. Carter, Report on Free French Intelligence, August 31, 1942, Box 98, "Carter, John F.: Aug.-Dec. 1942," President's Secretary's File, FDRL.

²²² General Henri Honore Giraud, Research and Analysis Branch Report Number 455, November 1942, Intelligence Reports, 1941-1961, Record Group 59 General Record of the Department of State, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1221, National Archives.

political position such as governor” in North Africa.²²³ At Casablanca, presidential advisor Harry Hopkins “gained a very favorable impression of Giraud.” Hopkins assessed, “I know he is a Royalist, and probably is a right-winger in all his economic views, but I have the feeling that he is willing to fight.”²²⁴

At Casablanca in 1943, Roosevelt told Murphy that he still deplored de Gaulle’s apparent readiness to start civil wars. Murphy recorded Roosevelt’s view that “it was as important as ever to prevent any disputes between Frenchmen which might interfere in military operations.” Roosevelt surmised that future military success by the United States in the war against Nazi Germany could hinge upon the ability of Frenchmen to maintain order in the territories through which supplies had to move to the fighting fronts. The president reaffirmed to Murphy the wisdom behind previous associations with Vichy from 1940 to 1942 and his conviction “that he should continue to refuse to recognize de Gaulle or anybody else as the sole governing authority for France until the French people were free to make their own choice.”²²⁵ The president remained suspicious of de Gaulle’s motives. At Casablanca, Roosevelt met with Giraud and had a gentlemanly conversation in French. In contrast, during his meeting with de Gaulle, the Secret Service kept a submachine gun trained on de Gaulle the entire time. Roosevelt scoffed at de Gaulle’s characterization of himself as Clemenceau with Giraud relegated to the role of Foch. It seems instead that Roosevelt fancied himself as having assumed the mantle of

²²³ Minutes of a Meeting at the White House on Monday, November 9, 1942, “Minutes of Meetings of FDR with Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-1945,” Conferences, Box 29, Map Room, FDRL.

²²⁴ Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 683.

²²⁵ Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, pp. 170.

Clemenceau. Concerning the squabble between de Gaulle and Giraud, Hopkins relayed that the president “thought Giraud should land on top” rather than be subordinate to de Gaulle. Consistent with Roosevelt’s belief that the proper relationship for the French military was to be bound by civilian authority, Hopkins observed that Giraud left him with “a feeling that he had made up his mind that he was going to do whatever the President wanted in Africa.”²²⁶

On Armistice Day in 1942, Roosevelt recalled the brave soldiers who “fought and won that fight against German militarism” in 1918. In the current war against German militarism again, Roosevelt found it “heartening” that “large numbers of the fighting men of our traditional ally, France,” were fighting alongside American and British soldiers in North Africa and that “soldiers of France will go forward with the United Nations.”²²⁷ Under the command of Giraud, the French *Armée d’Afrique* reinforced the Anglo-American campaign in Tunisia. In February 1943, Leahy, who became Roosevelt’s Chief of Staff in the White House the previous summer, contrasted the actions of “General Giraud, who is fighting in North Africa, and General de Gaulle, who is talking in England, and through a partisan press, in America.”²²⁸ In May 1943, over 275,00 German and Italian soldiers capitulated. Roosevelt had achieved his objective of bringing the French army back into the war along side Britain and the United States. The result was that, in the summer of 1943, Roosevelt confidently asserted that his administration had

²²⁶ Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 683-5, 691, and 693.

²²⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt address first draft, November 11, 1942, Amphitheater, Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, Master Speech File No. 1438, Franklin D. Roosevelt Speech Files, FDRL.

²²⁸ Entry for February 2, 1943, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

followed a consistent policy toward France since the Battle of France in 1940.²²⁹ The collapse of Germany, however, remained more elusive.

VI. Roosevelt and the German Resistance: The Other Dimension of “Unconditional Surrender”

At a press conference at the end of the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, Roosevelt announced a policy that had already been in effect for several years demanding the “unconditional surrender” of Germany and Japan. Shaped by the lessons of the Great War and its aftermath, “unconditional surrender” was a policy that derived from Roosevelt’s conviction that an enduring peace required that there be no settlement with the forces of reaction in Germany. Roosevelt told Averell Harriman that he “was determined not to repeat Woodrow Wilson’s tragic mistake in ... starting a discussion of peace terms with the enemy before the surrender.”²³⁰ Although the Kaiser left Germany, the armistice left the forces of reaction and autocracy undefeated. Adamant that there not be any negotiated settlement with Hitler’s regime, Roosevelt also wanted to prevent the conclusion of any inconclusive peace that would allow Prussian militarism or *Junker* conservatism to maintain their grip on power. In so doing, the policy of “unconditional surrender” also meant that Roosevelt refused to offer assistance to the opposition against Hitler inside the German army and foreign office.

²²⁹ Entry for July 16, 1943, William D. Hassett, Off the Record With F.D.R., 1942-1945 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1958), p. 191.

²³⁰ W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946 (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 190.

Several enduring lessons from the Great War and its immediate aftermath certainly shaped Roosevelt's policy nearly twenty-five years later. Following the United States declaration of war in 1917, Theodore Roosevelt had urged continuing the war until the achievement of an "overwhelming victory" that destroyed German militarism. By October 1918, members of Woodrow Wilson's cabinet used the term "unconditional surrender" in their debates over German armistice overtures. The following month, during the 1918 election, Republicans effectively used the slogan to accuse Wilson of settling for easy terms with Germany.²³¹ Clearly, the lesson of 1918 was not lost on Roosevelt and his advisors. For example, as early as 1937, diplomat George Messersmith asserted that it was essential for the United States "not to negotiate in any way with Germany until we have a responsible government to deal with."²³² The aftermath of that war convinced his Roosevelt that unless German autocracy and militarism were defeated soundly the forces of reaction would dominate the postwar world again.

The ideas presented in his Harvard classes, during his tenure in Albany, and in the Wilson administration also conditioned Roosevelt's thinking about the forces at work inside Germany during the Second World War. In Roosevelt's mind the Prussian militarism and autocracy of the Great War merely reemerged under Hitler. Hitler, the president believed, drew his support from the reactionaries left over from Imperial Germany: industrialists, imperialists, militarists, and the conservative upper class Prussian gentry. Any distinction between those groups blurred in Roosevelt's thinking. In

²³¹ Joseph P. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), p. 313.

²³² George S. Messersmith letter to Felix Frankfurter, February 2, 1937, "Messersmith, George S. 1936-37," Reel 53, Container 83, General Correspondence, The Papers of Felix Frankfurter, LCMD.

1940, for example, Roosevelt characterized the dictatorships threatening the United States as the reemergence of the enemies of the Great War. He offered, “They are not new, my friends, they are only a relapse--”²³³ Later that same year, Roosevelt referred to the Central Powers of the Great War as “the axis of 1918.”²³⁴

In that respect, Roosevelt’s advisors shared similar views. As members of the Roosevelt administration surveyed Nazi Germany in late 1940, the Great War provided their frame of reference. In November 1940, Secretary of the Navy Knox told his audience “we face again in a more dreadful form the same peril that we faced when we boarded transports to sail for France in 1918.” Perceiving Nazi Germany as a manifestation of Prussian autocracy with dreams of pan-Germanism, Knox thought that “in its essence” there was little difference “between the Kaiserism that we fought in ’18 and the Hitlerism that threatens us today.”²³⁵ Secretary of War Stimson believed that the militaristic dictatorship in Nazi Germany denied individual freedom and represented a primary threat to world peace in the same manner that he believed the Great War had been “the result of the Prussian doctrine of state supremacy,” of which one manifestation was submarine warfare.²³⁶

²³³ Acceptance Speech to Democratic National Convention, July 19, 1940, Master Speech File Number 1291, Speech File, FDRL.

²³⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt Armistice Day Address, Arlington National Cemetery, November 11, 1940, Speech File No. 1346, Speech Files, FDRL.

²³⁵ Frank Knox Armistice Day Address, Columbia, South Carolina, November 11, 1940, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, The Papers of Frank Knox, LCMD.

²³⁶ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 89-90. In a cabinet meeting in December 1940, Stimson advocated United States intervention in the European war “to forcibly stop the German submarines” once again. Entry for December 19, 1940, Stimson Diaries, XXXII: 46, Yale University Library.

The equating of the political situation in Germany with that of 1914-1918 became so pervasive in official Washington that dissenting viewpoints carried no weight. In the absence of a United States ambassador in Berlin, diplomatic reports that opposed the popular view went unheeded. Among those whose views were overlooked was diplomat George Kennan. Kennan, who had transferred from Prague to Berlin in 1939, recalled,

I was shocked to realize, in talking with President Franklin Roosevelt later in the war, that he was one of the many people who could not easily distinguish World War II from World War I and still pictured the Prussian *Junkertum* as a mainstay of Hitler's power just as it had been, or had been reputed to be, the mainstay of the power of the Kaiser. Actually, Hitler found his main support in the lower middle class and to some extent in the nouveau riche. The older Prussian aristocracy was divided; but from its ranks came some of the most enlightened and courageous of all the internal opposition Hitler was ever to face.²³⁷

In December 1939 and January 1940, consistent with the view of Germany teetering on the verge of internal collapse, the Roosevelt administration turned a deaf ear to representatives of the German resistance in the United States. Expecting the German people to revolt, the Roosevelt administration had no desire to assist conservative, nationalist Germans with Prussian and imperial backgrounds and deliberately rejected peace feelers from what they perceived as the forces of reaction in Germany, regardless of whether they were Nazis or their conservative opponents. Because Roosevelt anticipated the popular breakup of Germany, he did not want to do anything to sustain the power of reactionaries to the detriment of the German people. As a result, Roosevelt and his administration turned a cold shoulder to the opposition against Hitler in the German Army and Foreign Office and followed a policy that refused to acknowledge their requests for assistance. In Roosevelt's mind, their program of opposition to Hitler

²³⁷ George F. Kennan, Memoirs, 1925-1950 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), p. 123.

represented an internal struggle among the forces of German militarism and Prussian conservatism, the foes of civilization from the Great War.

As a result the visit to the United States during the winter of 1939 and 1940 of Adam von Trott der Solz, a descendent of Hessian nobility and Prussian *Junkers*, ended in disappointment. Former Chancellor Brüning had vouched for von Trott as someone who “really represented responsible, potentially powerful, conservative forces in Germany.” Although von Trott managed to see several State Department officials and Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, the meeting with Frankfurter ended on a sour note. Frankfurter relayed his suspicions about von Trott to both Roosevelt and Messersmith at the State Department.²³⁸ The administration made no distinction between conservative Germans and Nazis; as Roosevelt and his advisors saw the situation, they all seemed to be working toward the same ends, if not working together. By late November, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was trailing von Trott.²³⁹ When von Trott departed Washington, D.C. in January 1940, Roosevelt chided Frankfurter, “For Heaven’s sake! Surely you did not let your Trott friend get trotted out of the country without having him searched by Edgar Hoover. Think of the battleship plans and other secrets he may be carrying back.”²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Klemens von Klemperer, German Resistance Against Hitler: The Search For Allies Abroad (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1992), pp. 33, 184-5, and 187-8.

²³⁹ See J. Edgar Hoover letters to Brigadier General Edwin M. Watson, December 18, 1939 and January 16, 1940, F.B.I. Reports 1939-40, Box 11, Department of Justice, OF 10b, FDRL.

²⁴⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Frankfurter, January 17, 1940, Box 135, Subject File, PSF, FDRL.

Later in January 1940, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt met with Paul Hagen, member of the German opposition to Hitler who recently became research director for the American Friends of German Freedom. On January 9, Joseph Lash wrote Eleanor Roosevelt about “a wonderful German who has just arrived in this country” who, according to Lash, was “the leader of an opposition group to Hitler.” Lash, Hagen, and Eleanor Roosevelt met on January 22, and Hagen told her that his resistance group was “intact” and represented an “imp[ortan]t a[n]d a potential force” in his “gov[ernmen]t’s executive dep[artmen]ts.” When she asked whether his group drew support from the churches, Hagen confided that the “top Catholic hierarchy wanted a deal with Hitler while Protestant leadership was confused.” Hagen asserted “that a negotiated peace on Hitler’s terms, one that did not restore democratic r[igh]ts to the German people w[oul]d be catastrophic and end all democratic possibilities.” Hagen, consequently, urged firmness by the United States and stressed the need to make it clear that the United States “w[oul]d have no part in a peace that w[oul]d repr[e]sent a Hitler victory.”²⁴¹

Other aspects of Hagen’s message, however, were at odds with the accepted view in the White House. Hagen “minimized existing underground org[anization]s” and told the first lady that “there were no possibilities of a democratic revolution [in Germany] without a defeat in war.” When Eleanor Roosevelt asked Hagen to tell her “what specifically the U.S. c[oul]d do,” he replied that American “diplomacy c[oul]d find

²⁴¹ Entry for January 22, 1940, Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, Joseph P. Lash Papers, FDRL.

methods.” Unconvinced by Hagen and his arguments, Eleanor Roosevelt ended the conversation in favor of lunch and seems to have taken no action on the meeting.²⁴²

Amazingly enough, the correspondence between Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles and the Roosevelts shows that the administration had obtained, from a variety of sources, a fairly complete picture of the aims of the German opposition to Hitler. As Welles saw the situation, the “mass of information” suggested that if the Allies declared that they would not dismember Germany that “steps would be taken by [the] army to overturn or modify [the] present régime in Germany and bring into power a government with whom [the] Allies could negotiate.” The administration, however, was “inclined to regard these stories as part of [a] German war of nerves” motivated by Hitler in an effort to avoid “imposing losses and privations on the German people which might well jeopardize [the] existence of [his] régime.” It seemed to Welles that Hitler was using the peace initiatives to avert a possible democratic revolt at home, and as a result, with respect to German domestic as well as foreign policy, any early peace would clearly be “an inconclusive or precarious” one. Furthermore, from the administration’s point of view, the “framers of German policy whether Nazi or non-Nazi,” namely Hitler and the conservative opposition against him, were virtually indistinguishable.²⁴³ On top of

²⁴² Entry for January 22, 1940, Journal, 1939-42, Folder 3, Box 31, Speeches and Writings, Joseph P. Lash Papers, FDRL.

²⁴³ Undated and untitled memorandum apparently written shortly after Roosevelt announced the Welles mission to Europe on February 9, 1940, “Roosevelt, F & E,” Welles Mission: M-S, 1940, Box 155, Special Mission to Europe, 1940, Sumner Welles Papers, FDRL. A message from British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain confirmed that the information reaching the president “from Germany corresponds with what has been reaching His Majesty’s Government.” Chamberlain thought “it is not unreasonable to suppose” that the initiatives coming out of Germany “were the policy of the German Government.” Copy of Chamberlain message to Roosevelt, undated, “Roosevelt Jan-Apr 1940,” Box 150, Major Correspondents, Sumner Welles Papers, FDRL.

Welles' assessment of the German peace initiatives, Roosevelt jotted a note to emphasize that there must be "no inconclusive or precarious peace."²⁴⁴ Expecting Hitler's regime to collapse under popular pressure, the administration refused to negotiate with Hitler and totally discounted the opposition to Hitler from within the German government.

In early February, Roosevelt decided to dispatch Welles to the capitals of Europe in order to get a better appraisal of the situation. The Roosevelt administration's hopes seemed to have remained fixed on popular opposition to Hitler and on giving the Allies more time to rearm. Roosevelt explained to Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long his motivation for sending Welles. After the discussion, Long noted,

He figured it could not do any harm and it might do good. He conceived the idea that the Germans might launch a spring offensive about now. If Welles' visit would delay that offensive or possibly prevent it, it would be worth a great deal. If it prevented it altogether, that would be fine. If it delayed it a month, that would be so much. Even a week would mean a lot....²⁴⁵

While on his mission in Europe, Welles clearly remained indifferent to the opposition against Hitler within the German government. Welles visited Berlin for three days and met with members of the Nazi government to include Hitler, Rudolph Hess, Hermann Goering, and Joachim von Ribbentrop. He also met with two men linked to the opposition against Hitler, Ernst von Weizsäcker and Hjalmar Schacht, a minister without portfolio in Hitler's government. During his visit, Welles observed that all of the officials of the German Foreign Office were "dressed in military uniform," and he was struck by

²⁴⁴ Roosevelt's handwritten note on White House letterhead, undated, "Roosevelt, F & E," Welles Mission: M-S, 1940, Box 155, Special Mission to Europe, 1940, Sumner Welles papers, FDRL.

²⁴⁵ Entry for March 12, 1940, Fred L. Israel, ed., The War Diary of Breckinridge Long: Selections from the Years 1939-1944 (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 64.

the links that he saw there with Imperial Germany. Although Welles found von Weizsäcker genuinely hoping for “a way by which an absolute holocaust could be avoided,” he largely dismissed the State Secretary as “a typical example of the German official of the old school of the nineteenth century.”²⁴⁶ Welles, furthermore, seemed unconvinced after his session with Schacht. Schacht told Welles “that a movement was underway, headed by leading generals, to supplant the Hitler régime.” Schacht, however, was sure that Welles would understand why he “was unable to mention any names.”²⁴⁷

Schacht may have been silent about the identity of the opposition in Germany out of secrecy, but Welles’ discussions that same day left him with the distinct impression that there was another explanation. After meeting with the Belgian and Italian ambassadors in Berlin, Welles noted “that the internal and army opposition to Hitler, which had assumed some proportions in November 1939, has now completely died away.”²⁴⁸ A week later, Welles told Chamberlain that during his stay in Germany he gained the impression that “some of the leaders of Germany had so identified the fate of Germany with the fate of the Nazi regime” that they now shared its convictions.²⁴⁹

The Roosevelts admired German author Thomas Mann, and that spring Mann also offered some recommendations for dealing with Germany. Mann acknowledged “the

²⁴⁶ Welles Report, Berlin, March 1, 1940, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 1, General (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), pp. 34, 42-3.

²⁴⁷ Welles Report, Berlin, March 3, 1940, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 1, General (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 57.

²⁴⁸ Welles Report, Berlin, March 3, 1940, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 1, General (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 50.

²⁴⁹ Welles Report, London, March 11, 1940, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, vol. 1, General (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 76.

distinction between the German people and their destroyers” and characterized Hitler’s regime as “a handful of perverted and bloody-minded men” possessing a “vile and anachronistic spirit.” Mann advocated that the United States pursue a policy of patience “until severe military defeats have shaken that power” and brought about a popular revolt. He assessed that “any sort of definite peace is notoriously impossible” until the German people rise up and “shake off their present rulers.”²⁵⁰

After the French defeat in 1940, the Roosevelt administration hoped to avoid Wilson’s mistakes of 1918 and adopted the outlines of the national policy that would be characterized as unconditional surrender. Because members of the Roosevelt administration believed Germany overstretched and on the verge of internal collapse, they anticipated a round of German peace overtures that would give the Nazis the opportunity to consolidate their gains. The administration, however, soon moved to close that avenue. In early July, Berle noted that the United States government would play no future role in “transmitting German offers” of a negotiated peace or relaying peace feelers to Britain.²⁵¹ In addition to refusing to transmit German peace feelers, Sumner Welles also thought that a coup by the leaders of the German army against Hitler would not make much difference in the fundamental aims of German policy. He judged that Hitler, like Kaiser Wilhelm II, was merely a figurehead. Welles believed “that German policy during the past eighty years has been inspired and directed, not by the Chief of State, but by the German General Staff.” Although he considered Hitler’s Nazi Party an evil, criminal machine, he assessed that the German general staff had used the Nazi

²⁵⁰ Thomas Mann, This War, trans. Eric Sutton (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), pp. 5, 54, 60-62, 66.

²⁵¹ Entry for July 5, 1940, Adolph A. Berle Diary, Box 212, Berle Papers, FDRL.

machine for its own purposes, namely to renew its “attempt to dominate the world.”

Welles believed that the United States would make a grave mistake if it settled for any negotiated German surrender that left the German general staff intact, even if Hitler were deposed.²⁵²

The Roosevelt administration believed that German peace initiatives could not be trusted. In August 1940, Knox had been adamant that the United States should not fear an immediate German attack but rather “a great gesture of friendship” intended to calm American fears and to paralyze United States defensive preparations. Opposed to any negotiated peace, he proclaimed, “Any appeasement policy with Hitler would be only playing into his hands.”²⁵³ Although not labeled “unconditional surrender,” Knox announced in January 1941 that the president had “repudiated all thought of a peace dictated by aggressors, sponsored by appeasers, and bought at the cost of other people’s freedom.”²⁵⁴ Addressing the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Knox characterized proposals for “a stable negotiated peace between Great Britain and Germany” as “a wild fancy.” He asserted, “A negotiated peace without victory can be effected only when a military stalemate has existed for a long time, and under conditions where the belligerents

²⁵² Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 342.

²⁵³ Frank Knox statement on conscription, August 14, 1940, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, The Papers of Frank Knox, LCMD.

²⁵⁴ Frank Knox speech to the Canadian Society of New York, New York City, January 18, 1941, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, The Papers of Frank Knox, LCMD.

feel a reasonable degree of confidence that the peace terms will be faithfully executed.”²⁵⁵

In February 1941, Roosevelt asked Berle to review Wilson’s speeches of 1917. In his review of Wilson’s wartime speeches, Berle identified several key themes that he thought particularly pertinent in 1941. Berle perceived the presence in 1941 of a resurgent enemy that he characterized as “the military masters of Germany” and “the Prussian aristocracy” who hoped to revitalize and achieve their “astounding dream of pan-Germanism.” Although he believed that the United States had sincere friendship for the German people, Berle assessed that the Prussian military autocracy had to be destroyed in the Second World War in order to save liberal Germany and to keep the world at peace. For Berle, Wilson’s speeches provided a compelling “argument against a negotiated peace” with the military party of Germany, a group that did not reflect the will of the majority. Berle also praised Wilson’s rejection of the August 1917 peace proposal of Pope Benedict XV. Based on Wilson’s response, Berle recorded that the litmus test of every peace proposal had to be, “Is it based upon the faith of all the peoples involved, or merely upon the word of an ambitious and intriguing government on one hand, and of a group of free peoples on the other?” Another lesson from Wilson became evident to Berle during the review, namely the United States must “not be diverted from winning the war by insincere approaches on the subject of peace.”²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Frank Knox statement before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, January 31, 1941, Speeches and Writings File, Box 5, The Papers of Frank Knox, LCMD.

²⁵⁶ Adolph Berle memorandum, February 18, 1941, the Diary of Adolph Berle, Berle Papers, FDRL.

In March 1941, the reports of John Franklin Carter to Roosevelt reinforced the president's faith in a strategic framework for the unconditional defeat of Nazi Germany by blockade, economic sanctions, moral suasion, and air attack. Carter provided further rationale for the United States refusing to negotiate with Hitler or any military government in Germany. According to Carter's reports, "the German High Command has given up the idea of winning the war" and intend to seize "all they can in Europe" and then bargain for peace. Advocating a tighter blockade, Carter asserted that "we should stop stuff getting into Germany," target vulnerable oil and gasoline stocks, and "use food as a weapon." Carter informed Roosevelt that the Nazi system was "too strong for anti-Nazi revolts at present" but thought that an Allied bombing campaign that lasted at most two years would change that and "crack them." Carter also relayed to Roosevelt that because German morale had been built on Hitler's successes, military defeat would also bring about the popular collapse of the regime. He provided the president with the assessment "that Germany would crack with a few military defeats—'they haven't the guts to take it.'" Whether due to bombing or battlefield setback, Carter predicted "revolt would come in the industrial areas, particularly the Rhineland," coincidentally the same areas that Roosevelt equated with the urban, liberal Germany of his youth.²⁵⁷

Content to wait for the people of Germany to overthrow both Hitler and the German war machine, Roosevelt apparently chose not reply to German peace initiatives in 1941. In September, Naval Intelligence informed Roosevelt that conservative German officers

²⁵⁷ John F. Carter, Memorandum on Conditions in Germany, March 6, 1941, Memorandum of Conversation with V. C. Genn, General Motors Corporation Managing Director, Switzerland, March 21, 1941, and Memorandum of Conversation with E. W. Zdunek, General Motors Managing Director, Belgium, March 27, 1941, Box 97, "Carter, John F.: Mar.-Oct. 1941," President's Secretary's File, FDRL.

wanted “to discuss peace terms” with the president’s representative. Reportedly, the German officers proposed that if the Allies agreed to “not seek dismemberment and eternal ruination of Germany, the coup [against Hitler] might be attempted.”²⁵⁸ Roosevelt took no action. Likewise, in October 1941, Leahy reported to the president that he had expressed repeatedly “that America will not make any effort to bring about a negotiated peace with Hitlerism.”²⁵⁹ Roosevelt affirmed Leahy’s stance and commented, “You were quite right in expressing the opinion that this country will not join in any effort to bring about a negotiated peace with Naziism.” The president added, “This attitude of ours should be clear by now to all the world.”²⁶⁰

Amid new rumors of German peace initiatives in 1942, reports relayed by Carter to Roosevelt argued that even in the event that Hitler’s regime collapsed that the forces of German conservatism and militarism would continue to thrive. The assessment was that the combination of “British bombings” and “the failure of the Nazi Russian campaign of the past winter” produced “conditions in Germany similar in many respects to the 1918 position when the German army was massed for it[s] last desperate effort to break through the existing Western Front.” Rather than setting the conditions for a liberal regime to succeed Hitler, however, the prediction was that the failure of the German army to achieve a strategic breakthrough against the Soviet Union would result “in a collapse of the Hitler Regime with the almost immediate removal of Hitler, Georing[sic], Goebels,

²⁵⁸ Captain A. G. Kirk, Director of Naval Intelligence memorandum for Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 26, 1941, Navy Department: 1934-Feb. 1942, Box 4, Safe File, President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

²⁵⁹ William D. Leahy to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 15, 2003, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

²⁶⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt to William D. Leahy, November 1, 1941, Leahy Diary, The Papers of William D. Leahy, LCMD.

Himmler et al with the German Army generals taking over the Government reins.” Carter also relayed the assessment that “Franz Von Papen is laying the ground-work for a return to Germany” to “assume leadership” over the German Reich.²⁶¹

Similarly, in December 1942 as Roosevelt prepared for his trip to Casablanca, it seemed increasingly apparent that years of Nazi domination had eroded the ability of German liberals to effectively resist Hitler’s regime or seize power in the event of regime collapse. The fear was that the German army, rather than anything representative of the German people, would constitute the government that followed Hitler’s demise. Carter responded to a query from the president by affirming his belief “when the Hitler regime begins to crumble, the Army will be the only remaining group in Germany with the will and, above all, the weapons with which to remove the Nazis.”²⁶²

Having discounted the resurgence of a liberal German government in the wake of Hitler’s regime collapsing, it seems evident that Roosevelt intended his announcement of “unconditional surrender” as a message to those expected to seize power in Germany. He wanted to ensure that in the event of a sudden collapse that the United States could act quickly to guarantee that the German army could not consolidate its power. Amid planning for the cross-channel attack, Roosevelt predicted that the collapse of Germany would be sudden, and rather than fighting through the country he envisioned what he termed a “railroad occupation.” General Marshall reflected that the shortage of railway rolling stock would probably necessitate an advance by truck rather than train. Harry

²⁶¹ John F. Carter, Report on Nazi Peace Rumors, June 3, 1942, and attachment, Box 98, “Carter, John F.: June-July 1942,” President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

²⁶² John F. Carter, Report on “Sedgwick’s” Answer to Your Question, December 1, 1942, Box 98, “Carter, John F.: Aug.-Dec. 1942,” President’s Secretary’s File, FDRL.

Hopkins proposed retaining an airborne division on standby to seize Berlin within two hours of the collapse of the Hitler regime.²⁶³ Robert Sherwood assessed that because Roosevelt “was influenced by grim memories of the results of the Armistice of 1918,” he did not believe that uprisings against Hitler such as the one in July 1944 would lead to the achievement of total victory. In November 1943, he drafted a statement that explained “that the unconditional surrender formula meant that the United Nations would never negotiate an armistice with the Nazi Government, the German high command, or any other organization or group or individual in Germany.”²⁶⁴ Roosevelt intended to broker no deals that would allow the forces of reaction to retain power in postwar Germany.

VII. Roosevelt Implementing his Vision for Postwar France and Germany

During the Second World War, Roosevelt pondered the nature of the postwar world. It seems evident that he still feared that another world war might produce the conditions that would “drag civilization to a level from which world-wide recovery may be all but impossible.”²⁶⁵ To prevent that and a corresponding resurgence of the forces of conservatism and reaction, he hoped to establish a structure for international and great

²⁶³ Minutes of a Meeting Between the President and the Chiefs of Staff on Friday, November 19, 1943, at 1500, “Minutes of Meetings of FDR with Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-1945,” Conferences, Box 29, Map Room, FDRL.

²⁶⁴ Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 791.

²⁶⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt address at the San Diego Exposition, October 2, 1935, San Diego, California, Edgar B. Nixon, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol. 3, September 1935-January 1937 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 13.

power cooperation. In contrast to Wilson, he wanted to reach a wartime understanding with allies during the war for a postwar international organization and for crucial political and territorial issues, rather than save those for the peace conference.²⁶⁶ Recalling the challenges that confronted Wilson, Roosevelt believed wartime unity provided the best opportunity for the Allies to meet “the difficult task [that] came after the war when diverse interests tended to divide the allies.”²⁶⁷ He also wanted the wartime alliance to endure. He wrote, “But—above all things—we must continue in the peace the cooperation among the United Nations which is the essential force in the winning of the war.”²⁶⁸ In addition, Roosevelt sensed that the advance of civilization would require more than just continued cooperation between the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union. Conscious of the impact of France and Germany on the international situation after the Great War, Roosevelt sought the reemergence of republican France and a liberal alternative to a Prussian -dominated German state.

Roosevelt conceived the United Nations as the centerpiece of a progressive and peaceful postwar world. At Tehran in November 1943, Roosevelt sketched out the structure he proposed for the United Nations Organization. The organization consisted of the continued cooperation of the “4 Policemen,” an Executive Committee, and a general assembly of the “40 United Nations” that also could carry on the humanitarian programs

²⁶⁶ Sumner Welles, The Time For Decision (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), pp. 64-7.

²⁶⁷ Tripartite Dinner Meeting, February 8, 1945, Yusupov Palace, Bohlen Minutes, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 798.

²⁶⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt notes on first draft, Annual Message on the State of the Union, January 7, 1943, Master Speech File No. 1447, FDRL.

of the League of Nations.²⁶⁹ Unlike the League of Nations, he envisioned an organization with the capability to enforce international disarmament and punish aggressors.

Following the pattern of Wilson's League of Nations, the new organization would contain a general assembly in which all nations had representation. He believed, however, that the enforcement mechanism for the United Nations was the great powers working in concert through an executive council. Certainly, the lessons of his past provided a clear course for Roosevelt. Theodore Roosevelt had argued for cooperation between the major powers to police the world. The deliberations of the executive council during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference established an example of that great power cooperation in action. As he acknowledged in 1944, Roosevelt's ideas for a postwar Society of Nations that he laid out in 1923 submission for the Bok Peace Award "was in many aspects similar to the new plan for the United Nations."²⁷⁰

Germany and France figured prominently in Roosevelt's conception of the future world. Recalling the problems after the Great War that plagued France and Germany, he believed that the resurgence of the forces of reaction in either or both of those countries could be detrimental to the advance of civilization. During his first term in office, he had assessed that serious threats to civilization grew out of continued national jealousies, increased armaments, and aggressive ambitions that disturb the peace. For instance at an address in Arlington National Cemetery on Armistice Day in 1935, he expressed his

²⁶⁹ Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 789-90.

²⁷⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt memorandum, Quebec, September 15, 1944, and Roosevelt memorandum January 19, 1944, attached to a copy of "A Plan to Preserve World Peace: Offered for 'The American Peace Award'," Folder 46, Bok Peace Award 1923 or 1924, Box 41, Writing and Statement File, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Family, Business and Personal Papers, FDRL.

conviction that he and his generation had a “sacred obligation” to pass on the memory and lessons of the Great War. In addition to the horrors of the front lines, Roosevelt consistently credited war with ushering in a period of reaction detrimental to the reform impulse. He asserted his progressive belief “that elation and prosperity which may come from a new war must lead – for those who survive it – to economic and social collapse more sweeping than any we have experienced in the past.”²⁷¹

As a result, it seems clear that Roosevelt worked to influence the nature of the French and German states that would emerge at the end of the Second World War. What Roosevelt outlined for the future was entirely consistent with his worldview. Since the French defeat in 1940, he hoped for the reemergence of what he considered the true France under a republican and anti-clerical government that no longer aspired to be a colonial power. Under those conditions, Roosevelt believed that France would eventually rejoin the ranks of the great powers. Roosevelt also sought to resolve what he saw as a fundamental, enduring tension in Germany and minimize the powerful influences of Prussian militarism and *Junker* conservatism in favor of German liberalism.

Roosevelt followed a course crafted to restore republican France to the ranks of the democratic powers. During the six-week Dumbarton Oaks Conference held in the autumn of 1944, representatives of the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China, the Big Four, drafted a tentative charter for the new United Nations and proposed that France become the fifth sponsoring power. Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius conveyed to Roosevelt in early 1945, “It is in the interests of the United States to assist France to

²⁷¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt address, November 11, 1935, Amphitheater, Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, Master Speech File No. 815, Franklin D. Roosevelt Speech Files, FDRL.

regain her former position in world affairs in order that she may increase her contribution in the war effort and play an appropriate part in the maintenance of peace.” Although recognizing the complex challenges with such a course, Stettinius urged the president that in the long run the United States would “undoubtedly gain more by making concessions to French prestige and by treating France on the basis of her potential power and influence, than we will by treating her on the basis of her actual strength at this time.” The Secretary of State believed that inclusion of France might “help create a cooperative spirit among the French” and would “probably prove popular with the other small countries of Europe who profess to fear the results of a peace imposed by non-European powers.” Believing that “a considerable portion” of United States troops would be withdrawn from Germany “after the early period of occupation,” he thought the inclusion of France would facilitate their replacement by French troops.²⁷² During discussions with the British at Malta prior to the Yalta Conference, the United States agreed “that France should be a fifth sponsoring power” of the United Nations.²⁷³ Also in January 1945, Roosevelt agreed in principle that the instrument of German surrender should also be prepared in a French text, equally authentic as the English and Russian texts, with French participating in signing the German surrender. He also consented to French participation in the Allied authority over postwar Germany and a French zone of occupation.²⁷⁴

²⁷² Edward R. Stettinius to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 4, 1945, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 293-4.

²⁷³ “Items Still Open Before Conference Can Be Called,” February 8, 1945, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 794.

²⁷⁴ H. Freeman Matthews to Edward R. Stettinius, January 19, 1945, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 297-8.

Roosevelt believed that it might take time for “a stable French central government” to be established.²⁷⁵ Roosevelt apparently thought that assisting governmental transition and supporting the reemergence of the true France would require the subordination of de Gaulle’s political motives to civilian leadership. Rather than military, Roosevelt reasoned that de Gaulle harbored larger political ambitions. In November 1943 amid planning for a cross-Channel attack, Roosevelt predicated that de Gaulle “will be right behind the army when there is a penetration into France” so that there can be an immediate “take over by his faction as rapidly as the army advances.”²⁷⁶ Roosevelt hoped to preclude that from happening in liberated France.

He insisted that support from the United States to the Free French not result in de Gaulle becoming the de facto ruler of a liberated France. With the lessons from his history classes at Harvard under Silas Macvane to guide him, Roosevelt demanded that the United States not take any actions that might in some way undermine the ability of the French people to choose their own leaders after liberation. In late 1943, Roosevelt judged that the real sentiment in France was “that the people of France did not want de Gaulle.”²⁷⁷ While supporting the Free French as a provisional government, he remained resolute that de Gaulle should not receive formal diplomatic recognition because he had

²⁷⁵ Robert Murphy memorandum of conversation with Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 9, 1944, in Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference at Quebec, 1944 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 144-5.

²⁷⁶ Minutes of Meeting Between the President and the Chiefs of Staff, held on board ship in the President’s Cabin, on Monday, 15 November, 1943, at 1400, “Minutes of Meetings of FDR with Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-1945,” Conferences, Box 29, Map Room, FDRL.

²⁷⁷ Entry for December 17, 1943, in Henry A. Wallace, The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946, edited by John Morton Blum (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), p. 282.

“no direct authority from the people.”²⁷⁸ Because Roosevelt believed that “Self-determination means an absence of coercion,” he wanted to ensure that the Allied armies liberating France did not impose de Gaulle on an unwilling French population.²⁷⁹ To those ends, de Gaulle was excluded from the invasion of Normandy. As Allied armies prepared to liberate Paris in August 1944 and de Gaulle arranged to fly to France, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander in the European theater, simply proposed “to receive him as the commander of the French Army” rather than as a head of state.²⁸⁰ At the local level in France, Eleanor Roosevelt noted in late August that beyond all expectations “the French seem quite able to undertake their own civilian government.”²⁸¹

Nonetheless, her husband only seriously considered designating de Gaulle as the *de facto* head of what constituted “the Provisional Government of France” in September 1944 after three conditions were met. The first was that France largely was liberated. The second was the indication “that the resistance groups and others in France have no intention of permitting the establishment of a personal dictatorship under General de Gaulle.” Third was the requirement that de Gaulle bring into his organization members of

²⁷⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Cordell Hull, September 19, 1943, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1928-1945 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), p. 1542.

²⁷⁹ George M. Elsey, “President Roosevelt’s Policy Towards De Gaulle,” June 21, 1945, folder 20 “General de Gaulle,” Box 5, Admiral Leahy 1942-1948, Chairman’s File, Record Group 218 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²⁸⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, August 15, 1944, in Dwight D. Eisenhower, The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, vol. 4, The War Years, edited by Alfred D. Chandler, et al. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 2069-70.

²⁸¹ Entry for August 26, 1944, in [Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt’s My Day: Her Acclaimed Columns, 1936-1945, edited by Rochelle Chadakoff (New York: Pharos Books, 1989), pp. 353-4.

the resistance in Metropolitan France and civilian leaders such as Jules Jeanneney, the last president of the French Senate. Secretary of State Hull informed Roosevelt, “Of course, the word ‘provisional’ would not be dropped until after general elections are held in France.”²⁸² Roosevelt, however, agreed with advisor Harry Hopkins who supported diplomatic recognition of the provisional government only after “the French set up a real zone of the interior” and effectively enlarged the Consultative Assembly to make it more representative. Because the second condition would strengthen parliamentary democracy in France, Roosevelt noted, “I would not be satisfied with de Gaulle merely saying that he was going to do it.”²⁸³ Although sure that de Gaulle would continue to “make all the mischief he can,” Churchill subsequently informed Roosevelt, “De Gaulle is no longer sole master, but is better harnessed than ever before.”²⁸⁴ On October 23, 1944, after Eisenhower declared a large zone of interior for France, Roosevelt extended diplomatic recognition to the provisional government.²⁸⁵

Another issue for Roosevelt was the French desire to extend the French frontier to the Rhine or establish an independent Rhennish state aligned with France. It is likely that Roosevelt viewed French designs on the Rhineland as a manifestation of the monarchical

²⁸² Cordell Hull memorandum for Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 17, 1944, in Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference at Quebec, 1944 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 487-8.

²⁸³ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, October 19, 1944 in Warren F. Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, vol. 3, Alliance Declining (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 352-3.

²⁸⁴ Winston Churchill to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 22, 1944 in Warren F. Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, vol. 3, Alliance Declining (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 363-5.

²⁸⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, October 23, 1944 in Warren F. Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, vol. 3, Alliance Declining (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 367.

and Bonapartist influences that had motivated French generals after the Great War. In his visit to Moscow in December 1944, de Gaulle had raised the question to Soviet Premier Josef Stalin of the expansion of the French frontier to the Rhine.²⁸⁶ Although it had received no official indication from France that it intended to annex portions of Germany up to the Rhine, the State Department assessed that “long standing French ambitions in this area may lead to more or less open efforts to favor separatism, as was done in 1919.” The State Department, however, informed Roosevelt, “General de Gaulle is known to desire that France remain permanently on the Rhine.”²⁸⁷

For Roosevelt it was imperative that the postwar situation limit conditions for conservative French *général*s and the French Right to exploit as had happened immediately after the Great War. In January 1945, as the defeat of Germany seemed in sight, Roosevelt personally approved carving out a sector for French forces in the occupation of Germany and arming eight additional French divisions.²⁸⁸ Roosevelt told Soviet Premier Josef Stalin that his actions “were only out of kindness” for France. Clearly, Roosevelt’s actions served two basic goals. First, the designation of a limited French sector under a larger Allied occupation effort would thwart de Gaulle’s apparent

²⁸⁶ Josef Stalin telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 3, 1944, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 288-9.

²⁸⁷ Briefing Book Paper: France, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 300-9.

²⁸⁸ The German counterattack in the Ardennes in December 1944 probably added impetus to the proposal to arm more French divisions. Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, January 8, 1945 in Warren F. Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, vol. 3, Alliance Declining (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 501; H. Freeman Matthews to Edward R. Stettinius, January 19, 1945, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 297-8.

desire to annex German territory up to the Rhine, which he had told Soviet Premier Josef Stalin “was the natural boundary of France,” and permanently station French soldiers there. Second, Roosevelt apparently thought eight new French divisions “composed of Frenchmen who had had previous military training” could form the nucleus of a future French army fully integrated into the Allied coalition and serving coalition aims in occupied Germany.²⁸⁹

The Roosevelt administration also believed that rearming additional French divisions and providing them with an occupation sector in Germany help preserve peace and prevent German domination by the forces of reaction. Recognizing it likely that the United States would begin bringing troops home soon after the collapse of Germany, Churchill informed Roosevelt that without the assistance of a French postwar army it would not be possible to “hold down western Germany.” Recalling the failures of the interwar period, Churchill noted that without the assistance of the French army after the current war “All would therefore rapidly disintegrate as it did last time.”²⁹⁰ Stimson argued that keeping the French focused on the common enemy, Germany, “will keep the French factions together” and reduce the likelihood of the revolution in France that Roosevelt apprehensively predicted.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ Roosevelt-Stalin Meeting, February 4, 1945, Livadia Palace, Bohlen Minutes, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 570-3.

²⁹⁰ Winston Churchill to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 19, 1944 in Warren F. Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, vol. 3, Alliance Declining (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 398-9.

²⁹¹ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), pp. 575-6.

Roosevelt also sought to contain the colonial impulse that he believed had subverted the true France. Reflecting his perspective of the archaic and artificial nature of French colonialism, he believed that all French colonies should not revert to French control automatically after the war. In 1943, he pointed out that there were several places “which should definitely not go back to France.” Those were Indochina, New Caledonia, the Marquesas, and Dakar. He argued that, at the very most, the French might be able to keep civil administration in New Caledonia and Dakar but no armaments or fortifications. Expanding the Monroe Doctrine to the African coast, Roosevelt stated that he viewed “Dakar as a continental outpost for the Americas which would start on the Coast of West Africa.” Concerning Morocco, he assessed, “It was definitely the objective of the French to keep the Arabs down and not permit them to become educated.” Pointing out that the Sultan did not want to remain under French rule, Roosevelt suggested the United States could assist in the tutelage of Moroccan engineers, doctors, and professionals.²⁹² At Yalta, he urged that Indochina should become an international trusteeship. Concerning the people of Indochina, Roosevelt assessed, “France had done nothing to improve the natives since she had the colony.” He expressed concern that de Gaulle seemed intent upon restoring French military control over the Indochinese.²⁹³

Roosevelt’s aspirations for the reemergence of liberal Germany after the war were a direct result of his earlier experiences and views. For Roosevelt, German aggression was

²⁹² Minutes of a Meeting Between the President and the Chiefs of Staff held on board ship in the President’s Cabin, on Monday, November 15, 1943, at 1400, “Minutes of Meetings of FDR with Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-1945,” Conferences, Box 29, Map Room, FDRL.

²⁹³ Roosevelt-Stalin Meeting, February 8, 1945, Livadia Palace, Bohlen Minutes, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 766-771.

not the result of German unification but of the influence of Prussian militarism. He thought deeply, however, about how to reverse the effects of decades of Prussian influence on the German people. Guiding his actions were his worldview and the mistakes that he believed Wilson had made. As a result, Roosevelt pursued a policy that would “rule out any compromise with Nazism, bargaining over terms, or cries of deception from the Germans after the war.”²⁹⁴

By early 1943, Roosevelt had decided that the partition of Germany probably provided the best opportunity for German liberalism to reemerge. Rather than “use the methods discussed at Versailles” by the French to arbitrarily divide Germany, Roosevelt hoped that the “differences and ambitions” of the German people could generate “a division which represents German public opinion.” According to Hopkins, if that consensus did not emerge, Roosevelt was still committed to dividing Germany into several states, one of which had to be Prussia. Hopkins noted the president’s determination, “The Prussians cannot be permitted to dominate all Germany.”²⁹⁵

By the time of the Tehran in November 1943, Roosevelt suggested that Germany could logically be broken up into three or more German states after the war. He envisioned a southern state south of the Rhine, to include Baden, Württemberg, and Bavaria, that “was largely Roman Catholic.” The territory north and west of that southern state, to include Hamburg, Hannover, and possibly Berlin, would form a northwestern or Protestant state. Prussia and Pomerania in eastern Germany would form a third state, of which Roosevelt

²⁹⁴ W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946 (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 190.

²⁹⁵ Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 711.

commented “it might be said that the religion of the northeastern part is Prussianism.” Based on planning for the cross-channel attack and the need to prevent any crossing of lines of communication, the British proposed that the United States occupy the southern state. Roosevelt commented that he “did not like it” and preferred the Protestant and urban northwestern state.²⁹⁶ British silence and delay and the advanced state of detailed planning for the Normandy invasion eventually forced Roosevelt to acquiesce to the southern zone.

Roosevelt continued to think about the partition Germany for the remainder of his life. He also considered the international control of “the old Hanseatic League German free ports” and of the Saar and the Ruhr, whose resources he told Henry Wallace “served as a source of power for the industrialists” responsible “from time to time for precipitating international conflict.”²⁹⁷ The remainder of Germany, he proposed dividing up into five small countries. He described those states as a reduced Prussia, Hannover, Saxony, Hesse-Darmstadt and Hesse-Kassel, and Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.²⁹⁸ It is worth noting that, in addition to a Catholic southern state and a diminished Prussia, Roosevelt selected Saxony and Hannover, where his mother had lived as a child, and Hessen. Hessen contained the cities of Frankfurt and also Bad Nauheim where he spent his summers as a boy. Given the nostalgia associated with those three states and his own

²⁹⁶ Minutes of a Meeting Between the President and the Chiefs of Staff on Friday, November 19, 1943, at 1500, “Minutes of Meetings of FDR with Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-1945,” Conferences, Box 29, Map Room, FDRL.

²⁹⁷ Entry for December 18, 1943, in Henry A. Wallace, The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946, edited by John Morton Blum (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), p. 284.

²⁹⁸ Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 797.

interest in history, Roosevelt may have recalled the opposition of all three to Prussia during the Austro-Prussian War and the anti-Prussian and independent attitudes that persisted following German unification.

Recalling the centralization in Berlin of governmental activities during his youth, Roosevelt rejected a federal system because he thought Prussian influences could exploit and dominate the other German states politically or economically as it had over “the last twenty years.” At Yalta in February 1945, he commented at Yalta that he still thought “dismemberment of Germany” the proper course. Roosevelt recalled how “forty years ago, when he had been in Germany, the concept of the Reich had not really been known then” and communities “dealt with the provincial government” rather than Berlin.²⁹⁹

Unlike Wilson’s public announcement of his Fourteen Points and the ensuing political debates, Roosevelt “thought it would be a great mistake to have any public discussion of the dismemberment of Germany as he would certainly receive as many as there had been German states in the past.” When Churchill argued that publicly announcing any potential dismemberment of Germany would make the Germans fight harder, Roosevelt observed, “My own feeling is that the people have suffered so much that they are now beyond questions of psychological warfare.” Rather than embolden German resistance, Roosevelt intended to announce dismemberment plans only after “unconditional surrender.”³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Second Plenary Meeting, February 5, 1945, Livadia Palace, Bohlen Minutes, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 614.

³⁰⁰ Second Plenary Meeting, February 5, 1945, Livadia Palace, Matthews Minutes, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 626-7.

To complement dismemberment of Germany, Roosevelt envisioned other actions to break the power of the forces of reaction and prevent their resurgence. His approach was consistent with his appreciation of the forces of reaction in Germany: Prussian *Junkers*, industrialists, Nazis, and militarists. To lessen the power of Prussian conservatives, East Prussia would be transferred to Poland and the great estates of the *Junkers* broken up. Rather than a “complete eradication of German industrial productive capacity in the Ruhr and Saar,” Roosevelt wanted German industry to continue in those areas but under the aegis of the international community to prevent clandestine rearmament. In addition to international control of the Ruhr and Saar, Roosevelt envisioned curbing industrialists by dismantling steel, electrical, and metallurgical industries and banning the manufacture of arms, all types of aircraft, and “everything that goes into an aircraft.” The net result of limitations on industrialists would be to provide greater opportunity for small businessmen in Germany, an objective that Roosevelt had supported as early as 1927. The Nazis would be tried and also excluded from public office; Hopkins suggested to Roosevelt that the Gestapo and Nazi Party members could be sent to the Soviet Union to serve as forced labor. To diminish the power of militarism, Roosevelt wanted to abolish the German general staff and, as with the Nazis, ban Army officers from politics.³⁰¹ Struck by the destruction in Crimea in early 1945, Roosevelt told Stalin that he had become much “more bloodthirsty in regard to the Germans than he had been a year ago,”

³⁰¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorandum to the Secretary of State, September 29 and October 20, 1944; Cordell Hull memorandum for Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 29, 1944; Second Plenary Meeting, February 5, 1945, Livadia Palace; and Harry Hopkins note to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 5, 1945, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 155-8, 620, and 634.

Roosevelt told Stalin that he hoped he would repeat the earlier toast that he proposed “to the execution of 50,000 officers of the German Army.”³⁰²

In addition to exclusion of army officers, Roosevelt believed that it might take a substantial period of time to counter the effects of militarism on the German people. Roosevelt declared “when Hitler and the Nazis go out, the Prussian military clique must go with them. The war breeding gang of militarists must be rooted out of Germany – and out of Japan – if we are to have any real assurance of future peace.”³⁰³ He believed extensive controls should be maintained over communications systems, the German press, and educational system.³⁰⁴ Recalling his boyhood in Germany when “school children were not in uniform, [and] did not march all the time,” Roosevelt advocated education reforms to eliminate school uniforms and children being “taught to march.” In such a way, he thought the German people could reverse fifty years of gradual militarization. One of the key concerns in Roosevelt’s thinking was that after the war the German people had to acknowledge that they had been beaten if they were to reject the forces of reaction and begin the process of moving “in a non-militaristic method.”³⁰⁵ The total occupation of Germany was one way he intended to make the reality of defeat clear

³⁰² Roosevelt-Stalin Meeting, February 4, 1945, Livadia Palace, Bohlen Minutes, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 571.

³⁰³ Franklin D. Roosevelt message to Congress, September 17, 1943, in The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1943: The Tide Turns, edited by Samuel I. Rosenman (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), p. 391.

³⁰⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorandum to the Secretary of State, October 20, 1944, in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 158-9.

³⁰⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt presidential press conference number 992, February 23, 1945, Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, vol. 25, 1944-1945 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), pp. 63-4.

to the German people. Earlier in the war, during an hour visiting with General Pershing, Roosevelt recalled his 1919 visit to the American sector in Germany and the incident involving the American flag flying over Ehrenbreitstein. The president recognized the need during the occupation for the German people to have a constant and visible reminder “until the last American soldier was out.”³⁰⁶ Rather than just occupying a strip of Germany up to the Rhine, Roosevelt advocated total occupation by a substantial force in the American sector alone. As early as 1943, Roosevelt told the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he “personally envisioned an occupational force of about one million United States troops.”³⁰⁷ Furthermore, while Roosevelt intended that the German people not starve or Germany become an agrarian state, he wanted to ensure that the postwar standard of living in Germany was not higher than that in the Soviet Union as a constant reminder to them of their situation.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt memorandum, May 23, 1942, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, vol. 2, 1928-1945 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), pp. 1323-5.

³⁰⁷ Minutes of a Meeting Between the President and the Chiefs of Staff on Friday, November 19, 1943, at 1500, “Minutes of Meetings of FDR with Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-1945,” Conferences, Box 29, Map Room, FDRL.

³⁰⁸ Memorandum by Lord Cherwell, September 14, 1944, in Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference at Quebec, 1944 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 343-4.

Chapter 6: Insights and Conclusions

...certain events of truly great significance to the future of civilization took place....In all countries a growing protest over the abuses of the churchly power....the imagination of thousands in Europe was on fire.... at least a handful of people were thinking in larger terms than ever before.

Franklin D. Roosevelt draft "history of the United States," 1924¹

On April 12, 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt passed away. His son Elliott assessed that his father had been a "force for progress" but that with his father's death "the modern world lost its most influential and persuasive advocate."²

Although Roosevelt also did not live to witness the surrender of Nazi Germany, by the time of his death victory in Europe was in sight. In Europe, Roosevelt's strategic vision and worldview ensured that the United States emerged from the Second World War as the victor. With the Nazi war machine destroyed, Adolph Hitler committed suicide later that month. At the same time, the Allies had a blueprint in place for how to prevent the resurgence of German militarism in the postwar period. Despite the political challenges, republican France seemed poised to rejoin the ranks of the major powers. Less than two weeks after Roosevelt's death the San Francisco Conference opened, a forum intended to turn the Dumbarton Oaks draft into the charter for the United Nations Organization. Of the visions of the future held by leaders during the Second World War, the course of

¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt's draft "history of the United States," 1924, in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, volume 2, 1905-1928 (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), p. 548.

² Elliott Roosevelt, As He Saw It (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), p. 248.

events during the 20th century has demonstrated Roosevelt's worldview to be the most enduring.

I.

As president, Franklin D. Roosevelt operated from a durable and coherent perspective and historical consciousness that had developed fully by the mid 1920s. His worldview coalesced in the 1920s as he attempted to make sense of three fundamental crises that shook his world at all levels. On the international level was what Roosevelt saw as the failure of the Paris Peace Conference and the corresponding rise of the forces of reaction both in Europe and in the United States. On the domestic scene was the repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles and Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations by the U.S. Senate. On the personal level, polio compounded the sting of Roosevelt's defeat in the election of 1920.

Rather than alter or remold Roosevelt's character, polio provided Roosevelt with a dedicated opportunity for reading and reflection insulated from the constant demands of public life or political office. He capitalized on that opportunity and sought to understand better his world, beginning to draft a history of western civilization. He also developed a proposal for a Society of Nations that had the ability to dissuade or defeat aggressor states and preserve or restore international peace while avoiding the horrors of another Western Front. The premises, perspectives, and opinions that Roosevelt reaffirmed in the 1920s derived axiomatically from his experiences, studies, and background.

Identification of the emergence and development of Roosevelt's worldview necessitates a reinterpretation of his early life, education, and family. In general, scholars have not appreciated the influence of those aspects on Roosevelt's thinking. Detailed study of those aspects allows fresh insights into Roosevelt's decisions as president and a deeper understanding of the outlook, attitudes, and perceptions from which he operated. What emerges is a portrait of Roosevelt that is different than the popular image.

Reassessment of Roosevelt's early life reveals him to have been a much more serious student than typically acknowledged. Rather than a poor student, Roosevelt was curious and engaged; he read avidly, was a skilled debater, and possessed a flair for languages. From a young age, he displayed a fascination for reading and interest in history, political events, and naval affairs. He eagerly anticipated the arrival of *Scientific American*, followed the Dreyfus Affair, read the works of Victor Hugo, and pored over the histories of Francis Parkman, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and kinsmen James Russell Soley and Theodore Roosevelt. Imbued with a sense of history reinforced by his own experiences and his family's station in society, while at Harvard he tried his hand at writing his own history and placed himself and his ancestors within a Whig framework that emphasized the steady contributions of his kinsmen to the advance of civilization since the days of Charlemagne. As his senior thesis on the role of his family attests, Roosevelt had a deep appreciation for practical history that enabled him to understand better the world, an approach consistent with the advocacy of progressive historians such as Frederick Jackson Turner.

Secure in his position as a patrician and Hudson Valley gentleman, Roosevelt's historical consciousness gave him incredible confidence. As a student, his primary

interest was not in attaining particular grades or degrees but with understanding his world. Beyond fleeting personal satisfaction, grades and academic achievements did not factor prominently in Roosevelt's genteel world. He demonstrated above-average potential at Groton in history and languages, excelling in Latin, French, and German. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard in only three years but elected to remain at Harvard for a fourth year as a graduate student, not to attain a degree but to take history and economics classes that interested him and to edit the *Crimson*. It is inconceivable that the position of *Crimson* editor would have been entrusted to a poor student.

Roosevelt's reading and studies complemented his experiences in the Wilson administration and honed his ability to think strategically. In the White House, Roosevelt demonstrated substantial strategic skills that complemented his more commonly acclaimed political acumen. Veteran Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson observed that Roosevelt possessed "sound strategic instincts." Stimson, however, believed that because Roosevelt had such exceptional instincts that he had a tendency to operate from intuition and had a "weakness for snap decisions."³ Roosevelt remained an intuitive, visceral statesman and decision-maker who did not question his fundamental assumptions.

II.

Reassessment of Roosevelt's thinking allows a reinterpretation of his actions and motives prior to United States entry into the European War. Rather than being either an isolationist or an interventionist, it becomes evident that Roosevelt embodied both of

³ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 414.

those impulses into a coherent approach. He sought to influence events in Europe and bring about the demise of Hitler's regime without resorting to formal belligerency on the part of the United States or the need to dispatch another AEF to fight on the continent of Europe.

Those impulses persisted in his strategy after the United States entered the war in December 1941, and Roosevelt pursued the defeat of Nazi Germany through a peripheral strategy that rested on concerted Allied application of blockade, sanctions, and air power and was intended to avoid German strength. Looking for the battlefield setback that would trigger a German collapse as had happened in the autumn of 1918, Roosevelt supported Allied expeditions on the periphery, initially in North Africa and subsequently in Sicily. With the staggering cost of the Western Front in his consciousness, he consistently sought to eliminate German militarism but at the least possible human cost to the United States.

Roosevelt's worldview, however, had fundamental implications for how the United States waged World War II and the course the war took. Because of Roosevelt's strategic approach, the United States faced major wartime challenges. Although initially intended to be of relatively short duration until Germany collapsed, the blockade lasted for several more years, intensifying suffering on the continent of Europe. The persistence of Hitler's government also meant that the humanitarian crisis caused by the blockade deepened across Europe as the war continued, significantly beyond the six months to a year that many in the Roosevelt administration anticipated. Far from overstretched and on the verge of collapse, the German economy did not mobilize fully until 1942.⁴ The

⁴ Faced with a new war in early 1942, Hitler directed vast changes to Nazi economic policy and increases in the size of the German army. With Hitler's approval, between

combination of aid to the Allies and a strategy of hemispheric defense for the U.S. Army guaranteed that no combat ready AEF was ready and possessed the capability to directly attack German power. Consequently, when Anglo-American victories in North Africa and Sicily were insufficient to cause the elusive crack up of Germany, the United States had to resort to dispatching another AEF to fight on the continent of Europe.

Meanwhile, unfettered by any direct attack, Hitler moved Germany to a wartime footing, fortified the Atlantic defenses, and launched his “final solution” to exterminate the peoples he considered inferior. In addition, while Roosevelt’s policy of “unconditional surrender” may have prolonged the war and bolstered the fighting spirit of the German people as critics argued at the time, it undercut the resistance against Hitler inside the German army and foreign office, leaving resistance members with little prospect for ultimate success even in the event their attempts on Hitler’s life succeeded. Although Roosevelt wanted to avoid the error of the Great War and refused to condone

January and May, Armaments Minister Fritz Todt and his successor Albert Speer introduced centralized control measures and increased the proportion of the German gross national product dedicated to military output. In February, Hitler ordered full wartime mobilization of Germany industry. Prior to that, the German economy had produced both guns and butter, armaments and consumer products, due to Hitler’s insistence that military production should not lower the standard of living for the German people or limit the output of consumer goods. During the first two years of the war, Hitler had allowed Germany to avoid the strain of total war with an economy that was semi-mobilized. Gordon Craig, The Ordeal of Total War, 1939-1945 (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 45-7, 61-5. During a meeting with Armaments Minister Albert Speer on February 19, Hitler directed that “peace-time planning and developments in all firms be stopped immediately.” Hitler emphasized “that there will be time for this after the war” but threatened “heavy penalties” against industrialists who in any “way attempt, in the organization of their factories, to take account of peace-time purposes at this stage.” Record of Albert Speer’s discussion with Hitler, February 19, 1942, 192/405459, National Archives Microcopy No. T-73, Record for the Reich Ministry for Armaments and War Production (Reichministerium für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion), Record Group 242, National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, National Archives. In 1941, German armaments production accounted for only 16 percent of German industrial production, rising to 22 percent in 1942, 31 percent in 1943, and 40 percent in 1944. John Keegan, The Second World War (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 211.

any negotiated peace, the cold shoulder that his administration gave the members of the German resistance against Hitler seems particularly tragic and unsettling.

Roosevelt's unwavering self-confidence clearly contributed to his inability to reexamine his assumptions, perceptions, and attitudes. Although the demands of Depression-era and wartime leadership gave Roosevelt little opportunity for introspection as president, he showed little inclination to do so. Rather than alter his perspective or question his opinions, he tended to gloss over any reports or circumstances that contradicted his worldview. For instance, although the absence of a popular revolt in Germany against Hitler seemed to present a quandary for Roosevelt's nostalgic image, he did not question his conception of a liberal *Volk* in Germany. He could not imagine the Nazi regime enjoying enthusiastic popular support. Roosevelt, instead, persisted in his anticipation of the popular collapse of Hitler's regime well into the Second World War.

Because he operated from a historical consciousness that equated individuals and groups in the present with others in the past, Roosevelt never fully grasped or understood the forces at work in 20th century Europe. Tragically, during the late 1930s and throughout the Second World War Roosevelt's perspective of National Socialism was flawed and incorrect. Presuming that nothing was really new, he did not distinguish between Hitler's fascist National Socialist regime and Kaiser Wilhelm's government during the Great War, believing them both under the control of Prussian conservatism and militarism: major industrialists, the *Junkertum*, and the German general staff. Consequently, Roosevelt chose to ignore appeals from the courageous opposition against Hitler in the German army and foreign office, having equated them with Hitler or his aims.

Roosevelt's dealings with French *général*s suffered from a similar disposition to regard them as manifestations of the forces of reaction not representative of the true France. By equating conditions in Europe in 1940 with those in 1918, Roosevelt was unable to appreciate the situation in France in May and June 1940. Despite the lack of any tangible United States assistance during the Battle of France, Roosevelt believed that rhetoric could keep the French in the war. Because he envisioned in June 1940 that the German collapse was a matter of weeks away, Roosevelt perceived the armistice ending the Battle of France as the work of German subversion abetted by French reactionaries.

Roosevelt's anticipation of an imminent German collapse contributed to his visceral rejection of *Maréchal* Philippe Pétain's government and his treatment of France as an enemy even before the end of the Third Republic and the establishment of the French State. The creation of the authoritarian French State in Vichy merely served to confirm Roosevelt's views, he equated the traditionalist and authoritarian Vichy state with the fascism in Nazi Germany.⁵ Administration distrust of Vichy and French *général*s precluded any serious consideration of landings in southern France in late 1942 and hampered efforts to enlist French forces in North Africa, assistance that might have forestalled the German seizure of Tunisia. Meanwhile, Roosevelt's distrust of de Gaulle and desire to supplant him left an enduring cloud over Franco-American relations.

Relations between the Roosevelt administration and Charles de Gaulle's Free French organization suffered because of Roosevelt's *Dreyfusard* suspicions of the *général*. De Gaulle's apparent desire to preserve the French colonial empire, as evidenced by his

⁵ Robert O. Paxton assesses that the French State that replaced the parliamentary Third Republic in 1940 was "certainly not fascist." Paxton notes that only in the final days of the war did some pre-war French fascists find positions in the Vichy government. Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), pp. 112-3, 218.

efforts in the French colonies in central Africa, the Middle East, Dakar, and Indochina, his patronage from the French Right, and his apparent political ambition certainly reinforced Roosevelt's predisposition to see de Gaulle as a manifestation of the forces of reaction in France. Having rejected de Gaulle, Roosevelt entertained thoughts of enticing more acceptable French *général*s back into the war on the side of the Allies in North Africa with the hope of restoring the Allied coalition that had proven victorious on the Western Front in 1918.

In the United States, furthermore, Roosevelt did not think the American people would be able to grasp the nuances of his strategic course. Cautious about not getting ahead of public opinion, he consciously neglected to educate or fully inform the public what he was attempting to do with respect to the European War. Outside of his immediate circle of advisors, Roosevelt made no dedicated effort to share his strategy for bringing the worldview contained in his Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter to fruition. Consequently, United States entry into the war in December 1941 fueled the voice of Roosevelt's critics unable to reconcile the president's words with his actions, criticism that continues to influence popular views of United States entry into the Second World War. Although Roosevelt's strategic concept remained consistent and he explained his goals in private, he made no concerted effort to share his blueprint with the American public. After laying out his concept to the Senate Military Affairs Committee in January 1939, he cautioned his audience against making any public statements, believing that "the country would not understand" the strategy and how it might achieve his seemingly

contradictory goals.⁶ Roosevelt resisted prodding to come out publicly, such as the appeal by his old Harvard professor Roger B. Merriman “to give this poor propaganda bewildered people a lead.”⁷

In the balance, nonetheless, it is clear that Roosevelt and his worldview provided consistently focused and enduring strategic direction for the United States in a victorious global war against Adolph Hitler’s designs. Although weary upon his return from Yalta, Roosevelt proudly proclaimed to his wife, “It’s been a global war, and we’ve already started making it a global peace.”⁸ Throughout his tenure in the White House, Roosevelt operated from a coherent worldview and a corresponding drive to be an agent of progressive reform. He patterned his actions on Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson and strove not to repeat the mistakes that Wilson, in particular, had made. Even though he deferred many political decisions and details about the future to the postwar peace conference, his desire to reach wartime agreement between the great powers on major questions arguably prevented the reoccurrence of some of the problems that had undermined Woodrow Wilson’s efforts to craft an enduring peace. At the same time, Roosevelt established a powerful legacy for the postwar world, the foundation of enduring security in Western Europe, and a mechanism for international cooperation.

⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, January 31, 1939, Special Conferences, PPF 1P, President’s Personal File, FDRL.

⁷ Roger B. Merriman to Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 6, 1941, “MERRIMAN, ROGER B.,” PPF 962, President’s Personal File, FDRL.

⁸ Elliott Roosevelt, As He Saw It (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), p. 246.

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