

The Four Policemen and Postwar Planning, 1943-1945: The Collision of Realist and Idealist Perspectives

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The following article is a copy of the undergraduate thesis Brian wrote at Marist College in the fall of 2002. My primary source research was conducted at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, New York. While he feels it to be a respectable paper, he is a year wiser and more experienced now and thus recognizes certain aspects which could be stronger. This was a paper written between two disciplines, with the approaches of both history and political science at play. During the writing process he was juggling the degree to which the paper should be placed in the context of foreign policy ideologies and how much to rely on post-World War II events to illuminate the points I was making. He would welcome any feedback, as the myriad pieces of the Roosevelt administration's foreign policy continue to hold his interest, meaning that he may return to this or related projects as his historical inquiries continue.

The presidential administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt is largely judged by the work they undertook on two issues, one domestic and one international. The former pertains to the Great Depression and their responses to it, particularly the legislation that made up the New Deal. The latter is the administration's approach to foreign policy during what many would consider the most turbulent era in modern global history. While much has been written on American foreign policy during World War II, one particular

aspect whose far-reaching implications are worth examining is the development of postwar plans and the complications faced in establishing international accord on how to approach postwar security. What kind of organization would be in place to allow for a multilateral response to threats, such as invasions and internal rebellions? What would be the diplomatic and military response to hostile developments? What nations would take the lead in such an organization? Would traditional “great powers” be in charge, or would smaller nations hold equal influence? By examining the flow of documents on these issues between officials in Roosevelt’s administration and placing them within the framework illustrated by assorted secondary sources, one gains a greater insight into the diplomatic dynamics involved in this postwar planning process – one which tends to be glossed over in broader analyses of Roosevelt’s foreign policy. Additionally, ideology must be examined in order to understand not only the mindset under which the leaders of the world powers were operating, but the paradigms of realism and idealism which were interwoven throughout the postwar planning stages.

The issue of postwar security and organization became a greater focus as World War II progressed, meaning that the period stretching from late 1943 through 1945 featured most of the crucial decision-making. However, President Roosevelt was keenly aware of the significance the issue would take only a month into America’s direct involvement in World War II. In January 1942, he addressed a letter to Congress regarding a number of matters pertaining to the United States’ war effort. He touched upon postwar planning in this letter, remarking that “In any event, there must be plans in advance of action, and those plans must be carefully coordinated and made consistent with the central purpose of the nation, by the Executive, the Congress, and the leaders of our economic and civil life.”¹

This was a highlight of the early portion of the postwar planning effort, but the process was met with difficulty. Assistant Solicitor General Oscar Cox, in a memo to presidential assistant Harry Hopkins, declared that “There seems to be considerable ferment in Congress on postwar planning...” He went on to point out that with a half-dozen Congressional committees all conducting simultaneous investigations, all that could be expected was confusion amongst the public and a great deal of time-wasting in keeping officials busy trying to stay informed of each others’ actions. He called for a more flexible approach, proposing a commission consisting of four senators, four representatives from the House, and four appointees of the President. This, Cox felt, would keep Congress involved and informed via reports on the single committee’s activities. He hoped to give Congress greater interest in the international arrangements that were “essential to an enduring peace.” These reports could also be used to educate the public.²

In the summer of 1943, foreign policy and postwar planning were among the leading issues looming for the following year's presidential campaign. It was clear that Roosevelt and his administration needed to beat the Republican Party's leadership to drafting a postwar policy statement. It was felt that the Democrats would lose the foreign policy issue in the campaign if the Republicans were allowed to present the first plan for maintaining peace in the postwar era. Needing to make a pronouncement of some kind regarding a peacekeeping program, the Roosevelt administration set about drafting a document which would declare the Allies to be committed towards cooperative action for peace. As they saw it at this time, such a statement would consist of a "Four-Power Declaration" between the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China, with postwar regional councils in place to provide these nations with defined spheres of influence as opposed to a worldwide peace organization. It was intended that this program would be announced as a declaration so as to bypass Senate approval; this was a political move designed to ensure that the declaration was made as quickly as Roosevelt needed it to be, rather than getting bogged down in a time-consuming debate within the Senate. Given that the Democrats held the majority in the Senate at this time, there was little question that the program would pass, but time was of the essence.³

The Four-Powers Declaration pledged continued cooperation for multilateral establishment and maintenance of postwar peace and security, but without the immediate creation of a permanent international peacekeeping body. This was done to protect American sovereignty, in the wake of the failure of the League of Nations: concerns over the preservation of American self-determination in such an organization helped prevent the Senate from ratifying the United States' entrance into the League, leaving it devoid of the clout provided by American participation. However, the Declaration did promise to create such an organization as soon as was possible and practical. The Declaration went on to promise that the administration and its allies would create a commission which would determine the forces required to deal with threats to peace, as opposed to a permanent international police force, of which the Americans were not in favor. The program, as presented at this time, also attempted to gain a Soviet pledge that they would not annex further territories nor deploy military forces in other states without joint consultation and agreement. It did not make any statements regarding one of Roosevelt's acknowledged beliefs: that an end to colonial holdings would promote global peace by preventing struggles for independence in the postwar era. He wanted to establish international trusteeships in current colonies to prepare them for eventual self-rule.⁴ This was an aim he had previously stated in dialogues with Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov in June of 1942. It was in this meeting that he introduced to Molotov the idea of placing chief maintenance of postwar peace in the hands of three or four major powers – the U.S., Britain, Russia, and possibly China.

The tact taken by this Declaration was in line with a series of documents dispatched from the State Department's Breckinridge Long in October 1943 to the Honorable Stephen Early. Included within these assorted documents was a list of the "American Leaders' Ten Foundations For Peace," along with a number of quotations from high-ranking American officials offering commentary on each of the Foundations. Numbers 9 and 10 on the list were particularly important to the idea of a postwar alliance between the leading powers. Item 9 stated as a goal "International Organization on a wide and voluntary basis", while Item 10 proffered "Special postwar cooperation by the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China." The introduction to this collection of goals and views touches upon the ideological division still present within the Roosevelt administration at this time. Long states that the conflict between isolationism and internationalism pervaded each aspect of American foreign policy as the decision makers involved had yet to arrive at a consensus as to whether America should embrace the ideals of international cooperation, or attempt to hold on to the separation from such matters that had defined the nation's global role since the conclusion of World War I.⁵

The political figures quoted in Long's memorandum range from past and present ambassadors, governors, senators, representatives, and presidents, to judges and professors. Herbert Hoover and a former American ambassador, Hugh S. Gibson,⁶ are quoted as proposing a two-tier system of international organization. The first agency would serve "solely to apply pacific means to controversies" and would not be equipped to undertake military action. The second tier would come into play should attempts at pacific settlement fall short. It would be empowered to "step in and apply the force."⁷ Such a proposal would give teeth to a postwar peacekeeping organization without making militant action the foremost focus. In addition to addressing the balance of diplomacy and force, a number of commentators on the Ten Foundations called for an international court to be established which would determine courses of action in the cases of dispute over international law. Cordell Hull, former Minnesota Governor Harold Stassen, and Vice President Wallace each made statements to this effect in the Long collection.

Tentative outlines of an organization "supplying force to maintain peace" were drafted during this time period, with the opening stipulation that the organization was only a "first international organization for peace." These drafts stated that such an entity would not attempt to police the entire world, instead focusing only on enemy nations and others desiring its protection.⁸ These early drafts focused almost entirely on drawing distinctions between those who would be the "good guys" and those who would be the "bad guys": the chief points pertain to disarmament, punishment, and deterrence for enemy states while seeking to maintain authority and autonomous military decision making for those states which would emerge victorious in World War II.

Permanent disarmament of enemy nations is outlined, as is “quick punishment” of any individual nations which violate terms of peace. The draft mandates that the international force be both “powerful and friendly” so as to maintain peace without necessarily having to intimidate opponents diplomatically. However, a force powerful enough to ensure peace would carry with it some effects of intimidation. The so-called “Peace Council” force would be selected by the victorious nations with those victors remaining militarily armed for as long “as they see fit”. Strong inducements would be made to other European nations to disarm.⁹ From this wording, one might think that the Peace Council’s ultimate goal would be to leave only a small group of elite nations armed – with those nations to be determined by the winners of the war, leaving the defeated without say in the upkeep of their forces and armaments. Long declares that this approach concentrates on the establishment of peace by securing it independently of questions of boundaries, minorities, trade, colonies, and forms of government, though it “promotes the settlement of all such questions.” The idea is that the Peace Council enforces the peace that enables agreements on these matters to be carried out.

Very often though, those questions of sovereignty, interaction, and authority are precisely the roots of the international conflicts which the Peace Council seeks to halt. It seems counter-intuitive to state conflict resolution as an organization’s main goal rather than aiming to prevent such conflicts in the first place by providing diplomatic and judicial support when issues arrive – before they erupt in armed conflict. It also does not presume to administer peace between the four powers which comprise the Peace Council – the oft-associated China, Great Britain, Soviet Union, and the United States. The other American states (that is, Latin America and the Caribbean) likewise were not to be “forced” into keeping peace amongst themselves, though the organization was intended to facilitate this stability.

Long’s memorandum takes care to point out the shortcomings of the proposed organization’s predecessor, the League of Nations. It is stated that the basic measures for peace, as specified in the Long collection, were not present in the League or any other world organization. Despite their absence in those structures, he argues that these principles have a historic precedent set by the American people through their actions under the Constitution for over 150 years. He argues that a Peace Council with its own armed forces is advisable and would be far more effective than the League’s approach, in which before the League could use its collective forces, individual countries had to take separate actions of approval. As Long puts it, “they failed collectively and separately.” A final key point in the summary of proposals presented in this memo was that of a new international court which would replace the League of Nation’s World Court. The latter had authorization only to deal with legal disputes; the new court would be enabled to handle disputes which were fueled by politics and other factors.¹⁰

In total, Long concludes that these stated goals point toward requiring a police force “far smaller than any one of the four supporting states and yet overwhelmingly large enough to maintain peace where it is most needed.”¹¹ This indicates a need for early intervention in political aggressor states to prevent their military buildup from rendering the police force’s numbers less than overwhelming. He goes on to state that such a force would not take powers from the United States and the other three states; rather it would add to them.

The ability to even undertake such proposals and debates was facilitated significantly by the distinct changes in American public opinion as the war progressed. Greater approval of their country’s involvement in international affairs was indicated by the results of three Gallup Poll surveys conducted during a five-year stretch from 1937 to 1942. In October 1937, only 33% of American voters surveyed favored U.S. participation in a League-type organization. By July 1941, amidst major Allied struggles in Europe and continued expansion by the Japanese in the Far East, that number rose to 50%. Finally, in July of 1942, with the United States now at war in two continents, 73% favored America’s involvement in an international peacekeeping body. The former isolationist majority in American had been transformed in a rapid swell of internationalism. Polls results further show that Republican opposition to such participation declined at a nearly identical rate during this stretch.¹²

The Declaration was clearly fueled by concerns regarding the domestic campaign trail, but Churchill endorsed the proposal once Roosevelt explained that final decisions on world security would not be influenced by American domestic pressure.¹³ Since it was exactly that pressure which provided at least some of the impetus for the Four-Power concept in the first place, one can assume that Roosevelt sought to take American public opinion into consideration on matters of world security, but that ultimately the decision-making on these matters would occur independent of domestic pressure. Meanwhile, the Russians saw first priority at this time as being the shortening of the war with Germany and developing a cross-channel attack. Roosevelt figured that the Soviets wished to avoid fully embracing any preliminary pact that involved China, as Japan could see this as an affront. Churchill on the other hand presumed that the Russians (like himself) simply wished to avoid acknowledging China as a great power.

Roosevelt’s approach to questions involving the Soviet Union would be of the utmost importance at this time. He had a number of beliefs which he hoped to promote, and eventually turn into reality, in his interactions with Russian officials. The president’s great dream was to turn the wartime coalition of the U.S., Britain, and Russia into a “family circle” of sorts in peacetime.¹⁴ In his ideal world, they would remain politically and economically allied, leading the postwar reconstruction efforts while jointly maintaining international security via their military presence. To bring this about,

Roosevelt needed to convince the Soviets that their interests would not be threatened – in other words, that Russia would play a highly influential role in postwar Europe.

On the home front however, Roosevelt was swimming upstream against a public which generally preferred to go it alone when American demands were not met; this meant that any agreements with Stalin which were seen by the American public as compromising national interests would be met with great disapproval.¹⁵ It was clear to Roosevelt that the United States had to formally cooperate in Europe's postwar transition; the harsh precedent for what could happen if the United States failed to play a leading role had been set in 1919. The expectation now was that any number of European states might gravitate towards Russia if America didn't play a hands-on role. Here again though, there existed a very fine line between America's role and Stalin's perception of a threat to Russian interests.

Roosevelt was further influenced by the so-called Bullitt thesis: William Bullitt, who had been the first American ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1933 to 1936, asserted that the Soviet government was determined to dominate all of Europe via force of arms or force of Communist propaganda. In a letter he wrote to Roosevelt on January 29, 1943, Bullitt mentioned that the U.S. would never again possess the level of influence over Britain and Russia that they had at this time: "Today they are dependent on us for their lives." He predicted that once Germany was defeated, the American negotiating strength would deteriorate greatly. While still in this favorable bargaining position, he stated, an invitation should be extended to Stalin to visit the President and thus commence negotiations. Bullitt saw that only the arrival of American and British troops in Eastern Europe could prevent Russia's "Red Army" from taking hold on the continent.

The desire to win Russian endorsement of a Four-Power agreement committing the United States, Great Britain, Soviet Union, and China to cooperate in the establishment of a postwar peace and security would become Roosevelt's main focus for the October 1943 meeting of foreign ministers in Moscow. There, American Secretary of State Cordell Hull, British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden and Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov met to discuss matters of postwar policy. Roosevelt dispatched Hull with a specific agenda: collective security must be advocated, since Congressional Republicans sought to take over the issue for the upcoming campaign. Despite objections by U.S. Ambassador to Russia W. Averill Harriman, Roosevelt provided Hull with orders to insist upon the inclusion of China as one of the four powers – this also despite Russia's objections. Molotov resisted at first, but after several days of hard-line negotiation, Hull was able to gain his agreement to China's participation as a signatory. Prior to Hull's push, Molotov wouldn't even allow the matter on the agenda. Later in the conference, Hull scored another victory by gaining a Russian promise that they would join the fight against Japan unconditionally upon securing victory in Germany. Harriman felt, even

after the conference, that Hull would have been wiser to use his “considerable leverage with the Russians” to hammer out agreements preserving the independence of Poland and other nations in Eastern and Central Europe. Hull flatly stated that matters of independence were not among the “main issues” which required his immediate focus.¹⁶

Hull’s success at the Moscow Conference, or lack thereof in the eyes of Harriman, moved the administration ahead a step in their postwar planning. They now needed to quickly increase support in Congress and amongst the public for their postwar program. To this end, Roosevelt made Hull his leading liaison to Congress and the public regarding the President’s proposal for a peacekeeping organization. Additionally, Hull’s success in dealing with Stalin and the Soviets increased expectations both in Washington and across the nation. Seeking to capitalize on America’s receptiveness and the Russians’ apparent willingness to negotiate fruitfully, Roosevelt set off for a major conference in Tehran, Iran. Prior to this, he met with Churchill, Chiang Kai-shek, and Madame Chiang in Cairo. It was an opportunity for the President to develop East Asian policy in direct consultation with Chiang. His immediate goal was trying to persuade Chiang to sanction further training of forces and to commit them to the fight against the Japanese.¹⁷

British and American objectives at this time in the East Asian/Pacific region differed more so than on matters of Europe and the Mediterranean. The chief British postwar aim during this period was to regain sovereignty over their colonies in the region, from Burma to Hong Kong. Churchill and the British assumed that America wished to use her (supposed) ideology of anti-colonialism to replace the British Empire as the leading presence in the region: through a stronger China, America could oust the British and establish their own economic dominance. To that end, several leading American firms had created a China-America council in October 1943 and had begun placing themselves in a position of advantage over British rivals.

While Roosevelt did not want to make China a major front in the war, as it would have been strategically inadvisable to do so, he needed troops there to keep the Japanese forces occupied. A lessening of Chiang’s fight in China would allow Japan to divert needed troops to other fronts where they could do more damage to advancing American forces. Additionally, Roosevelt recognized the blow that would come to Allied morale with Chinese defeat. The President’s concern with the Chinese was especially profound with regards to the home front: American public opinion saw China as a “favorite ally” and essentially demanded that America support Chiang’s fight against the Communists; he and his troops were seen as defenders of freedom and democracy. As a victim rather than instigator of political power struggles, China’s nationalists were seen as a natural democratic ally. A 1944 poll showed that 63% of Americans included China with Britain, Russia, and the United States when asked which countries they felt should have the greatest say in a postwar international organization. To show less than the fullest support

for China would be seen in America as an abandonment of principle. The United States was bound to support those who would fight for the democratic ideals held dear by many Americans.

The other factor weighing significantly in Roosevelt's China equations was that of postwar occupation and trusteeships. His plan was to use the ever-growing Chinese state as an equalizer to Russian power in the Far East. He told Eden in 1942 that the Chinese could be depended on to side with the United States in any serious policy conflict with Russia. The assumption then was that they would support the U.S. in trusteeships in Korea and Japan, where it was expected that Russia would have some sway in order to maintain regional stability. Additionally, Roosevelt wished to publicize interracial cooperation between East and West, so as to combat anti-white sentiment in the Far East, as promoted by the Japanese.¹⁸ In a further dose of political realism, Roosevelt was looking out for future American interests in the region, which would be inhibited by a feeling of suspicion or outright opposition to the United States.

With this in mind, Roosevelt went out of his way to make Chiang feel as though he were a chief participant in the war. At the ARCADIA Conference in Washington, D.C., he persuaded the British to make Chiang Supreme Commander of the United Powers in China, Thailand, and Indochina, and to establish joint planning staff in Chungking so as to give Chiang a role in decision-making for the Asian theater. Roosevelt also established links between Chiang and other Allied headquarters in India and the southwest Pacific. To provide greater prestige to Chiang's military operations, General Joe Stilwell was assigned to China to act as Chiang's chief of staff. He was appointed Commander of U.S. Army forces in China, Burma, and India.¹⁹

These determinations all came to the consternation of Winston Churchill. He was bothered by the strong and positive approach that Roosevelt took towards China, finding the importance placed by America's leaders on the Asian state to be strangely disproportionate. Churchill went so far as to say that America looked upon the Chinese army as superior to that of Russia and placed them on an almost even keel with the British. The prime minister felt, and stated as much to the president, that Chinese military power was overestimated by American leaders. Roosevelt countered by stating that China's huge population and economic growth indicated great postwar potential. He declared that an alliance with China "will be very useful twenty-five or fifty years hence," but he recognized China's limited ability for military and naval contributions in the short term. At that time, however, Churchill was more inclined to discuss current problems. China's potential as a world leader in the centuries to come was not a priority for the prime minister at this time.

Roosevelt recognized China's limitations to a greater extent than Churchill seemed to realize. He was acting primarily out of a desire to encourage the Chinese and

their troops to continue holding off the Japanese and to satisfy the widespread public opinion in America that the Chinese should be a major player in world affairs.²⁰ The Chinese would not be given much real power, but rather a number of nominal recognitions and enough of a voice to maintain sufficient presence to please themselves and their American supporters. As Dallek states, “It was all shadow and no substance.”

Chiang and his generals caused problems during the Cairo negotiations. They developed a tendency for agreeing to proposals, then quickly taking back their agreement to demand more supplies. The President, fueled by a sometimes idealistic view of the nation in question, declared that China should immediately participate on terms of equality in the mechanism and decisions of the Four Powers. He proposed that China would take the lead in occupying Japan, as the peacekeeping leader for the Asian sector. However, when he started to inquire of Chiang about his opinions regarding the fundamentals of such an occupation, such as whether the general felt that the emperor should be removed, Chiang stated that he didn't think China was equipped to occupy Japan. This was probably true from a military standpoint, but it was vital that China prove herself worthy of inclusion in the Four Powers in order to gain greater approval as such by Britain and Russia. Taking the lead role in occupying Japan after her eventual military defeat would surely boost China's reputation as a legitimate power. It is worth noting that despite his statement that China would fully function as one of the “Big Four,” Roosevelt refused to allow Chinese representatives in the discussions between the chiefs of staff. Regardless, Roosevelt had clearly intended that the Chinese be used by the Americans as prime players in maintaining an American-led peace in the Pacific.

It is intriguing to note that in reports published by the State Department's Division of Special Research, several Asian (often specifically Chinese) writers and thinkers are called upon for their ideas on the postwar future of the Asian continent. Sumner Welles' portfolio of Division of Special Research reports on postwar planning includes an essay from writer and philosopher Lin Yutang, in which he criticizes the “amoral” approach of Western scholarship to human studies. Dr. Sun Fo contributes a piece entitled “Treaty Terms Regarding Japan: A Chinese View.” Also included is a lengthy report called “The Future of Asia,” featuring references to a long list of East and South Asian writers and Westerners knowledgeable in the area, such as Pearl S. Buck. “China's Plans For The Future” examines various economic and political issues facing that nation in the postwar era.²¹ The inclusion of an Asian perspective, particularly with regards to terms of the eventual treaty with Japan, indicates the State Department's willingness to consider the ideas of the Chinese despite the controversy over whether they should indeed be considered a fourth world power with a good deal of say in the development of postwar Asia. Roosevelt, at times, would waver in his approach to the Chinese in this respect.

Continuing on to the Tehran Conference, the Americans approached the meeting as a chance to gain their ends by being extremely open and generous with the Russians. Churchill remained dismayed at this notion; maintaining his opposition to yielding any ground to his Russian ally of circumstance. By this point the difference in ideology between the president and prime minister had become clear: at the Quebec conference of August 1943, a precursor to the Tehran meeting, Roosevelt declared that he and Stalin were realists, while Churchill was overly idealistic. As such, he felt he had a firm understanding of what Stalin, fueled by the realism-oriented priorities of ensuring his state's survival and continued expansion rather than long-term cooperation, would demand – and Roosevelt knew what he was willing to concede.

He came to the meeting with several hopes: first, that so-called “Russian intervention” in Europe would not be “too harsh.” In other words, Roosevelt was hoping that when the time came for the Soviet Union to make further moves to expand their sphere of influence westward into Europe, it could take place without armed conflict, oppression, and bloodshed. Second, he hoped that Stalin could be convinced not to annex lands beyond a certain point; he considered Poland, Bessarabia, Finland, and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to essentially be gone to the Soviets at this time. He expected that Austria, Hungary and Croatia would become Soviet protectorates, but that beyond that the rest of Eastern Europe might be able to escape Soviet domination. Roosevelt had decided that it would facilitate further negotiations if these states which he already assumed to be headed for Russian control to be “yielded gracefully” – nothing could be done to prevent their annexation or satellite status. Lastly, he hoped, quite optimistically, that in ten to twenty years European influences would lead to a lessening of the Soviet regime's harshness. He recognized the strong Russian economy, to the point of realizing that the Americans and British could not fight the Russians in the future due to their massive industrial production.²²

On his arrival in Tehran, Roosevelt promptly went about courting Stalin, stating his wish that he could ease pressure on the Soviets by removing the thirty to forty German divisions on the Eastern front, and offering surplus vessels from the Anglo-American merchant fleet. This would be a postwar gift of sorts, one which Stalin would be hard-pressed to pass up. The Russians needed a stronger fleet, so he stated that the Soviet Union would be greatly aided – as would Soviet-American relations, which he hoped would see a significant expansion after the war.

Also at this conference, Chiang and China were spoken of, as well as France, despite the absence of their representatives from the meeting. Stalin didn't want Indochina to return to French control following the war, nor did Roosevelt: “After 100 years of French rule, its inhabitants were worse off than they had been.” The president

proposed that a trusteeship be established to prepare Indochina for independence over the next twenty to thirty years. Stalin agreed to this.²³

The Tehran talks saw some firming of military commitments regarding Operation Overlord, but once that was out of the way Roosevelt turned his focus to postwar concerns. Ambassador Harriman stated afterwards that FDR's chief political goal at Tehran was to win Stalin's support for a new international peacekeeping organization. He offered his plan to Stalin in a private conversation. The organization would consist of a worldwide body of 35 of the United Nations, which would make recommendations to deal with nonmilitary matters to an executive committee featuring the Four Powers and six other states, including one British dominion. Additionally, the "Four Policemen" would be in place to deal immediately with any threat to peace.

Stalin pointed out that such an organization, in particular the aspect of the Four Policemen, might require the stationing of Americans in Europe. Roosevelt stated that he envisaged sending only planes and ships to Europe, with England and the Soviet Union handling land armies in the case of a threat to peace. If such a threat came from a revolution or other internal developments in a small country, the quarantine method would be attempted first. Frontiers of the unstable nation would be closed and embargoes imposed. In the case of a more serious threat, the Four Powers, acting as policemen would send an ultimatum to the nation in question and if refused, would launch immediate bombardment and possibly an invasion of the threatening country.²⁴ The various drafts of this agreement did not offer any proposals as to what would occur if the aggressor nation in such a situation was one of the Four Powers,²⁵ a fact which indicates the mood of idealism exhibited at Tehran. In the spirit of the meeting, there was little inclination to worry that the alliance would be violated before Russia could become a full-fledged ally of the Western powers. As the war progressed, Roosevelt would summarize this question with the comment, "The maintenance of the moral prestige of the great powers is an essential element in any successful system of international cooperation."²⁶

Tehran represents the peak of optimism in diplomacy during World War II. Grandiose toasts were made along with touching assurances of friendship at Churchill's sixty-ninth birthday party. Much praise was given back and forth amongst the three leaders, with Churchill going so far as to call the Russian head of state "Stalin the Great." Curious for a man who earlier in his life equated Stalin with the devil, but indicative of the upswell of idealism which now fueled the war effort and the postwar process. These three leaders, at least for the time being, impressed each other enough and aided each other enough to put aside the ideological conflicts.²⁷ Stalin would not, however, offer any concrete statements regarding Soviet territorial aims following the war, as Churchill

attempted to gain from him. He would say only that “There is no need to speak at the present time about any Soviet desires, but when the time comes, we will speak.”²⁸

Following the conference, smaller nations of Europe voiced their dismay as Roosevelt’s plan for the “Four Policemen” became publicized. Stalin and Churchill had predicted this at Tehran, stating that small nations would object to the concentration of global power in the hands of just four countries. The example given was that a European state would harbor resentment over Chinese influence and control over its affairs. Hence, Stalin’s call for regional committees limited to the nations directly concerned with the area in question. Roosevelt opposed this, predicting that American public opinion, particularly in Congress, would much prefer a worldwide approach to peacekeeping rather than the establishment of regional spheres of influence.²⁹

Indeed, as word of the conference’s deliberations became public, the general argument was that the new organization provided smaller countries with little power aside from debating the issues which arose. The chief opponent was the Netherlands, led by foreign minister Elco Nicolaas Van Kleffens who addressed the issue long before it became a focal point of the Roosevelt administration. In March of 1941, he “envisaged a limited regional structure composed of the European powers bordering the Atlantic together with the United States and perhaps the other American republics.” This would exclude the Near Eastern and Central European countries.³⁰ He expressed the country’s ongoing concern in a series of messages dispatched to Biddle, the American ambassador to the Dutch government in exile, and to American Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. The Dutch statesmen called for smaller countries to participate with, not simply to be consulted by, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in their deliberations when these decisions concerned the interests of said smaller nations.

When asked by British foreign minister Eden as to whether representation by France would satisfy the Dutch government, Van Kleffens replied “definitely not”. He pointed out that he felt the Americans, in light of their own national history, would likely understand the Dutch position - as they had seceded from Great Britain on the grounds of “no taxation without representation.” Van Kleffens asserted that the Dutch government would pursue proper representation “determinedly, even stubbornly.”³¹ Van Kleffens also made public a letter of protest against the proposed arrangements for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. The minister was seeking some assurance from the United States government that the proposed setup for the UNRRA did not represent a “precedent or prototype of any international organization in the postwar period.” Welles was not pleased with this particular dispatch, mentioning that he found “it had been very unfortunate that my good friend Dr. Van Kleffens...had found it necessary to come out with a public letter of protest against the proposed [UNRRA] arrangements.”³² Earlier in the year, Van Kleffens and Welles held a conversation, the memorandum of which

indicates it to be more amicable that their situation in August, in which the Dutch minister expressed the strong commitment of his Queen, Wilhelmina, to the power of smaller nations in postwar organizations. She believed that even if the four major powers undertook joint maintenance of world peace through their coordinated military forces, the small powers should be permitted to take part in such action when for certain reasons (i.e. geographical) their services were needed. The Queen also emphasized that the Dutch would always deem it necessary to maintain some defense force in addition to what was required for maintaining domestic order.³³

In mid-1944, as a response to the concerns that the “Four Policemen” would dominate the rest of the world, Roosevelt publicly stated that indeed he was not proposing any “international or super-state” police force – international borders would still be respected in this new order. Americans generally found the basic tenets of the Four Powers concept to be agreeable enough, and thus postwar organization was eliminated as a campaign issue, with only two weeks remaining before the start of the Republican campaign’s full thrust. As it would turn out, the concept of the Four Policemen would become only a partial reality: while serving as the basis for the Security Council of the United Nations, the Policemen were not incorporated as a standing force at the ready to respond to international threats. Fifty-one nations made up the United Nations at its outset; needless to say many of these were among the smaller nations who earlier expressed misgivings regarding the strength of the four powers. The Netherlands, for its part, also became part of an organization grouping together three of Europe’s smallest states with three of its larger powers. The Netherlands, with Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Germany and Italy, formed the European Coal and Steel Community. This economic agreement came to be the groundwork for the European Union.

Henry Kissinger argues that the idea of the Four Policemen represents a compromise between Churchill’s traditional balance of power approach to international politics and the “unrestrained Wilsonianism of Roosevelt’s advisors as epitomized by Secretary of State Cordell Hull.”³⁴ Indeed, each of the three leaders focused upon in the above discussion displayed tendencies toward both the realist and idealist ends of the political spectrum. Churchill may well have striven for a realistic balance of power, but it was he who supported a large-scale international organization from the start. Roosevelt’s advisories were certainly fueled by an idealistic sense that they could succeed where Woodrow Wilson left off and establish a lasting peace in the world through the cooperation of states, large and small. Joseph Stalin’s intentions are perhaps harder to discern as he approached the situation with goals of long-term expansion. In his seemingly heartfelt pledges of friendship, one might argue that Stalin hoped to cooperate

with Britain and the United States in the postwar world and perhaps find some compromise between his ideals and theirs.

Kissinger is an appropriate man to make such an argument, given his expertise as an historian on the topic of the Concert of Europe. Comparisons have been drawn between the Concert and the Four Policemen proposal, as each was essentially based upon balance of power politics and the notion that nations would behave a certain way. Roosevelt's assumption, it would seem, was that the great powers would come to operate from a set of common political principles – specifically referred to by some as liberalism or Americanism. The Holy Alliance, established after Napoleon's near-conquest of the European continent in the early nineteenth century, was built off a common ideology designed to maintain the stability of Europe's redrawn borders and the governments within them. No power would be allowed to grow strong enough to dominate any of the others. It is argued that Roosevelt aimed for a similar balance, but his Four Powers lacked the common ideology which would allow it to work.³⁵ Britain was interested in her territorial holdings, Russia in the expansion of her political (and essentially ideological) influence in Eastern Europe, and the U.S. opposed each in her economic interests in Asia and her opposition to Russian dominance in Eastern Europe.

China meanwhile appeared to approach the topic from an entirely different perspective. The Chinese sought to establish themselves as a bona fide world power, against the better judgment (as the Western powers saw it) of Russia and Britain. At the very least they sought to maintain some influence upon affairs among their neighbors in the postwar world lest Russia and the United States dominate the trusteeships in Korea and Japan. This is not to say that in the world of the Concert of Europe the continental powers did not have individual interests in mind. However, many would argue that the leaders of those nineteenth-century states all recognized that the balance of power hinged upon a "political equilibrium"- each state's individual political goals were not to be such that they would disrupt the balance.³⁶ Territorial acquisitions would be opposed if they provided a state with too great an industrial, strategical, or population advantage; as would rapid military buildups. According to Kimball, Roosevelt seemed to be aware of this need for equilibrium, but the states which comprised the Four Policemen had goals which superceded their desire to maintain the balance of power. Once again, the collision of ideals and reality which defined the Roosevelt era is evident.

It seems fitting then that the Four Policemen concept should give birth to the security structure for an entity which continues in contemporary times to be a battleground between realist and idealist approaches: these four states, with the later addition of France under Charles de Gaulle (a man disliked by Roosevelt and Churchill but gradually included in talks as postwar planning progressed) would become the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, with the remaining

membership filled out on a rotational basis with states elected for two-year terms. The Security Council differed substantially from the Four Power Protocol despite the commonality between its five permanent members and the declared powers. Its members would vote on proposed resolutions, with the permanent member-states possessing the ability to veto any resolution put before it. Should a resolution be passed (by virtue of nine votes of approval and no vetoes from the permanent members) then the states involved would be held to its terms, which could include the threat of military action. In practice, the Security Council has at times failed to follow through on its edicts, or has failed to outline strong enough terms to force the desired result. An example now commonly cited is that of Iraq in the years since the Gulf War; seventeen United Nations resolutions have been violated in that timespan, and the terms of punishment on each occasion clearly were not sufficient to deter further violations.³⁷

The reputation of the present-day United Nations has been battered by its lack of legitimate military authority to deal with international conflicts. The obvious advantage of the Four Policemen, in terms of a deterrence factor against potential aggressor nations, is that it pre-establishes the force which will react to such aggression. In the case of the United Nations, coalition forces may be assembled, essentially on an ad-hoc basis, as they are deemed necessary. An example is the aforementioned 1991 Persian Gulf conflict, in which a U.S.-led coalition responded to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The obvious problem here is that without a predetermined force to respond to threats to the peace, nations are dependent upon the system to follow through with a sufficient and appropriate response – a system which is prone to subjective decisions by member states based upon their individual perceptions of the crisis and personal stakes in the matter, as well as to diplomatic wrangling to compel nations to arrive at certain conclusions. This gives the mechanism an almost arbitrary feeling, detracting from the near certainty of the cause and effect strategy proposed via the Four Policemen. Under the Roosevelt and Hull proposal, certain situations were outlined; for example, the outbreak of revolution within a country. This would prompt a given response from the four powers; in this case, the imposition of quarantines and embargoes. Ideally, from Roosevelt's standpoint, an agreement which included the Four Policemen concept would have been promulgated into international law, providing the construct with binding global authority.

Is there then something to be learned from the Four Policemen protocol for use in modern international law and organization? The debate over the United Nations' efficacy in conflict resolution may rage for decades to come, but those who doubt its current strength as a peacekeeping body point to the lack of a willingness to follow through on punishments for violations of its resolutions. The existence of standing protocols for following through, with force, on unmet demands may provide greater impetus for compliance on the part of violator nations. A condemnation by the United Nations

currently is just that – an acknowledgement of wrongdoing. Under protocol such as that initiated by Roosevelt, a condemnation would carry with it the likelihood of strong military action.

The question then is whether it is favorable, in the interest of world peace, to deter aggression through the existence of an at-the-ready military force, always prepared to intervene swiftly in international conflicts. At first glance this seems optimal, though it seems one could make stand an idealism-tinged argument that such a force promotes militant action: if such a force exists as a means to accomplish what diplomacy cannot, then perhaps there is a tendency to break off diplomatic efforts too soon, and to let the system take the next step. Additionally, if military authority is concentrated in the hands of a small group of nations, then those states which might be disenfranchised from that group, i.e. a modern-day Iraq or North Korea, could find themselves compelled to build up their own military forces as a counterweight to the strength of the elite. Such an arms race would defeat the purpose of an organization like the U.N. and would create at best a fragile peace. The idealist perspective comes into play here in that if one supports a United Nations without a standing military-response force, then one supports the notion that the United Nations can still be a viable peacekeeping entity, able to prevent conflict through global consensus rather than by carrying a “big stick.” This was the ideology which fueled Woodrow Wilson’s determination to create such an organization. This determination carried through to Roosevelt’s presidency, with the chief difference being that the latter appears to have been tempered in his approach. Recognizing the opposing ideologies at play, Roosevelt hoped they would eventually meld into mindsets similar enough to allow for cooperation and to avoid confrontations.³⁸

If one subscribes to the argument that militancy begets further militancy, and that the surest way to a lasting peace is to abandon the arms which would violate such a peace, then one would aim for an organization which need not rely on a military force to bring about its goals. The Four Policemen then can be seen as Roosevelt’s attempt to promote Wilsonian idealism with a firm rooting in realistic global interplay, a dynamic not fully realized by the United Nations as it now stands. This compromise of paradigms may still be applicable on the stage of modern international politics. Perhaps, with more give-and-take between larger and smaller states, Roosevelt’s concept could remain a blueprint for worldwide peacekeeping.

¹ Letter to the Congress of the United States, January 1942. From Franklin Roosevelt’s Secretary’s Files (hereafter PSF), Box 157 at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, NY. I am compelled to draw comparisons to the present day: Roosevelt, in the midst of the most widespread military conflict the world has known, was calling for us to look past the war itself and begin planning for what would follow in the war-torn regions of Europe and Asia. One can argue that American policy has since changed, as the

present Bush administration spoke of military action and regime change in Iraq without commenting to Congress or the American public on what logistical processes would follow such a conflict.

² Memorandum from Oscar Cox to Harry Hopkins, February 23, 1943. From PSF, Box 157.

³ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 419-420.

⁴ Dallek, 342.

⁵ Memorandum from Breckinridge Long for the Honorable Stephen Early, October 10, 1943. From PSF, Box 157. Hereafter cited as “Long Memo” with reference to the specific document within the collection of papers which he included in this memo.

⁶ The documents mention only an “Ambassador Gibson”, without reference to his first name. Investigating lists of American ambassadors from the era, the only Gibson I encountered was Hugh S., who undertook assignments in Belgium, Brazil, and Luxembourg between 1927 and 1938 following a pair of ministerial posts in Poland and Switzerland between 1919 and 1927.

⁷ Long Memo, *Comments and Reactions to American Leaders’ Ten Foundations For Peace*.

⁸ Long Memo, *Tentative Outline Of Organization Supplying Force To Maintain Peace*.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Department of State: Division of Social Research. *Summary of Opinion and Ideas on International Post-War Problems*. July 15, 1942. From Welles’ Papers – Postwar Foreign Policy Files 1940-1943. Box 190, Folder 01. Hereafter cited as *Summary of Opinion and Ideas on International Post-War Problems*.

¹³ Dallek, 420.

¹⁴ Warren F. Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991) 83.

¹⁵ While the American public was at this time undergoing the transition towards increased openness to involvement in a worldwide peacekeeping body, that the fact remains today that Americans prefer not to be held back from taking desired steps on the international stage. Again, an example comes from the present-day: wrangling between the U.S. and the world community over American unilateral action has raised questions of what actions a state can take with and without United Nations approval.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 95. Harriman is further said to have written in his memoirs that Hull’s “main issue” was really the Four Power Declaration – which he created with Roosevelt. Harriman essentially implies that Hull was too preoccupied with his “baby,” the Declaration, to concern himself with matters regarding the smaller nations of Europe.

¹⁷ Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1990) 477-478.

¹⁸ Kimball, 131.

¹⁹ Dallek, 328.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 329

²¹ *Summary of Opinion and Ideas on International Post-War Problems*.

²² Freidel, 479.

²³ Freidel, 481.

²⁴ A number of drafts regarding the system of the “Four Policemen” can be found in Sumner Welles’ Papers: Postwar Foreign Policy Papers – Four Powers Protocol Drafts (Box 189, Folder 02) at the FDR Library. Drafts are included from May 5, May 6, May 27, and June 6 (all 1943), demonstrating the moderate alterations which took place in the proposals’ wording over the course of that month.

²⁵ In George N. Crocker’s *Roosevelt’s Road To Russia* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959), the author states that there is no evidence of any discussion to this effect, prompting him to offer that in the eyes of Stalin, “Roosevelt’s world [must have been] a phantasmagoria. He encouraged the delusion and was quite willing to be a policeman.”

²⁶ Kimball, 98.

²⁷ That being said, it is important to note the incident which took place at dinner on the second evening at Tehran. Freidel (page 485) describes the “macabre” teasing of Churchill at times by Stalin, who at one point comments that fifty thousand Germans must be killed. Churchill protests angrily at this “butchery in cold blood”. Amusingly, Roosevelt offers the compromise that only forty-nine thousand Germans be killed,

prompting Churchill to leave the room with Stalin following. He returns, embracing Stalin, after the latter's assurance that he was only joking.

²⁸ Freidel, 486.

²⁹ Dallek, 435.

³⁰ Memorandum of Conversation: March 20, 1941. From Sumner Welles' Papers at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library.

³¹ Telegraph from Ambassador Biddle (U.S. ambassador to the Dutch government in exile), November 3, 1943, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States of America: 1943, Volume I*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 803-804.

³² Memorandum of Conversation: August 13, 1943. From Welles' Papers.

³³ Memorandum of Conversation: June 23, 1943. From Welles' Papers.

³⁴ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 397.

³⁵ Kimball, 103. The author makes reference to a number of sources in his notes regarding this topic: among those attributed to the development of the article are Paul Schroeder, Steven Miner, Ian Clark, Michael Howard, Gordon A. Craig, and Alexander L. George.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

³⁷ While it may be a historical stretch to connect decisions of 1945 with those of the 1990s and early twenty-first century, it is pertinent to examine the modern-day fallout from those decisions. It will be relevant as this work progresses, as I will pose the question of the potential efficacy of a Four Policemen-type concept in contemporary international organization.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.