

ENCLOSURE IN No. 1

Memorandum by Mr. Balfour [British Ambassador in Washington]

WASHINGTON, 28 November 1945

Analysis of the present attitude of the United States towards world affairs

Seen in terms of comparative power, the Soviet Union is to-day viewed by all thoughtful minded Americans as the only country comparable in stature to the United States and capable of constituting a major threat to its security. The intransigent attitude of Soviet Russia in Europe, her ambiguous policies in the Middle East, and her emergence as a leading Pacific power, are the cause of deep misgiving, greatly accentuated by her unwillingness to remove the iron veil of secrecy which she interposes between herself and the outside world.

2. Great Britain by contrast appears in an altogether more favourable light. Whilst responsible Americans find it difficult to rid themselves of disapproval of everything connoted by the word colonial and sometimes entertain the belief that the policies of Great Britain as a much harassed and weakened imperial power may lead her into courses calculated to endanger international peace, they do not in any sense view us as a possible enemy of the United States. The prevailing tendency is rather to regard Britain as the junior partner in an American orbit of world power whose survival as a strong and prosperous country is essential to America both from the point of view of preserving Western democratic values and the security of the United States itself. At the same time, unlike the Soviet Union which so far at any rate has no comparable points of friction, Great Britain is exposed to constant difficulties with the United States resulting from the outward thrust of American business interests which see in the advent of peace an opportunity for acquiring a predominant position for themselves not merely in the Western Hemisphere but in other continents.

3. Against the foregoing background the United States Government are to-day confronted in the first instance in the field of foreign affairs with the problem of discovering the means to adjust American-Soviet relations in a manner which will ensure the perpetuation of world peace. The urge to discover the means of adjustment has been immeasurably stimulated by the realisation that the knowledge of how to manufacture the atomic bomb cannot long remain an American monopoly.

4. In what respects, if any, are the United States Government approaching this problem and the field of foreign affairs as a whole in ways which differ from the broad lines of American policy as defined under the Roosevelt Administration?

3. The late President Roosevelt dreamed of, and strove for the ideal of one world in which the Big Three partnership, forged during the war, would be merged in a United Nations Organisation. On the economic side his policy was complemented by the aim of Mr. Hull* to build up a system of commercial agreements with other countries which would remove trade barriers and foster the flow of goods on a multilateral basis.

6. In pursuing his ideal, which was constantly directed towards the goal of international collaboration between peace loving and democratic powers Mr. Roosevelt, as a good patriot and far-seeing strategist, did not neglect opportunities to strengthen America's security and promote her interests. Apart from the negotiation of the Atlantic Bases Agreement with Great Britain in 1940-41**, he had arranged before the United States became involved in the war to establish an American base in Iceland and had proclaimed the strategic importance of the Azores from the point of view of United States defence. Primarily with an eye to establishing American civil aviation in a paramount position in the Southern Pacific, the Roosevelt Administration in the months immediately preceding the European war had shown an increasing interest in British and New Zealand owned islands in that area, and in August 1939 had tabled claims to the sovereign possession of sixteen of them. After the entry of the United States into the war it became clear that, by reason of the leading share she was taking in hostilities in the Pacific, America would

expect to have a paramount voice in an eventual Far Eastern settlement. She was at the same time at pains to encourage the admission of China to the Councils of the major powers.

7. In furthering the good neighbour policy in Latin America, both before and after Pearl Harbour, the Roosevelt Administration constantly sought first to align the Latin-American countries in a Pan-American policy of regional defence, and secondly to ensure as far as possible that they collaborated together under United States aegis for the defeat of the Axis.

8. In his dealings with Soviet Russia Mr. Roosevelt was primarily concerned to cement her partnership with Britain and the United States with the supreme object of winning the war. At the same time his Administration exerted itself to prevent a unilateral Soviet solution of the Polish problem. It also intervened at Moscow during the Persian crisis in January [sic], 1944, in order to remind the Soviet Government of its obligations under the Three Power Teheran Declaration. It was moreover the author of the Yalta Declaration on liberated and ex-satellite countries designed to enable the former satellites of Germany to work out their destinies in accordance with the wishes of their peoples. When in the earlier stages of the discussion of the World Organisation the Soviet Government first enunciated its standpoint on the veto question, the United States Government devised a formula which corresponded to that ultimately adopted at San Francisco. In thus assuming vis-à-vis the Soviet Union the responsibilities devolving upon America as a leading world power wedded to the idea of international collaboration the United States Government were at all times anxious, both on account of possible Kremlin reactions and more especially for the sake of avoiding adverse criticism at home, to avoid the appearance of ganging up with His Majesty's Government against the Russians.

Notes

* Mr Cordell Hull had been U.S. Secretary of State March to-November 1944.

** The Exchange of Notes of 2 September 1940 and the ensuing Agreement signed on 27 March 1941 for the lease by the United Kingdom to the United States of naval and air bases in Antigua, the Bahamas, Bermuda, British Guiana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Newfoundland are printed in *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 144, pp. 180-3 and 645-83. In return for the leases the U.K. received military and naval equipment, including surplus destroyers held in reserve by the U.S. Navy. For the negotiation of the agreement see W.S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Volume II (London, 1949), pp. 353-68.

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