INITIAL PRESS AND RADIO REACTION TO UNDER SECRETARY ACHESON'S SPEECH AT CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI ON MAY 9, 1947

During the week following Under Secretary Acheson's speech at Cleveland, Mississippi, articulate press and radio response has been almost wholly favorable. Comment to date, however, has come principally from influential news analysts, radio commentators and a few magazines and editors (e.g., Walter Lippmann, Anne O'Hare McCormick, Arthur Krock, James Reston, Joseph Alsop, Raymond Swing, Joseph Barnes, Washington Post and Star, New York Herald Tribune). On the other hand, various influential sources have not yet expressed an opinion (e.g., New York Times, Scripps-Howard, Chicago Tribune, Hearst). Also severely any editorial comment has yet been received from sections of the country other than the East.

News stories highlighted Mr. Acheson's statement that the United States would "push ahead" with the recon-struction of Germany and Japan "even without full Four Power agreement". But most commentators laid chief emphasis on Mr. Acheson's five-point economic program for "implementing and clarifying the Truman Doctrine". The importance and long-range implications of the address were widely noted, Ernest Lindley stating: "Under Secretary Acheson's speech should be read in full by everyone who attaches more importance to the ocean currents of world affairs than to the ripples and the waves".

Most felt that the speech represented a "conscious effort" on the part of the Administration to emphasize the "positive" side of European reconstruction rather than the "military, ideological and emotional" aspects of "fighting Communism". Commentators of varying political outlooks welcomed the speech as indicating that the U.S. would pursue a policy of "reconstruction rather than retribution". There was wide agreement with the New York Herald Tribune that in the light of present world conditions and in the hope of a healthy, solvent and friendly Europe, "We have little choice but to continue the course marked out by Mr. Acheson".

Much of the comment revealed deep concern with the desperate conditions of hunger, poverty and misery
in Western Europe with a corresponding awareness of the economic and political implications of such a situation. Some felt the program might call for "something like a post-war extension of lend-lease" and others looked at the program in terms of $6 billion in loans or grants. Nevertheless, the common reaction was that of the Washington Post: "The blunt inescapable fact is that the United States is the only country in a position to meet that financial need and, if we do not meet it, we shall assuredly be landed with general disorder, political as well as economic". A minority note was struck by the Wall Street Journal which, while "not quarreling" with the Acheson points, warned against assuming that economic betterment "surely will be attended by political pacification".

A number of commentators echoed approvingly Mr. Acheson's plea for increased U.S. imports and the continuation of export controls. For example, Marquis Childs stated: "The thesis Mr. Acheson developed was that we must take as large a volume of imports as possible from abroad in order that the financial gap between what the world needs and what it can pay for can be narrowed". Similarly, the continuance of export controls was endorsed by several to make essential goods available to countries in need.

Despite the general acclaim for the program, however, many noted that it ran "straight into the economy drive of Congress". Several agreed that it would "take a lot of crafty to persuade Congress to permit vast imports or to make still larger loans". Joseph Alsop, in this connection, reminded that the alternative would be "the necessity of pouring anywhere from 25 to 40 per cent of the national income into national defense in a world in chaos".

From Congress itself came a request from Sen. Bridges for a "total figure" of the foreign aid commitments which would be necessary to implement the "Truman Doctrine", Cecil Brown commenting that this was a question uppermost in the minds of many Americans, who wanted to know "how much this whole program of stopping communism is going to cost and where it is taking us".

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EXCERPTS FROM CONSENT ON MR. ACHESON'S SPEECH

Joseph Alsop (Washington Post) - May 9, 1947

"As in the prelude to the Greek-Turkish crisis, the danger signals are going up in Washington...The prospect of a world-wide monetary crisis is the cause...Just when or how the developing crisis will become acute...no one can as yet predict. But the facts—that the crisis is developing and developing much faster than even the pessimists had expected—are no longer disputed. That is the meaning of the carefully expressed speech of warning just delivered by Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson...The first step...is to assure from Congress a renewal beyond June 30 of this year, of the controls by which essential goods are made available for export and directed to the countries most in need of them. This is the only way to avoid an insane competitive scramble. The second planned step is to bring the World Bank to life—to get the bank to meet the most urgent needs of France and other Western European countries...The third step will be to expand lending power...through the Export-Import Bank. All this will be exceedingly unpleasant for the political sleep-walkers and the 'back to normalcy' drummers. But they, and the country will have the same choice on a much larger scale, as in the Greek-Turkish emergency. Either they can provide the few billions immediately necessary to promote political and economic stability, or they can expect their bailouts for 'economy' to be rudely interrupted by the necessity to pour anywhere from $6 to $8 billion into national defense in a world in chaos..."

Neal Stanford (Christian Science Monitor) - May 9, 1947

"This determination on the Administration's part to get on with the process of reconstruction despite political stalemates over peace settlements is perhaps the major addition to American foreign policy since Secretary Marshall's return..."

James Reston (New York Times) - May 9, 1947

"The administration is not happy about the emotional response here and abroad to the military and ideological aspects of the Truman Doctrine. Consequently a conscious effort is being made now to emphasize the positive economic problems of reconstructing Europe rather than the military and ideological program of blocking Russian expansion and Soviet communism..."
James Reston (Continued)

Unfortunately it is not going to be easy to switch the mood of Congress and the country. The administration has centered its primary appeal in the last eight weeks on aid to Greece and Turkey as if that were the most important aspect of the reconstruction problem...Now, however, the emphasis is shifting...Those who went to Moscow have come back convinced that the decisive test-ground for peace and a democratic Europe is the West and that the West cannot be sustained by anything but sound economic reconstruction."

Elmer Davis (ABC) - May 9, 1947

"...But the Greek-Turkish situation...is not the biggest one nor the one which is potentially most serious. Attention was turned to some of these long-term headaches by Under Secretary of State Acheson...Economic aid should be concentrated, said Mr. Acheson, in areas where it will be most effective in building world political and economic stability. To that extent it is a political as well as an economic program. But it is not any sense a war program. It is a peace program designed to create such a general state of well being that there will be less incentive for any nation to fall into either civil or foreign war..."

Winston Burdette (CBS) - May 9, 1947

"The very nature of the (Greek-Turkish) program gave an emotional emphasis to the Congressional debate. It was presented as an emergency move to halt Soviet expansion...It was asked to approve the general idea without seeing the entire pattern. The confusion was understandable. Our policy makers themselves are still at work filling out various details in the larger pattern...The larger...positive side of our Government's foreign policy design would call for the revival of Western Europe through large scale, long-term economic assistance...It would have to be met by something like a post-war extension of lend-lease...This is the Administration's first effort to prepare and warn the Congress..."

Martin Agronsky (ABC) - May 9, 1947

"The statements of responsible Administration officials, which immediately after the Truman Doctrine was first presented, dwelt so heavily on the ideological and military importance of its stop-communism motto...have brought forth a very heated emotional response..."
Martin Agronzy (Continued)
response that now seems to frighten them a little bit ...

...So now the State Department line seems to be to at-
ttempt to concentrate on the importance of American
economic operations to preserve European stability...

But if today's House debate is any indication, it's
not going to be so easy to turn off the heat. And it
all points up one of the vital and really depressing
failures of the Truman Doctrine...to emphasize so that
all who run can read that the best way to defeat com-


Washington Post - May 9, 1947

"...The pressing demand for our products from war-

starved countries will not be satisfied for quite a

number of years to come. We should, therefore, be con-
sidering long-range plans for meeting those needs and

at the same time for sustaining our export trade. The
draft on our resources will, no doubt, diminish as re-
habilitation goes forward. Moreover, the countries

aided will in time be able to increase their exports
to us and so earn dollars—provided, of course, we are

prepared to receive goods in payment. Nevertheless,

further financing of hard-pressed foreign countries

beyond the amounts already authorized will be essential.
The blunt and inescapable fact is that the United States

is the only country in a position to meet that financial

need and, if we don't meet it, we shall assuredly be

landed with general disorder, political as well as

economic."

Walter Lippmann (Washington Post) — May 10, 1947

"The Administration will never regret that it com-

missioned Mr. Acheson to make this speech. The warn-
ing signals have been rushed while there is still time
to avert a collapse. If the measures which it calls
for are taken, they may carry the world over the hump
of danger into a time of reconstruction and peace...

The Administration will do well to address itself to

the adult and informed population of the United States

and to assume that the American people would rather

hear the truth than be jaded up and needled by rhet-

oric...The rhetoric of the Truman message is something

to be avoided. The tone and temper of the Marshall,

Dulles and Acheson speeches are something to be ad-

hered to."
Raymond Swing (ABC) - May 11, 1947

"Indication that the Administration now sees the folly of the emotional selling campaign used to back
the Greek-Turkish program is the speech made by Dean
Acheson... Mr. Acheson was calling attention to the
economic side of our task abroad and to the very grave
condition of our foreign trade... It is obvious that
something must be done now... This is a situation which
the country and Congress have to be told... Provision
must be made soon if we're not to find ourselves in
a tempest for which we have some responsibility and
from which we are sure to suffer... It will not do to
content ourselves with loose talk about Communism.
For though it is true that a ruined Europe, which
we've not adequately aided, will go communist in its
chaos, the communism is not the danger, the chaos is
the danger and the way to stave off the communism is
to stave off the chaos... If it really took the emo-
tional melodrama of the Truman doctrine to get a one-
time payment of $400 million for Greece and Turkey,
what under the sun could induce Congress to provide
nearly 5 billions a year on terms equivalent to Land-
Lease. Obviously it can't be done with emotion. Above
all, it can't be done with hatred. What the world now
needs is reconstruction not retribution."

Joseph C. Warren (CBS) - May 11, 1947

"But this speech took American policy back to
the problem very much more urgent than the Greek-
Turkish issue which was precipitated when Britain
announced that she was withdrawing from those partic-
ular countries. Mr. Acheson was announcing Part Two
of the Truman Doctrine even before Part One had been
formalized by the signing of the Greek aid bill. An-
other way of saying it would be that he took American
foreign policy back to the fundamental issues from which
it was diverted by the issue in Greece... The real
problem is not Russian-trained guerrilla bands in Greece or
a Russian war of nerves directed at Turkey. It is the
economic weakness of Western Europe.

"In the end we lose the negative battle against
Communism along with the positive battle for freedom
and democracy if we fail to provide economic condi-
tions in which freedom and democracy can survive..."
Wall Street Journal - May 13, 1947

"The present foreign policy of the United States looks to bolstering of the economies of western Europe on the assumption that if that is neglected the political abuses will increase and that countries will be propelled by their despair into totalitarianism. Unless one believes that it is feasible and possible for the United States to withdraw from Europe, it would be difficult to quarrel with the policy...What we should not do, however, is to suppose that economic betterment surely will be attended by political pacification. It may be, but it is unlikely that the world has yet seen the exhaustion of the resources that are being employed to maintain distrubed politics...

Marcus Childe (Washington Post) - May 13, 1947

"The speech was intended to be in effect, an extension of the Truman Doctrine. The thesis Acheson developed was that we must take as large a volume of imports possible from abroad in order that the financial gap between what the world needs and what it can pay for can be narrowed. This is the positive side of the Truman Doctrine. It looks forward to a peaceful world in which there is an ever-increasing exchange of foods and services.

Jennings Vey (PM) - May 13, 1947

"Of course the malodorous and unpopular Greek-Turkish business has got to be wound up in Congress; but already it has served its main purpose—as a pop-off valve for our stop-Communism hysteria...Now, in its gentle way, the State Dept. is turning our attention to the real needs of the world and our real responsibilities toward ourselves...It has begun to speak, through Mr. Marshall, in genuine terms of good-fuels and machinery and through Mr. Acheson, in terms of vast credits and the rehabilitation of stricken economies; It is talking billions instead of bullets and this American new economic policy makes sense..."
"At last a government spokesman admits that nothing less than a bold plan for reconstruction of Europe on the basis of food, fuel and industrial production will stave off the collapse of which Greece is merely a local symptom...more and more it is borne in on policy-makers that everything comes back to food..."

New York Herald Tribune - May 10, 1947

"Nearly every phase of that Acheson address fits neatly into the pattern of sharp competition and seems to be a mere extension of the Truman doctrine as it is narrowly understood—the checking of Communist expansion through the use and the withholding of American goods and credits. "Selection is necessary and Russia herself, virtually dictated the lines on which selection must be made. If she is willing to cooperate, willing to reduce strains caused by her political activity (and inactivity), willing to join in the various agencies for improving the world's economic condition, it may be feasible to broaden the scope of American aid without reducing its effectiveness. But until then, the U.S. has no choice but to continue the course marked out by Mr. Acheson."