

March 19, 1947

EDITORIAL REACTION TO CURRENT ISSUES

(Issued on a continuing basis as events warrant)

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS BEFORE CONGRESS  
on  
GREEK SITUATION

Part I  
Restricted to speech. Later Parts  
will cover situation as a whole

(Editorials from 225 papers received Mar. 13 to Mar. 18)

Prepared by  
Division of Press Intelligence  
Office of Government Reports

-----

The reaction of the press and the reception by the people, as reflected through editorials, is exceedingly favorable. This can be truly said despite the fact that nearly all editorials recognize the risk and doubtful outcome of the proposed steps. The risk must be taken, most papers believe.

A sizeable group is 100% in support of the President's proposal.

A number agree we must act but have doubts as to just how and when. They advocate the deepest and most judicious inquiry by Congress and the people before decision is made, so that the action taken will be the wisest and safest for ourselves and the rest of the world.

On the President proposing action outside the United Nations, opinion is 4 to 1 in favor of such action.

Only about a dozen editorials oppose such "meddling". As may be expected, they include the New York Daily Worker, New York PM, Chicago Tribune and Washington Times-Herald. Strangely enough, the two Richmond papers and the Raleigh News & Observer are found in this group.

- 117 endorse the President's proposal; declare historic decision to be made is greater than Monroe Doctrine or our expansion to West Coast century ago; feel outcome of situation may decide our own destiny as a free people; say the President's "brave and admirable address" made a strong case for a precedent-breaking foreign policy; are convinced Congress must give the President what he seeks or we will face most serious consequences with the alternative of leaving weak nations at mercy of expanding Red empire; urge Congress to accept recommendations without partisan debate; point out our choice is to assume our place as principal world power or give Moscow a blank check; call our decision as crucial as Roosevelt plea to give lend-lease and convoys to Britain and France; regard message in speech as "plain as a pike-staff" though it was "masterpiece of indirection" with Soviet Union not being mentioned once; emphasize fact British kept world at peace for century without Communism and we must now do so with Communism as foe; insist we have inherited this mantle from British and cannot escape our responsibility.
- 33 see situation "full of ominous possibilities" and placing on Congress the burden of most difficult and delicate decision; want Congress and people to give problem most judicious and deliberative study; feel choice is not "whether" but "how" and "when"; believe steps should not be taken without knowing all contingencies and being determined to see things through; say the President could be wrong in overestimating consequences of delay for full study; warn against acting on theory money is cure-all.
- 20 on United Nations' role in crisis.
- 16 support the President in suggesting action be taken outside world organization since UN is not organized or equipped to undertake task; feel people should understand this.
- 4 argue we must decide either to make UN our primary objective and such issues as Greece and Turkey secondary or put UN aside momentarily and give first consideration to situations we once hoped UN would remedy; say UN could at least authorize us to act in its stead.
- 13 in opposition to Truman course.
- 9 complain that "crisis whipped up by the President has no basis in reality" and that the President is playing tricks with words; accuse him of "babbling" about peace and security while inviting hazards of war and dissolution of our republic; ask "what business is it of ours?"; say if democracy can't live in rest of world without us going to war every few years, "we ought to let it die". (3, NY Daily Worker; 2, Chicago Tribune; 1 each, NY PM, Washington Times-Herald, Wheeling Intelligencer and Green Bay, Wis., Gazette.)
- 3 criticize speech in what might be called pseudo-patriotic spirit; charge vagueness, incompleteness and possible hiding of secret commitments; stress great likelihood of war. (All lengthy editorials. Two from Richmond Times-Dispatch and Richmond News-Leader, 3/13. Third from Raleigh News & Observer, 3/14, including entire Times-Dispatch editorial.)
- 1 declares "President Truman's demand . . . marks a day of national shame for our country"; accuse him of "selling the American people the 'fool's gold of empire', in complete abandonment of Roosevelt's vision of a stable postwar peace"; predicts "the empire-grab, masked by anti-Communism hysteria, is doomed to failure". (New York Daily Worker, 3/13)
- 7 say speech is comparable to Roosevelt's famous "quarantine" speech against aggressors, made under analogous circumstances in 1937; feel the President has made "relatively modest proposals" to meet Russian threat; believe it essential that assistance program be supervised by competent military and civilian personnel.

14 on miscellaneous phases.

- 1 takes New York Daily Worker to task for saying the President's program "marks a day of national shame for our country"; claims such a charge "is so utterly pro-Russian as to be as ridiculous as it is irritating"; is confident American people realize the President "was speaking from full knowledge of facts and conditions, and out of patriotic devotion to his country". (Portland, Me., Press-Herald, 3/14. See NY Daily Worker, 3/13, above.)
- 3 insist American people must not be left in the dark; want them given all inside facts; oppose having closed hearings in Congress.
- 3 wonder how Greece can have confidence we will continue support, in view of our record in aiding Chiang Kai-shek's government.
- 1 does not fear Russo-American war since neither country is ready for war; considers prospect of armed conflict almost zero.
- 1 feels statement of endorsement by Vandenberg will go far to eliminate bitter partisanship; says showdown with Russia is inevitable and might as well come now.
- 1 believes our aid to Greece and Turkey will prevent rise of Communism if majorities there really want it.
- 2 favor all-out aid from us to relieve personal and economic distress in two countries but would leave military and ideological phases up to UN.
- 1 maintains relief demands upon our funds do not end need for utmost economy in domestic affairs.
- 1 is pleased by improvement in the President's platform manner; find him slower and more deliberate; note gain in clarity of speech.

204

-00-

March 22, 1947

EDITORIAL REACTION TO CURRENT ISSUES

(Issued on a continuing basis as events warrant)

GREEK SITUATION

Part II

(Editorials from 225 papers received Mar. 18 to Mar. 20)



Prepared by  
Division of Press Intelligence  
Office of Government Reports

-----

The President continues in Part II to receive editorial support from a majority of the American daily press. The ratio remains about the same as to general endorsement, approval with some reservation, and all-out opposition.

Of those anxious or willing to go along with the President, practically all express realization of the seriousness, and even uncertainty, of the proposed program. However, it is keenly felt that it is inevitable we must undertake to assure world peace and self-determination in government by all peoples.

Those opposing the proposal as listed in Part I, are now joined by the Detroit Free Press and other members of the John S. Knight chain. Knight's crusade banners are being carried by the Sioux Falls Argus-Leader and the Topeka Capital.

Josephus Daniels' Raleigh News & Observer is carrying on its own crusade in opposition, with some of its arguments of questionable pertinence and soundness. In the midst of the crusade, the paper pauses long enough to score other critics for asserting Roosevelt violated his 1940 pledge not to send our boys into foreign wars.

The 4-to-1 sentiment supporting the President's by-passing of UN, is reduced to 2-to-1 in Part II.

Condemnation of Wallace's opposition is unanimous.

Editorials on positions taken by members of Congress are almost all in support of the President.

Sentiment on reception by Russian press and Russian policy makers is entirely favorable to the President's position.

-----

- 96 endorse the President's proposal either in its entirety or with some doubts on single phases; consider it "not a war policy, but a peace policy"; say it is "both premature and unwise to talk of an inevitable conflict when there are alternatives"; admit proposal is neither painless nor cheap but are convinced it is wise; feel proposal reflects the President's personal courage and his faith in strength and ideals of U.S.; like his phrase "at the request" which means aid will be given only if wanted and will not be imposed; see proposal helping Marshall's position at Moscow; believe we should neither compromise nor appease; argue against permitting decline in our armed strength because of economy efforts; urge "resoluteness and perseverance" of American people; feel sending aid is good way to use war surpluses we have no need for; welcome support given by Vandenberg, Bridges and other GOP leaders.
- 48 sympathize generally with the President's proposal but reserve support as to scope and degree of aid which can be successfully and safely given; all favor relieving personal distress of Greeks and Turks; call it a time for "hard and deep thinking"; are mostly concerned over Congress having full facts and information on which to base its decision; want that decision to conform with wishes of American people; say "intelligent necessity" not "emotional desire" should control; some favor immediate relief of distress but would be more deliberative on political and ideological phases; hail recall of our ambassadors to Greece and Turkey as master stroke to get first-hand information for Congress; criticize Britain for dumping Greek problem in our lap.
- 23 in opposition to proposal.
- 6 urge Congress to reject program and turn problem over to UN where it belongs; insist World Bank and Export-Import Bank should shoulder burden of social and economic relief; feel Truman plea has shocked American people and left them unconvinced; claim real target of Truman doctrine is not Russia but labor and social legislation enacted under New Deal.
- 2 call it imprudent to count on easy diplomatic victory through Truman policy; maintain it would lead to war and that even victory would leave us in sorry condition in which England finds herself. (Chicago Tribune, 3/15 & 3/17)
- 3 contend the President has handled situation very badly; say Russo-American differences will be more easily composed when and if we stop fighting England's battles as well as our own; believe all European countries would like us to save them from Communism but don't want to become U.S. "protectorates" or battleground for World War III. (Detroit Free Press, 3/15 & 3/18)
- 2 remain unconvinced by arguments of backers of the President's proposal; complain that nation has not been taken into official confidence and that decisions to date are based on hearsay; prefer statesmanship Disraeli used to block Russian ambitions in 1875. (Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3/16 & 3/17)

Opposition to proposal (Cont'd)

- 1 complains of overnight changes in our foreign policy; points out one month we ask UN for trusteeship over Pacific islands and next month by-pass UN in campaign against Russia. (Richmond News-Leader, 3/17)
- 4 claim possibility of democracy in Greece has already disappeared and fighting there has already gone the way of Spanish Civil War; wonder if next step for Uncle Sam will be to become one of Britain's Commonwealth of Nations; find it "something new for Congress to be directed by a foreign government as to date and hour when it must legislate in a way to drain the Treasury of the United States"; contend we should not undertake alone what UN was set up to do. (Raleigh News & Observer, 3/15, 3/17 & 3/18)
- 1 reverses position above by insisting Roosevelt kept his 1940 campaign pledge not to send troops abroad "unless we are attacked"; accuses some Republicans in present crisis of taking the place of ancient ghouls. (Raleigh News & Observer, 3/15)
- 2 are inclined to agree with John S. Knight of Detroit Free Press in his opposition to the President's proposal. (Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, 3/15; Topeka Capital, 3/16)
- 2 refute opposing arguments of NY Daily Worker; say Moscow and Wallace type of opposition proves the President right; claim what is bad for Russia must be good for U. S. (St. Paul Pioneer-Press, 3/14; Wilkes-Barre Times-Leader, 3/15)
- 32 on the President acting outside UN.
  - 22 approve, recognizing inability of world organization to handle situation; blame bungling in setting up UN and properly implementing it; say obligation to act is clearly ours since we failed to rule power politics out of UN; want UN utilized now to "greatest feasible extent"; condemn enemies of UN for criticizing the President; would make his address to Congress not death knell of UN but new transfusion of life; find most helpful the Vandenberg statement UN is not ready to act.
  - 6 maintain UN, not the U. S., should decide whether armed intervention is needed to keep world peace; contend moral backing of community of nations is vital, even though U. S. would have to contribute most; insist possibility of UN action should be explored before decision is made by Congress.
  - 4 condemn Truman policy as a death blow to UN and as a risk of bankruptcy and war for us; quotes formal statements of UN leaders during past two years to prove unwisdom of the President's proposal; offer six-point fallacy of our position. (Half-page editorial with cartoons in John S. Knight chain. Detroit Free Press, Akron Beacon-Journal, Miami Herald, 3/16; Chicago News, 3/15)
- 20 condemn Wallace speech opposing proposal; feel Moscow must be grateful to him and fear Russia will err in thinking U. S. is not behind the President; say no situation in U. S. can be so bad that speech by Wallace won't make it worse; use such captions as "Singing Soviet Song", "Isolationists' Folly", "Why Doesn't He Take Up Boomerangs Again?", "No More Munichs, Henry", "Why, Henry!", and "Henry's 'Agin' It".
- 22 on reaction in Congress.
  - 3 insist debate should be in order and without wrangling; want the President given broad discretionary power in using funds; warn against cutting Armed Services appropriations below budget requests; hail support of Vandenberg, Eaton and others.
  - 6 praise prompt support of Vandenberg; call it outstanding example of placing patriotism above partisanship.
  - 2 find great comfort in prompt endorsement of Sen. Lodge.
  - 1 approves Flanders resolution to stop shipment of goods to Russia; feels it is in line with the President's plan and will help stop Red aggression.

Reaction in Congress (Cont'd)

- 5 declare that Taft, as usual, is wrong; find him typical of false GOP leadership which is undermining party; charge unreformed isolationists like Taft find themselves bedfellows with Communist totalitarians.
- 2 on Johnson argument we should furnish relief but not armed assistance.
  - 1 endorses.
  - 1 opposes; says Colorado Senator "is back on the old isolation track".
- 1 feels it would be better if those who "fought the war mongers forewent their little hour of triumph"; names Brooks, Hoffman and Reed.
- 1 condemns Brooks' isolationism and obstructionism, both past and present.
- 1 agrees with O'Konski we have been aiding aggressors since 1933 and that Truman plan shows intent to continue.
- 31 take delay and mildness of Russian reaction to mean Kremlin is faced with hard nut to crack; say Russ protest hardly deserves serious reply; admit Izvestia charge we are interfering but declare we should do so to win world stability; ridicule claim UN should act since Moscow knows UN can't; see protest as proof of soundness of the President's fears; regard Wallace speech as American loud-speaker for Russ press and policy makers.
- 5 point out that Russia can solve crisis by abiding by UN charter and making concessions from her present position; maintain prospects of war depend on Moscow's good or bad intentions.
- 11 on Turkey's position in crisis.
  - 10 see destinies of Turkey and Greece bound together against Russian expansion; feel we must give moral and material support there, just as much as to Greece.
  - 1 doesn't trust Turkey and says she doesn't need relief; calls country military dictatorship and not democratic government.
- 6 on our record in China.
  - 4 insist reasoning behind Greek-Turkish program argues for reversal of present U. S. and UNRRA policies in aiding China; call on the President to follow up his brilliant speech with such a declaration of economic policy. (Scripps-Howard chain, 3/14.)
  - 2 admit record in China is contrary to plan for Greece but declare conditions are different; expect Congress to realize difference and approve Greek program.
- 14 on miscellaneous phases.
  - 6 call FAO report on conditions in Greece poignantly dramatic; say it is most timely and gives excellent idea of what is needed to rehabilitate Greece; declare it points out only feasible way to prevent spread of Communism.
  - 3 praise Senate Committee for rejecting the President's earlier request to let Selective Service lapse March 31; see full justification for rejection in light of Greek situation.
  - 1 says the President, "a remarkably patient and reasonable man", cannot be accused of belligerence; thinks he "has grown enormously in the esteem of the nation in showing the simple courage of his convictions and coming forward at the right moment as the spokesman of us all". (Lynchburg News, 3/16.)
  - 1 blames Roosevelt Administration for fostering developments in Russia which have led to present crisis; claims President Truman is risking war in attempt to undo damage.
  - 1 insists Hungary is high on list of democratic vexations, along with Greece and Turkey.
  - 1 contends Democratic Committee Chairman Sullivan should have kept his silence instead of asking GOP Committee to back the President's program; says it gives GOP chairman, "who is frequently inept himself, a chance to show some good judgment".

Miscellaneous phases (Cont'd)

- 1 opposes giving \$400,000,000 in relief since it would be a gift and not a loan; ignores all other phases of problem.
- 1 corrects "mechanical error" in its Sunday editorial which said the President's request means U.S. has abandoned hope in UN; claims that editorial was intended to say commitments under UN Charter made the President's present course inevitable. (Dayton News, 3/17)

308

-00-

