

DRAFT 3/3/47

Suggestions for the President's message to Congress in regard to the Greek situation.

*Drafted over snowy week - end
march 2-3. Goal - in
effort to
arrive at a
tone.*

I lay before you today one of the gravest problems of national security ever to confront the nation. We are face to face with a crisis in foreign policy. It is a crisis less serious than a crisis of arms only because there is still time to work out a program of peaceful salvation. But upon the decisions that must be made now will depend the security and well-being of the American people.

The British Government, through its Ambassador in Washington, has informed the Government of the United States that as of March 31 it will be obliged to discontinue its program of economic assistance to Greece. The British Government has also informed us that it will not be in position to extend further financial or economic aid to Turkey.

The Greek Gov't on mar. 3 informed us that - - -

The setting in which these developments must be viewed is one of acute economic weakness and financial stringency in Great Britain, which imposes upon that country the necessity of reducing or liquidating its commitments not only in Greece and Turkey but in other parts of the world, notably in Egypt, Palestine, India and Burma.

The situation with which we have to deal, therefore, is no sudden and limited occurrence. It is the culminating development in a long

historical

historical process, and it is as wide as the world.

Our nation has existed ever since its birth in a world in which economic and military strength has been distributed among a number of ^{Countries} states, and in which, until recent years, British foreign policy backed by British industrial and financial and naval strength has maintained a balance of power and thus a measure of order. Now, the shambles of war have replaced economic and military strength in many countries of the world and Great Britain, though a survivor, has been so weakened in two world wars that it is no longer equal to its historic task. Notwithstanding that Greece and Turkey are the keys to the Mediterranean and the entire Middle East, the British Government ~~is obliged to admit that it~~ is no longer able to extend the economic aid to those countries which the preservation of democracy and independence there may require. As I speak to you today I am deeply conscious that a page in history has been turned.

We must face frankly the gravity of this situation and consider calmly the proportions of the problem that it poses for the United States.

We

We have hope that the United Nations, now a fledgling organization, will in time achieve power in its own right, but today its ability to keep the peace is largely dependent upon the underlying structure of power relationships.

We are thus forced back finally and irrevocably upon our own policy, our own strength. If there are any forms of government or principles we wish to see survive in this world, it is up to us to see to it that they survive. For not since ancient times has there been such a polarization of power on this earth. Not since Athens and Sparta, not since Rome and Carthage, has economic and military strength been divided so preponderantly between two states.

We must decide today whether, and to what extent, we in the United States are going to support free peoples and democratic governments in their efforts to survive post-war chaos. For if we do not extend aid on a scale sufficiently broad, economic disorganization and human despair in large parts of Europe and Asia will inevitably yield to Communism. If that should happen, the cost of defending the freedom and independence of this country and this hemisphere would be many

times multiplied, and the probability of success in that undertaking sharply reduced.

The situation in Greece is the most urgent case in point. British retrenchment there raises for immediate decision the question of what the United States is going to do to support a stable economy and democratic form of government in that strategically situated country.

Here we come up against the historic process of quite a different order, and I am compelled by the seriousness of the situation to describe it with utmost candor.

During the past 18 months, while the Secretary of State and his Senatorial advisors have gone from conference to conference in a strenuous and sincere effort to hold together the core of international cooperation, anti-democratic forces in many countries of the world have gathered strength and momentum, and the position of the democracies has materially deteriorated. Communism thrives on hunger, economic breakdown, fear, and hopelessness; and we have only to look about us to see that these have become primary conditions of life in a large part of the world ravaged by war. Desperate people will bargain away their freedom for a day's sustenance.

At

At the end of the war Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and Albania found themselves with Communist-dominated governments. Since the end of the war, Communist minorities, *exploiting the economic instability which has followed in the wake of war,* have made startling gains in Hungary, Austria, Italy, and France, and in those countries have put themselves within striking range of political control. In Iran an armed Communist minority ~~not long ago~~ made a bid for power that was frustrated by the Government of Iran ~~and~~ with the aid of world public opinion mobilized through the United Nations.

Today the danger spot is Greece.

~~It is not hard to see that~~ The events that usually follow upon Communist control of a government are well known. Communism, ~~as an avowed enemy of democracy, of capitalism, of socialism, of freedom,~~ *as an avowed enemy of democracy, of capitalism, of socialism, of freedom,* almost inevitably brings in its train a hostility towards the United States and other democratic countries. Communism
 How far can we go?