February 25, 1947

The President had been consulted from the beginning as to each of the decisions to be made regarding Greece and Turkey as to the extent to which Congress and the American people could be convinced that a program of aid was necessary. As a result, the previous chronology, the President, Vann, Acheson, Vandenberg, and the Cabinet. As a whole had emphasized the central importance of the public approach. Once the basic decisions had been made, therefore, the drafting of the President's Message to Congress and the working out of an information program was to occupy a central position.

As stated in the previous chronology, at Mr. Acheson's meeting with his staff on February 25, responsibility for working out an information program was assigned to Francis Russell, to be aided by Jernegan, Thompson, and Jones (and Russell, upon Acheson's suggestion invoked the aid of the SWC's Foreign Policy Information Subcommittees). Specific responsibility for drafting the President's message was not assigned, but Jones proceeded on the assumption that he would be so assigned. For the first few days after February 25, in considering what should be said publicly, and how, there was no distinction between what should be said in the President's Message and what should be said in supporting speeches and documents used before Congress and in a public information program. Jones attended all information meetings for backgrounds.

SWS daily meeting of the SWC's Subcommittees on Foreign Policy information in the conference room on the top floor of the Senate. The present were: Senator Hull, John Jernegan, Leavitt, Thompson, Joseph Jones, Stevens (IBP), Friedman, and George Morgan (PS). Perry, Needham, Vickers, May, Sorensen, R. R. Arnold, Weizak, Beardsley, Rolland, others from information staffs of State, War, and Navy. (Note: I do not have the full names of the War and Navy representatives, and may have them mixed up.) Russell, Jernegan, Thompson, Arnold, and Needham did practically all the talking.

The problem stated by the Subcommittees in its report was: 1. To make possible the formulation of intelligent opinions by the American people on the problems created by the present situation in Greece through the furnishing of full and frank information by the Government. 2. To portray the world conflict between free and totalitarian or imposed forms of governments. 3. To bring about an understanding of the American people of the world's strategic situations. The specific tasks of the Subcommittees were: to draw together background information on the three aspects relating to all aspects — political, economic, and military — of the program of aid to Greece and Turkey, define the program of aid contemplated, and set out informational objectives, draft the themes to be used in the public approach, consider what the times of Soviet propaganda would be, and in what the country, and prepare specific informational programs for putting the story over to the press, radio, magazines, and group leaders throughout the country.

Russell summarized Acheson's analysis of the situation as given to him by Senator Jernegan the day before, and to the staff meeting that morning. Each of the principles present reflected to a degree the view expressed in the staff meetings and the paper work of the previous week, plus the personal
ideas of such as to the nature and proportion of the problem and how to present it to public attention. He in a very curious way the breadth and tone of the President's Message was achieved and crystallized in this meeting of the SUBGO Subcommittee, in the internal labor of Russell, Thompson, Jernegan, and Villard, and in the final report which they drew up on March 3, 1941. The meeting was held on March 2 and on March 4, 1941. This document, especially the general paragraphs dealing with the facts not only of the specific situation but the wider situation, became the central document used in drafting the President's Message, and is therefore of special importance.

The document did not serve as a basis for the final version of the Message, but most of the themes that formed the basis of the Message were expressed in this meeting. A working party was then appointed to pull together the discussion of the meeting (Col. Parker, Lebrun, Millard, Thompson,inclusive, and Friedman) and write the report. They were instructed to meet the following day (March 4) and carry on their work. Actually, Thompson took charge of the drafting of the most important parts of the report, aided by Russell, Millard, Jernegan, and Jones. [Note: If this is not true, would someone correct me?]

March 1

Working Party of the SUBGO Subcommittee met in Francis Russell's office, with Thompson, Villard, Jernegan, and Jones present most of the day.

March 2 (Sunday)

Russell, Thompson, Villard, and Jernegan revised and refined the work of the previous day and produced the final report—"Public Information Program on Aid to Greece." It was mimeographed on March 3 and handed to Acheson on March 4.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, March 2, Jones, anticipating the assignment of responsibility for drafting the two Presidential speeches, spent the day at home (it moved from Washington), writing and editing on Sunday, trying in five pages of triple-spaced draft, to establish a tone, a breadth, a pitch, for the President's Message. But was only the beginning of a Message, which he handed to Lay Henderson the next morning. (March 3). The same Sunday, Lay Henderson and Gordon Harrison wrote full-length drafts of a Message.

March 3 (Sunday)

Lay Henderson sent the fractional Jones draft along with his own and Harrison's to Acheson. In the late afternoon Lay called Jones to say that he was to be assigned the job and to stand by for a call from him. At 7 p.m., Acheson called Jones to his office and gave him his assignment, telling him to keep in close touch with Henderson.

March 4 (Tuesday)

Acheson called a drafting conference in his office. Present were Jones, Russell, Thompson, Richardson, Saville, John Howard, Ernest Gross, John Manley, and others. Acheson said he liked the tone and introduction written by Jones. Then he took up the SUBGO Report and went through it paragraph by paragraph and indicated what might be used in the President's Message. In each case there was discussion, and ideas were thrown in and agreed upon or rejected. Acheson then referred to specific items in the Henderson and Harrison drafts that might be useful. Jones took notes and got a general idea of what was wanted.
He worked late that night turning our the first working draft, dated March 4, which was considered in the second drafting conference in Mr. Acheson's office on March 5.

March 5, 1947 (Wednesday)

Afternoon. Second drafting conference in Mr. Acheson's office. Some of those present were there, but fewer. Acheson said the Jones draft dated March 4 was a good one to take for further editing, and it seemed to meet with general approval. Acheson then proceeded to lead the group in a line by line consideration of the draft, and a considerable number of revisions, deletions, and additions were suggested. Jones read changes on his copy and took notes on additions and substitutions. Afterwards, he returned to his office and worked that evening on a revised draft.

March 6

Morning. Jones went to see Acheson to suggest that the idea of a Presidential radio "fireside chat" be abandoned. The message was shaping up in a pretty forceful way, and Jones suggested that it would be more impressive if the President went to Congress to deliver it in person. Also, he suggested that the way things were going there wasn't going to be time to write a radio speech for delivery the same day as the Message. Acheson readily agreed, and said he would recommend it to the President which he did. The President accepted the suggestion.

In the Acheson Jones brought up another matter that did not seem to get settled and which affected the drafting of the Message rather profoundly. The draft message at that point described Greece's plight in detail, emphasizing at length the "terrible situation" faced by Greece on the strength of the 

Afternoon. Third drafting conference in Mr. Acheson's office—with only a few of the staff present—to go over Jones' revised draft dated March 6. There were relatively few changes and corrections, these appearing on the third complete draft, dated March 7, which was sent to Mr. Acheson's office in numerous copies the following day. (Jones cleared it with Henderson and Mildrem).

March 7 (Wednesday)

The March 7 draft was mailed to Secretary Marshall in Paris on his way back from Moscow. Marshall replied the next day approving, except for three minor deletions in wording which he suggested. Acheson also sent the March 7 draft to Clark Clifford in the White House.

March 8 (Saturday)

Acheson asked Jones and Hummel to go over to the White House to discuss, at Clifford's request, the draft message. Clifford had a few specific
suggestions to make, by way of addition, but his main criticism was directed at the order of presentation. The March 7 draft opened with Greece, went on to the "rider situation" and came back to Greece. Clifford suggested that it begin with Greece and consider Greece completely, go on to the "rider situation" and Turkey, and then proceed to specific proposals and language as in our draft. Jones readily agreed this would be better. A return to the Department and an hour and a half, with the aid of scissors and a stapler, turned the thing around, and it was a marked improvement. He also added two of the points Clifford had suggested, had the whole retypewritten, and returned it to Clifford that (Saturday) afternoon. Clifford considered this draft at length on Sunday, March 9.

March 10 (Monday)

Late afternoon, Clifford brought over and discussed with Acheson, Jones, and myself the first White House revised draft, dated March 10. There were a few stylistic changes, which were readily agreed upon. There were also three or four extraneous ideas added. These were considered for various reasons objectionable and distracting, for very clear reasons, and Clifford promptly switched his families to do so suggesting that the changes had been suggested by neither himself: the President but by others on the White House staff.

Clifford returned to the White House and a conference was held with the President, Admiral Leahy, and others on the White House staff. At this meeting the President and advisors agreed to the draft virtually as it was, making only a few minor changes in wording.

March 11

The White House sent over the final draft dated March 11, as approved by the President the previous afternoon, and it became the official message.

March 12 (Tuesday)

At 12 noon the President appeared before a Joint Session of the Senate and House in the House chamber and delivered the message.