February 29, 1947

The President had been concerned from the beginning as to much about the decision he had to make regarding Greece and Turkey as about the extent to which Congress and the American people could be convinced that a program of aid was necessary. As indicated in the previous chronology, the President, Harriman, Achseon, 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. Achseon's meeting with his staff on February 29, responsibility for working out an information program was assigned to Francis Russell, to be aided by Jernegan, Thompson, and Jones (and Russell, upon Achseon's suggestion, invited the aid of the SWG's Foreign Policy Information Sub-committee). 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 29, 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.

3:30 p.m. Meeting of the SWG Sub-committee on Foreign Policy Information in the Department Conference room on the top floor of the Dept. of State. Present were: Stuart Russell, John Jervagun, John Jervagun, Jernegan, Thompson; Joseph Jervagun, Stevens (Rep.), Friedman and George Morgan (Ap) Jerry Stimson, Alexander W. H. Arnold, Col. Parker, Leibron, Ball; others from information staffs of State, War, and Navy. (Notes: I do not have the full names of the War and Navy representatives, and may have them mixed up.) Russell, Jervagun, Thompson, Arnold, and Stimson did practically all the talking.

The problem, stated by the Sub-committee in its report, was: "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 government. 3. To bring about an understanding of the American people of the world strategic situations." The specific tasks of the Sub-committee were: to draw together background information on the three parts relating to all aspects--political, economic, and military--of the program of aid to Greece and Turkey, explain 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 amenable to counter them, and prepare specific informational programs for giving the story over to the press, radio, magazines, and group leaders throughout the country.

Russell summarized Achseon's analysis of the situation as given to Congressional leaders earlier that day, and to the staff meeting that morning. Each of the principles present reflected to a degree the views expressed in the staff meeting minutes and paper work of the previous weeks, plus the personal
ideas of such as to the nature and proportions of the problem and how to present it publicly. But in a very curious way the breadth and tone of the President's Message was achieved and crystallized in this meeting of the SMCg Subcommittee, in the voluminous labors of Russell, Thompson, Jernegan, and Villard, and in the final report which they drew up on Sunday (March 3), and mimeographed on Monday (March 4) and gave to Auchan on March 5. This document, especially the general portions 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.

She said that at this Fab.3d meeting of the Subcommittee need not be related here, but most of the themes that found their way into the Message were expressed in this meeting. A working party was then appointed to pull together the discussion of the meeting (Col. Parker, LeBaron, Bellard, Thompson, Lishman, and Friedman) and write the report. They were instructed to meet the following day (Saturday March 1) and carry on their work. (Actually, Thompson took charge of the drafting of the most important parts of the Report, aided by Russell, Villard, Jernegan, and Jones. Note: If this is not true, would someone correct me?)

March 1

Working party of the SMCg 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 Auchan 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 snowed again, making it a cold and milky day) trying in five pages of triple-spaced draft, to establish a tone, a breadth, a pitch for the President's Message. This was only the beginning of a Message, which he handed to Loy Henderson the next morning. (March 3). The same Sunday, Loy Henderson and Gordon Harrison wrote full length drafts of a Message.

March 3 (Monday)

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

March 4 (Tuesday)

Auchan called a drafting Conference in his office. Present were Jones, Russell, Thompson, Richarson, Jernegan, John Howard, Ernest Cross, John Schick, and others. Auchan said he liked the tone and introduction written by Jones. Then he took up the SMCg 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. Auchan 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. Achaseon's office on March 5.

March 5, 1947 (Tuesday)

Afternoon: Second drafting conference in Mr. Achaseon's office. None of those present were there, but for Mr. Achaseon the Jones draft dated March 4 was a good one to take for further editing, and it seemed advisable to make a general approval. Jones 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 made changes in his copy and took notes on additions and substitutions suggested; afterwards, he returned to his office and worked that evening on a revised draft.

March 6

Morning: Jones went to see Achaseon 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. Achaseon readily agreed, and said he would recommend it to the President, which he did. The President accepted the suggestion.

Morning: 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 "eider situation", had three quarters of a page on Turkey, and yet requested Congress to authorize $250 million for Greece and $200 million "to be used in Turkey or in any other such country as may find itself in need of help in maintaining the economic stability necessary to the survival of its independence and free institutions". Jones had discovered that official decisions on this last part were exceedingly tentative, and could not get anyone even to edit that part; but the general philosophy and policy of the draft were so wise and sweeping that they led up to a request for an open authorization. Mr. Achaseon leaned back, thought a while, looked over at the White House, and said slowly: "If I B.H. were alive I think I know what he'd do. He would make a statement of global policy, but confine his request for money right now to Greece and Turkey".

Then, Jones revised his draft accordingly (the changes appearing on his draft dated March 6) and specific authorization was asked only with respect to Greece and Turkey.

Afternoon: Third drafting conference in Mr. Achaseon'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. Achaseon's office in numerous copies the following day. (Jones cleared it with Henderson and Hissman).
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 preparation as in our draft. Jones readily agreed this would be better, returned to the Department and in 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 redone, and returned it to Clifford that (Saturday) afternoon. Clifford considered this draft at length on Sunday, March 9.

March 10 (Sunday)

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 we considered for various reasons objectionable and distracting, for very clear reasons, and Clifford promptly suggested that these ideas be deleted, his readiness to do so suggesting that the changes had been suggested by neither him or the President but by others in the White House staff.

Clifford returned to the White House and a conference was held with the President, Admiral Leahy, and others in 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 draft.

March 12 (Tuesday)

At 10:30 the President appeared before a Joint Session of the Senate and House in the House chamber and delivered the message.