THE ADMINISTRATION OF American Foreign Affairs

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To

JOHN *and* JANE GAUS

Chapter XIV

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC AND CONGRESS

THE PUBLIC DEFINED

Perhaps in no other field of discourse is there so much loose talk as in the field of the public's role in a democratic state. Political leaders in all sincerity talk about their direction by "the public," without recognizing that in fact their own decisions are influenced by many complex forces representing many different groups. Educators often discuss training for citizenship under the assumption that each individual would be concerned for his entire community if he were only exposed to certain courses in school. Serious-minded citizens say that civic improvement could be accomplished if only "the public" were made aware of the need. Many an individual, distressed by the alarming tendency of international political affairs to affront human sanity, has concluded that if "the public" were informed, it would cure such social ills as war.

Much of this kind of approach assumes that the public is one whole and so responds as a whole. It also assumes that the response of the whole will be reasonable and will be forthcoming provided only that accurate information be given the public.

In reality, what we call "the public" is many different groups, or publics. Their composition changes and is determined at any one time by the subject that commands the attention of the individuals who form the public for that subject. Thus at one moment an individual may be a member of the public that is concerned with the local schools because his children are of school age. The same individual may be a member of another public that is concerned with the new automobile models because he wants a new car. And so on, he may be a member of any number of groups, depending upon his various concerns. He does not necessarily remain steadfast in any one group. New members are added and old members drop out as their concerns change. The public interested in any subject is in constant change. Sometimes a public will grow so large that it includes nearly all the individuals in a community. The public concerned with victory in a war would include practically all the individuals in the national community. The public concerned with a football game will include most of the individuals in a college community any Saturday afternoon in season. More often, however, the public for any subject is a smaller portion of the entire community and may in fact be only a small portion, much less than a majority. This becomes especially significant whenever a small public, by using persuasion and taking advantage of the indifference or acquiescence of the other publics, establishes a policy that affects the entire community. Pressure politics it is often called, but whatever the name, many decisions of general policy are made as a result of the interest of a few and the acquiescence of the many.

When we talk about informing the public we should be clear that only particular publics are ever reached by particular information. The publicist, whether he be publicizing soap or world government, shoots his persuasive argument into the

air hoping that it will strike a responsive public within the mass community. He tries to base his persuasion upon ideas or symbols already supported by the people he hopes to reach. The mode of persuasion may be the spoken word, a piece in such a medium as a newspaper, pamphlet, book, or magazine, or a motion picture, a poster, or a stage play. Often the persuasion reaches principally those who are already convinced, although the persuader is always hopeful that he will recruit some new believers through his argument.

The terms education, information, and propaganda are often debated by people who grope with the subject of communication, the definitions in some cases becoming very strained because of a widespread compulsion to apologize for propaganda. Thus one definition may say that education is the transmission of skills, information the transmission of news without persuasion, and propaganda the transmission of persuasion. In practice, however, all three concepts become mixed until it is almost impossible to dissect one from the other. Education includes some propaganda, as when teachers persuade their charges to honor the customs of their group; whether those customs be respect for such elementary ideas as private property, when teaching the very young, or such elaborate rationalizations as some of the myths that are perpetuated among graduate students who are trained to become teachers. As for the concept of pure information, one has only to realize that reporters and desk editors must always choose what they want to emphasize in order to recognize that news contains opinion.

A more useful approach is to consider that whatever comes to the attention of individuals or groups may have its effect in a change of attitude toward the object under consideration at the particular time. It may be principally education, information, or propaganda, but the necessity to carve out the separate elements is removed. Each of us is bombarded continuously by images and sounds that convey the mixture of fact and persuasion which forms our opinions. We take a walk and we pass show windows in the city or billboards in the country, or perhaps a companion in conversation will make an impression on our attitudes. We go to school and the teachers tell us to believe in the virtues of the founding fathers. We go to the movies and find in a photoplay persuasion against the Soviet Union or against race prejudice or in favor of priests and policemen and the accepted virtues of good fellowship. We turn on the radio and hear a nerve-shattering multitude of sounds that have the effect of making us believe one thing or another. We pick up a magazine or newspaper and find words, ideas, and pictures that will affect our thinking. Wherever we turn we meet sounds and images that press upon our senses, and some of them register with effect. The ones that register are the ones in which we had some previous conditioning that made us receptive. Put another way, we read and hear only those items that we want to read and hear. Much of the news in newspapers is skipped by readers, while no one in his right mind would think of listening to everything on the radio or of accepting every idea in motion pictures. The audience for any particular concept is as specialized as the public for that concept and is by no means the entire mass of individuals in the community.

This brings us to the point that the public concerned with United States foreign relations, generally defined, is surprisingly small. With the exception of such a foreign policy as an actual war, only a small minority of Americans ever choose to receive the information, education, or propaganda available on the subject of specific foreign policies. Most Americans are just not interested in foreign affairs if we assume that their ignorance of subjects in the field indicates lack of interest.

IGNORANCE OF ISSUES

Martin Kriesberg has summarized the condition of ignorance in his contribution to *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, a pertinent book edited by Lester Markel.[1] He draws his evi-

[1] Lester Markel and others, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (New York, Harper & Bros., published for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1949). The report by Martin Kriesberg is Chapter II, "Dark Areas of

dence from the public opinion polls, after asserting that, despite the harsh words said about polls for their failure to predict the election of 1948, they still provide valuable information and that if there is any error in their revelation of ignorance it is likely to be in reporting a higher level of information than actually exists, because people will tend to claim knowledge they do not possess in order to save face. Summed up in Dr. Kriesberg's own words:

> About 30 percent of the electorate, on the average, is *unaware* of almost any given event in American foreign affairs.
>
> About 45 percent of the electorate is *aware* of important events in the field but cannot be considered *informed*. These people retain little information. Although they may follow discussions of the issues of foreign policy, they cannot frame intelligent arguments about them.
>
> Only 25 percent of the electorate consistently shows knowledge of foreign problems.

In this language the *unaware* "freely confess that they have neither heard nor read of important issues in American foreign policy;" the *aware* have heard or read of the issues but have only rudimentary knowledge of them; and the *informed* know the meaning and the implication of the issues. Both the *unaware* and the *aware* groups are usually regarded as uninformed, so that for all practical purposes of the guidance of national policy by an informed mass public, only 25 per cent of the adults in America are available as informed individuals on foreign policy issues in general.

These are average conditions over a period of years, it should be noted. When a particular issue of foreign policy is prominent in the news the number of informed will tend to

Ignorance." Another relevant study is Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., and Sylvia Eberhart, *American Opinion on World Affairs in the Atomic Age* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1948), based on a report prepared for the Committee on the Social and Economic Aspects of Atomic Energy of the Social Science Research Council. While the survey is concerned with public opinion toward the atomic bomb, it includes valuable insight into other aspects of the public and foreign affairs. An interesting historical and interpretative discussion of American popular reaction to foreign affairs is Thomas A. Bailey, *The Man in the Street, The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (New York, Macmillan Co., 1948).

increase, Dr. Kriesberg reports, "but even when an issue has received widespread publicity, a large proportion of the electorate remains unaware of it, and substantially less than half is found to be *informed*." Thus, for three examples of issues that received wide publicity at the time, 25 per cent were informed about the British Loan proposal in March, 1946; 37 per cent were informed about the Greek-Turkish Aid proposal in March, 1947; and only 14 per cent were informed about the Marshall Plan proposal of aid to Western Europe in February, 1948. It was fairly early in the discussion of the Marshall Plan when this count was taken, but Dr. Kriesberg says that at no time did the percentage of informed citizens reach a point that could be called encouraging. A series of Gallup polls taken over a two-year period showed that fewer voters could be called informed on foreign affairs than on domestic, less than a fourth on foreign affairs, and about one-third on domestic affairs. These polls were taken at the end and during the first year after World War II and covered such foreign affairs topics as the San Francisco Conference which established the United Nations, the Bretton Woods proposals for a world bank and stabilization fund, voting procedure in the Security Council, the loan to Britain, and President Truman's proposal to give aid to Greece and Turkey.

But lest the one-fourth of adults who now appear to be informed be considered as thoroughly informed, other evidence shows how little a person has to know in order to be classed as informed. In an unpublished memorandum presented in 1948 to the Public Library Inquiry of the Social Science Research Council, Helen R. Roberts examined the findings of several polling agencies on the extent of information concerning prominent and timely matters.[2] The small amount of information that is necessary to merit a rating of *informed* is revealed in the surveys assembled in her summary.

The Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan in December, 1946, and January, 1947, using its intensive in-

[2] Helen R. Roberts, "Civic Enlightenment in the United States as Measured by Public Opinion Polling Agencies," memorandum for the Public Library Inquiry, July 18, 1949, mimeographed.

terviews which allow a person to show as much or as little as he knows, rated people for their understanding of Russia and United States–Soviet relations.[3] The highest rating was given to 22 per cent who made more than one specific reference to persons, places, or events of current importance related to Russia or U.S.–Soviet relations. The second rating was given to 37 per cent who made more than one general statement but did not make a specific reference to a person, place, or event. The third rating, given to 20 per cent, was for only one general statement, and the lowest rating, to 21 per cent, was given to people who knew nothing whatsoever. The ratings were based upon answers to the following questions:

> Can you think of any things that the United States and Russia are likely to have trouble about in the next few years? What do you have in mind?
>
> How about power and influence in the world—do you think we are likely to have trouble with Russia over that?
>
> Russia and the United States have already had some disagreements. As you remember it, what are some of the things these two countries have disagreed about?
>
> In what ways are things different in Russia now than before they had Communism?
>
> What would you say is the main difference between the government in Russia and our government here?

In other words, if a person answering any of these questions, in his own way so that he could bring to bear any information he might have, made more than one specific reference to a person, place, or event, he was rated in the top group of those informed. He might have known no more than the identity of "Molotov," "Moscow," and "Yalta Conference," to be considered in the top rating.

Another example of the slight requirements for a high rating is taken from a survey conducted in Cincinnati in September, 1947, by the National Opinion Research Center using the question: "What would you say is the main purpose

[3] Survey Research Center, "Public Attitude Toward Russia and U.S.–Russian Relations: A Nation-Wide Survey" (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, March 1947), quoted by Helen R. Roberts, *Op. Cit.*

of the United Nations organization?"[4] Thirty per cent of those interviewed had no idea whatever. The "poorly informed," 27 per cent, answered *incorrectly* three or more of six items relevant to the purpose of United Nations, while the 43 per cent "better informed" answered *correctly* four or more of the six items. The six items were:

> As far as you know, is it the job of the United Nations to . . .
> See that all people everywhere get equal rights?
> Improve health conditions in different parts of the world?
> Increase trade between countries?
> Deal with disarmament and control of atomic bomb?
> Set up a new world language to be used in all countries?
> Work out peace treaties with Germany and Japan?

Only 1 per cent of the people surveyed were able to answer all six questions correctly.

The Michigan Survey Research Center in April, 1947, surveyed a cross section of the entire nation's adults for their understanding of the purpose of the United Nations and American foreign policy.[5] It rated as low in understanding the 34 per cent who were unable to give even a simple explanation of the United Nations. If a person had said, "To keep peace," or "To help the countries get along," which were considered acceptable as simple explanations, he would have escaped the low rating. A rating of medium was given to 44 per cent who were familiar with the purpose of the United Nations but who could not show any familiarity with details. The rating of high was given to the 22 per cent who could give a full and correct answer to at least one of six questions which required a knowledge of some details.

The conclusion is clear that the majority of adult Americans are not very thoroughly informed about even such prominent topics as American relations with the Soviet Union

[4] National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, "Cincinnati Looks at the United Nations," Report No. 37. Quoted by Helen R. Roberts, *Op. Cit.*

[5] Survey Research Center, "Public Attitudes Toward American Foreign Policy: A Nation-Wide Survey" (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, May 1947), Part I, "Patterns of Attitudes Toward American Foreign Policy." Quoted by Helen R. Roberts, *Op. Cit.*

or the United Nations. If they are classified as informed, there is still a possibility that they know very little indeed to merit their rating.

It would be easy to resolve the dilemma that is caused for democracy by this ignorance among the sovereign people by saying that if only more information were distributed, the people would be better informed. Unfortunately, for this easy solution, the American people have available to them much more information about foreign affairs than they ever absorb. There is some validity to the argument that if more information is devoted to public affairs, more people would be interested, but at the same time there is no blinking the fact that Americans by and large do not pay much attention to the information that is already available on public issues. Apparently if they go to the movies, the majority fail to retain such elementary facts as the newsreels present; if they read the newspaper, they pass over the items on foreign policy; if they listen to the radio, they do not hear with any interest the news of foreign relations.

The proportion of people who are informed about foreign affairs is strikingly smaller than the proportion of people who are exposed steadily to the media of communication that carry at least some information about those policies. About 90–95 per cent of adult Americans listen to the radio fifteen minutes a day or more. About 85–90 per cent read one or more newspapers more or less regularly. About 60–70 per cent read one or more magazines more or less regularly. About 45–50 per cent see a motion picture once every two weeks or oftener. About 25–30 per cent read one or more books a month.[6] Compare these figures with the 25 per cent of adult Americans who show a knowledge of foreign problems and the point is clear. If the information beats upon their eyes and ears, it is not taken in and retained.

About the only effective change that would create more

[6] Bernard Berelson with the assistance of Lester Asheim, *The Library's Public, A Report of the Public Library Inquiry* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 6. Dean Berelson draws his data from several recent studies of the extent to which people are exposed to various media.

interest appears to be in the areas of schooling and income. Interest in reading about and discussing public affairs, including foreign policy, rises with the level of education and income. Conceivably if most citizens finished high school and got college degrees and made larger incomes, more people would be interested in foreign affairs. This is, however, a fairly remote solution for any immediate problem of democratic control.

In a nation where the amount of information available is prodigious, yet where the people are by and large indifferent to foreign affairs, it is doubtful that the answer is to pour on more information and argument. The answer is, rather, to recognize the condition that exists and to realize that much of the folklore of democracy by public opinion is subject to question. Once the realities are recognized, caution can be raised against any abuse of the masses, and controls can be imposed at the points where they would be effective.

One aspect of reality is that since most people are not interested in foreign affairs, the small public that is interested is the only public that has any chance of being effective in the formulation of policy. This public, as usual, will be partly unorganized. Some individuals, however, will be organized and they will form the strategic public in this field. The organized group may or may not represent the views of the small public that can be expected to have opinions, but it will be the only group ready with opinions and aggressive in their expression. Some organizations, such as the National Association of Manufacturers, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the League of Women Voters, were established for other purposes but incidentally take an interest in foreign policy. Other groups, notably the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies which worked for the adoption of lend-lease in 1940–41, were formed to work primarily for certain ends in foreign relations. The relatively new movement for world government, with committees appearing over the country, including one committee of promi-

nent writers who are pledged to work for international unity, is a significant current example of the appearance of special groups. Another type of organization concerned with foreign affairs is represented by the Foreign Policy Association and the Council on Foreign Relations, which do not bring pressure for particular programs but which provide information and discussion on the issues under consideration. Theirs is mainly the function of distributing accurate information. Altogether, 42 organizations were invited by the Department of State to send representatives to the San Francisco conference at which the United Nations was established. The American delegates consulted twice a week with the representatives of the organizations.[7]

Organizations will be more effective than any unorganized individuals. They can present to government officials a judgment that represents at least the consensus of their members. They can provide observers and representatives at the place and at the time advice is acceptable. They can also be used by officials to carry messages to their members, so that it is sometimes difficult to know whether the organization urges the official or the official uses the organization.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PREVAILS

A result of the present lack of interest in the mass public is that executive officials of government, particularly in the practice of foreign relations, can make most of the decisions of national policy and, if necessary, can persuade a following for them. Executive leadership is prevalent here. It is inevitable since the executive officials of government deal with other governments and receive first all the official information which affects decisions. The executive branch responds to public pressure for a foreign policy less often than it takes pressure to the public to support the policies already decided.

[7] Blair Bolles, *Who Makes Our Foreign Policy?* (New York, Foreign Policy Association, Headline Series, No. 62, March–April, 1947), pp. 61–65. This entire pamphlet is recommended reading for anyone interested in the factors that enter the formulation of foreign policy.

The executive, in this sense, is many people. It includes the "desk officers" in the political affairs units and various other groups in the Department of State; it includes the influential policy advisers of the military departments, and technicians and policy leaders in the Departments of Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, and other Federal agencies. The President is the chief of the executive branch of government, but by no means does he originate all the policies that are sponsored by that branch. Policies for foreign relations arise in all sorts of places within the executive. Some of them reach the eminence of spoken support from the President or the Secretary of State. More of them are framed and carried out without the attention that is drawn by the high light of top sponsorship. Some prominent recent policies will illustrate the fact of executive leadership. The typical major foreign policies are now developed in the executive branch and sold to the Congress and those groups in the mass public which show any interest in foreign affairs. The Truman doctrine of economic aid to "free people" who are fighting totalitarianism, the Marshall plan of American financial aid for the recovery of other countries, the Atlantic Pact of alliance among the nations of the democratic West, and military aid to Europe—all these were executive policies sponsored in executive leadership. They were developed by officials in the executive agencies; they were raised to the top level of sponsorship by the President and his Cabinet officers; they were taken to Congress and the nation in an organized campaign of persuasion for their adoption.

For the conduct of foreign relations, the executive officials of the Federal Government, together with the organized groups that take an interest and the members of Congress to be discussed later, form an elite that makes the decisions in the name of the sovereign masses. The Federal executive is the most influential of the three elements. This elite is not free to make arbitrary and unwelcome decisions, and in fact it must be constantly alert to the objections that will be raised to its proposals, but it remains nonetheless the group which originates foreign policies and the group which uses the media

of persuasion to secure whatever approval is necessary. It prepares the press releases which serve the newspapers and radio, the speeches for radio, the statements for hearings called by congressional committees, the timing of announcements that will create an atmosphere favorable to the executive argument.

Any theory of democracy which pertains to the popular control of foreign relations—and domestic policies too—must take account of the role of the executive element of the elite if it is to be realistic. Once the strategic position of this elite is recognized, then democratic theory becomes a concern for the controls that can be applied to the governmental executive without impairing its essential work. In the search for a way to insure such executive responsibility, certain conditions in the administration of foreign affairs need to be considered.

First, the executive branch of the Federal Government is in a better position than any other group in the nation to use the instruments of persuasion. It is part of "the government," and as such quite properly it is considered by the media of mass communication to be disinterested, so far as profit of any sort is concerned, in the attention it is given. Executive officials work in the public interest, even though they may define that interest. The managers of newspapers, newsreels, radio, magazines, and motion pictures, who must be on guard constantly against being used for free advertising, accept the news of government as being in the public interest and also as having no connection with profits for the persons who give out the news. When the leader of a business, labor, or farm organization makes a statement, unless he is speaking during a crisis such as a strike, his words may be carried on the inside pages of a few metropolitan newspapers and never reach the radio and newsreels. If the President makes a statement, it will probably be placed on page one of many daily newspapers, repeated through a whole day of radio news broadcasts, and carried in the newsreels if the President so desires. If he wishes, the radio networks will be cleared for his use, without any charge except during the time he is making campaign speeches. What is true of the President's ability to claim the use of

media is true only in lesser degree of his higher subordinates, particularly the Secretary of State in recent years when foreign relations have been so prominent in the media. And in this function, as in all others, the many different people who form the executive share in the opportunity and the expression that is personalized so often in the President and the Secretary.

The executive officials have systematized their use of the media of mass communication, and in many cases their relations with the organized groups in the mass public which have an interest in the subject.[8] For the field of foreign relations, the President and the Department of State are most strategic, although occasionally other agencies join in a campaign of propaganda for such a joint program as economic aid to Europe, reciprocal trade agreements, or the development of industrially backward countries as proposed in point four of the President's inaugural address of January, 1949.

The President's press conference, his speeches to Congress and to the nation, his appearance before newsreel cameras, the routine constant work of his press secretary, the persistent attention that is given to his every move are all too familiar to require additional description. He can claim the attention of the mass media by the merest gestures, such as, for example, whether or not he shakes hands with a certain foreign representative, as actually became prominent in the news when President Truman shook hands with Andrei Vishinsky, foreign minister of the Soviet Union, when they sat on the same platform at the laying of the cornerstone of the United Nations secretariat building in 1949.[9]

Within the Department of State a Special Assistant to the Secretary for Press Relations and his small staff provide for news as it develops the chief outlet to the mass media of newspapers, news magazines, radio, newsreel, and news photogra-

[8] James L. McCamy, *Government Publicity, Its Practice in Federal Administration* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1939), describes the systematic use of media by Federal officials. For a discussion of the role of government in the broad field of communication, see Zechariah Chafee, Jr., *Government and Mass Communications* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1947, a study for the Commission on Freedom of the Press, two volumes).

[9] *New York Times*, October 25, 1949.

phers. The most effective publicity of persuasion is presented in the form of spot news, hence this office is the most strategic in government outside the President's Office for the handling of propaganda for executive proposals of foreign policy. This staff, provided it is consulted by top officials and provided it chooses to manipulate the news, can time releases, determine the emphasis to be given to various events, and can withhold information that might be adverse to the executive strategy. One has great difficulty when trying to keep "straight news" and "propaganda" separated, primarily because in so much current practice the two are inseparable. Silas Bent once estimated, and with considerable justification, that news of murder, suicide, forgery, and fire is the only news in a modern newspaper that does not come in some way from press agents.[10] In a society in which a ladies garden club, a church youth group, or an amateur choir will have a publicity committee, it is not strange that the great preponderance of news is deliberately released and the press has become more and more a handler of handouts.

The government publicity man, including the chief of press relations for the Department of State, will contend sincerely that he does no more than facilitate the gathering of news by the media. But ours is a system in which most news is news that is selected by people who want it to be spread. This is true, oddly enough, even of news that officials would choose not to have released but which they fear will be discovered. In such a case, the news is released with the official's own chosen emphasis, to give it the best possible light, in order to forestall discovery by the occasional probing reporter. This condition in which news equals publicity and vice versa is not necessarily a threat to democracy. Perhaps it does no more than violate a fiction that the press maintains a fierce self-sufficiency and that all news is uncovered by the relentless, vigilant agents of the press. It would become sinister as a choke on freedom only if the government's executive officials established censorship over the press to prevent publication of the news released by competitive sources such as leaders of organi-

[10] Silas Bent, *Ballyhoo* (New York, Boni & Liveright, 1927), p. 133.

zations and political parties in opposition to official policies. Under present circumstances, the government publicity man is in constant competition with other publicity sources. He has an advantage in the competition when he works for the President or the Secretary of State because they can claim the attention of media to a greater extent than can most other leaders in our community, but he cannot monopolize the news, and this is an important difference between despotism and democracy.

As a routine performance the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Press Relations distributes about 1,000 separate news releases a year, distributes the texts of speeches or statements by officials of the department, arranges press conferences for the Secretary and other departmental officials, and may advise these officials on what questions to anticipate from the press.[11] In general all information that reaches the public from the Department of State through the mass media, and that is intended to reach the public, will pass through this chief publicity man's hands.

Some news is still discovered by exceptional reporters who ask questions of those individual officials who are sufficiently eminent or audacious to violate the established procedures and talk for publication. These newsstories may be attributed, for example, to "a State Department official" or may say simply, "It was learned today." Such news is probably still released deliberately in the sense that an official will not talk to an individual reporter unless he wants the information published. There are times, however, when this type of anonymous release is contrary to the official departmental policy line. Individual officials who are opposed to accepted policy sometimes "leak" news to reporters in the hope of influencing a decision toward their own preferred policy, though most news is released through the official channel, carefully prepared as to wording and emphasis and representing the executive program in its most favorable possible light.

Another type of public information is handled by the Office

[11] Lester Markel and Others, *Op. Cit.*, Chapter VI, "More than Diplomacy," by W. Phillips Davison.

of Public Affairs of the Department of State. It is in part the longer-range and slower-tempo type of official release represented in pamphlets, books, and periodicals, including scholarly journals, and it is in another part the direct delivery of official information to individuals and groups through speeches and letters. A Division of Public Liaison, within the Office of Public Affairs, maintains relations with private groups, answers the mail that brings questions concerning foreign policy, arranges for speakers to appear from the Department, provides data for scholars and writers. A Division of Publications issues a variety of books and pamphlets that convey official policies. The Department of State has tried to promote the reading of its own publications, many of which carry the verbatim statements of United States foreign policies. It has made arrangements with offices of organized groups concerned with foreign affairs to sell or give away its publications to authorized journalists, teachers, and discussion groups. It has urged libraries to set up displays of its publications and to refer clients to the distribution centers maintained by the organized groups.[12] It has designed its publications to be attractive and readable. Two points should be made, however, about the enlightenment of citizens through State Department publications. First, the publications tend to reach those readers who are already interested in foreign affairs and therefore they do not tend to widen the public so concerned. And second, under present procedures of distribution of government publications, it is unlikely that any large number of citizens will ever know about these publications even if they should be inclined to read them. The publications present accurate statements of United States foreign policy and would provide considerable enlightenment if they were widely read.

Having said that the executive officials combine with the organized groups that take an interest in foreign affairs to form, with Congress, the elite which has influence in this field, it would be expected that relations between the Department

[12] James L. McCamy with the assistance of Julia B. McCamy, *Government Publications for the Citizen*, A Report of the Public Library Inquiry (New York, Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 68–69.

of State and those groups would be well established. The interchange of ideas and suggestions is constant. It is most effective when the organized group has agents who can talk the same language as the executive officials. Most effective pressure groups have one or more research specialists who dig up information relevant to the cause under promotion. These people and their superiors in many cases have the same type of information as the government officials. When the bureaucracy of the pressure group and the bureaucracy of government get together on a common question, they meet as craftsmen. Much of the liaison between government and private groups takes place among the subordinates who write the first draft of a policy. The staffs of such experienced groups as the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Farm Bureau Federation, or the League of Women Voters do much of their work with the technical staffs of government, and when necessary they also go to the top officials. In any case, it is the constant, informed, and friendly exchange between government officials and pressure group officials which provides the most effective collaboration.

In addition, the Department of State maintains more remote relations with some 300 national citizens' groups whose members it hopes to reach with information. The Public Liaison Division assists these groups in getting speakers, supplies information, sends representatives to their conventions, and provides discussion material. Some publications have been issued with large organizations in mind. One example is the series of *Foreign Affairs Outlines*, brief summaries with titles such as "What Are We Doing in Germany and Why." Another is the series of *Pocket Pamphlets* which give summaries of United States positions on such issues as atomic energy or international trade. The circulation of these small popularized publications is much greater in volume than that of other publications.[13]

Another significant relationship is a face-to-face meeting between officials of the department and representatives of

[13] Lester Markel and Others, *Op. Cit.*, Chap. VI by W. Phillips Davison, pp. 134–35.

organized groups or other influential people such as professional lecturers and editors. Conferences are arranged at which officials talk and answer questions about policies, with an opportunity usually for the nongovernment visitors to make suggestions.

Other departments of the executive branch also have press relations offices and issue statements of executive policy in foreign affairs whenever they are concerned. The armed services are especially significant as sources of publicity. They are extensively organized for the deliberate release of selected news.[14] They also maintain relations with selected civilian leaders outside government for the end of mutual understanding. On October 31, 1949, the fifth "joint civilian orientation conference" opened in Washington for eighty representatives of business, finance, labor, religion, and the professions to hear top officials of the armed services discuss defense. An air tour to see demonstrations in Florida and Georgia was arranged.[15] Whenever a concerted effort is in order to secure some common purpose, the whole battery of agencies at the President's command will join in prepared statements to congressional committees, which are reported in the newspapers, radio, and perhaps the newsreels, in speeches direct to audiences present and listening to the radio, and in negotiation with public groups and with members of Congress.

THE PROMOTION OF POLICIES

The point to remember is that the executive officials of government are in a position to use the media of communication, are organized to do so, and in fact do so in great volume. This condition is illustrated in nearly any major policy decision by Congress in recent times. One need only trace the advocacy of the policy from the time of its formulation in the executive until it is adopted by Congress to see the system at work. Executive officials announce the proposal, sometimes after

[14] *Ibid.*, Chap. V, "When the Big Guns Speak," by Hanson W. Baldwin.
[15] *New York Times*, November 1 and 2, 1949.

leading up to the announcement with less specific discussions of the condition that led to the proposal. They probably have conferred with the key members of Congress who carry first influence in the reception of foreign policy bills. The public announcement of the proposal is carefully prepared, with every phrase weighed for its effect on the people who will read it, every argument for the proposal included but seldom one against it.

Next, a bill which in most cases has been written in collaboration with executive officials is introduced by friendly members of both houses of Congress. The Secretary of State testifies before committees of both houses, followed by the heads of other agencies who can add weight to the argument, say the Secretary of Defense if the subject is military aid to other powers or the Secretary of Agriculture if the subject is reciprocal trade agreements. Such testimony is reported by press and radio and perhaps by the newsreels. During the campaign for adoption of the measure, executive agencies may reveal news that conduces to support, timing the release to coincide with consideration of the policy. Executive agencies must be cautious about spending money for direct propaganda to influence legislation, since this has been forbidden by law since 1919, but testimony before congressional committees, letters to members of Congress who have asked for information, and the release of news that inclines its audience to favor a proposal is different from the printing of pamphlets or the dispatch of official speakers to urge pressure on Congress for the adoption of a particular bill. Securing legislation is, in fact, one of the identifiable purposes in executive publicity practices, or, in other words, in the release of news at the right time.[16]

Other good men come to the aid of their country as the campaign develops. Leaders of the organizations that favor the policy may testify before the committees. Resolutions will be adopted by local and national groups and copies sent to Congress and the press. Eminent individuals will make statements for publication. Radio commentators will add their

[16] James L. McCamy, *Government Publicity*, *Op. Cit.*, Chap. II.

quotable wisdom and the few radio programs that discuss public issues may stage debates. The few citizens' groups which try to keep informed about such matters, such as the local Councils of Foreign Relations in the big cities or the League of Women Voters, will have speakers to discuss the proposal.

If there is opposition, its representatives will also usually be heard by the congressional committees if they request a hearing. The opposition will be given space in the press according to whether the managers of the choice of news to publish have any tolerance for the opposition viewpoint and whether the representatives of the opposition enjoy reputations for being orthodox. Newspapermen shy away, and with some reason, from the unorthodox citizen who objects too often to governmental policies and who too frequently seeks public attention for his objection. A conventional citizen makes the most effective spokesman for the opposition. Two conditions should be recalled, however, concerning the opposition to a proposed policy in the field of foreign relations. First, in this field more than in any other save the military, opponents of official proposals have difficulty in getting the information upon which news and argument can be based to support their opposition. He who gets the first attention in a campaign of promotion has the advantage. Outsiders can almost never obtain the information concerning foreign relations that will allow them to beat the government executives to the public with news and argument. The information is concealed in official papers, such as reports from missions abroad or the reports of analysts in the departments in Washington, and is known first only by the officials who have access to these papers. Secondly, as discussed earlier, the government official is considered to be personally removed from any private gain to come from the policy he proposes, while most others in our profit-making society are considered to be working for some interest. If the head of a highway builders' association, for example, opposes government appropriations for Europe on the ground that the money should be spent for highways at home, he will be given less attention than will the government official who will gain no profits from aid to Europe.

EFFORTS TO LEARN OPINION

There is no easy alternative to this general dependence upon an elite in the practice of foreign relations. One cannot contend with any assurance that the executive should consult the public before a policy is formulated. Which public would he consult? The organized groups that now participate with the executive in the elite are not a majority of the mass public, and the balance of the mass is overwhelmingly indifferent to issues of foreign policy while they are being developed.

And is an opinion worth much if it is registered by people who do not know what they are talking about? Suppose the government executive asks a simple question in a straw poll: Do you favor or oppose a high tariff by the United States on goods coming from Iron Curtain countries? Francis Russell, the State Department's Director for Public Affairs, in 1949 asked the questions that follow from the hypothesis:

> Suppose we find that 55 percent of the American people are in favor of it, 35 percent are opposed, and 10 percent have no opinion. Do we conclude from this that a substantial majority of the American people are in favor of such a policy and that it should be immediately put into effect? Or do we go on to inquire how many of the American people know what a tariff is? Recent surveys indicate that only half of the American people have a clear idea of the nature of a tariff. Do we inquire how many people know the elements of this country's reciprocal trade-agreement program and what the effect of such a reversal of this program would mean to the economy of this country and the general program of world economic recovery? Do we inquire how many people are aware of the relationship between the Tito regime in Yugoslavia and the Kremlin, and what the possible effect of a lumping together of all countries behind the Iron Curtain might be?

Mr. Russell concluded, in answer to his own questions, that public opinion analysis could be helpful to officials "who are faced with the necessity of formulating particular elements of our foreign policy" in the following ways:

In the first place, public-opinion analysis can show the general mood or attitude of the country toward a particular line of policy. Such attitudes are not, under our form of government, determinative, but they are a most important factor and frequently fix the limitations within which policy can be formulated.

Secondly, in addition to knowing the general attitude of the public, it is important to know the extent and intensity of the views of the contending interest groups involved; and also to know the intensity of opinions of non-self-interested groups.

Thirdly, it is important to know the extent and the accuracy of public information concerning the elements of the problem. This makes possible an assessment of the weight that should be attached to the views that are held. It may also be helpful in providing a guide to areas in which the Government has failed in making available adequate information where that information is exclusively or especially in its possession.[17]

This statement by a thoughtful executive official summarizes the difficulty of assuming a direct and competent influence of people in the mass over decisions of foreign policy. The Department of State tries to find out what people are thinking in order to obtain the information called useful by Mr. Russell. The Division of Public Studies systematically reads editorials, columns, and feature stories from a wide variety of newspapers, reads the *Congressional Record* to see what members of Congress are saying, analyzes the findings of the various public opinion polls, reads magazines and transcripts of radio comment, reads statements issued by leaders and reads the resolutions and publications issued by organized groups. The Public Inquiries Branch handles letters from citizens who ask questions or make comment on foreign policy. Such letters average about 400 a day but vary greatly in volume from day to day depending on the prominence of the matters under discussion. The Division of Public Liaison pays attention to the resolutions adopted by organized groups and sometimes circulates them to other officials of the department.

[17] Francis H. Russell, "The Function of Public-Opinion Analysis in the Formulation of Foreign Policy," Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. XX, No. 505, March 6, 1949, p. 275.

It also sends representatives to conventions in part to find out what members of groups are saying about foreign policies, and it takes note of the questions and comments received when it holds conferences in Washington with representatives of groups. Most government officials are sensitive to the opinions of the people they meet whenever they go on trips, talk with friends outside the government, or attend meetings of private groups. Many a decision has been made because some official happened to talk with someone who was accepted by the official as representing "public opinion." It is an inexact practice but not uncommon. For that matter, all these techniques of opinion-analysis, with the possible exception of the polls, are too inexact to be admitted in any profession of science, but they are the only ones currently used.

The findings that come from the use of these loose techniques are presented in a two- or three-page daily summary of opinion sent to about 50 officials of the department, a longer ten- to fifteen-page fortnightly summary of which about 200 copies are distributed to Department officials and about 400 are sent to American missions abroad, a weekly digest of outstanding magazine articles on foreign affairs for about 80 officials, a weekly summary in about 50 copies of the opinions of organized groups, and in special reports on particular subjects as required. In practice, however, the officials who are primarily responsible for formulating foreign policy pay little or no attention to these particular factors of public opinion that might be relevant, as W. Phillips Davison, the editor of the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, found in his study of this function in the Department of State. They may or may not read the written reports on public opinion, but they seldom consult the specialists in public opinion during the process of developing a policy. "In practice," says Mr. Davison, "a policy maker may be more influenced by reading his customary newspaper in the evening and thinking through the arguments advanced by columnists or commentators than by scanning in his office mimeographed reports on public opinion." [18] Perhaps the rea-

[18] Lester Markel and Others, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 128–31.

son is that policy-making officials know that their significant publics are not assessed by the sampling of newspapers and cross-section polls. Rather, the support needed for any foreign policy is known by higher officials to come from the handful of people who are organized to be effective with help, or opposition, and their views can be had without polling them.

Most foreign policy, in any case, cannot await the initiative of a public outside the governmental executive branch. It has to be decided, and is decided, in the urgency of the moment by officials who do their sincere best to represent the interest of the nation as a whole as they see it. These officials hope, of course, that their policy will be accepted and even supported by the interested public groups, and that the mass public will acquiesce in the policy, for officials in our system must be conscious always of the fact that the mass public could refute its officials if it ever got sufficiently concerned. At all times the executive official must try to make decisions that will secure the support of some interested groups, avoid the hostility of some, and be prepared to meet the opposition of others. He cannot please all, but he can try to anticipate the reactions of the various groups. Meanwhile, he must make decisions of policy as the world moves and the United States moves with it.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE

It is essential to examine the responsibility of the Federal executive since it has such extensive and original power in the field of foreign affairs. The President's responsibility is clearer than is that of the thousands of permanent officials who make the great majority of the individual decisions. He and his Cabinet answer to Congress, to the electorate, and occasionally to the courts, and his party is brought to judgment every four years at election time. Not so, the permanent officials. Their responsibility must be located in less obvious, more subtle arrangements.

They are responsible to the political heads, the President

and his top officials, only for those matters which come to the attention of those political heads. It is no answer to say that the permanent officials are responsible to political heads for all matters, because they are not. It is estimated that less than 1 per cent of Federal personnel would be changed by a new President if an opposition party wins an election.[19] In other words, less than 20,000 employees, not all of them policy-makers, represent that part of the Federal executive which can be voted out of office, or kept in office if the electorate is satisfied with their work. If we assume that 10 per cent of Federal employees are in positions to make public policy, the results show that too many are responsible to too few to mean that the political heads can supervise all policy-making. The total number of Federal executive civilian employees is just over two million. Ten per cent of the total, or two hundred thousand, are, under this assumption, in position to affect public policy, either as people who select the facts for consideration or as executives who make decisions. Ten per cent of the 20,000 estimated to change with a new president of a different party is 2,000. It is clear that the officials who affect policy cannot be responsible for all their actions to those who are politically responsible to the electorate. Two hundred thousand can be responsible to two thousand only for the few items that the two thousand can take into cognizance. Nevertheless, the two hundred thousand are responsible to political heads for the few items that can receive attention. The permanent group may also receive, but this is by no means certain, a general guidance from the political heads as to large policy goals so that individual decisions can be related to the larger general policy. A Franklin Roosevelt, for example, may create an atmosphere by his dramatic solution of problems and his more dramatic explanation of his policy so that the permanent executive officials, as well as other citizens, are guided toward the general goal. The spirit of new effort is spread throughout an organization in the exceptional times of crisis and bold leadership. At other times, however, the political heads are

[19] Paul H. Appleby, "A Reappraisal of Federal Employment as a Career," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, Spring 1948, p. 85.

really out of touch with nearly all their subordinates in the permanent service, and they deal with the few only on those matters that can come to their attention.

Next, the permanent executive officials are responsible to any staffs that are created to serve the political heads. Under present organization, the only such staffs considerable at the President's level relevant directly to foreign affairs are the Bureau of the Budget, the staff of the National Security Board, and that of the National Security Resources Board. In some departments, staff offices appear from time to time to serve the political head. In a sense, these offices extend the political head's ability to take cognizance of policy matters. They also provide more scrutiny of the policy actions of the permanent officials. They are not yet established, however, in anything like the extent necessary to provide thorough policy guidance and policy supervision over the whole range of the permanent executive.

Permanent officials are also responsible to the public groups that watch them; that is, to the groups of citizens, usually clients of the agency, who are sufficiently concerned to keep themselves informed and to express opinions about the work of a particular agency of government. Permanent officials at all levels acquire constituents whom they try to please. A commodity expert in the Department of Commerce or the Department of Agriculture serves the producers and distributors of his commodity. They are his public constituency, and they watch his work. The rest of us in the mass public have no interest and no concern in what he does. Public opinion is influential over the permanent executive when it is expressed by such constituent groups. Note, however, that the Federal departments most directly involved in the conduct of foreign relations, the Department of State and the armed service departments, are the most removed from scrutiny by organized public groups. They have no special constituents in business, labor, or agriculture whom they serve as do the other departments. There are no pressure groups active in foreign affairs in the same sense that the farm organizations, the labor groups, and the business associations keep an eye upon the work of

other Federal departments. No other Federal officials work so independently of questioning by public groups that really have a concern. The Department of State and the armed services have no constant, abiding demands from pressure groups that receive service from them and demand explanations of their actions. These departments more than any others are immune from the public opinion of organized groups.

Next, and probably most significant of all, the permanent officials of government are responsible to themselves. They must answer to their own consciences, to their own senses of dignity and pride, to the opinions of their fellowmen, to their hopes of esteem for the record they leave behind them, above all to their devotion to their own honest effort to define the total general welfare and to serve it. Gradually but steadily a sense of profession has been growing among permanent government employees so that eventually the sense of pride and responsibility that comes from membership in a worthy profession may be added to the personal self-demands that now govern actions by individuals. We must never discount self-estimation as a protection of the general welfare against abuse of power. Responsible American public officials by and large take pride in their work and particularly in their devotion to serving the public interest as it is defined in their sector of work. Permanent officials of the Department of State and of the armed service departments are sincere in their sense of duty to the nation. It is more difficult for them to define their public and to be sure of its interest since they have no organized constituent groups, but this does not detract from their desire to keep their self-respect by doing their job honestly and dutifully.

Finally, the permanent officials are responsible to Congress, both whenever an appropriation is requested and also whenever individual members or committees of Congress investigate the work of the executive agencies. No executive official near the top can long ignore the power of Congress, and none can gain advantages for his agency unless he follows most of the time policies that are accepted by Congress, or that at least do not arouse the hostility of many Congressmen.

CONGRESS THE PROTECTOR

Congress, that unknown, amiable, inconsistent, baffling collection of rugged individualists, is the principal instrument of democratic control over the executive branch of government. While organized groups are varied in their coverage of subjects and erratic in their interests, Congress is in the minds of executive officials always present, even ominous, always interested, always wanting services for its members or for their constituents, always ready to ask hostile questions and almost never ready to give praise. The American Congress in its refusal to be strictly organized reflects the strength of democracy's refusal to be all one thing or another, and in its peculiar way the Congress is the great protector of freedom and the chief source of popular expression to the Federal executive.

The role of Congress in foreign relations has developed until Congress is more intimately involved and therefore more in control of specific foreign policies than ever before. Once the power of the Senate to confirm appointments and to concur in treaties and the power of both houses to regulate foreign commerce or to declare war were the more significant congressional powers in the conduct of foreign affairs. When foreign policy is as much action by the United States as it is the signing of treaties, both houses of Congress are called upon to enact legislation that will authorize the executive to take new kinds of action and, above all, both houses are asked to appropriate large amounts of money to carry out the foreign policy. When money talks as loudly and as often as it does in United States foreign relations since 1940, Congress is an everpresent participant in the making of foreign policy.

A summary of the work of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in the Eightieth Congress, January, 1947, until June, 1948, will illustrate the condition. In its special constitutional functions, the committee handled 1,212 nominations by the President for appointment to posts in foreign relations. Most of these were the routine appointment of 1,100 career Foreign Service Officers, but the balance of 112 were ap-

pointments to major policy positions. The committee also handled 24 treaties, conventions, protocols, or agreements, including, as examples, a protocol extending for one year the Inter-American coffee agreement, a convention with France for avoidance of double taxation, treaties of peace with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, and the International Wheat Agreement which was considered but received no final action. In the field of legislation, as distinct from the Senate's special constitutional functions in foreign relations, the committee reported and saw enacted into law 31 bills and resolutions, reported 2 bills which did not receive action in the Senate, and reported 7 bills which were adopted by the Senate but not finally acted upon by the House. This makes a total of 40 bills reported out of the committee. In addition, the committee considered but did not report for Senate action 34 bills. A total of 74 bills and resolutions were considered by the committee, compared to a total of 24 treaties, conventions, protocols, and agreements.[20]

The provisions of the acts are more significant than their number. Included in the lot were the acts to provide economic and military assistance to Greece and Turkey, to provide relief to countries devastated by the war, to provide for United States membership and participation in the International Refugee Organization and authorizing an appropriation for this, to authorize the President to bring into effect an agreement between the United States and the United Nations for establishment of the permanent headquarters of United Nations in the United States, to extend assistance to other countries in the economic recovery program, and to provide for United States membership in the World Health Organization.

Congress is, of course, an institution and also a collection of individuals, and it serves in both capacities whenever it deals with foreign affairs. As an institution it works chiefly through the committees for foreign affairs, for the armed services, and for appropriations, and occasionally through other committees whenever bills for domestic affairs have a direct consequence

[20] U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Legislative History*, 80th Congress. Printed for the Use of the Committee.

in foreign relations. Congress also works through special subcommittees to go into the details of certain proposals and to investigate actions of executive agencies.

Investigating committees are particularly awesome to executive agencies, more for the constant threat that such committees might be set up than for the frequency of actual investigations. No official wants to undergo the ordeal of congressional investigation, especially since so often the committees inflict punishment as much as they seek enlightenment. Congress has used its power to investigate most erratically. At times it has gone into important substantial executive practices as when the Truman-Mead Senate Committee kept an eye upon the conduct of the war, and executive agencies were always aware of its competence. At other times it has stooped to trivial subjects in the hope of causing damage to a President or to other individuals, as when certain statements in Voice of America broadcasts were lifted out of context to support a claim that the broadcasts as a whole disparaged certain sections of the United States. Congress in its use of the power to investigate has done some of the things it ought not to have done and has left undone some of the things it ought to have done, but the fact remains that its power is itself a check on executive officials. One need only note the preoccupation of executives with leaving a proper record of their actions to accept the general thesis that executives keep in mind the possibility that a congressional committee might some day investigate if the eccentric lightning of chance should happen to strike the particular agency or subject. Federal executives show an invariable concern for what goes into the files in the uneasy knowledge that some day the files might be examined by skeptical eyes, and they also tend to take only those actions that will stand scrutiny by outsiders.

More consistent in the work of Congress as an institution is the conduct of hearings on proposed legislation. Heads of executive agencies and their subordinates are almost constantly appearing before congressional committees or preparing to go before them. They must justify or oppose bills affecting their work; they must defend their agencies against

criticism; they must defend their requests for appropriations. They labor over prepared statements to be read before the committee and put into the record, and they study data that might be useful in answering questions put by members of the committees. A congressional committee hearing is a unique performance. Depending upon circumstances, it can combine the exalted public discussion of issues in the highest reaches of the democratic process with the degrading tactics of gutter-snipe lawyers who browbeat witnesses and distort the truth. Whether the emphasis is one or the other depends largely upon the men who serve upon the committee that holds the hearing. The members of Congress who take a dignified and large approach to public policy—and they are in the great majority—use hearings to bring out the issues fairly and fully. Those who fail to achieve the stature of statesmen use hearings to persecute witnesses with whom they do not agree or to dwell upon trivial weaknesses which they hope will damage the agency under discussion. The rules and customs of committee hearing allow either use with equal freedom. Federal executive officials in their relations with Congress must submit to questioning by both the statesmen and the poltroons. They are never far from the bright light of public hearings, and they are aware of this fact in their daily actions.

INFLUENCE OF CONGRESSMEN

It is in the role of members of Congress as individuals, however, that their effect is greatest in the formulation of foreign policy. Executive officials who must deal with the congressional tradition of fierce individualism soon learn to deal with individual members of both houses and both parties. They think not so much of what a committee will think as of what this member and that will think, or of what concerns of particular members will need to be anticipated. They seek to explain their proposals not only in the formal arena of committee hearings but also in private conversations with members whom they hope to persuade. Each member of Congress is as important as his sovereign vote. His requests for informa-

tion or help are given special attention, as when letters from Congressmen get special handling and the signature of the highest officials. If he is willing, officials of the executive agencies will spend hours explaining their needs for legislation. When he appears as a questioner in a committee hearing or as a speaker in debates on the floor, he can be friendly or hostile, fair or unfair, accurate or deceitful, public spirited or small-minded. Whatever his position and his manner, he has the floor in the world's freest forum, and if he is skilled enough to say something newsworthy he will be heard round the world. Wise executive officials prefer to have the talented members of Congress on their side.

American congressmen as individuals are also potent, and equally uninhibited, in their practice of releasing to the world their solitary conclusions on foreign affairs. By the present standards of the American press, a member of Congress will be quoted, provided only that what he says is striking. He need be no more qualified to speak on the subject than any average person, but his membership in Congress gives him status as a source of news. The accuracy of his statements is never questioned by the press, in the questionable assumption that the source, and not the medium, is responsible for what he says for quotation and that the audience knows this.

Examples of such individual utterance can be found in the daily flow of news. In a random two-week span in August of 1949, when Congress was in session, the *New York Times* gave space to the following:

August 1. Senator John McClellan, Democrat, Arkansas, said that the only alternative to his proposed amendment to the foreign aid appropriation bill was to dump billions of taxpayers' dollars. The McClellan amendment, later defeated, would have earmarked for the purchase of American surplus farm crops some 1⅓ billion dollars of a total of about 5½ billion for foreign aid.

August 1. Senator Kenneth S. Wherry, Republican, Nebraska, urged legislation to prohibit specifically the exchange of atomic bomb information with other nations, on the ground that a gentlemen's agreement between the President and members of Congress not to reveal information was not enough. It was reported that Great Britain, which had participated in the original development of the bomb, was seeking more information. Senator Wherry said that "the President is free to disclose to Socialist-ridden foreign governments the dearly bought secrets of the atomic bomb."

August 2. Forty-nine Senators, 23 Democrats and 26 Republicans, signed a joint letter to the President to protest an agreement with Canada that opened the New York to Montreal air route to Canadian competition with the American firm of Colonial Airlines which had flown the route alone for 19 years. The Civil Aeronautics Board had helped negotiate the agreement. The Senators, speaking for themselves as individual members and not as a committee, nor as the Senate in a resolution, said the agreement was a flagrant example of how the procedure of making such an executive agreement without Senate participation, "can result in unjust and unsound discrimination against United States companies, their employees and stockholders."

August 9. Senator Pat McCarran, Democrat, Nevada, told the Senate that persons had gone "directly from fields of subversive activity in the United States" to positions of authority in the United Nations. He cited by name as examples one man in the U.N. secretariat and another man who worked not for the United Nations but who represented the Government of Poland in the International Emergency Children's Fund. Senator McCarran in this case spoke, as an individual, from his chairmanship of a subcommittee that was investigating the entrance into the United States of allegedly subversive persons. (The alleged subversive in the secretariat was a native American, and the other was a diplomatic representative of another nation.)

August 14. Senator Burnet R. Maybank, Democrat, South Carolina, called a news conference to criticize a reported plan, which he said he had learned about from newspaper stories, to authorize the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to advance funds for arms aid to Europe.

The list could be carried on through any session of Con-

gress. During the recesses of Congress, the members when they desire and can make their thoughts newsworthy will be quoted in the press in their districts, where individual members of Congress are more important than they are in Washington. At times a man will go abroad and be quoted upon his return, again regardless of whether he makes sense or not in terms of accuracy of statement. At other times he may hold a news conference to reveal his opinion of the government of another country or to announce information about another country which he has purportedly received from his own intelligence sources. A member of Congress is a source of news whenever he knows how to make news, and members of Congress are more skilled at making news than most other people in our society.

This unique American practice of debating as individuals, and in the fullest publicity that can be obtained by striving for it, has preplexed many a foreign government until its officials have come to understand the American custom. It is perplexing, to say the least, to see public attention drawn to the statements of officials who do not represent any institution in government but speak only for themselves. When these statements have no foundation in fact, or when they represent a viewpoint contrary to that of the President and his Secretary of State or contrary to that of either political party, it becomes even more perplexing. The foreign representatives of other powers must learn that the American Congressman is his own law and his own party whenever he wants to speak in the field of foreign affairs.

Our own executive officials likewise must learn that members of Congress as individuals and as the collections of individuals who form committees and houses have a final say in so much of modern foreign policy. They must be cultivated by executive officials whenever a new policy is wanted. The biggest selling job is to sell enough individual members of Congress on a proposed new policy.

The interaction between the executive and the legislative branches is continuous, and each branch influences the other. For most important foreign policy decisions the executive in

the end must rely upon the agreement of both houses of Congress to its propositions. Congress is, therefore, more than ever, the chief instrument of popular control over the powerful executive group which commands the data upon which foreign policy is based and which formulates the propositions that frame the foreign affairs of the nation. When foreign relations will determine the very way of life for all the people of the nation, and may determine the death of many people, the duty of Congress is indeed a solemn one.

CONGRESSIONAL REORGANIZATION

Since Congress is the strongest safeguard of democratic influence in foreign affairs, we should ask how well it performs its duty. The answer is, of course, not so well as it should. It is an answer that bothers many citizens and especially the thoughtful members of Congress itself.

The body is competent but inefficient. It is competent because its members in their own persons are truly representative of the American masses and in the fact that the members must stay in office by pleasing most of the people most of the time. Congressmen by and large are intelligent, honest, earnest, devoted, well-informed, and sincere individuals who do their best to serve the total public interest as they see it. The knaves are few among them, probably in about the same proportion here as in the mass of America. Because there are so many particular interests in conflict in any one congressional district, any member of Congress is fairly free to follow his own best judgment when he votes on most, though not all, bills affecting foreign affairs. No position he takes will please every one of his constituents, and whatever position he takes will please part of them. The competition of interests, which forms the American system of democracy, can often free a member of Congress, if he desires, from serfdom to any one interest. Congress as an institution has simply failed to make arrangements to make itself efficient in the present complexity of government.

This is not the place to go into the handicaps of the institu-

tion and the remedies proposed. They have been developed clearly, accurately, and readably by George Galloway in one book, by Estes Kefauver and Dr. Jack Levin in another book, and by Congress itself under the leadership of Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Jr., and Representative A. S. Mike Monroney in hearings on the Congressional Reorganization Act of 1946.[21] It would be unfeasible, not to say deceptive, to attempt to summarize in a few words all the troubles of Congress and all the proposals for change that have been made by such authorities as these named. It is enough to refer to the recent literature for the details and to say here only that the large purpose of the proposed reforms is to enable members of Congress to do their job better. They would be freed, for example, from some of the onerous and noninstructive messenger work they now do for constituents; they would be provided more help in the form of administrative aides and research staffs; they would have more conciseness in the consideration by committees of proposed legislation; and they would keep in closer touch with the actions of executive officials so that they could keep closer watch over those actions.

Two points that are especially pertinent in the field of foreign relations should be mentioned. First, since the executive officials possess most of the data concerning foreign affairs, and since they can select the data that will be revealed to Congress, it is all the more essential for Congress to have experienced staff aides who can raise searching questions to test the data that are presented. Congressional staffs, whether located in the Library of Congress or attached to the com-

[21] George B. Galloway, *Congress at the Crossroads* (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1946); Estes Kefauver and Dr. Jack Levin, *A Twentieth-Century Congress* (New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947); U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, Hearings, *Organization of Congress*, 79th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1945). 79th Congress, Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, 60 U.S. 812, August 2, 1946. Other recent books that give insight into Congress and its role are, in the order of their appearance, Thomas K. Finletter, *Can Representative Government Do the Job?* (New York, Reynal & Hitchcock, 1945); Roland A. Young, *This Is Congress*, 2nd edition (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1946); James MacGregor Burns, *Congress on Trial, the Legislative Process and the Administrative State* (New York, Harper & Bros., 1949).

mittees that deal with foreign policy, should ask the questions that will reveal whether the executive is telling all it knows, whether it really knows anything for certain, whether it has chosen only the evidence most favorable to its cause. The representatives of the military departments, the State department, and any other agencies favoring certain courses in foreign policy should be tested more than any others since by circumstances they have the most available information on which to argue. It is relatively difficult for members of Congress to get data from abroad; certainly they cannot gather as much information abroad as they can in their home districts, nor can they read the cables and dispatches as they can read mail from their trusted advisers at home. Whatever disability is now forced upon Congress by its removal from the data of foreign relations should be offset by the demanding questions that can be suggested only by a tough-minded, independent, and experienced staff serving the members of Congress.

Secondly, if Congress is to do its duty in watching the executive and in adopting informed legislation, a party system must operate with force and with responsibility. Parties must so organize and inform their members in Congress that they can take unified, respectable, dignified positions and refrain from the too-common costly devotion to trivialities in the hope of damaging the other party over minor matters. Above all, the minority party must be a questioning party if democratic control of foreign policy is to be assured. This is the same as saying that we need parties that are cohesive and that act responsibly as parties. The only time for a silent bipartisan foreign policy is in time of war when the nation is under attack and all citizens stand together. At other times, as in the years following World War II the resignation of the Republican party from its duty to question proposals of the Democratic Administration deprived the mass public of its protection from the possible abuse of executive power. For bipartisanship removes the proper testing of executive proposals, leaving this function to the chance opposition that might possibly come from individuals who typically will not have as much standing as would a political party. Whatever

is gained through having a united front against other nations—and it is at best a slight gain because individuals are always breaking the unity and the opposition party as a whole or in segments can break away at any time—is more than offset by the loss of a responsible opposition to question the proposals of executive officials. Popular influence is threatened whenever politics stop operating. If politics stop, popular influence over foreign policy has been diminished to the point where the good judgment and goodwill of the executive officials, plus their skill in keeping Congress persuaded, are chief guardians of the public interest, and political parties have ceased to serve their function of representing different viewpoints. An opposition party may agree to support a majority measure, but it resigns its duty when it fails to ask questions and challenge assumptions before reaching its decision to agree.

Perhaps the last point here should be that until Congress becomes more efficient and until an opposition party becomes effective and responsible in the testing of foreign policy proposals, the people have no other recourse than to trust their executive. Fortunately, the President, the Secretary of State, and the less-renowned officials who really make most foreign policy now have an integrity of service to the whole people which prevents them from exploiting their power for mean purposes. Their mistakes are errors of judgment and not the sins of wrong intention, and their achievements are works of public service and not the private victories of selfish men. But it is also a tenet of American government that public executives should be responsible for their errors as well as rewarded for their good deeds. The chief instruments of popular control are Congress and, one can recommend, political parties operating in Congress. When neither of them serves its purpose in the conduct of foreign affairs, there is little check on public executives who have not yet attained perfection. Honest though they be, the executive officials who conduct our foreign affairs should be questioned systematically as a test of their judgment, as well as their purpose. Otherwise they may never be caught up for mistakes nor held down if they get wrong ideas.

Chapter XV

CONCLUSION

A SUMMARY OF FAULTS

The United States reached its full stature in foreign relations without having attained the administrative maturity to go with its strength. So far, in modern times, an almost miraculous combination of natural resources, new and adventurous people, vast technological development, and a form of government that encouraged enterprise has meant that we could pay for our mistakes and buy our support from other nations, no matter what the cost. If we kept our tariffs so high that other countries could not sell to us, hence could not buy from us, we could export dollars to be spent for goods. If we entered a war, we could provide great strength of armament and technical skill. If we wanted to maintain democratic forms in other countries, we could use money and goods to support the parties that favored our cause.

This reliance on sheer strength and wealth is a policy that, while an obvious one to choose, bothers many far-sighted