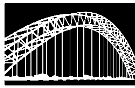
Three Kings

The Rise of an American Empire in the Middle East After World War II

LLOYD C. GARDNER



NEW YORK
LONDON

CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgments ix

1. Introduction to a Doctrine 1
2. The United States Moves into the Middle East 16
3. The Truman Doctrine Protectorate 48
4. The Iran Oil Crisis 85
5. Damming the Egyptian Revolution 135
6. Be Careful What You Wish For 185

Epilogue 225
Notes 229
Index 249

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As we contemplate the difficult process of getting out of Iraq without making matters worse, it is time to reflect on the deeper history of how the United States came to be in the Middle East, especially before embarking on a new mission to rebuild Afghanistan. A place to begin is with the events leading up to President Harry S. Truman's speech on March 12, 1947—the Truman Doctrine. Remembered today as the necessary American answer to the expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union, the Truman Doctrine was really much more than that. From the beginning it provided a rhetorical base on which to reassemble the broken pieces of the old European empires in a new constellation of states that, according to the accepted narrative, defied the wiles and threats of "International Communism" by means of military and economic aid. As such, it was a great success.

The actual history of the Truman Doctrine contains far more doubts, and many more twists and turns, present from the very outset, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee struggled to comprehend the likely outcome of the president's initial request for $500 million to send to Greece and Turkey to bolster their internal and external fortitude. It had a prehistory dating to World War II and Roosevelt's dreams for Iran and negotiations for the first air base in Saudi Arabia. From that time onward, American policy makers continued to develop and define the nation's role at the ancient crossroads of empire—the Mediterranean. They saw themselves as successors to the Pax Britannica, not in the sense of nineteenth-century imperialists, of course, but as creators of a dynamic new era that would prove more enduring than the old empires.

The Truman Doctrine had its greatest difficulty, ideologically, in defining the enemy. Without naming the Soviet Union, the president referred to forces directed against existing governments

from the outside, and their subversive allies joined together to strike from within, a lethal combination. That loose formulation tried to distinguish between agent-inspired revolutions and non-agent-inspired revolutions, an almost impossible undertaking. Eisenhower's secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, adopted the term "International Communism" to aid him in attempting to explain why, in the absence of an actual Soviet military threat, it was necessary to send arms to countries gathered under the umbrella of the Truman Doctrine. At various times, especially in the original congressional debates on the request for money, and then again at the time Dulles was trying to sell the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957 as an advance on definitions of the threat, the rationale became brittle and almost shattered into fragments of ideological incoherence. Added to this difficulty was the ever-changing cast of American supporters who became useless or actually hindrances, from the Shah of Iran to Egypt's Nasser, Saddam Hussein, and, most recently, Hamid Karzai in Kabul.

General David McKiernan, the former commander in Afghanistan, reflected a commonly held view among American policy makers when he warned against taking the history of British and Russian failed efforts to succeed in that country as at all applicable to American prospects. Of course, as he might note, there was now no other "superpower" to provide the Taliban or Al Qaeda with "Stinger" missiles, the scourge of the Russian army and air force in the 1980s, but he went beyond that to make a general comment that all such historical comparisons were "unhealthy." It was a typically American, can-do kind of talk, tailored from traditional notions about the disinterested motives of American foreign policy, the optimism of the military commanders, and a belief that technology ruled politics. Such convictions all too often make us deaf to unwelcome messengers, and thus foster a search for alternate facts, not truth.

Flash back to the spring of 1965 and the National Teach-In. Professor Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the famous historian and chronicler of the Kennedy years, was now beginning to waver a bit about Vietnam. He nevertheless takes a stand in favor of sending in the army. He is against the bombing campaign Rolling Thunder, however,

saying bombs won't do the job. And then he adds his own take on history. It's time, he says, to stop asking how we got in and concentrate on how we get out of the situation without damaging our national security. Many in the audience nod, but in the back a hand raises.

The hand belongs to William R. Taylor, a professor of history at Stony Brook. "Arthur," he begins, "I wonder if you would care to venture an opinion on when history stopped being important to our situation and a discussion of alternatives. Was it six years ago? Six months? Six weeks?"

Smiling, Arthur starts to answer: "As usual, my old colleague at Harvard asks a tough question—"

At that very moment, the District of Columbia fire marshal steps to the podium: "Folks, we have just been alerted to a bomb threat, we have to clear this room."

The dialogue ended there, without an answer. It should not end today on that same note, "we have to clear the room."

This book is the missing part of my recent look at a later period, *The Long Road to Baghdad*, also published by The New Press. Thanks always to friends for their help and inspiration, especially Warren Kimball, Walter LaFeber, Thomas McCormick, Paul Miles, and Marilyn Young. They are not responsible, of course, for any of my opinions you may find in the pages herein, nor any factual errors. These all belong to me. A very special word of thanks as well to André Schiffrin, founder of The New Press, and Marc Favreau, editorial director of The New Press. This book is dedicated to my wife, Nancy, who has heard it in bits and pieces many times over. Here is the whole picture.

Lloyd Gardner
Newtown, Pennsylvania
May 2009

1

INTRODUCTION TO A DOCTRINE

> *Senator Walter F. George: I do not see how the President's speech of yesterday can be characterized as a mere plea for assistance to Greece and Turkey. If it were mere economic assistance it would be one thing, and it would be easily done. But he put this nation squarely on the line against certain ideologies.*

> *Senator Arthur Vandenberg: I want to lay everything on the table, Senator, so that the American people will understand it. I do not think they understand it this morning much better than they did before the President delivered his message, and I think one of our major jobs is to make them understand it, and I do not believe they ever will unless we dramatize this thing in every possible way.*

The above exchange took place on the first day of secret hearings to consider president Harry S. Truman's pivotal speech to Congress on March 12, 1947, his most dramatic since he announced the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and the one that launched the Cold War. It was now the responsibility of the United States, the president had asserted, to meet the imminent global threat emanating from Moscow. The White House insisted on a prompt response to the president's request for a $500 million appropriation to rescue two countries threatened, he said, by extreme political pressure from the Kremlin, with the shadowy implication of some sort of military action behind the threats. But Senator George worried that the administration was embarking on a dangerous path that would lead the nation far beyond Truman's initial request for economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey. Senator Vandenberg agreed that the president had not made his case, so it was up to

Congress to do that for him, as well as appropriate the funds—otherwise Truman would be left out on a limb.

Not made public until 1973—more than twenty-five years later, near the end of the disastrous Vietnam War—these private discussions inside the Senate Foreign Relations Committee revealed the considerable discomfort, even confusion, about the open-ended commitment Congress was being asked to underwrite. And it turned out pretty much the way both men predicted it would. Over future decades the United States would spend billions of dollars in an effort to institutionalize a Pax Americana in the Middle East to replace the old European suzerainty over the area, while Congress would find itself in a compromised position whenever it attempted to question the White House's urgent appeals to expand the "Truman Doctrine." Each time Truman's successors asked for a new congressional mandate, the White House would declare the threat to be more serious than before, and now one that could traced to a shadowy force—"International Communism." Making the case in that fashion avoided some problematic questions about the consequences of intervening in the internal politics of Middle Eastern nations, though a few embarrassing (or enlightening) exchanges did take place in congressional testimony.

The transition path had been paved by Truman himself, who did not mention the Soviet Union in his speech, an omission that allowed his listeners to interpret his words in different ways. Either he did not wish to make matters worse elsewhere in Russian-American relations by offering up such a direct challenge, or he had foreseen the need to leave himself and future presidents a broad rationale for new initiatives. Of special interest in this regard, moreover, was the absence of any mention of Eastern Europe or any challenge to the Russian presence there. When his point man in the rushed hearings on the Truman Doctrine, under secretary of state Dean Acheson, tried to help out with the problems that concerned George and Vandenberg, he said: "It is true that there are parts of the world to which we have no access. It would be silly to believe that we can do anything effective in Rumania, Bulgaria or Poland. You cannot do that. That is within the area of physical force. We are excluded

from that. There are other places where we can be effective. One of them is Korea, and I think that is another place where the line has been clearly drawn between the Russians and ourselves."[1]

Acheson's outstanding talents as a diplomat are on display here. He manages to calm nerves about an open challenge to the Soviet Union in its at least temporarily acknowledged sphere of influence, while suggesting that the United States stood ready to defend new frontiers elsewhere—places far beyond prewar definitions of national security.

The Meaning of the Truman Doctrine

It is best to begin this narrative by setting out some propositions about what the Truman Doctrine was, and what it was not. Acheson has given us the essential clue in his testimony: it was not about forcing the Russians out of Eastern Europe. Indeed, the Red Army's presence there proved useful to policy makers seeking to find a theme for the Cold War drama. Neither, however, was it about turning back the specific threat of Russian military bases in the Black Sea Straits. That danger could have been handled without all the ideological mobilization of an overarching "doctrine." Such a simple solution was rejected, however, in favor of the summons to take up the burden where the British had once stood guard at the crossroads of empire.

Here are the propositions offered throughout the chapters below as guides to understanding the emergence of an American empire in the Middle East from World War II and the Truman Doctrine until the United States stood alone as the dominant power in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War:

- The Truman Doctrine was the essential rubric under which the United States projected its power globally after World War II—casting this as a global ideological struggle and enabling the kind of massive, unquestioned military/foreign policy spending that we still take for granted at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It was the ideological foundation for the "imperial presidency."

- It was understood at the time by the key players that what was in fact at stake was not the need to fend off the Soviets but to shore up friendly governments in strategic areas.
- And, finally, the doctrine addressed a process that had already been under way for some time: U.S. maneuvers to replace the British in the region of signal importance, the Middle East.[2]

The speech Truman read to Congress on March 12, 1947, had been carefully crafted by White House and State Department "ghosts," in part to remove sentences that referred directly to both the region's proximity to the vast oil resources of the Middle East and the already growing U.S. stake in their exploitation. The first draft was not to his liking, Truman said in his memoirs, because they made "the whole thing sound like an investment prospectus." He wanted a speech that put aside material considerations and asked the nation to face up to its destiny. "This was the time to align the United States of America clearly on the side, and at the head, of the free world."[3]

Purged of any less than worthy ambitions, the key sentence then read, "I believe that it should be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we should assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic stability and orderly political process." Truman found the second draft too wimpy, he tells us in his memoirs, especially in this regard: "I took my pencil, scratched out 'should' and wrote in 'must.' In several other places I did the same thing. I wanted no hedging in this speech. This was America's answer to the surge of expansion of Communist tyranny. It had to be clear and free of hesitation or double talk."[4]

Truman's memoirs offer us a self-portrait suitable to hang in the first room of the Cold War gallery of American leaders who grasped the essential evilness of the nation's adversaries. Some continue to interpret the Cold War by studying those pictures. Still, the immediate reaction to the March 12, 1947, speech was scarcely that of a

nation united in its determination to take up the challenge that Truman had put before Congress (along with a crisis watch deadline for action less than three weeks away). The *New York Times* had not yet settled into its destined role as journalistic insider with a dash of critical thinking here and there, and reported that Congress was "somewhat bewildered" by the president's mandate, especially his insistence on an almost instantaneous response. "Members, as they listened to the Chief Executive, saw their country's foreign policy undergo radical change in the space of twenty-one minutes."[5]

There were predictions of a congressional storm in the making as the nation's legislators struggled to understand and debate the tectonic shift set in motion by the speech. Had he called for "a new, world-wide Monroe Doctrine" to warn off the Kremlin everywhere? Was it even a "declaration of war" upon Russia? Or had the president simply proposed a new postwar lend-lease plan to help Greece and Turkey?[6]

It was all of these—at least by implication. It announced the beginning of a Cold War to legitimate nearly all the actions Truman and his successors in the White House would undertake to realize the American Century, from Greece and Turkey to Vietnam. After 9/11, comparisons of the two "accidental" presidents, Harry Truman and George W. Bush, suddenly appeared all over the media, even in outlets where praise for Truman had never even been whispered about, let alone proclaimed. Of course it was not praise for the "Fair Deal," but for the man who had put forward the "Truman Doctrine," where it was possible to honor the author of the charter under which conservatives and liberals alike waged the good fight for world leadership against successive "evil empires." Former Reagan speechwriter and keeper of the flame Peggy Noonan wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* on November 16, 2001: "Harry Truman was a great man. And I believe we are seeing the makings of a similar greatness in George W. Bush, the bantamy, plain-spoken, originally uninspiring man who through a good heart and a good head, through gut and character, simple well-meaningness and love of country is, in his own noncompelling way, doing the right tough things at a terrible time."

But Bush's mission went beyond the Truman Doctrine, even as Noonan saw it as the foundation for the war on terror:

> And he faces stakes as high as Truman faced, if not, as many think, higher. Truman had to stand for freedom and keep the West together while keeping Stalin from getting and then using weapons that he could, in his evil, use to blow up half the world. Mr. Bush has to stand for freedom and keep an alliance together while moving against a dozen madmen who have it within their power to deploy weapons of mass destruction that can blow up half the world. He has to see to it that this great mission doesn't end with getting or killing Osama and his men. He must lead the civilized world now to root out, get and remove every weapon of mass destruction—every chemical and bio depot and laboratory in every rogue nation—and banish this scourge from the world. It will be hard to keep the allies on board and supportive, hard to keep the American people behind him, because it's going to be a long war.[7]

In fact, as she suggests, Bush's ambitions inhered in the original Truman Doctrine and its inevitable evolution as the American ideology of its founder's day and ours. The Truman Doctrine was designed from the outset to be capable of stretching from Ankara and Athens to provide a general outlook on threats to American interests, beginning with lands bordering the ancient crossroads of civilization in the Mediterranean. The story is told and retold in Cold War histories of how Under Secretary of State Acheson politely interrupted his "boss," the venerable George C. Marshall, to inject passion into a White House briefing of congressional leaders on the consequences of British inability to carry on supporting the Greek government against a Communist-led leftist insurgency, or provide modern arms to stiffen Turkey's resolve in resisting Russian pressures for joint control of the Black Sea Straits (the gateway to the Mediterranean and beyond). When Secretary Marshall began his presentation he emphasized the need to strengthen the British position in the Middle East. That did not go down well with the con-

gressional delegation, and led to awkward questions about pulling British chestnuts out of the fire and such.[8]

Leaning over to Marshall, Acheson asked in a low voice, "Is this a private fight or can anyone get into it?" If one were to reassess turning points in American foreign policy, Acheson's briefing—or better put, his chilling vision of the Red peril—would have a serious claim to pride of place. Everywhere one looked, he began, the position of the democracies had seriously deteriorated since the end of the war. And while the immediate crisis was in the Greco-Turkish area, the aim of the Soviets was control of the Mediterranean, north to Italy, and south as far as Iran. From there the possibilities for further "penetration of South Asia and Africa were limitless."

Point Man: Dean G. Acheson

Despite the urgency President Truman asked of Congress, the day after the speech he flew off to Key West for several days in the Florida sun. He had good reason to feel comfortable about the legislation, however, because his point man with Congress was Acheson, who, while Marshall was absent at a foreign ministers' conference in Moscow, easily managed the administration's case and parried questions about why the United Nations had been ignored. A few days after Franklin D. Roosevelt's reelection for a fourth term in November 1944, Acheson, then an assistant secretary of state, had testified before a special congressional committee that no one believed the United States could absorb its entire production under the capitalist economic system. The nation had to export goods up to a total of $10 billion a year. "We cannot go through another 10 years like the 10 years at the end of the twenties and the beginning of the thirties, without having the most far-reaching consequences upon our economic and social system."[9]

The central purpose of World War II diplomacy, beyond the obvious need to see the Axis menace scourged from the earth, had been to create something better than the nineteenth century world economic system lest a new threat arise from the ashes of war. FDR

was careful to caution the nation in his January 6, 1945, State of the Union message before Congress that it could not all happen at once. "In August, 1941, Prime Minister Churchill and I agreed to the principles of the Atlantic Charter. . . . At that time certain isolationists protested vigorously against our right to proclaim the principles—and against the very principles themselves. Today, many of the same people are protesting against the possibility of violation of the same principles."

Roosevelt's warning against expecting perfection in the inevitable chaos of temporary postwar arrangements was forgotten when he died on April 12, 1945, replaced by fears that the nation was drifting. Berlin was a bombed-out shell, but already there was talk about the rising menace from the East. Truman was an unknown to most Americans. And the new president's advisers, those he inherited from FDR and his own favorites, understood the need for a unifying theme. The danger of a nation divided as it faced the tasks of securing the peace seemed even greater with the Republican victory in the 1946 congressional elections. The New Deal coalition had come apart, it was felt, with former vice president Henry A. Wallace forced out of the cabinet and now posing a challenge from the left, while southern Democrats angered by Truman's pro–civil rights stance seemed on the verge of bolting the party.

That was the situation when Acheson testified about the Truman Doctrine and offered his interpretation of American policy, combining a plea to come together to meet the external challenge with calming assurances that Truman would not go off the deep end even as American power stretched out geographically. He was not sure he had succeeded.

Writing to Marshall, Acheson wrote about his experience before the committee. The senators were not going to block the bill, he wrote, but they were still concerned about "where this is going to lead and why doesn't the Administration tell us the whole story and the whole cost now?"[10]

If he wished to be candid about it, Acheson did not know where it would lead, specifically, or how much it would cost. Also, if he were to be candid, he would have acknowledged Senator George's

concerns about an ideological war—if only to affirm such a conflict to mobilize the nation behind Truman's initiative. Republican H. Alexander Smith had asked Acheson about a column by the pundit Walter Lippmann, who warned that the Truman administration, with its "musts" and all-encompassing rhetoric, was spreading American financial capability too thin. Lippmann thought, said Smith, that we should instead bolster up some strategic areas. "That is what troubles me." Well, Lippmann had changed his mind about Greece and Turkey, Acheson replied; he used to think they were strategic.

But that was not really the point, as the wording of Truman's speech made clear. Truman's language in the speech had it that nearly the whole world was faced by two choices—and two choices only:

> At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

The Truman Doctrine initiated a policy of support for a series of Greek governments that survived a civil war and remained within the parameters set out for membership in the "Free World." In the case of Turkey, especially, the doctrine laid the foundations for the Military Advisory Groups that became an integral part of American foreign policy in the Middle East and elsewhere. The original crisis "locations," which supposedly called the new policy into being—Greece and Turkey—proved not to be crises for very long, especially not in the sense of threatening the outbreak of war.[11]

The Truman Doctrine's usefulness as an ensign under which Cold

War battles could be fought on the highest planes of idealism was only beginning to be understood at the time of the Senate hearings. But there were glimpses of the future as the committee concluded that it had to approve Truman's immediate requests for funds, if only because there were dangers to be feared in leaving the president stranded on a rhetorical island.

A Doctrine for All Seasons

After watching the administration's witnesses, led by Acheson, attempt to explain the limits on the Truman Doctrine, Senator Walter George concluded, "I know that when we make a policy of this kind we are irrevocably committing ourselves to a course of action, and there is no way to get out of it next week or next year. *You go down to the end of the road.*"[12]

To understand just how prescient George was, we need to go back to World War II, where the road began, as the United States moved into the Middle East with Lend-Lease offers and requests to build air bases, and to replace British dominance economically and politically. With VE Day there was a need to reformulate the quest. The Soviet Union's advance into Eastern Europe, and its ambitions for sharing in the control of the Black Sea Straits, offered a new focus—one that would serve to justify expansion of the Truman Doctrine to Iran, leading to a CIA-engineered coup against a prime minister who sought to nationalize the oil wells; to Egypt, in an effort to control the direction of that country's revolution; and to the overthrow of a leftist government in Iraq that marked the emergence of Saddam Hussein.

Following Truman's speech, the American military seized the opportunity to expand its naval presence in the Mediterranean. Aiding Turkey to withstand Moscow's blandishments required, as a beginning point, access to existing British bases. But the United States had already begun planning for strategic strongpoints in the Middle East during World War II. Indeed, in September 1941, nearly three months before Pearl Harbor, General Curtis LeMay led

a survey mission to Africa and the Near East, ending in Cairo, in search of places for American aircraft to land: "The plan was to assemble fighters at some place on the west coast of Africa and, flying them across the wastes in between, get them into the Middle East." Germany was the immediate target, but the future of American airpower could be deduced, LeMay observed, from Roosevelt's political vision. "We'd had President Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech back in the previous January. The marines had occupied Iceland on July 7th. The Atlantic Charter was signed by Roosevelt and Churchill on the British battleship *Prince of Wales*, off the coast of Newfoundland, 14 August."[13]

As LeMay suggests here, the relationship between military and political visions is one of co-dependency. General LeMay is the first person one thinks of in talking about the history of American strategic bombing. He commanded the bomber group that dropped the first atomic bombs, and was the godfather in 1947 of the new Strategic Air Command. He understood how Roosevelt's initiatives would mature into the holy trinity of airpower—bases, delivery systems, and payloads. What began as an imagined deterrent to Germany had become by war's end a policy of burgeoning global ambitions until at last the sun would never set on the stars and stripes flying over more than seven hundred foreign bases.

As policy makers thought about how to deal with the British announcement in February 1947 that London was once again calling in the New World to redress the balance in the Old, not a lot of concern had to be given to the possibility that Stalin would risk World War III to achieve his aims. On March 13, the day following Truman's summons to world leadership, the Joint Chiefs of Staff presented their assessment of the military situation to navy secretary James Forrestal and secretary of war Robert Patterson. Truman's rhetoric and the reality were something of a mismatch: "It is believed that the Soviet Union currently possesses neither the desire nor the resources to conduct a major war. Further, the Soviet Union must now have a clear appreciation that open aggression, of the type which she undertook with something less than complete

success against Finland in 1939, might inevitably result in war with the Western powers, which alone, for the present, possess atomic bombs."[14]

The only danger to Turkey that the Joint Chiefs could foresee was psychological, in the sense that if Greece succumbed to communism, the Turks might "yield" to Soviet pressure short of military measures. The real meaning of the Truman Doctrine, then, was that it would provide a means for becoming involved, establishing a presence, and projecting American power into a strategic area. Thus it is remarkable that even Secretary of State Marshall, who had only recently succeeded James F. Byrnes in that post, confessed that he did not understand the urgency of the Turkish situation in a conversation with the British ambassador Lord Inverchapel, who presented the message that His Majesty's government could no longer keep up its imperial role in checking Russian ambitions at the straits barrier. "It was his understanding," Marshall said, "that the Russians had made no move with regard to Turkey for some time and asked if the Ambassador had any ideas regarding the reasons for the Russian silence?" Inverchapel replied as Lord Salisbury might have at the height of the Pax Britannica: "The Ambassador said that in his opinion no foreigner knows why Russia takes or fails to take certain actions. Therefore, as an honest man, he must admit that he is not in a position to explain what is responsible for the present Soviet attitude towards Turkey."[15]

It would take some time, obviously, for American leaders to pick up on all the nuances of empire maintenance, especially the use of language to describe threats in a way that made everything defensive in nature. In a related exchange, at the first meeting of a special committee that Marshall appointed to consider the British notes the same afternoon, the consensus was that the United States must accept the responsibility the British were proposing to turn over. "If we did not," said the leading State Department representatives, "Greece and probably Turkey would be lost." There was but one dissent, from General James Crain, who argued that the British had arrived at their "present precarious financial state as a result of trying to do just what it was now proposing that the U.S. should attempt."

It would be better policy, he insisted, that the United States should conserve its resources "for the final trial of strength." If the question was the military defense of Greece and Turkey, that could be accomplished by advising the Soviet Union "we would use force if necessary to keep it from seizing control of those countries."[16]

Alas, General Crain had no sense about where American policy was going or how it would get there. A simple statement that the United States would defend Greece or Turkey against military attack could not provide the foundation for a projection of American power to stabilize areas of interest. It was a case, army chief of staff Dwight D. Eisenhower argued, of risking at some date being unable to traverse the Mediterranean to hold on to air bases in the Middle East to launch strategic operations in wartime. Vice-chief of naval operations, admiral Forrest Sherman, said the Mediterranean should be conceived of as a "highway" for the projection of military power "deep into the heart of the land mass of Eurasia and Africa."[17]

As legislators anticipated, even as they voted for the $500 million aid to Greece and Turkey, they had given an imprimatur to an ideological struggle that would give cover to decades of subsequent interventions, and that inevitably involved taking sides in the thorniest political struggles of Middle Eastern nations. Succeeding administrations ratcheted up the stakes as Washington justified its positions by Truman Doctrine standards, insisting that it was only protecting countries from agent-inspired revolutions dedicated to the delivery of Middle East governments to what a later secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, would call "International Communism," a purposely vague formulation used to rationalize military aid to maintain cooperative leaders in power where there was no danger of a Soviet invasion. By doing so, moreover, they would put themselves in the position of being blackmailed by ambitious leaders who called forth the "threat" to support their demands for arms. No one was better at that game than the shah of Iran, who would eventually bring about his own destruction and tip over the applecart. The process produced, as the shah's case demonstrated, a constant tug-of-war between Washington and its clients, with American policy makers determined to control the reins lest the locals kick over

the traces and turn the weapons to the service of their ambitions beyond their borders instead of staying inside and maintaining good order on the safe parade grounds of the "Free World."

The principal purpose of American policy, therefore, was not to deter a Russian attack, but to ensure the loyalty of the countries receiving aid and to maintain their governments in power against internal threats. As Admiral William C. Radford, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified at a 1957 hearing on the "Eisenhower Doctrine," "They love to have the heavy equipment that they can parade down the main street on independence days and things like that, and show the people that they have what they feel is real armed strength."[18]

Upon taking office in 1961, John F. Kennedy supplied the final words to enlarge the Truman Doctrine into full-blown counterinsurgency theory. In a speech on March 28, 1961—only weeks before the Bay of Pigs fiasco—Kennedy outlined his defense policies to Congress, saying:

> The Free World's security can be endangered not only by a nuclear attack, but also by being slowly nibbled away at the periphery, regardless of our strategic power, by forces of subversion, infiltration, intimidation, indirect or non-overt aggression, internal revolution, diplomatic blackmail, guerrilla warfare or a series of limited wars.
>
> In this area of local wars, we must inevitably count on the cooperative efforts of other peoples and nations who share our concern. Indeed, their interests are more often directly engaged in such conflicts. The self-reliant are also those whom it is easiest to help—and for these reasons we must continue and reshape the Military Assistance Program which I have discussed earlier in my special message on foreign aid.

The speech not only updated Truman's original contention about the need to resist outside support for subversive forces, but added a whole new list of rationales—intimidation, non-overt aggression, even diplomatic blackmail—thereby completing the transforma-

tion of the doctrine into counterinsurgency theory. Working from those premises, moreover, the United States would seek regime change in Iraq not once but twice, eventually bringing to power a future nemesis, Saddam Hussein.

The intellectual preparation and justification for the Truman Doctrine did not suddenly appear in a flash of insight in February 1947 when Lord Inverchapel revealed London's plight and put all of his cards on the table. "I am fully aware of the broad implications involved if the United States extends assistance to Greece and Turkey," Truman said in his speech, "and I shall discuss these implications with you at this time."

The following chapters explore the world the Truman Doctrine created. The path begins with the American forward movement into the Middle East in World War II.