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From Compromise to Confrontation: 
The American Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and His Attempts to Mitigate Disagreements with the Soviet Union as the Cold War Began

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James F. Byrnes as United States Secretary of State pursued a policy based on compromise with the Soviet Union during the first year following the end of the Second World War. He was determined to use his political skill for engineering compromise in order to bring about an agreement with the Soviet Union which would lead to an era of peace. While the crucial question facing American policymakers in the wake of World War II was the creation of a new world order, a most important part of this question was the future of American-Soviet relations, the two nations that had emerged from the war as the dominant powers of the international system.

Byrnes was always hopeful that a basis for agreement with the U.S.S.R. existed because he perceived Stalin as pursuing national rather than ideological goals. Byrnes felt that although the Russians were tough negotiators, it was possible to reach meaningful agreements with the Soviet Union.

The high point of the period of Byrnes' policy of compromise was the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in December 1945. The Secretary of State returned home, however, to find that his position had been undermined. The Communique of the Moscow Conference had come under strong Congressional attack. In Byrnes' absence, the President had become more open to the influence of those who counseled an anti-Soviet American foreign policy. He had decided as President to exert a stronger influence on the direction of United States’ foreign policy.

The requirements of a bi-partisan foreign policy imposed sharp limits on his maneuverability, but Byrnes continued to seek a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union within these limits. He thought he could fashion agreements acceptable to both the United States and the Soviet Union; it is clear that the period of Byrnes' tenure as Secretary of State was one during which both American and Soviet policies were fluid. But Byrnes resigned in January 1947, and with his departure the doctrine of containment was accepted as United States policy. As long as Byrnes had remained as Secretary of State, the view that it was possible to negotiate with the Russians had a powerful advocate in policy-making circles.

How had the chances for a more amicable relationship between the two countries unraveled in the brief period from the Moscow Conference in December of 1945 and the Byrnes resignation in January of 1947?
During this year Byrnes increasingly felt growing restraints on his flexibility in dealing with the Soviets. His major concern in early 1946 was the completion of peace treaties ending World War II. So, in mid-February 1946, the Secretary took two steps to ensure the success of the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers, which would allow the proposed Peace Conference to begin on schedule, by May 1, 1946.

The first of these was to propose to the U.S.S.R. a treaty which would guarantee German demilitarization for a period of twenty-five years.\(^1\) The idea of such a security treaty had been in the Washington air for almost two years.\(^2\) Byrnes’ intentions were to maintain Allied solidarity.\(^3\) This is demonstrated by the manner in which the Secretary of State went about writing to Molotov concerning the security treaty.

Byrnes knew that the security treaty might arouse opposition within the American government. He therefore decided to pursue discussions on this sensitive matter without the knowledge of the rest of the State Department. The cable which he sent to Molotov was marked “No distribution, No stencil” and Byrnes refused to circulate copies of the draft treaty in the department. Moreover, when the Secretary discovered that the news of the dispatch of the treaty proposal was included in the top secret “Summary of Events,” he attempted to restrict the distribution of the “Summary.”

At the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in December 1945, the Foreign Ministers had agreed to meet in Washington on March 15, 1946. As of early February 1946, Byrnes had concluded that since the Soviet Union would not withdraw its troops from Iran by March 2, a meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Washington would draw Congressional and public attention to the state of American-Soviet relations, thus exacerbating tensions between the United States and Russia. Accordingly, he cancelled (with Molotov's approval) the planned meeting for March 15 in Washington.\(^4\)

The Iranian Crisis

By early March 1946, Byrnes and his policy of seeking an accommodation with the Soviet Union were on the defensive. The Secretary of State was under attack both because of the substance of the agreements reached at the Moscow Conference and because he had failed to keep Truman fully informed about his efforts at compromise with the Soviet Union.

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1 Byrnes believed that American participation in such a treaty might reassure the Soviet Union about the intentions of the United States, thus assuaging Russian fears and thereby inducing the Soviet Union to be more amenable to agreement in the forthcoming talks.

2 Senator Arthur Vandenberg, R-Mich, who had been actively promoting the creation of the United Nations, had proposed such a treaty in his “conversion” speech in January 1945.

3 The purpose of Vandenberg, however, was to expose Russian perfidy.

4 The Secretary wanted the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers to be held under circumstances as propitious as possible.
Byrnes had turned to public diplomacy to gain support for his policy of arranging a *modus vivendi* with the U.S.S.R. Although the Secretary was somewhat critical of the Soviet Union, in a speech on February 28, 1946, he had not lost hope of seeking agreement with the U.S.S.R. on a broad range of political and economic questions. Although on the defensive, Byrnes revived the credit of $1 billion to the U.S.S.R.

Events in Iran in the spring of 1946 were to further reduce Byrnes' flexibility and undermine his policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union, thus preventing a continuation of the spirit of the Moscow Conference throughout the new year. The Secretary of State continued with his policy of “never anticipating trouble” in the first days of March.

The question of the continued presence of Soviet troops in Iran had been pushed from the public light during February by the bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and Iran. The public position held by Byrnes, that the U.S.S.R. would adhere to its treaty commitment to withdraw from Iran by March 2, was shattered by a Russian announcement on March 1 of a partial withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran. The troops in Azerbaijan would not be withdrawn “pending examination of the situation.”

Byrnes' initial response is instructive. The Secretary did not immediately request a meeting with the President to design a strategy to deal with the crisis. Instead, Byrnes waited until his regularly scheduled Monday morning meeting with Truman. As a result of his meeting with the President, Byrnes dispatched a note to the U.S.S.R. which he termed “rather strong medicine.”

His note stated that the decision of the Soviet Government to retain Soviet troops in Iran beyond the period stipulated by the Tri-Partite Treaty of 1942 had created a situation over which the Government of the United States as a member of the United Nations and as a party to the Declaration Regarding Iran of December 1, 1943, could not remain indifferent.

Byrnes had pursued a strategy of compromise with the Soviet Union despite considerable opposition from Congress and from several figures in the White House, primarily Admiral William Leahy, FDR’s Chief of Staff. However, the personal aspect of the Secretary's motivation ought not to be overemphasized.

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5 The Iranian Ambassador in Washington immediately requested American diplomatic assistance in obtaining the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

6 The Secretary noted that the decision to maintain Soviet troops in Iran was “not in accordance with the principles of the United Nations” and expressed the “earnest hope” of an immediate Russian withdrawal.
Byrnes agreed with the rationale for the American response later set forth by Ben Cohen, then Counselor of the United States in the State Department. The Secretary had sought to prevent Iran from becoming a source of discord among the Allies. Now his options were limited, and no private deal could be made.

On March 6, Brynes explained his view of the Iranian situation. The United States was a party “to the Declaration of Teheran and that therefore we cannot remain indifferent to the failure of the U.S.S.R. to withdraw its troops.” The Secretary of State had his next action planned. Should the response from the Soviets with regard to Iran not prove satisfactory, the United States would ask the British to join in presenting the matter to the Security Council.

Byrnes realized that the question of the continued presence of Soviet troops in Iran might represent an irrevocable turning point in American-Soviet relations.

Further, should the Soviets decline to appear before the Security Council on this issue, thought Byrnes, the United Nations might well expire as an organization, and a different world could be in the making. Further, if these events happened within the next three weeks after the Americans had spoken, it would mean the end of cooperation with the U.S.S.R.

Byrnes was not seeking an issue over which the United States could force a break with the Soviet Union. The Secretary had not forsaken his policy of cooperation and did not believe that the period of cooperation had ended. On the contrary, the Secretary was attempting to minimize the resulting tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

At the same time, Byrnes returned to a theme which he had sounded frequently in the fall of 1945, that “our rapid demobilization” was having a “deplorable effect” on a number of specific problems, notably the situation in Venezia Giulia (northeast Italy, near Trieste). Byrnes wondered about slowing down the rate of demobilization and he told his colleagues that he could not go on talking to the Soviet Union as he had been, in defense of our basic foreign policy if the United States was going to continue its rapid demobilization.

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7 But whereas before a public event such as the retention of Soviet troops beyond the treaty date in Iran had occurred, it had been possible to arrange matters in dispute privately, once a public event such as in this case had occurred, the issue had to be met in light of public opinion, and it was impossible then to settle such things on the basis of any deal.

8 Because Iran was nominally an ally under the terms of the Teheran Declaration, Byrnes said that “we could not agree to the maintenance of foreign troops in Iranian territory on the grounds that the government was a hostile one.”
Byrnes was caught between a desire to improve his bargaining position, which was being weakened by the rapid demobilization, and his desire to continue to search for a modus vivendi with the U.S.S.R. The Secretary felt that having the President issue a statement explaining the reasons for stopping demobilization would be very unfortunate and might just inflame the situation. Many will say we were getting ready for war, he thought.

Since ending demobilization might jeopardize relations with the Soviet Union, Byrnes concluded that the United States must speed the building of a new army instead. The thrust of his recommendation was to concentrate on the renewal of the Selective Service Act rather than to alarm the world. Thus, Byrnes' desire for a stronger negotiating position was subordinated to his fear of inflaming the situation.

At the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy on February 28, 1946, Byrnes agreed to a proposal that an American task force be sent to the Mediterranean as a display of American power. But soon after, the Secretary of State concluded that such a display of force could have an unfortunate effect on Soviet-American relations. He told his fellow Secretaries that “any plans for the assembly of this (Task) Force must be postponed.” They then arrived at a compromise in which only the U.S.S. Missouri was sent to the Mediterranean.

Byrnes’ policy of restraint may be contrasted with that of Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Churchill, who had wanted the American task force sent into the Sea of Marmara as a display of force, was gloomy over the change in plans. The Secretary of State was not willing to jeopardize the prospects of cooperation with the Soviet Union despite his distress “at the way Russia had treated him.”

Shortly, reports reached Washington (and were published in the New York Times as well) that Soviet troops were moving on Teheran. Byrnes concluded that “military invasion was being added to political subversion” and announced that he would “give it to them with both barrels.” However, the Secretary of State did not respond as he had indicated he would. The American note on the movement of Soviet troops was in fact restrained and the Soviet Union was left with a graceful way out, the opportunity to deny the movement of Russian troops in Iran.9

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9 Bertram D. Hulen, "Heavy Russian Columns Move West in Iran: Turkey or Iraq May be Goal," New York Times, March 13, 1946, p. 1. It is not known who gave the story to the Times, but there is no question that Hulen had access to the cables from the State Department’s Robert Rossow. In fact, the note read: The Government of the United States desires to learn whether the Soviet Government, instead of withdrawing Soviet troops from Iran as urged in the Embassy's note of March 6, is bringing additional forces into Iran. In case Soviet forces in Iran are being increased, this Government would welcome information at once regarding the purposes therefore.
Byrnes continued with his efforts to avoid exacerbating the international situation in the week before the opening of the session of the Security Council, scheduled for March 25. The position taken by the Secretary during the discussions of the testing of the atomic bomb shows Byrnes' position quite clearly. The Army and Navy had scheduled tests of the atomic bomb at Bikini Atoll for May 1946. Secretary of the Navy Forrestal was not averse to this display of American power and argued strenuously against any postponement of these tests. The Navy wanted to determine the effects of the atomic bomb on ships at sea.

The position of the Secretary of State was very different. Byrnes argued at the Cabinet meeting of March 22 that “from the standpoint of international relations it would be very helpful if the test could be postponed or never held at all.” The Secretary of State's position was unequivocal. He argued that holding the tests as originally planned might have an adverse effect on an already disturbed world situation and in particular on the United Nations Security Council meeting scheduled for March 25.\(^{10}\)

On March 19, the President agreed to postpone the Bikini tests until 1947. Byrnes agreed to the postponement date of July 1 because he “thought the Security Council's problems would be solved one way or another” by then. In addition, he expected it would be clear by early July whether or not the United States and the Soviet Union could successfully collaborate in writing peace treaties for the former German satellites.

Although Byrnes attempted to minimize the tension between the United States and the Soviet Union by postponing the Bikini tests, events in Iran were drawing the United States and the Soviet Union deeper into conflict. On March 18, the Iranian Ambassador to the United States requested that the Security Council hear Iran's complaint about the continued presence of Soviet troops in Iran. In response, Soviet representative Andrei Gromyko requested a postponement of the discussion of Iran’s complaint. On March 24, with the meeting of the Security Council scheduled for the next day, Moscow radio announced that the Soviet Union would evacuate Iran within six weeks, “if nothing unforeseen should take place.”

When the Council opened, Gromyko continued to press for the postponement of consideration of the Iranian case until April 10. The Soviet representative insisted negotiations in progress were nearing completion and that all Russians troops would be withdrawn “unless unforeseen circumstances arise.”

Byrnes rejected this démarche for several reasons.

The Soviet commitment to withdraw was conditional. Secondly, the Secretary had become aware of the course and substance of negotiations in Moscow between the Iranian Prime Minister and the Soviet Government. The reports reaching Byrnes made it clear that the Soviet Union sought a sphere of influence in northern Iran. Stalin's statement that Soviet interests demanded the presence of Russian troops in Iran suggested that Stalin was interested in more than access to oil.

Byrnes was not opposed to Soviet oil concessions in principle, according to State Department functionaries, but it was also reported that there was very little oil to be found where the U.S.S.R. actually sought concessions. This served to reinforce the Secretary's doubts about Soviet policy in Iran. Moreover, the Secretary of State believed that the Soviet Union had enough oil for its own needs.

Byrnes had done his best to prevent Iran from becoming a source of discord between the United States and the Soviet Union, to little appreciation from the Soviets. The Secretary, in discussing the issue with Edward Stettinius, then the Ambassador to the United Nations, on the day before the Security Council opened, “stated that he had nursed the Russians (for) the last time.”

The second reason for Byrnes' rejection of the Soviet proposal relates to the decision of the Government of Iran to retain the Washington law firm of Covington, Burling to assist in the preparation of its case in the Security Council. John Laylin, one of the attorneys working on the case, later described his strategy. According to Laylin, “Our then Secretary of State, James Byrnes was a master of compromise. Our problem was to draw an issue which precluded compromise.” It was reported that the State Department was helping the law firm.

With the issue drawn so narrowly, Byrnes was forced into a corner. The Secretary could not oppose hearing Iran on the proposed postponement of its complaint, since doing so would undermine the United Nations. Gromyko walked out of the Security Council and the Council turned to the Iranian complaint. Byrnes saw Iran as relatively unimportant to the United States and as a Russian or British problem. So, he attempted to limit the extent of the break with the Soviet Union after Gromyko left the Security Council.

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12 They were received with “some assistance from the Russians” as well as the continuous day-to-day help from the State Department's Office of Near Eastern Affairs (all of whose members unequivocally supported Iran), and thus Laylin and O'Brien pursued this strategy. The initial issue before the Security Council centered “on the right of a member (of the United Nations Organization) to argue for its right to be heard on the proposed postponement of its case. See also, George Allen, "Memoirs," pp. 10-13, Allen MSS. Allen had copies of the Iranian Ambassador's speeches prior to their delivery. Allen was at this time Deputy Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs.
At the suggestion of Byrnes, the Council limited the Iranian representative to “a statement concerning the question of postponement.” When Hussein Ala, the Iranian Ambassador, proceeded into a discourse on the substance of the Iranian complaint, the Secretary broke in to suggest that Ala “confine himself to the procedural question before the Council.”

After an exchange between Ala and the Polish representative, the Secretary stated that “the crux of the matter” centered on whether Soviet assurances were “unconditional.” Byrnes therefore proposed a five-day postponement of the issue to allow information on the status of the negotiations between Iran and the U.S.S.R. to be brought before the Council. The Soviet Union would either have to state that it was using the presence of its troops to force concessions from Iran or that the March 24 announcement of withdrawal was unconditional.

Despite his absence from the Security Council, Gromyko responded to the Byrnes' motion in a letter to the Security Council on April 4, 1946. This letter left unclear the essential question of whether or not the withdrawal of Soviet troops was unconditional. The Secretary used the Soviet response after eliminating its ambiguity and introduced a resolution which would postpone formal consideration of the Iranian complaint until May 6, 1946. It is important to note that Byrnes “overlooked” the statement by the Iranian representative that as far as he knew the Soviet assurances were conditional on an oil concession being granted to the Soviet Union and on provincial autonomy for Azerbaijan.

Iran had been heard on the question of postponement, but neither the problem of interference by the U.S.S.R. in the internal affairs of Iran nor the question of Azerbaijan was really settled by this resolution. Keeping the Iranian issue on the agenda until May 6 would provide some assistance to the Iranian negotiating position but would probably allow the Soviet Union to emerge from the bilateral negotiations with most of its goals intact.

For American purposes, the Security Council “agreed on a solution” to the Iranian question. Byrnes wrote that he hoped that by May 6, when the Security Council would again consider Iran, “there would be nothing to discuss.”

Indeed, on April 5 a joint communique was signed by the Iranian Premier and the Soviet Ambassador, issued in Teheran. Complete agreement had been reached on all questions. The Soviet Union would unconditionally withdraw all of its troops by early May.

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The U.S.S.R. and Iran would establish a joint stock company to drill for oil under terms which followed “closely” those of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. In addition, the situation in Azerbaijan, where secessionist forces were still in power, was termed an “internal problem” but the Soviet Ambassador promised to use his “good offices” to help reach a settlement. The Soviet Union was left with a sphere of influence in Azerbaijan and the prospects of considerable Russian influence in the areas to be controlled by the joint oil company.

The Soviet Union then made what must be regarded as a major tactical blunder. On April 6, Gromyko insisted that the Iranian complaint be removed from the agenda. While this position was consistent with the initial Soviet position that Iran ought not to be heard, the Soviet motion was pointless since the U.S.S.R. had already obtained what it wanted from Iran. Thus, there was no longer any reason for maintaining Russian troops in that country.

Byrnes instructed Stettinius to approach Gromyko with the promise that the United States would let the issue die. The Secretary publicly stated his position on April 8: “There is no reason for reopening the case.” Byrnes announced that he would not return to the United Nations and promised that the Security Council would take no action if a satisfactory report came from the Governments of Iran and the U.S.S.R.

Byrnes had defended the right of Iran to be heard on the postponement of its complaint while discouraging Iran from getting into the substance of its complaint. The Secretary had broken with the Soviet Union publicly over a major issue and had emerged from the debate on Iran with increased prestige and public support. His critics had been silenced and there was no reason for the Secretary to press the issue further.¹⁴

However, with the new Soviet motion to remove the question of Iran from the agenda, a second battle began in the Security Council. The reasons for the Soviet decision to reopen the debate on Iran are unclear. Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations during 1946, later wrote that Soviet pride was hurt, and that Gromyko wanted to prove the U.S.S.R. innocent of the charges leveled against it. An alternative explanation is that the hard-liners in the Soviet Union argued in favor of renewed debate in the Security Council on Iran to demonstrate the “hostility” of the Western Powers and particularly of the United States and to end the chances for post-war cooperation.¹⁵

As a result of this debate (as well as the earlier, shorter and less acrimonious one), the Soviet Union destroyed most of the goodwill which the status of an ally during World War II had brought to it.

¹⁴ See Stettinius to Byrnes, April 8, 1946, Ibid., pp. 410-411, enclosing Gromyko's letter of April 6, 1946; Byrnes to Stettinius, April 8, 1946, FRUS, 1946, VII, p. 411; and Secretary Byrnes' Press Conference of April 8, 1946, found in Byrnes MSS, File 557.

The Secretary of State had sought to warn the U.S.S.R. that he would have to oppose the continued presence of Russian troops in Iran. Byrnes did not seek a confrontation with the U.S.S.R. Rather a public event had forced the Secretary to bring differences with the Soviet Union into the public light.

The Russian decision to seek the removal of the Iranian complaint from the agenda again stirred up the passions which had been calmed by Byrnes’ resolution postponing consideration of Iran's complaint. Neither the Soviet Union nor the United States would back down since doing so would entail an admission of error.

On April 23, the Security Council defeated (with American support) the Soviet resolution calling for the removal of Iran's complaint from the agenda. On May 10, the date to which the question had been postponed, the United States declined to press the Soviet Union on the question of withdrawal from Iran. In the midst of a critical period of the Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting Byrnes decided not to press the Soviet Union. Instead, Stettinius was instructed to postpone consideration until May 20, 1946, when further information would be available.16

The issue of Iran was dropped from active consideration by the United Nations. Byrnes reached this decision despite strong representations made by Judge John Lord O'Brian, the Iranian counsel with Covington, Burling to Ben Cohen. O'Brian pleaded that the United States should not consent to the Iranian complaint being dropped from the Agenda but should insist on an investigation.17

While O'Brian had argued that the situation in Iran was a “straight moral issue” and that “the country was opposed to any appeasement,” he failed to sway the Secretary of State. Byrnes had defended Iran because the principles of the United Nations had required him to do so. However, he declined to wage a battle in the Security Council against the U.S.S.R. to defend the interests of Iran or to use the Iranian issue as the basis of a propaganda contest with the Soviet Union.

This Iran matter created an impact on American-Soviet relations that was out of proportion to Iran's importance to the United States. Byrnes told French Foreign Minister Bidault on May 1, 1946, that as a result of the Iranian debate, “Russian popularity in the United States had been completely dissipated by the Soviet Governments' policies.” Iran was the “most critical issue” in the evolution of American-Soviet relations.18

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16 Ibid. The British, however, wanted to press the matter further. Campbell and Herring eds., The Diaries of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., (May 10, 1946), p. 470.
17 See Van Wagenen, The Iranian Case, 1946, pp. 72-74. See, also, the Cohen memo of discussion with Judge O'Brian, May 28, 1946, Records of the Department of State, Filed with 501BC.
18 Bohlen memo of conversation between Byrnes and Bidault, May 1, 1946, FRUS, 1946, II, p. 204.
Byrnes' policy of compromise with the Soviet Union had come under strong attack in Washington. The Secretary of State had concluded that public diplomacy was necessary to defend and explain his diplomacy toward the Soviet Union. He had not ended his pursuit of a *modus vivendi* with the U.S.S.R., as his rejection of Kennan's cable #511, the famous “Long Telegram” calling for containment of Soviet expansionism, and his reopening of negotiations on loans to Russia, both indicated.

With the eruption of the Iranian issue in March 1946, Byrnes was forced to publicly take a stance in opposition to the Soviet Union. Byrnes told Bidault that American opinion was no longer disposed to make concessions on important questions. Nevertheless, despite his limited flexibility, the Secretary of State continued to pursue a diplomacy of compromise with the Soviet Union, but within considerably circumscribed limits.

### The Paris Foreign Ministers Meetings

Despite the failure of the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Iran, Byrnes did not intend to allow Iran to slow the process of peace-making. Similarly, the Secretary of State was prepared to overlook what he later termed “Stalin's tactics in London,” when the Soviet Union turned the United Nations into a propaganda forum and gratuitously abused the veto power in the dispute over the Levant. There were, Byrnes believed, “differences on which the deputies will not reach agreement.” The Secretary therefore concluded that the “Foreign Ministers must make an effort to reconcile the differences that exist.”

On March 5, 1946, the day before the note to the Soviet Union on Iran was dispatched, Byrnes had proposed that the Foreign Ministers meet on April 15, 1946. British Foreign Minister Bevin opposed such a démarche “until we have had some moderately satisfactory reply to our remonstrances regarding Persia.”

The Secretary of State, although rejecting Bevin's argument, accepted the British Foreign Minister's position, writing: “However, if you are opposed to meeting, I shall not communicate with the other Foreign Ministers.”

With the introduction of his resolution postponing the discussion of Iran's complaint until May 6, Byrnes hoped to clear the air in time for a meeting of the Foreign Ministers. By May 6, as the Secretary wrote, he hoped “there would be nothing to discuss.” Accordingly, on April 4, with the Iranian issue apparently disposed of, Byrnes suggested that the Foreign Ministers meet in Paris on April 25, 1946.

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10 See Byrnes memo of conversation with the British Ambassador, March 6, 1946, FRUS, 1946, II, p. 25; Byrnes to Dunn (Assistant Secretary of State and Deputy in London), March 5, 1946, Ibid., pp. 22-23; Halifax (British Ambassador) to Byrnes, March 9, 1946, Ibid., pp. 27-28; and Byrnes to Gallman (U.S. Chargé in the United Kingdom), March 22, 1946, Ibid., p. 35.
Byrnes outlined the problems facing the United States at a Cabinet meeting on April 19. The Secretary felt that the “most immediate” problem was Italy. Byrnes believed that the Soviet Union did not want a peace treaty for Italy now, since “delay works in their favor.” The United States was most anxious to restore Italy both economically and politically; a failure to do so would create conditions conducive to the growth of the Communist Party in Italy.

According to Forrestal's record of this meeting, Byrnes believed that the Soviet Union was prepared to hold out for American concessions in the form of trusteeships over the Dodecanese Islands and Tripoli. Such concessions to the U.S.S.R. would be the price of Soviet consent to a peace treaty for Italy. The Soviet Union could afford to wait, while the United States could not allow any delay of the peace treaty for Italy.

The Secretary of State said that he was not hopeful of much success in getting peace treaties written now for the reasons he had outlined. Byrnes, however, wanted to avoid the alternative with which he was faced, a separate peace treaty with Italy.

The implications of a separate treaty with Italy were very serious; such a decision would mean the end of Byrnes’ hope for an arrangement with the Soviet Union. Moreover, Byrnes feared that the Russians might occupy portions of Italy (including, but not limited to, the area around Trieste), a move which could lead to war with the U.S.S.R. Byrnes was therefore determined to return to the conference table to seek a negotiated settlement.

The Soviet Union, however, would not let the Iranian issue die in the Security Council, but insisted on reopening the question. Thus, when Byrnes met with Molotov and Vyshinsky in Paris on April 28, 1946, he discovered that he could not escape the matter of Iran. The Secretary explained that once a “public event” had occurred, he had little choice but to oppose the Soviet Union. Byrnes regretfully noted in his memoirs that because this meeting of the Foreign Ministers opened on a note of discord, his later discussions on the treaties and the American proposals on Germany and Austria met with little success.

In addition to facing an atmosphere poisoned by the dispute over Iran, Byrnes faced another problem, namely, Senator Arthur Vandenberg.

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20 Forrestal Diary, April 19, 1946, Forrestal MSS.
Vandenberg had heard Byrnes say:

I know how to deal with the Russians. It’s just like the United States Senate. You build a post office in your (their) state, and they’ll build one in your state.22

The Senator thought that Byrnes' attitude was naive.

Not surprisingly, Vandenberg and Byrnes were at odds during the first months of 1946. As the Senator observed in early April 1946, Byrnes “still hopes for local negotiated settlement of outstanding issues” with the Soviet Union. Byrnes and Vandenberg did not share the same perspective on the Soviet Union because the Secretary of State believed it possible to negotiate with the U.S.S.R.23

When the Council of Foreign Ministers opened in Paris in late April 1945, the Secretary of State took Vandenberg with him. Byrnes told his Cabinet colleagues that he had to take into the conference with him both Vandenberg and Senator Tom Connally. Senator Vandenberg, by virtue of his position as the ranking Republican on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, had a “veto” over any agreement that Byrnes might make.24

During the first session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Vandenberg was impatient, bored, and sought a means to end the conference. The senator could not escape attendance at the Foreign Ministers' meetings because his absence could be used as a political issue against him and his party. Vandenberg held “little hope for the resolution of major controversies” and in his Diary he outlined his strategy for the second session of the Council of Foreign Ministers. “If possible, we shall seek an early showdown.”25 The Secretary of State continued to resist the senator's efforts to provoke a break with the Russians by opposing any compromise with the Soviet Union. In light of Vandenberg's attitude, what is most notable about the Paris Council of Foreign Ministers is that these meetings did not lead to a separate peace with Italy.

After several days of fruitless discussions on Italian colonies, the future of Trieste, and Italian reparations at the Paris Council of Foreign Ministers, the lines of disagreement were clearly drawn.

24 Interview with Ben V. Cohen, October 31, 1975, Washington, D.C.
25 See Vandenberg Diary, May 11, June 15, 1946, Vandenberg MSS. Also, see Byrnes to Truman, May 12, 1946, Records of the Department of State, Filed with 740.00119 Council. This accurately expresses the position which Molotov had developed over a period of weeks in Paris.
Byrnes wanted to hold the peace conference as soon as possible in order to bring about the normalization of life in Western Europe. The Soviet Foreign Minister was determined to use the unwillingness of the United States to pursue a separate peace in the Russian interests. Byrnes found that Molotov had revealed what the Soviet delegation regarded as fundamental questions which must be settled before a conference could be called.

Molotov indicated that differences of opinion on the Balkan peace treaties were not serious enough to delay the peace conference. However, in regard to Italy, he (Molotov) made it clear that the question of Trieste and reparations were, from the Soviet point of view, the only fundamental questions which must be settled before the (peace) conference date could be set.

The Secretary of State decided to revert to private diplomacy on May 5. Molotov suggested that if the United States agreed to the outright cession of the whole of Venezia Giulia, including Trieste, to Yugoslavia, “it would be possible for him to take a more favorable attitude toward Italy’s desires in regard to the colonies and reparations.”

Byrnes reiterated his previous position that the boundary between Italy and Yugoslavia must be determined along ethnic lines. Then the Secretary pressed for an elaboration of Molotov’s suggested trade. The Soviet Foreign Minister was suggesting that Yugoslavia and Greece renounce their claims for reparations from Italy, but he indicated that the Soviet Union did not intend to renounce its claims against Italy. Molotov’s offer was not as generous as first appeared and as Byrnes cabled Truman it became “apparent” that the “suggested trade” offered no basis for agreement. At least that is how Byrnes reported his conclusions about his meeting to the President.

The Secretary decided to pursue Molotov’s proposal with Vandenberg to see if an agreement could be reached along the lines proposed by Molotov. To avoid giving the impression that he was appeasing the Russians, Byrnes approached Vandenberg indirectly, using Connally as an intermediary. The Secretary soon learned that Vandenberg unequivocally rejected the basis of Molotov’s proposal and refused to consider giving Trieste to Yugoslavia. An immediate prospect for agreement on Trieste and reparations from Italy was vetoed by Vandenberg’s refusal.

Senator Vandenberg soon decided that he should return home and that the United States should pursue a separate peace with Italy, opinions which he informally conveyed to members of the press. Vandenberg urged Byrnes to “find a good excuse to go home.”

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26 Byrnes to Truman, May 6, 1946, Records of the Department of State, Filed with 740.00119 Council.
The Secretary of State disagreed with the Senator's recommendations and told Vandenberg that he did not “wish at present to confess that the Potsdam and Moscow program had broken down.”27

Byrnes continued to seek other avenues of approach. On May 11, the Secretary made a proposal which was the mirror image of that presented by Molotov. Italy would get Trieste and Byrnes promised that the settlement of other questions would not be too difficult.

The Secretary specified that “other questions” included reparations from Italy, Italian colonies, the Dodecanese Islands and navigation of the Danube. There is indirect evidence as to the nature of Byrnes' package deal. Jefferson Caffery, the American Ambassador in France, sent a cable to Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson stating:

Secretary desires data to consider feasibility of possibly offering to credit Soviet in reduction of amounts due in settlement, certain reductions Soviets might make in reparations claims against Italy and other countries.28

To reach an agreement with the Soviet Union, Byrnes was thinking in terms of reducing United States claims against the Soviet Union, resulting from Lend Lease (including Section 3 (c)) and the transfer of merchant ships to the U.S.S.R. The United States would in effect, finance reparations from Italy to the Soviet Union under this proposal but would do so indirectly.

Byrnes had other ideas which might provide the basis for an agreement with the Soviet Union on Trieste. In early April 1946, the Secretary had requested a study of the effect on the United States if Russia were granted bases in Tripolitania and the Dodecanese by the United Nations, thus suggesting that such a concession was under consideration. On May 15, 1946, a cable from the American delegation at the Paris Council of Foreign Ministers “urgently requested” the results of a study the State Department had made of “possible sources of Italian reparations” including the “cost of reconditioning the (merchant ship) Saturnia.”29

The first session of the Paris Foreign Ministers meeting ended in failure, but the meeting resumed several weeks later, in June 1946.

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27 See Vandenberg Diary, May 6, 1946, Vandenberg MSS. Vandenberg also viewed Trieste as the key to a settlement. Ibid., May 11, 1946. See, also, John C. Campbell, The United States in World Affairs, 1945-1947, pp. 124-125.
28 Caffery to Acheson and Clayton, May 11, 1946, Records of the Department of State, Filed with 740.00119 Council.
29 Byrnes to Acheson, May 15, 1946, Records of the Department of State, Filed with 740.00119 Council. Byrnes had long been opposed to substantial reparations from Italy. Byrnes' Press Conference, October 10, 1945, Byrnes MSS, File 554.
It was clear to Byrnes that Trieste could not form the key to a trade over the remaining issues. Stalin refused to consider a solution other than a transfer of Trieste to Yugoslavia. The Secretary therefore sought an agreement on Trieste which would provide for the internationalization of that city.

When Byrnes first sounded out Vandenberg, certain of the Hearst newspapermen were seeing Vandenberg and stirring him up, “thereby encouraging his intransigence.”30 The Secretary was equal to the task, and he decided to counter the Hearst journalists by using newspapermen who were “more interested in peace than in war with Russia.”

As Byrnes told his Cabinet colleagues on July 16, 1946, he used this part of the press corps to convey to Vandenberg the argument that if there were not some type of internationalization of Trieste, it would only be a matter of time until the Russians and the Yugoslavs moved in and took Trieste away from Italy.

Under this prompting Vandenberg came out with a proposal for the internationalization of Trieste in essentially the same form as that advocated by the Secretary of State. Byrnes promptly accepted the Senator's proposal and to ensure that Vandenberg would not change his mind, he issued a joint press release giving Vandenberg most of the credit for the idea.

An agreement in principle was reached on the internationalization of Trieste. The U.S.S.R. surrendered its claim to the Italian colonies and agreed that the Dodecanese islands should be awarded to Greece. Byrnes agreed that the Soviet Union should receive $100 million in reparations from Italy. Much of this sum would come from current production, with the U.S.S.R. providing the raw materials.

Despite Byrnes' complaint about his difficulties in keeping Arthur Vandenberg in line, the Secretary managed to gradually persuade Vandenberg to come around on Trieste and “deferred” reparations from Italy.31

The only major question left to settle on the satellite peace treaties was that of the specific terms of the internationalization of Trieste. Molotov kept making specific proposals for implementing the agreement in principle on Trieste, which effectively left control and sovereignty with Yugoslavia.

The Paris Peace Conference nearly broke up over Trieste. A war of nerves ensued after two American planes, lost in harsh weather, accidentally crossed the Yugoslav border and were shot down by Yugoslavian planes. Byrnes succeeded in restraining the military and the hard liners in the State Department.

When an ultimatum drafted in the State Department was sent to the Secretary in Paris for his approval, Byrnes changed the threatening phrase. The note to Yugoslavia, outlining the American complaint in considerable detail, closed with the following sentence.

If, however, within that time (forty-eight hours) these demands are not complied with, the United States Government will call upon the Security Council of the United Nations to meet promptly and to take appropriate action.32

The Secretary of State prevented those who opposed his policy of compromise with the Soviet Union from increasing the level of tension. Yugoslavia, in the face of Byrnes' conciliatory response, complied with the American demands.

After the Paris conference had concluded, Molotov refused to accept the recommendations, regardless of whether they were approved by a simple or a two-thirds majority. The Soviet Foreign Minister demanded the United States accept its position despite the essentially trivial nature of the disputes. Byrnes used the tactic of threatening to end the New York Council of Foreign Ministers meeting without agreement. The Secretary's strategy succeeded and complete agreement on the peace treaties for the former German satellites was reached.

Despite the decision of the Soviet Union to maintain its troops in Iran past the March 2, 1946, deadline, Byrnes was determined to continue to seek agreement on the peace treaties with the Soviet Union. The Secretary had called for the meeting of the Foreign Ministers to expedite the holding of the Peace Conference as soon as he thought the Iranian question was settled. The decision by the U.S.S.R. to reopen the issue on April 6 poisoned the atmosphere in which the Foreign Ministers met.

Nevertheless, Byrnes had continued to pursue his policy of compromise within the limits allowed him by the President and existence of Vandenberg's “veto” over his diplomacy. Over a period of two months, the Secretary explored a variety of proposals which he hoped would form the basis for agreement with the Soviet Union on Trieste and reparations from Italy.

Byrnes compromised with the Soviet Union, agreeing to the internationalization of Trieste and at the same time, managed to “keep Vandenberg in line.” The Secretary used the press corps and effectively co-opted Senator Vandenberg for his policy of pursuing an accommodation with the Soviet Union.

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32 Interview with Ben V. Cohen, June 20, 1974, Washington, D.C. Note to the Yugoslav Chargé, August 21, 1946, DSB, XV, pp. 417-418
**Byrnes' Departure from Washington**

After the United States and the Soviet Union reached agreement and successfully completed the peace treaties for the former German satellites, Byrnes again sounded a hopeful note in a speech given on January 11, 1947. The Secretary admitted that he had been deeply discouraged by the constant rebuffs of his efforts to seek agreement.

Today I am happy to say I am more confident than at any time since V-J Day that we can achieve a just peace by cooperative effort if we persist with firmness in the right as God gives us the power to see the right.33

Byrnes had not given up hope of reaching an arrangement with the Soviet Union.

In December 1946, Molotov agreed that the deputies should begin work on a peace treaty for Austria. The Secretary took note of this move, stating that agreement on the five peace treaties for the former German satellites “does give hope they (deputies) will soon be able to agree upon a treaty for Austria.” Byrnes' observations on the prospects for a peace treaty with Germany were guarded. However, the Secretary noted that the discussions on Germany “will start under much more favorable circumstances than seemed possible until last month.”

Byrnes' January 11 speech contained a repetition of a theme which characterized his diplomacy. “Nations like individuals must respect and tolerate one another's differences.”

After he had finished the peace treaties for the former German satellites in December 1946 (treaties which recognized the predominant rights and powers of the governments in occupation), Byrnes was prepared to go to Moscow to begin work on the peace treaties for Austria and Germany. However, Byrnes felt that he “couldn't start negotiations unless I was willing and able to carry through until the end — probably not less than eighteen months for the German, Japanese, and Austrian treaties.”34

Byrnes did not have the opportunity to remain as Secretary of State for the eighteen months which he felt would be required to complete these peace treaties.

Relations between Truman and Byrnes never fully recovered from the low reached after the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers.

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33 105 Byrnes' speech, January 11, 1947, DSB, XVI, p. 88.
In December 1945, Truman decided that George Marshall should be the next Secretary of State and he told Marshall that “if Byrnes quits me, I want you to be Secretary of State.” The President, however, did not tell Byrnes of his intentions and, moreover, Truman did not act immediately to replace Byrnes.

In April 1946, Byrnes, as a result of medical examination, appeared to be in ill health, and he tendered his resignation to take effect with the completion of the satellite peace treaties. At this time, the President formally asked Marshall to succeed Byrnes at the conclusion of his mission to China. However, a second physical examination, including another electrocardiogram, demonstrated that Byrnes was in good health and could remain in office indefinitely.

Nonetheless, this latest information did not cause Truman to change his mind about replacing Byrnes with Marshall. The relationship between the President and the Secretary of State remained under strain despite the fact that the President was regularly informed after the Moscow Conference about the direction of Byrnes' policy. Although Byrnes and Truman “were drinking companions dating back to their Senate days,” their relationship had been irrevocably altered by Byrnes’ failure to keep Truman fully informed.

Loy Henderson has stated that Byrnes “did not have a high opinion of Truman's intellect.” The Secretary of State, as Turner Catledge has written, “disdained his (Truman's) talents.” Byrnes’ attitude toward the President and his envy of Truman for occupying the White House led Byrnes to “quit dropping over to the White House for those long intimate chats in the cool of the afternoon.”

In addition to the deterioration of the friendship between Truman and Byrnes, the absence of the Secretary from Washington also contributed to his departure from office. Byrnes, in the course of attending four separate meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers and the Paris Peace Conference, was away from Washington 350 out of 562 days during which he was Secretary of State. As Walter Brown observed, during Byrnes' absence from Washington “there was quite a bit of rivalry between those around the President and those in the Secretary’s office.”

During 1945, Walter Brown had made it a point to stay in close touch with a number of key figures in the White House. After Brown's departure at the end of 1945, there was no one around the Secretary to keep in close touch with the White House.

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35 Quotes are from author’s interview with Loy Henderson, March 20, 1975, Washington, D.C.; Catledge, My Life and the Times, p. 71; Letter from Walter Brown to author, June 16, 1975; and from Truman comments on February 11, 1947 that “now” he had a “completely loyal White House Staff and Cabinet” found in the Davies Diary, February 11, 1947, Box 24.
36 Letter from Walter Brown to author, June 16, 1975.
Although Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson did visit the White House occasionally, no one with a primary loyalty to Byrnes explained the Secretary's policy at the White House.

In mid-December 1946, Byrnes discovered that Truman had committed himself to Marshall as his successor and that he was holding office only until Marshall's return from China. Byrnes was extremely sensitive and would not stay in office as a caretaker Secretary of State. He, accordingly, resigned as Secretary of State. Reasons of health, which Byrnes used to explain his action, were only a pretext to cover his anger.37

Coincident with the deterioration in the relationship between Truman and Byrnes, the President had begun to have second thoughts about a policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union. As Arthur Krock wrote in March 1947:

> There is good reason to believe that as long ago as the London Conference of Foreign Ministers, the President began to abandon real hope of effectiveness for enduring peace and security, of a continued policy of appeasement and official treatment of the Russians as a government friendly to the United States. He (Truman) made up his mind that when a fitting opportunity arose...he would proclaim the new (Truman) doctrine.38

The President had, however, been dissuaded from altering the direction of United States foreign policy before the Truman Doctrine by “some of his more important advisors.” He began to take a more active role in foreign policy in January 1946 in the wake of the Moscow Conference as Byrnes’ diplomacy came under heavy criticism.

The Iranian crisis swept away most of Truman's remaining doubts about Soviet intentions. The keystone of American diplomacy was that Stalin was a man of his word and that he would keep his agreements. The failure of the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Iran by March 2, 1946, upset that theory and led the President to conclude that he had been wrong about Stalin.

Byrnes' position on the Truman Doctrine must be considered to complete the consideration of his attitude toward the Soviet Union.

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37 Interview with Loy Henderson, March 20, 1975, Washington, D.C. According to Harry Vaughan, Truman told a staff conference that “Jimmy got mad.” — Interview with Harry Vaughan, March 22, 1975, Washington, D.C. Further evidence of Byrnes' anger is found in Forrestal's observations that "it will take some urging to get Byrnes to brief George Marshall on the diplomatic front." Forrestal Diary, January 28, 1947, Forrestal MSS. Byrnes' later career as Governor of South Carolina would suggest that he was in good health.

“The Truman Doctrine was properly understood at the time as a full break with the policy of hoping for a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union.”\(^{39}\) The Truman Doctrine also involved financial assistance for Greece and Turkey.

The Secretary of State early on had considerable doubts about support for the Greek Government. Byrnes’ initial attitude in mid-1946 was explained by Joseph Alsop. Byrnes pressed upon Bevin’s people at Paris, in the strongest terms, the embarrassment and wastefulness of investing any energy or resources in such a government as now exists in Greece.

Yet, by November 1946, Byrnes had changed his mind about aid in Greece. The Secretary had concluded that the United States must “pull British chestnuts out of the fire” because American interests could not allow forces friendly to the Soviet Union to gain control of Greece and with it control of the eastern Mediterranean.

On November 1, 1946, Byrnes initialed a memo prepared by the State Department’s Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs. This memo stated that “Greece and Turkey form the sole obstacle to Soviet domination of the Eastern Mediterranean which is economically and strategically an area of vital importance.” Greece, as Byrnes agreed, “is becoming the focal point in strained international relations.”\(^{40}\)

By December, Byrnes was seriously disturbed since he believed that the Russians were behind the situation in Greece. The Secretary of State expressed his views unequivocally on December 18. “Greece is our problem today. Greece and Turkey are our outposts.” Since Byrnes felt “we want to help Greece all we can,” the Secretary had informed the British that “we will assist Greece in its economic rehabilitation and that the British should furnish Greece arms to the extent of its ability.” Those arms which the “British are unable to furnish” would be provided indirectly by the United States.\(^{41}\)

Byrnes had not embarked on a policy of confrontation with the Soviet Union. Instead, the Secretary had taken up with Molotov the problem of trying “to get Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to refrain from stirring up trouble” in Greece. The situation in Greece was not a reason to embark on a policy of confrontation with the U.S.S.R., but it was a problem to be discussed in the same fashion as the situation in China had been discussed at Moscow. Although Byrnes had “gotten nowhere” in discussion of Greece with Molotov, he had not despaired. Future meetings might bring an agreement.

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\(^{40}\) State Department memo, approved November 1, 1946, FRUS, 1946, VII, pp. 242, 240 n.

\(^{41}\) Minutes of the meeting of the Committee of Three, December 18, 1946, Records of the Department of State, Filed with 811.0200.
Byrnes did not give up hope for an accommodation with the Soviet Union. Thus, he did not agree with the ideological (as opposed to the economic) half of the Truman Doctrine. Byrnes did not surrender hope of improving American-Soviet relations.

The first speech given by Byrnes after he left office clearly illustrates this point. On May 15, 1947, Byrnes expressed his perspective on relations with the Soviet Union, demonstrating his disagreement with the portion of the Truman Doctrine which meant an end of diplomacy with the Soviet Union:

I deny that conflict is inevitable. On the contrary, I believe we can make the peace and we can keep the peace. I realize the difficulties. But we can overcome the difficulties. We have made clear to the Soviet Union that it cannot dictate the terms of peace. We must also realize the United States cannot dictate the terms of peace. (I continue) to believe in the value of compromise with the U.S.S.R.

He admonished his audience that there “is no place for a ‘take it or leave it’ attitude.”

Byrnes tenaciously held to the view that an agreement with the U.S.S.R. concerning Germany could be reached. On November 6, 1947, in a speech given to the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopalian Church, Byrnes outlined his plan for writing a peace treaty with Germany.

The United Nations “should honestly try to reach a unanimous agreement.” If the Soviet Union refused, then the United States and the other members of the United Nations Organization should proceed without the Russians. Byrnes denied that he was recommending a separate peace with Germany:

It is my conviction that when the Soviets see that the rest of the Allied nations intend to proceed with a settlement with Germany, after making many protests, they will attend the peace conference and make the best settlement possible from their viewpoint.

The former Secretary of State realized the obstacles to negotiating quickly with the Soviet Union, but he advised that “we must always leave open the gates of understanding.” “Time, tolerance and the return of the world to economic health” were prerequisites for an atmosphere conducive to successful negotiations.

Byrnes was out of step with much of the thinking of official circles in Washington on the question of relations with the Soviet Union. He told the assembled clergy:

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In view of what I have said, you may ask if I still cling to my policy of patience as well as firmness and whether I think it is possible for us to get along with the Soviets. To both questions, I answer 'yes'. Certainly, we must try to do so.\textsuperscript{43}

Even within the context of the Berlin blockade, in August 1948, Byrnes still believed that an accommodation with the Soviet Union was possible. Byrnes' response to an invitation from Secretary of State George Marshall to join the American delegation for a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, then scheduled for mid-September 1948 (but never held), is instructive. Byrnes wrote that if the meeting is held then “it will be the turning point in our relations with the Soviets, either for better or worse.” Byrnes felt that it was still possible to have a good relationship with the Russians.

After the summit of Byrnes’ diplomacy of compromise at Moscow, the Secretary’s policy of seeking a \textit{modus vivendi} with the Soviet Union came under attack as Byrnes was placed on the defensive. The Secretary of State lost flexibility in his negotiating position as he turned to public diplomacy to defend himself against his critics. Despite this tactical move, Byrnes continued to plan for cooperation with the U.S.S.R. in the postwar world. The decision to revive a loan from the Export-Import Bank to the Soviet Union is a demonstration of Byrnes' confidence that the economic policies of the United States and the Soviet Union could be made compatible and complementary.

Despite Byrnes' successes, Iran became a major obstacle on the road to maintaining the alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union. The decision to maintain Soviet troops in Iran cut sharply into public support for a policy of compromise with the Soviet Union. Similarly, the failure of the Council of Foreign Ministers quickly to reach agreement on the satellite peace treaties further undermined support for Byrnes’ search for accommodation with the Soviet Union.

Although the Soviet Union later withdrew its troops from Iran and agreed to the internationalization of Trieste, these moves came too late. By the time of the Truman Doctrine, American opinion and the leaders of the United States were prepared for a policy based on rejection of the possibility of negotiated agreement with the Soviet Union.

\textsuperscript{43} Byrnes expressed similar views in two letters written to personal friends in September 1947. The Soviets, Byrnes believed, “are a disagreeable people to deal with because of their inferiority complex and their suspicion of us.” The United States “must be firm but we should not encourage the frequently expressed belief in the inevitability of conflict.” “We must continue our efforts to live with them (the Russians) in peace.” Byrnes to Josephus Daniels, September 1, 1947, Byrnes MSS. File 653. Byrnes to Mark Ethridge, September 25, 1947, Byrnes MSS, File 654.
From the perspective of the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in December 1945, however, it had appeared that Byrnes had succeeded in solving the major problems that threatened American-Soviet relations. During 1946, Byrnes was on the defensive as his search for an accommodation came under attack.

The failure of this policy rested not with the Secretary of State, who did his best to concert policy with the U.S.S.R. within the limits prescribed for him by his relationship with the President, by the constraints of domestic politics, and by opposition from those who had never reconciled themselves to the 1917 revolution in Russia.

Further, the causes of Byrnes' inability to create the arrangement he sought rested with Stalin, but not because of the Soviet leader's expansionist desires. The Soviet Union, after all, had backed down in Iran, despite the inability of the United States to counter Russian military force exerted in that part of the world. The modest concessions which the U.S.S.R. obtained as a result of the negotiations in 1946 at the Council of Foreign Ministers meetings and at the Paris Peace Conference must be weighed against the loss of Russian good will in the United States and Britain.

The Soviet leaders, in effect, postponed discussion of the more crucial questions relating to the future of Germany and Austria until after Byrnes had left office, until a time when the one man who possessed both the will to work with the Soviet Union in Germany and Japan and with the possible influence to ensure the success of a concerted policy had departed from the center of power. Whether even Byrnes could have succeeded in determining the future of Germany and Japan with the U.S.S.R. is unknown.

But with Byrnes' resignation as Secretary of State, all hope for such a concerted policy disappeared. The responsibility for the failure to maintain the alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States rests in part with the seeming shortsightedness of Soviet diplomacy. It rests in part with the apparent Russian failure to understand that if the Soviet Union did not demonstrate a willingness to work with the United States, then the political positions of those who favored a policy of compromise with the Soviet Union would be undermined and American leaders would lose their desire for a concerted policy.

In other words, Soviet diplomacy probably played into the hands of the hardliners in the United States who argued that an accommodation with the U.S.S.R. was not in the best interests of the United States.