THE ANALYSIS BY SELECTED MICHIGAN NEWSPAPERS OF EVENTS LEADING TO AND ISSUES ARISING FROM THE DISMISSAL OF GENERAL OF THE ARMY DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

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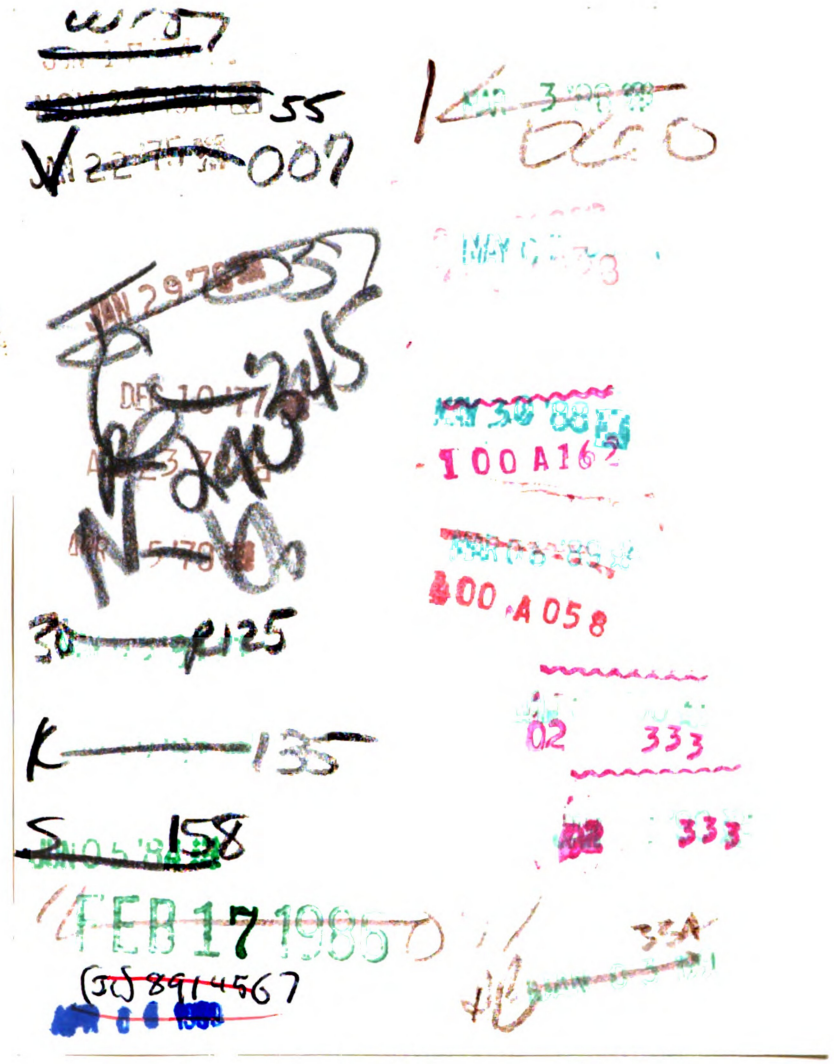
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ABSTRACT

THE ANALYSIS BY SELECTED MICHIGAN NEWSPAPERS OF EVENTS LEADING TO AND ISSUES ARISING FROM THE DISMISSAL OF GENERAL OF THE ARMY DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

By

Dalrymple M. Harris

This is a study of press performance in regard to the dismissal in 1951 of General Douglas MacArthur by President Harry S. Truman. MacArthur's dismissal raised a storm of controversy over foreign policy, constitutional, political, and military issues. The debate was brief, but furious while it lasted. This study outlines the relationship of MacArthur and Truman to the press, and through an analysis of six Michigan daily newspapers, examines how well the press performed its function of providing the citizenry with information needed to make rational political judgments.

It was found that the Michigan newspapers generally asserted the constitutional principle of civilian control of the military, and that information and interpretation of that information on foreign policy matters was adequately, but not thoroughly, presented. Outright bias in favor of the "pro-MacArthur" position existed in the case of the Hearst-owned Detroit Times. Other issues, such as the question of MacArthur's military competency or the influence of

domestic politics on the controversy were covered only superficially by the press, if at all. The Detroit News, the Detroit Free Press, and Grand Rapids Press and, to a lesser degree, the Flint Journal retained a rational perspective in their news and editorial columns despite disagreement over policies and despite the intense emotionalism of the time.

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INTRODUCTION

This is the age of the celebrity rather than of the hero, historian Daniel J. Boorstin suggests, defining a celebrity as "a person who is known for his well-knownness,"[1] and observing that "in the creation of a celebrity, somebody always has an interest--newsmen needing stories, press agents paid to make celebrities, and the celebrity himself."[2] A genuine hero, by Boorstin's definition, is a far different kind of creature:

> For our purposes it is sufficient to define a hero as a human figure--real or imaginary or both--who has shown greatness in some achievement. He is a man or woman of great deeds.
>
> Of course, many such figures remain. But if we took a census of the names which populate the national consciousness . . . we would now find the truly heroic figure in the old-fashioned mold to be a smaller proportion than ever before.[3]

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur was cast from that old-fashioned mold, although he sometimes failed to fit Boorstin's description of the ideal hero. A true hero, for example, should shun publicity.[4] That

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[1]Daniel J. Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 57.

[2]Ibid., p. 73.

[3]Ibid., p. 49.

[4]Ibid., p. 62.

was never a MacArthur characteristic. In addition, he often showed an unheroic tendency to shift the blame for his failures and rationalize his defeats. Despite these flaws, however, there is little doubt that MacArthur was a big man; not just a big name. He created himself; he was not created by the media. Samuel P. Huntington, a Harvard University professor and specialist in the military aspects of politics, wrote of MacArthur:

> . . . MacArthur had been a brilliant soldier but always something more than a soldier; a controversial, ambitious, transcendent figure, too able, too assured, too talented to be confined within the limits of his professional function and responsibilities. As early as 1929 his name was mentioned in connection with the Presidency, and in 1944, 1948, and 1952 he was on the fringes of the presidential political arena.[5]

If General MacArthur ever became less the hero and more the celebrity, it was during the thirty days after April 11, 1951. It was on that date that MacArthur was dismissed from all of his military offices by President Harry S. Truman, touching off a brief but extremely bitter controversy over issues of national foreign policy. During the last part of April, President Truman was vilified by congressmen, hanged in effigy, denounced as a traitor, threatened with impeachment, and damned by many of the newspapers in the nation. It was a period bursting with

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[5]Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 369-70.

emotionalism. Richard Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., later wrote that

> . . . it is doubtful if there has ever been in this country so violent and spontaneous a discharge of political passion as that provided by the General's dramatic return from voluntary, patriotic exile.[6]

The purpose of this study is to examine the news reports and editorial reactions of a representative sample of newspapers to determine whether--under these conditions of major policy disagreement and extreme emotionalism--the facts and issues involved were presented to newspaper readers in a coherent manner.

Six Michigan daily newspapers, representing more than half of the aggregate paid newspaper circulation in the state during 1951, were selected for the study. The publications chosen were: the Detroit News, an independently-owned newspaper published weekday afternoons with a circulation in 1951 of 452,760; the Detroit Free Press, a newspaper owned by Knight Newspapers, Incorporated, published mornings with a daily circulation of 449,449; the Detroit Times, a newspaper owned by the William Randolph Hearst chain, published weekday afternoons with a circulation in 1951 of 440,317;[7] the Grand Rapids Press,

[6]Richard H. Rovere and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The MacArthur Controversy and American Foreign Policy (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1965), p. 5.

[7]In 1951, the Detroit Times was at the peak of its circulation curve, which would decline steadily from 1951 until the newspapers demise in November, 1960.

an afternoon newspaper with a circulation of 106,391, published weekdays by Booth Newspapers, Incorporated; the Flint Journal, also a Booth newspaper, published weekday afternoons with a circulation in 1951 of 77,975; and the Lansing State Journal, an afternoon newspaper published in the state capital by Federated Newspapers, Incorporated, with a daily circulation in 1951 of 55,513. Each of the newspapers in the study, with the exception of the Grand Rapids Press, then published a Sunday morning edition.[8]

In 1951, fifty-five daily newspapers were published in Michigan with an aggregate paid daily circulation of more than two and one-quarter million. Two-thirds of that circulation was provided by the six newspapers listed above.[9]

Because of the importance of Douglas MacArthur's character and personality in shaping the issues of the 1951 controversy, it is essential to understand something about that extraordinary general, particularly those aspects of his career that helped shape the relationship between him and the press.

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[8]N. W. Ayer & Son, Directory: Newspapers and Periodicals (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Son, 1951), pp. 451-62.

[9]Ibid.

CHAPTER I

MACARTHUR'S "FIRST CAREER"

Douglas MacArthur served his country as a general officer for so many years that by 1951 his early fame was almost forgotten by the people. He was born to a military tradition. His father, Arthur MacArthur, had won the Medal of Honor during the Civil War as a regimental commander at Missionary Ridge, and had served as a major general in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. Later, Arthur MacArthur became the first military governor of the Philippine Islands.[1] In 1903, his son, Douglas, was graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, at the age of twenty-three. From its beginning, the career of Douglas MacArthur was spectacular. He was first captain of the cadet corps, the highest military honor a cadet can receive, and was academically first in his class.[2] After his graduation, MacArthur served briefly in the Philippines and Japan, was a military aide to President

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[1] Dorris Clayton James, The Years of MacArthur, 1880-1941 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), pp. 13-15, 33-38.

[2] Ibid., pp. 78, 84.

Theodore Roosevelt, helped sieze Vera Cruz from Mexico in 1914, and served as a press censorship officer on the War Department general staff.[3]

In 1917, MacArthur served in France with the American Expeditionary Forces as a major in the Forty-second Infantry (Rainbow) Division. By the end of the war in Europe, he was a much decorated brigadier general and in command of the division. MacArthur was widely hailed as one of the outstanding combat leaders in the American Expeditionary Forces.[4] The young general was an imposing presence and was attractive to the press in those early days:

> . . . The papers had found him a fetching figure and liked to call him "the D'Artagnan of the A.E.F." After serving for a while with the occupation forces in Germany, he came home with two battle wounds, a trunkful of decorations and clippings, and enough memories of wartime kudos to nourish vast discontent through the years of peace.[5]

During the years from 1919 to 1922, MacArthur served as the superintendent of the United States Military Academy, the youngest officer to hold that post since the War of 1812.[6] After another assignment in the Philippines,

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[3]Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 28-48.

[4]James, Years of MacArthur, pp. 140-50, 239.

[5]Rovere and Schlesinger, The MacArthur Controversy, p. 28.

[6]James, Years of MacArthur, p. 261.

he returned to the United States and in 1925 was assigned to sit on the court-martial board of air-power advocate Brigadier General William (Billy) Mitchell, a boyhood friend. MacArthur later wrote that this assignment was "one of the most distasteful orders [he had] ever received."[7] Mitchell had been angered by the crash of the military dirigible Shenandoah and other aircraft accidents and had told reporters, "these accidents are the result of the incompetence, criminal negligence, and almost treasonable administration of the national defense by the Navy and War Departments."[8] The offense for which Mitchell was tried was "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline," under the catch-all Ninety-sixth Article of War.[9] Of the twelve officers assigned to act as Mitchell's jury, six--including MacArthur--were major generals and six were brigadier generals.[10] The truth of Mitchell's accusations of negligence in the War and Navy Departments was not to be an issue in the trial, because a separate board of inquiry was to investigate the aircraft accidents. Mitchell and his defense attorney, however,

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[7]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 85.

[8]Time, Nov. 2, 1925, p. 9.

[9]Burke Davis, The Billy Mitchell Affair (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 247-48.

[10]James, Years of MacArthur, p. 307.

were able to turn the court-martial into a public forum on air power. After a seven-week trial, Mitchell was convicted and sentenced to suspension from duty for more than two years. Despite the public outcry, President Calvin Coolidge approved the sentence and Mitchell promptly resigned his commission.[11]

One aspect of Mitchell's defense is pertinent to MacArthur's later career. Mitchell's civilian defense attorney, U. S. Representative Frank R. Reid, a protege of Clarence Darrow,[12] had offered the defense of freedom of speech, arguing that the Articles of War did not supersede the rights guaranteed to a military officer or any other citizen by the Bill of Rights.[13] On this point, MacArthur wrote in his memoirs:

> It is part of my military philosophy that a senior officer should not be silenced for being at variance with his superiors in rank and with accepted doctrine. I have always felt that the country's interest was paramount, and that when a ranking officer, out of purely patriotic motives, risked his own personal future in such opposition, he should not be summarily suppressed.[14]

The MacArthur legend, reported by a number of admiring biographers, suggests that MacArthur voted to

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[11] Davis, Billy Mitchell Affair, pp. 326, 331-32.

[12] Ibid., p. 332.

[13] Time, Nov. 2, 1925, p. 9.

[14] MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 85.

acquit Mitchell.[15] In fact, MacArthur never publicly revealed his vote. His memoirs, however, give some hint as to his decision. He wrote:

> . . . In such a court-martial as Mitchell's only a two-thirds vote is necessary to convict. When the verdict was reached, many believed I had betrayed my friend, and certain rabid and irresponsible columnists even assailed me for joining "in the persecution of Mitchell." Nothing could be further from the truth. I did what I could in his behalf and I helped save him from dismissal. That he was wrong in the violence of his language is self-evident; that he was right in his thesis is equally true and incontrovertible.[16]

In viewing Mitchell's trial in retrospect, it seems probable that MacArthur voted to convict, but may have argued for a light sentence.

Mitchell was a colorful figure, popular with the public and the press. One of his champions was Fiorello LaGuardia, U. S. Representative from New York City, who focused attention on MacArthur during the trial. LaGuardia, a wartime pilot under Mitchell, had been quoted in the press as saying, "Billy Mitchell isn't being tried by his peers, but by nine[17] beribboned dogrobbers of the General

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[15]See among others, Clark G. Lee and Richard Henschel, Douglas MacArthur (New York: Holt, 1952), p. 45; Frazier Hunt, The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1954), pp. 118-19; or Clarke Newlon, The Fighting Douglas MacArthur (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1965), p. 107.

[16]MacArthur, Reminiscences, pp. 85-86.

[17]Three of the members of the board of officers had been challenged by the defense and dismissed.

Staff." When questioned on this statement while testifying before the court, LaGuardia responded, "I want to say that at that time I didn't know General MacArthur was on this court."[18] MacArthur was still a popular public figure.

In 1930, President Herbert Hoover appointed MacArthur as Chief of Staff of the United States Army. He was then fifty years old--once again the youngest man to hold such a position--and he had been an officer for thirty-one years.[19] He was at the top of his profession. MacArthur's tenure as Chief of Staff was essentially a struggle with the Congress to prevent further reduction of the army's strength and budget in the depths of the Depression. He was disturbed by talk in the Congress "and all across the country . . . to the effect that war could come no more."[20] On June 8, 1932, MacArthur made a speech at the University of Pittsburgh in which he identified the enemy:

> Pacifism and its bedfellow, Communism, are all about us. In the theater, newspapers and magazines, pulpits and lecture halls, schools and colleges, it hangs before the face of America, organizing the forces of unrest and undermining the morals of the working man.[21]

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[18] James, Years of MacArthur, pp. 308-09.

[19] MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 89.

[20] Ibid., p. 90.

[21] Ibid.

To MacArthur's dismay, the speech brought much criticism upon him. Some years later he wrote:

> I was roundly denounced not only by pacifists and Communists, but even on the floor of Congress itself. A small group in that august body fancied themselves far better strategists than any general. I was harrassed ceaselessly in the effort to force me into acceptance of their appeasement views. I was slandered and smeared almost daily in the press. The propaganda spared neither my professional attributes nor my personal character. It was bitter as gall and I knew that something of that gall would always be with me.[22]

Another bitter dose of gall was waiting for MacArthur as he spoke in Pennsylvania. It had originated in 1929, when the stock market crashed and plunged the nation into the worst financial crisis it had ever known. By 1932, the future looked bleak for millions of unemployed men and women. Assets that had survived the crash now were mostly depleted, and sources of private relief were all but exhausted. Tens of thousands of veterans of the armed services saw their single remaining asset to be their "adjusted compensation certificates," representing a "bonus" due them from the government for their wartime service during 1917-1918. The payment was not legally due until 1945, but U. S. Representative Wright Patman of Texas had introduced a bill in the House to pay the bonus immediately in response to the veterans' need. The bill

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[22] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

was opposed by the Hoover administration as fiscally irresponsible, and was shelved by the Ways and Means Committee of the House.[23]

To get action on the bill, the veterans organized a march on the Capitol. The first contingent of the "Bonus Expeditionary Forces," or "B.E.F.," as it became known, arrived in the District of Columbia on May 28, 1932, led by Walter W. Waters of Oregon, who became the leader of the bonus army. By June 7, about 20,000 veterans marched in ragged military formation down Pennsylvania Avenue, and more men were arriving every day.[24] Partly through the lobbying efforts of the veterans, the bonus bill was forced out of committee to the floor of the Democrat-controlled House. That body was aware that the measure could probably not pass the U. S. Senate. And if it did, the President had promised to veto the legislation. On June 15, the House passed the bill.[25] But all hope for the bonus bill ended on June 17 when the Senate voted it down. Senator Hiram Johnson, a maverick Republican from California, is reported to have said:

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[23] New York Times, May 7, 1932, p. 1.

[24] Ibid., June 8, 1932, p. 1.

[25] Detroit Free Press, June 16, 1932, p. 1.

> This marks a new era in the life of our nation. The time may come when this folderol--these trappings of government--will disappear, when fat old men like you and me will be lined up against a stone wall.[26]

Despite such fears of revolution, 8,000 veterans outside on the Capitol grounds heard the bad news quietly. Their leaders spoke to them for a few tense moments, then they sang "America" and marched back to their camps, vowing to stay until 1945, if necessary.[27]

The veterans were generally well-disciplined and orderly and, for the most part, the residents of the capital city tolerated them in good humor. This was apparently largely due to the efforts of a man respected and admired by both the residents and the veterans: retired Brigadier General Pelham Glassford, superintendent of the District of Columbia police.[28] After the Congress had adjourned on July 17, there were some attempts by the small radical element of the bonus army to march on the White House. None of these came close to success, thanks in part to the intervention of the main body of veterans.[29]

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[26]Robert S. Allen, More Merry-Go-Round (New York: Horace Liverwright, 1932), p. 46. Johnson's remark is not reported in the Congressional Record.

[27]Detroit Free Press, June 16, 1932, p. 1.

[28]Frederick Lewis Allen, Since Yesterday: The Nineteen-Thirties in America, September 3, 1929--September 3, 1939, Bantam Books (New York: Harper & Row, 1940), pp. 66-67.

[29]New York Times, June 19, 1932, p. 1.

Some veterans left Washington in the face of an eviction order issued July 22, but efforts to convince the majority to depart had no immediate success. When Glassford insisted on explicit written instructions before forcibly evicting the veterans from their camps, a series of conferences was called. The administration was losing patience with Glassford's moderate tactics, and was ready to take a harder line.[30] One of the meetings included Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley, B.E.F. leader Walter Waters, and Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur.[31] According to Waters, MacArthur did not contribute to the five-hour discussion of the future of the B.E.F., but paced around the room listening. At the close of the meeting, Waters was convinced that the government had no sympathy whatsoever for the veterans' plight. He wrote:

> . . . I turned to General MacArthur, who would give the order to the troops in case they were to be used. "If the troops should be called out against us will the B.E.F. be given the opportunity to form in columns, salvage their belongings, and retreat in orderly fashion?"
>
> His answer was vital to me . . . . He paused in his endless march around the room and replied, "Yes, my friend, of course!"[32]

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[30] Detroit Times, July 28, 1932, p. 3.

[31] Walter W. Waters, B.E.F.: The Whole Story of the Bonus Army, with William C. White (New York: John Day Co., 1933), p. 192.

[32] Ibid., p. 199.

MacArthur's version of this exchange is that he "conferred with [Waters] and reached an agreement that if the army was called in he would withdraw without violence."[33] After more delays, the police evacuation of the veterans began at 11:00 A.M. on July 28. In the early afternoon a scuffle between police and veterans resulted in the fatal wounding of a veteran by a panicky police officer. Other veterans and some police officers were hurt, but Glassford restored order and the evacuation continued. President Hoover called out federal troops shortly after, announcing that this action was needed to put an end to "rioting and defiance of civil authority."[34] Four companies of infantry, a platoon of light tanks, and four troops of cavalry were mobilized, arriving in downtown Washington in the late afternoon.[35] General MacArthur decided to accompany the troops on their mission. He later wrote that he did so "in accordance with the President's request."[36] Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, then an assistant to MacArthur, advised the chief of staff that it seemed "highly inappropriate"

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[33]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 93.

[34]Washington Post, July 29, 1932, p. 3.

[35]Gene Smith, The Shattered Dream: Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1970), p. 160.

[36]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 95.

for the head of the army to be present with the troops. Eisenhower reported that

> . . . General MacArthur disagreed, saying that it was a question of Federal authority in the District of Columbia, and because of his belief that there was "incipient revolution in the air," as he called it, he paid no attention to my dissent.[37]

Time, a weekly news magazine, reported MacArthur's participation:

> General MacArthur directed the military operation, tears streaming down his cheeks, not from emotion but from the fumes of the [tear gas] bombs. When his cavalry rode down a group of veterans with a U.S. flag, a spectator sang out: "The American flag means nothing to me after this." General MacArthur snapped: "Put that man under arrest if he opens his mouth again."[38]

The imposing show of force and liberal use of tear gas cleared the downtown area with little delay, and the troops moved on to the main camp at Anacostia flats, near the Potomac River. By midnight, the bonus army was shattered and dispersed; the shacks of Anacostia were ablaze; and the stunned veterans, many with wives and children, streamed from Washington along every road.[39] Remarkably, no one was killed during the evacuation, although a veteran's baby later died of complications resulting from tear-gas inhalation.[40]

[37]Dwight D. Eisenhower, At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 216-17.

[38]Time, Aug. 8, 1932, p. 6.

[39]Washington Post, Nov. 30, 1932, p. 1.

[40]New York Times, Aug. 10, 1932, p. 2.

The decision to use the army was clearly not MacArthur's.[41] The size and composition of the force was his responsibility, however, and he could be validly criticized for sending tanks and cavalry against unemployed American citizens. MacArthur's supporters suggested that the strength of the force was a prime factor in minimizing casualties through its psychological effect. Most criticism of MacArthur's role in the bonus army affair was directed at his comments to newspaper reporters on returning to the War Department late on the night of the eviction. He said, in part:

> . . . That mob down there was a bad-looking mob. It was animated by the essence of revolution. The gentleness, the consideration with which they had been treated had been mistaken for weakness, and they had come to the conclusion, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they were about to take over . . . . It is my opinion that had the President not acted today, had he permitted this thing to go on for twenty-four hours more, he would have been faced with a grave situation which would have caused a real battle. Had he let it go on another week, I believe that the institutions of our government would have been very severely threatened . . . .

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[41] Arthur Krock, then chief of the New York Times Washington bureau, reported a conversation with President Hoover in which Hoover may have disclaimed responsibility for the removal of the bonus army. Krock quotes Hoover as speaking of the veterans' rout by the military "which MacArthur ordered on his own." (Arthur Krock, Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968], p. 132.)

> There were, in my opinion, few veteran soldiers in that group we cleared out today; few indeed. I am not speaking by figures because I don't know how many there were, but if there was one man in ten in that group today who is a veteran, it would surprise me. . . .[42]

Dwight Eisenhower, who had advised MacArthur not to meet with the press, thought that MacArthur's comments

> . . . led to the prevailing impression that General MacArthur had undertaken and directed the move against the veterans and that he was acting as something more than just the agent of civilian authorities.[43]

Press criticism of MacArthur was loudest from those newspapers that would be his champions twenty years later: the Scripps-Howard publications and those of William Randolph Hearst. The Baltimore Sun ridiculed MacArthur's statement in an editorial that concluded:

> . . . and what bosh it is! A handful of forlorn men, of so little economic power that they had to live on handouts, of so little political power that Congress turned on its heel and left them sitting in their hovels, of so little military power that actually a few tear bombs sent them scurrying into the light from their wretched shelters. These were the "insurrectionists" who were to endanger the nation and menace civilization. What Bosh![44]

The Detroit Times, in a front-page editorial, reviewed the incident and the reaction of the international press and

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[42] New York Times, July 29, 1932, p. 2.

[43] Eisenhower, At Ease, p. 218.

[44] Editorial, Baltimore Sun, reprinted in Detroit Times, July 31, 1932, p. 3.

summarized it as "a sorry day's work, Mr. President and General MacArthur."[45]

MacArthur remained bitter about criticism of the eviction of the bonus marchers until his death. In his memoirs, he wrote:

> During the Bonus March Communist threats continued to be made against responsible officials. I was to be publicly hanged on the steps of the Capitol. It was the beginning of a definite and ceaseless campaign that set me apart as a man to be destroyed, no matter how long the Communists and their friends and admirers had to wait, and no matter what means they might have to use. But it was to be nineteen years before the bells of Moscow pealed out their glee at my eclipse.[46]

MacArthur served as chief of staff for an unprecedented five-year term. In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt extended the general's normal tenure by one year.[47] As his term closed, MacArthur faced the prospect of retiring at fifty-five, or reverting from temporary four-star rank to his permanent grade of major general and accepting a subordinate command. He did neither. At the request of the Philippine government, MacArthur was detached from the U. S. Army to be military adviser to the

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[45]Editorial, Detroit Times, Aug. 1, 1932, p. 1.

[46]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 97.

[47]Ibid., p. 102.

Philippine Commonwealth and field marshal of the armed forces of the islands. He left Washington, ending his "first career," in 1935.[48]

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[48] Ibid., p. 103.

CHAPTER II

MACARTHUR'S RETURN

Douglas MacArthur was not yet a legend in 1941, but he was a famous general with a long and honored career behind him. Dorris Clayton James, latest and most comprehensive of MacArthur's biographers, observes that by the beginning of World War II the general was still seen by most mortals as a mere human:

> . . . None yet adulated him to the point of comparing his genius of military leadership to that of Alexander the Great or Napoleon I, as some would later do. . . . No one talked seriously yet of MacArthur as a unique creature of destiny, nor does the evidence suggest that MacArthur saw himself as such. The myths of his almost superhuman attributes and feats were still several years in the future.[1]

From 1935 to 1941, MacArthur struggled to create an effective defense for the Philippine Commonwealth. His resources were small and progress was slow. After two years as an American military adviser, MacArthur retired from the U. S. Army to go on with his work in the Philippines rather than accept reassignment to a subordinate command elsewhere.[2]

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[1]James, Years of MacArthur, p. 570.

[2]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 107.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had accompanied MacArthur to the Philippines, returned to the United States after four years in the islands.

As war came to Europe and Manchuria, the defense of the Philippines remained low on the list of priorities of the U. S. War Department. By 1941, armed forces personnel strength in the islands totaled about 100,000 men, but 75 per cent of those men were in Philippine army reserve divisions that existed only on paper, not as trained units.[3] MacArthur's most optimistic estimate of a date for a "completely adequate defense force" was April, 1942.[4] Because of increased tension between Japan and the United States, MacArthur was recalled to active duty on July 26, 1941, and promoted to lieutenant general. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, appointed him to head the newly-created Far Eastern command. Marshall's biographer reports that this decision was not made lightly:

> . . . The return of General MacArthur to active duty created a difficult situation. Having served as Chief of Staff for a longer period than any of his predecessors, he naturally found it awkward to accept directives from men who were colonels or even captains when he was Chief of Staff.[5]

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[3]James, Years of MacArthur, p. 594.

[4]Ibid., p. 597.

[5]Forrest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall, Vol. II: Ordeal and Hope, 1939-1942 (New York: Viking Press, 1965), p. 184.

There was not enough time left to complete the job. At 3:40 A.M. on December 8, 1941, MacArthur learned that Pearl Harbor had been attacked.[6] MacArthur was for a time under the impression that the attack had been repulsed:

> . . . I learned, to my astonishment, that the Japanese had succeeded in their Hawaiian attack, and at 11:45 a report came in of an overpowering enemy formation closing in on Clark Field. Our fighters went up to meet them, but our bombers were slow in taking off and our losses were heavy.[7]

General MacArthur must bear at least part of the blame for failure to protect his aircraft with more than eight hours warning that hostilities had begun. More than half of his air force was caught on the ground and destroyed. Two weeks after the attacks, General George Marshall told a Time magazine reporter: "It's all clear to me now except one thing. I just don't know how MacArthur happened to let his planes get caught on the ground."[8] Although the commanders at Pearl Harbor were disgraced, castigated by the press, and subjected to military and congressional inquiries, MacArthur's disaster passed almost without public comment.

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[6]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 117.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Pogue, Marshall, II, p. 234.

On December 22, 1941, the Japanese invaded the Philippines. In Washington, the basic decision to concentrate first on the defeat of Hitler had been made, with the full knowledge that this meant that the Philippines could not be reinforced in time to save them. The American and Filipino forces there resisted valiantly, but eventual defeat was certain. MacArthur felt that he was being abandoned; that had there been sufficient determination in the War Department, he could have been reinforced.[9] Dwight Eisenhower, then on General Marshall's staff, was made responsible for desperate attempts to provide any possible support for the Philippines. Later, in 1944, Eisenhower read of MacArthur's complaint in a book by correspondent Frazier Hunt.[10] He called the book to Marshall's attention, writing that

> . . . the book practically gave me indigestion . . . you will be quite astounded to learn that back in the winter of '41/'42, you and your associates in the War Department had no real concern for the Philippines and for the fighting forces there.[11]

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[9]Courtney Whitney, MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p. 27. General Whitney was a long-time member of MacArthur's staff. His book and MacArthur's memoirs draw on the same source material and can almost be considered a single work.

[10]The book referred to was: Frazier Hunt, MacArthur and the War Against Japan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), pp. 59-61.

[11]Stephen E. Ambrose, The Supreme Commander: The War Years of General Dwight D. Eisenhower (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1970), p. 20, citing the Eisenhower Papers, Letter No. 1994.

On March 11, 1942, MacArthur left the Philippines on President Roosevelt's order. General Jonathan M. Wainwright surrendered the forces on Bataan and Corregidor two months later, and went with them into captivity. It was MacArthur's first bitter defeat. Years later, MacArthur told New York Herald Tribune reporter Bert Andrews that the decision makers in Washington were guilty of "treason and sabotage" in not adequately supporting the Pacific war. He condemned European strategy as "hammering stupidly against strongpoints" to rescue an area that was worn out and dying, and predicted that the history of the world would be written in the Pacific for the next 10,000 years.[12]

In Australia, after his escape from the Philippines, MacArthur made his memorable and much-publicized promise, "I came through and I shall return,"[13] and began organizing the Allied defenses of the Southwest Pacific area. MacArthur characteristically chose to defend Australia by assuming the offensive as quickly as possible. The Pacific strategy adopted by the Allies called for a two-pronged assault. MacArthur would attack with predominantly army forces on a south to north axis, while Admiral Chester A. Nimitz would command the naval thrust from west to east.

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[12]Walter Millis, ed., The Forrestal Diaries (New York: Viking Press, 1951), pp. 17-18.

[13]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 145.

MacArthur strongly opposed this divided command and called instead for a major effort from Australia under a single commander. He was not successful.[14] The U. S. Navy victory at Midway Island checked the Japanese advance and enabled MacArthur to attack New Guinea with American and Australian ground forces in the fall of 1942. As MacArthur began his long drive northward, the MacArthur legend began to take form. Two of the general's most severe critics admit that the legend was based on solid accomplishment:

> Whatever MacArthur's initial resistance to the directives from Washington, he executed them with incomparable skill. Combining air, naval and ground operations with supurb success, ably solving the logistics of the amphibious offensive, he succeeded brilliantly in knocking out the cricial links in the Japanese island chain of defense. The enemy was badly out-maneuvered; allied losses were one-tenth those of the Japanese. In these spectacular campaigns, MacArthur more than made up for Bataan.[15]

After nine months of battle, the Philippines were recaptured. MacArthur announced the official end of the campaign on July 4, 1945, a few weeks before the Japanese surrender.[16]

Keyes Beech, Pulitzer-prize-winning correspondent for the Chicago Daily News, wrote that it was typical of

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[14] Ibid., pp. 197, 227, 230, 258-59.

[15] Rovere and Schlesinger, The MacArthur Controversy, p. 66.

[16] MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 259.

MacArthur that "while his press relations were generally bad his public relations were excellent."[17] The American public was as familiar with Dwight Eisenhower's name as MacArthur's but in the European theater the identities of the field commanders--Bradley, Patton, Montgomery and others--were also well known. Richard Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger suggest that

> . . . MacArthur's special triumph was to make people forget who his field commanders were; the greatest triumph of all was to convey the impression that he was the field commander himself, in tactical command in every jungle and on every beachhead.[18]

Censorship restrictions in the Southwest Pacific area were tighter than in any other theater of the war. George C. Kenney, an admirer of MacArthur and his air force commander during the war, put much of the blame on MacArthur's staff:

> . . . To them, unless a news release painted the general with a halo and seated him on the highest pedestal in the universe, it should be killed. No news except favorable news reflecting complete credit on an infallible MacArthur had much chance of getting by the censors. They seemed to believe they had a sacred mission, which was to "sell" the general . . . . Sometimes they tended to be arrogant and almost insulting to the representatives of the press, of whom they did not have a high opinion.[19]

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[17]Keyes Beech, Tokyo and Points East (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1954), p. 59.

[18]Rovere and Schlesinger, The MacArthur Controversy, p. 71.

[19]George C. Kenney, The MacArthur I Know (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1954), pp. 240-41.

From the beginning of MacArthur's offensive until the end of the war, communiques from his headquarters would optimistically announce the end of a campaign when it was clear to the reporters (and the troops) that weeks of fighting lay ahead. Once the battle had been declared "won," or if American soldiers did not perform well, the correspondents could not get their stories through the censors. According to Gavin Long, an Australian military historian, some of the bitterest fighting in the Pacific--such as at Papua, where twice as many allied soldiers were killed as at Guadalcanal--is all but unknown to the American public.[20] Long believes that MacArthur's "regrettable information policy" was due largely to the defensive and mistrustful attitude of his staff toward Washington and his own "abnormal sensitiveness to criticism and appetite for favorable publicity."[21]

MacArthur himself was almost unapproachable to the press. An Australian observer described one of MacArthur's press conferences as follows:

> The thirty or more war correspondents and officers present rose as the general made an impressive entry--bare-headed, grave, distinguished-looking, immaculate. His right arm was raised in salute. There was no other introduction. Pacing to and fro almost the length of the conference room, MacArthur began to declaim his statement of the military situation. His

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[20]Gavin Long, MacArthur as a Military Commander (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1969), p. 116.

[21]Ibid., p. 118.

> phrasing was perfect, his speech clear and unhalting, except for pauses for dramatic emphasis. The correspondents took notes but there was no interruption of any kind. The conference room had become a stage . . . . The statement ended, the general again raised his right arm in salute and strode from the room followed by one or two staff officers. The conference was over. One man alone had spoken--the Supreme Commander. There was no questioning, no opportunity to clarify the meaning of the statement. It had come from the lips of General Douglas MacArthur, and as such it was, evidently, beyond question.[22]

Working conditions for reporters did not improve much when the war ended and MacArthur assumed his new role as military governor of Japan. John Gunther, writing in 1950, said that MacArthur had "performed the extraordinary feat of conquering an enemy, occupying its territory, and making its people like it."[23] As Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, usually called "SCAP," MacArthur directed the transformation of Japan with all but absolute powers. The Diet, the Japanese national assembly, nominally ran the country and the emperor remained as the head of state; but MacArthur controlled the Diet and the emperor called on MacArthur at the general's office, not the reverse.[24] It is generally conceded that the Japanese occupation was one of the most successful and enlightened in history. MacArthur instituted many reforms,

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[22] Ibid., p. 136.

[23] John Gunther, The Riddle of MacArthur (New York: Harper, 1951), p. 13.

[24] MacArthur, Reminiscences, pp. 287-88.

reorganized the educational system, instituted a labor movement and equality of sexes, introduced civil rights and a new legal code, abolished the "thought police" and the state religion, and gave the Japanese a new, fairly liberal constitution. One of the most successful of MacArthur's reforms was the establishment of a free Japanese press, or at least the foundations of such an institution.[25]

MacArthur was popular in the United States. By 1943, he had been one of the Republican party's top choices for the presidential nomination.[26] MacArthur and Eisenhower headed the list of "ten most-admired people" compiled in a Gallup public opinion poll in 1946.[27] Perhaps because of his popularity, his virtually unlimited authority, and the genuine accomplishments of the occupation, MacArthur and his staff became even more sensitive to criticism than they had been during the war years. No person could enter or leave Japan without permission from the Supreme Commander. This included Americans, Japanese, foreigners and, emphatically, news media correspondents.[28]

[25]William J. Coughlin, Conquered Press: The MacArthur Era in Japanese Journalism (Palo Alto, Calif.: Pacific Books, 1952), p. 142.

[26]American Institute of Public Opinion, Gallup Poll Reports, 1935-1968 (Princeton: American Institute of Public Opinion, 1969), p. 149.

[27]Ibid., p. 188.

[28]Gunther, Riddle of MacArthur, p. 22.

Newsmen who did not cooperate were in frequent trouble with MacArthur's headquarters. General LeGrande A. Diller, for a time MacArthur's public relations officer, was said to have told reporters:

> We are not going to let you give MacArthur's critics in the States any ammunition. . . . Furthermore, when we do lift the censorship we will still have control over what you correspondents write about MacArthur. Don't forget the army controls the food here.[29]

To a large extent, the press cooperated:

> Most correspondents in Tokyo--and I refer specifically to the major news agencies--dutifully fed the MacArthur line to American readers word for word, even though they knew that what they were sending was not the truth or at least not the whole truth. The justification was objectivity. In short, MacArthur had said it, and even if it was an outright lie it was not their responsibility to contradict him.[30]

Keyes Beech wrote that it was impossible to be neutral on the subject of MacArthur "because MacArthur did not tolerate objectivity." Those who pleased the general had occasional access to him, Beech wrote. Those who filed unfavorable stories did not. "I wrote both kinds of stories," said Beech, "and I did not have access to MacArthur. It was as simple as that."[31]

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[29]Coughlin, Conquered Press, p. 116.

[30]Beech, Tokyo and Points East, p. 49.

[31]Ibid., p. 61.

In February, 1948, the reporters rebelled, sending a list of complaints to General MacArthur and various agencies in the United States. The spark had been struck when a Newsweek magazine correspondent, Compton Parkenham, was barred from reentry to Japan because he had formerly associated with Japanese of "feudalistic and militaristic tendencies."[32] Hanson W. Baldwin, military writer for the New York Times, commented that "the Parkenham exclusion was preceded and accompanied by restrictions which further hampered the gathering of news in the Far East. Some correspondents have been subjected to threats and grilling," Baldwin wrote. "The home of one man was searched by the Army's Criminal Investigation Division."[33] After a few weeks, Parkenham was quietly readmitted to Japan. Conditions improved for the reporters as long as they did not attack the occupation too vigorously, at least until the start of the Korean War.

The press had not been reluctant to grant that the peaceful transformation of Japan was a tremendous achievement. Their complaint was best stated by an Australian diplomat, W. MacMahon Bell: "It isn't that SCAP has done so little--but that it claims so much."[34] History may

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[32] New York Times, Feb. 19, 1948, p. 12.

[33] Ibid., March 5, 1948, p. 3.

[34] Beech, Tokyo and Points East, p. 49.

yet remember MacArthur longest, not for his considerable military talents, but for his service as military governor of Japan. It would have certainly been so had MacArthur been able to complete the work of the occupation, see the signing of the Japanese peace treaty, and retire. It was not to be. In June, 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea and President Harry S. Truman prepared to meet the challenge.

CHAPTER III

TRUMAN AND THE PRESS

President Harry S. Truman began his tenure as chief executive with a reservoir of good will--if not, perhaps, of admiration--from the press. One Washington correspondent said that Truman had "a larger acquaintance among newspaper men than Hoover or Coolidge ever enjoyed or than Roosevelt had" in 1933.[1] James E. Pollard, author of The Presidents and the Press, updated his standard work on the subject of presidential press relations with an analysis of the Truman administration:

> In Mr. Truman's first year and a half in the White House, the press as a whole treated him rather well. Opposition newspapers were naturally critical of him, but at this stage there was none of the personal feuding that marked the Roosevelt period.[2]

As the Roosevelt Democratic coalition collapsed and the 1948 elections drew near, Truman's support in the press--and seemingly among the public as well--diminished. By April, 1948, a Gallup public opinion poll indicated that

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[1] Editor & Publisher, April 21, 1945, p. 9.

[2] James E. Pollard, "President Truman and the Press," Journalism Quarterly, XXVIII (1951), 458.

only 36 per cent of those sampled approved of Truman's performance of his office, while 50 per cent disapproved.[3] Elmo Roper's polling organization found that 64 per cent of the voters questioned in July, 1948, expected Thomas Dewey to defeat Truman.[4] Just before election day, Editor & Publisher, journal of the newspaper publishing business, reported the result of a survey of 1,183 daily newspapers in the United States:

> The completed poll of all daily newspapers in the U. S. reveals Dewey is backed by 65.17 per cent of the dailies representing 78.55 per cent of the total daily circulation. Truman has the support of 15.38 per cent of the dailies with 10.03 per cent of the circulation.[5]

In Michigan--and in twelve other states--not one daily newspaper endorsed Truman's candidacy, according to the survey. Twenty-three Michigan dailies responded to the Editor & Publisher poll. Of these, four indicated that they remained "independent" and the rest endorsed Governor Thomas Dewey of New York.[6]

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[3]Mildred Strunk, ed., "The Quarter's Polls," Public Opinion Quarterly, XV (1951), 395.

[4]Elmo B. Roper, You and Your Leaders, Their Actions and Your Reactions, 1936-1956 (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1957), p. 136.

[5]Editor & Publisher, Oct. 30, 1948, p. 11.

[6]Ibid., p. 13. The "independent" newspapers were the Ann Arbor News, the Manistee News Advocate, the Muskegon Chronicle, and the Royal Oak Tribune.

Editorial comment in Michigan newspapers stressed the theme that the public wanted a change after sixteen years of Democratic administrations. Some writers, such as John S. Knight, publisher of the Detroit Free Press and three other large metropolitan dailies, implied that Truman was not a big enough man for the office he held. Commenting on Dewey's nomination, Knight wrote: "This year, Dewey is fortunate in the meager abilities of his opponent. The intellectual contrast should be striking."[7] A few days later, the Free Press editorially discounted Truman's chances of reelection in colorful language: "With the Republican bandwagon rolling to glory, its steam calliope blared the victory theme that the Democratic party is dead."[8] In the same issue of the Free Press, the distinguished author and syndicated columnist Walter Lippmann suggested that the campaign was a waste of time for Mr. Truman:

> Although Mr. Truman will not, of course, allow himself to believe it, and though none of the practical politicians can under the rules admit it, the main purpose of the Democrats this year is to prepare themselves to become the effective opposition.[9]

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[7]John S. Knight, "The Editor's Notebook," Detroit Free Press, June 27, 1948, p. 4.

[8]Editorial, ibid., July 14, 1948, p. 6.

[9]Ibid.

Truman's unexpected re-election was a shock to the pollsters and to the press. James Reston, a reporter in the Washington bureau of the New York Times, in a letter to his own editor, said that "we were wrong, not only on the election, but what's worse, on the whole political direction of our time."[10] The Washington Post publicly offered to "eat crow" at a banquet in Truman's honor, and the embarrassment of the famous Chicago Tribune "Dewey Defeats Truman" headline was duplicated in the Free Press editorial and some advance-written syndicated columns the day after the election.[11] Two of Truman's supporters delightedly collected and published the pre-election editorials and columns as evidence that the press was not so influential or representative as it believed.[12] They pointed out that Lippman, the Alsop brothers--Joseph and Stewart, David Lawrence, Marquis Childs, Westbrook Pegler, Drew Pearson, and other analysts had been completely wrong. Of Lippmann, they wrote:

> . . . Having decided early in the game that Truman had no chance and should not even try to be nominated, Lippmann seemed to be quite hurt because the President refused to take his advice. Since Lippmann had already settled the election as no contest, it seemed

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[10] Editor & Publisher, Nov. 6, 1948, p. 5.

[11] Detroit Free Press, Nov. 3, 1948, pp. 10-11.

[12] Morris L. Ernst and David Loth, The People Know Best, The Ballots vs. the Polls (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1949), pp. 50-93.

ungracious of a mere President of the United States to go on fighting.[13]

In January, 1949, Truman made two important speeches: his "State of the Union" message in which the "Fair Deal" was introduced, and his inaugural address. The former speech was described by the Michigan press--or at least the six newspapers central to this study--as more of the same kind of "centralism" newspaper publishers and other businessmen had mistrusted in Roosevelt. The Lansing State Journal, for example, said editorially that the speech could be boiled down into a three-word phrase: "greater government control."[14] The inaugural address dealt with foreign policy and in it the President introduced as the fourth point of his policy a large foreign assistance program. The "Point Four" program was the basis for the later work of the Agency for International Development. Editorial reaction to the speech was polite, but there was little comment on its substance. The Detroit Times was an extreme example. The Hearst newspaper did not carry the text of the speech, stories about it, or editorial comment on it. A front page story explained why the President's daughter had no escort to the inaugural ball, but the single reference to the foreign

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[13] Ibid., p. 70.

[14] Editorial, Lansing State Journal, Jan. 6, 1949, p. 6. (Hereinafter cited as "State Journal.")

policy statement was one sentence: "Peace was the theme of Mr. Truman's inaugural address, that and a 'fair deal' at home."[15]

During the campaign, Marquis Childs, an editorial columnist for United Features Syndicate, had written that Truman was given "less than justice for the results of the firm foreign policy that began with the Truman Doctrine."[16] Certainly, Truman felt that this was true, and had lost much confidence in the press. He wrote:

> It was my conviction that the major media of communication had failed in their responsibility to present facts as facts and opinions as opinion. It seemed to me that many owners, publishers and columnists of the press and the radio were deliberately irresponsible during a time of great importance to the people of the United States . . . . As far as I was concerned, they had sold out to the special interests, and that is why I referred to them in my campaign speeches as the "kept press and paid radio."[17]

After the 1948 election campaign, the opposition of the press to the Truman administration grew more personal.

The North Korean army invaded the Republic of Korea in June, 1950. General MacArthur went to Korea and reported that the South Korean army was disintegrating. The Security Council of the United Nations called on all

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[15] Detroit Times, Jan. 21, 1949, p. 1.

[16] Detroit Free Press, July 3, 1948, p. 4.

[17] Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. II: Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952 (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 176.

member nations to help repel the North Korean attack, and Truman authorized MacArthur to commit American ground forces from Japan. Most Michigan newspapers supported President Truman's decision to intervene. A Flint Journal editorial said, in part:

> Somewhere, sometime, the Russian advance had to be called to a halt. If it had not been Korea, it would have had to be Formosa, French Indo-China, Siam, the Malay states, India, the Philippines.[18]

The Grand Rapids Press reviewed foreign policy "mistakes" in China and post-war Korea and concluded:

> Mr. Truman's forthright action . . . belated as it might have been, conceivably may convince the Soviets that they can gain no more save at great risk to world peace and themselves; for in ordering American air and sea forces to protect Korea and Formosa, the President has announced to the world that the United States finally has taken a stand in the Far East.[19]

President Truman, fearing the spread of the war outside Korea, had ordered the navy to protect Formosa but also to prevent the Nationalist Chinese forces from attacking the China mainland. Some newspapers saw the order to "protect" Formosa as a reversal of the President's much criticized China policy. The Lansing State Journal said editorially:

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[18]Editorial, Flint Journal, June 28, 1950, p. 12.

[19]Editorial, Grand Rapids Press, June 28, 1950, p. 18.

> Mr. Truman's action . . . is an abrupt reversal of past policy with respect to the last-remaining refuge of the Chinese Nationalists on Formosa, and it should be satisfactory to those in both major political parties who have been demanding sterner action to halt the Communist tide.[20]

The Detroit Times "support" for the President's action was slightly barbed. Truman's decision to fight in Korea, the newspaper said, was a repudiation of Secretary of State Dean Acheson's advice:

> By his historic reversal, the President was recognizing at last that General MacArthur was right, that former President Hoover was right . . . .
>
> It took the Korean War to show the President how profoundly wrong his Secretary of State had been.
>
> Mr. Truman must be commended for his stand, committing us to action in place of a policy of supine indifference.[21]

The Detroit News editors reminded their readers that "more than two years ago, [on August 23, 1948,]" the News had predicted that "South Korea would go out like a light the moment the United States turned its back." The News editors concluded, however, that Korea was the wrong place for the United States to fight a war:

> . . . War might come in any case, but if we've got to fight, we should do it on ground where the issue is unmistakeably clear to our own people and where the strategic stake is worth the risk. South Korea from the standpoint of world strategy is a dead end for the United States.[22]

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[20]Editorial, State Journal, June 28, 1950, p. 12.

[21]Editorial, Detroit Times, June 29, 1950, p. 28.

[22]Editorial, Detroit News, June 27, 1950, p. 22.

Once American troops had been committed, the News said editorially that "it remains for us to close ranks, strengthen our armor, and hold ourselves ready."[23]

The Detroit Free Press was not ready to close ranks. Like most of the other newspapers in this study, the Free Press said editorially that

> . . . the Communist challenge in Korea must be met firmly. A retreat there would be still another invitation to further aggression. The word 'Korea' would join 'Yalta' and 'China' on our roster of ignominy.

But, said the editors, it was unfortunate that "our support will benefit the appeasers . . . who got us in the mess."[24] The Free Press also ridiculed the "crisis activity" of politicians:

> While the lives of millions of young American men and women may be at stake, the leaders of both parties are playing cheap and contemptible politics--even as the Roman soldiers gambled at the foot of the cross for the garments of the Lord.[25]

Formosa was a constant problem in Korean war policy, and later would be central to the MacArthur controversy. In the early days of the war, Chaing Kai-shek, leader of the Nationalist Chinese government on Formosa, offered 33,000 Nationalist troops for use in Korea.

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[23] Ibid., June 28, 1950, p. 30.

[24] Editorial, Detroit Free Press, June 29, 1950, p. 6.

[25] Ibid., June 28, 1950, p. 6.

Truman considered but declined this aid because these troops were needed more to secure Formosa from possible attack and because he did not want to provoke the Chinese Communists. In addition, General MacArthur had advised against using the Chinese troops. He felt they would be more of a burden than a help to him because of inadequate logistical support.[26]

The war did not go well for the United Nations forces during July and August, 1950. The South Korean Army was beaten, and the American military machine built during World War II had been mostly dismantled. The few units available for committment to the Korean fighting were poorly trained and equipped. One unit at a time, they were rushed to the battlefield to slow the enemy drive. By August first, the United Nations command--at that time a virtually all-American organization--was defending a small perimeter around the port of Pusan, at the southeastern tip of the Korean peninsula.[27]

On July 31, 1950, MacArthur made a brief trip to Formosa. At the close of the visit, Chiang Kai-shek told reporters that he and MacArthur were in complete agreement

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[26]Truman, Memoirs, II, 342, 348.

[27]Roy E. Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, [Vol. II,] U. S. Army in the Korean War, ed. by Stetson Conn (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 59-265. This work is the official U. S. Army history of the Korean War.

on Far Eastern policy. But President Truman said later: "The implication was--and quite a few of our newspapers said so--that MacArthur rejected my policy of neutralizing Formosa and that he favored a more aggressive method."[28]

The President immediately sent W. Averell Harriman, a presidential assistant and later governor of New York, to Tokyo to confer with the general. An Associated Press correspondent, John M. Hightower, reported:

> Policy makers here [in Washington] assume MacArthur acted under President Truman's general instructions for the protection of Formosa, and discussed only defensive military arrangements with Chiang. The Harriman trip is said to be for the purpose of making certain this assumption is correct, as well as to clarify between Washington and Tokyo precisely what American policy toward Formosa is.[29]

Harriman met with MacArthur and reported back to the President that:

> . . . for reasons I find difficult to explain, I did not feel that we came to a full agreement in the way we believed things should be handled on Formosa . . . . He accepts the President's position and will act accordingly, but without full conviction.[30]

It soon became clear that Harriman was correct when MacArthur sent a message on Formosa to be read to a convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The statement

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[28]Truman, Memoirs, II, 354.

[29]State Journal, Aug. 5, 1950, p. 2.

[30]Truman, Memoirs, II, 351-52.

said, in part, that "nothing could be more fallacious than the threadbare argument by those who advocate appeasement and defeatism in the Pacific that if we defend Formosa we alienate continental Asia."[31] It is possible that MacArthur did not realize that his description fit precisely the position of the President and his advisers who were trying to neutralize Formosa. After the President ordered the message withdrawn--too late to prevent its publication--MacArthur reportedly reexamined the message but "could find no feature that was not in complete support of the President."[32] Truman later would write that he gave "serious thought" to relieving General MacArthur at that time.[33]

Editor & Publisher commented on the suppression of the message in an editorial that said there were exceptions to the rule that American foreign policy must speak with but one voice:

> . . . Americans whether in military or civilian government employ have always spoken their minds and rarely have they been slapped down by the President as was MacArthur.

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[31]U. S., Congress, Senate, Joint Committee on Armed Services and Foreign Relations, Military Situation in the Far East, Hearings before the Joint Senate Committee on Armed Services and Foreign Relations, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., 1951, p. 3189. (Hereinafter cited as "Hearings.")

[32]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 341.

[33]Truman, Memoirs, II, 355.

> The President and his advisers may set foreign policy but certainly the American people are entitled to hear the opinions of informed people such as General MacArthur. The President assumed an unbecoming dictator-tinge when he revealed his disinclination to tolerate the opinions of others.[34]

MacArthur's brilliantly successful counterattack at Inchon, Korea--an operation that had been opposed by many senior officers in the Far East and in Washington as dangerous and extremely difficult--changed the course of the war and eased tension between Washington and Tokyo.[35] After the recapture of Seoul and the collapse of the North Korean army, United Nations forces marched quickly toward the thirty-eighth parallel. Truman met with MacArthur for the first and only time at Wake Island in the Pacific to confer on the Korean situation. MacArthur's supporters and some newspapers suggested that the trip was a political ploy to gain support for the Democratic party in the approaching congressional elections and, as a member of MacArthur's staff later wrote, to "exploit politically the smashing victory of Inchon and directly link the administration with this impressive success."[36]

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[34]Editorial, Editor & Publisher, Sept. 9, 1950, p. 40.

[35]Appleman, South to the Naktong, pp. 492-95.

[36]Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain, MacArthur, 1941-1951 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1954), p. 382. Major General Willoughby was MacArthur's intelligence chief in Korea and a long-time member of MacArthur's personal staff.

The Lansing State Journal, in an editorial, "Seeking the Pre-Election Spotlight," said the meeting was an

> . . . attempt to salvage political advantage from the success achieved under the leadership of General MacArthur in spite of the foreign policy fumbling and blundering of the Truman administration.[37]

Curtis D. MacDougall, a Northwestern University professor and the author of Understanding Public Opinion, wrote in his book of the attitude of the public toward General MacArthur during World War II:

> . . . The most intense hero worship among Americans was of General Douglas MacArthur. It is not detracting one iota from the general's ability as a military leader to declare that the movement developed from necessity rather than from any exploits of his. Some way had to be found to assuage the national pride after the humiliating defeats suffered at Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. . . . Hero-worshipping of MacArthur, at a time when he had done nothing except retreat, filled the psychological need of the moment. It also, of course, enabled Roosevelt haters to pin their hopes to someone other than the logical wartime leader, the President . . . . Part of the MacArthur myth involved . . . charges that the commander in chief was jealous of the arrogant Pacific leader and deliberately withheld supplies and authority from him.[38]

The same forces were probably operative in the relationship between President Truman and MacArthur during the Korean War.

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[37]Editorial, State Journal, Oct. 12, 1950, p. 10.

[38]Curtis D. MacDougall, Understanding Public Opinion: A Guide for Newspapermen and Newspaper Readers (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1966), p. 328.

At Wake Island, the two leaders conferred for only a few hours. Truman was told by the general that the war would probably end before Christmas, 1950, and that there was little chance that the Communist Chinese would intervene. The President regarded the conference as "very satisfactory" and he and MacArthur parted on the "best of terms."[39]

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[39]Truman, Memoirs, II, 365-67.

CHAPTER IV

MACARTHUR, KOREA, AND THE PRESS

MacArthur was appointed supreme commander of United Nations forces in Korea on July 9, 1950, and much of the American public was thus assured that all would be well in the Far East. Dwight Eisenhower would later write of MacArthur that

> . . . at all times, he seemed so certain of his own professional superiority over his fellow officers and of a high place in American history that he developed in the American public a like appraisal of his merits."[1]

International News Service correspondent Bob Considine summed up this feeling in the first installment of a series, "MacArthur, Man of the Hour," that ran in the Hearst-owned newspapers during the early days of the Korean War:

> When General Douglas MacArthur flew to Korea for a sixteen-hour examination of that war and the news was announced, a costly panic on the New York Stock Exchange was checked; the Bourse reacted favorably, and hundreds of millions of human beings breathed easier. . . . His brief presence in Korea reassured a jittery western world that, having cast its die, the United States was now prepared to see the matter through to a finish.[2]

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[1] Eisenhower, At Ease, p. 219.

[2] Detroit Times, July 9, 1950, p. 3.

MacArthur was understandably pleased by this confidence in his talents, noting that his "appointment as commander-in-chief was generally well received in the United States, despite the usual clamor of [his] leftist enemies."[3]

A New York Times editorial complimented MacArthur and called his appointment "cause for satisfaction."[4] John Fisher, an editorial columnist for the McClure newspaper feature syndicate, also approved of the general's assignment and suggested in addition that Truman was fortunate that MacArthur was not interested in the presidency. MacArthur would defeat the Communists, Fisher predicted, but the President would get the credit.[5]

After the successful landings at Inchon by the U. S. Army Seventh Infantry Division and the First Marine Division, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed MacArthur that the President had approved an expanded mission for his forces. His new task was the destruction of the North Korean armed forces north of the thirty-eighth parallel.[6] Later accusations made by some that MacArthur provoked the Chinese Communist intervention by attacking North Korea without proper authority were false. MacArthur's

[3]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 338.

[4]Editorial, New York Times, July 10, 1950, p. 20.

[5]State Journal, July 10, 1950, p. 1.

[6]Dean G. Acheson, Present at the Creation, My Years in the State Department (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 462.

actions were restricted, however, by a paragraph of his orders that read as follows:

> Under no circumstances . . . will your forces cross the Manchurian or U.S.S.R. borders of Korea and, as a matter of policy, no non-Korean ground forces will be used in the northeastern provinces bordering the Soviet Union or in the area along the Manchurian border. Furthermore, support of your operations . . . will not include air or naval action against Manchuria or against U.S.S.R. territory.[7]

On October 1, and again on October 9, MacArthur called on the North Korean commander-in-chief to surrender because "the early and total defeat and complete destruction of your armed forces and war-making potential is now inevitable."[8]

During the same period, the Associated Press reported to its members that

> . . . Red China's Premier Chou En-lai warned in a weekend broadcast from Peiping [Peking] that China's 400 to 800 millions will not 'supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by imperialists.'[9]

DeWitt MacKenzie, an Associated Press foreign affairs analyst, concluded that

> . . . despite General Chou's grim language, it isn't likely that the Chinese will intervene at this late date. If they had intended to take a hand they would have done so long before this.[10]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] State Journal, Oct. 9, 1950, p. 9.

[9] Ibid., Oct. 2, 1950, p. 1.

[10] Ibid., Oct. 6, 1950, p. 6.

The directive restricting MacArthur was modified on October 9, 1950, by another that warned him that even if the Chinese did intervene, MacArthur must contact Washington before striking targets outside Korea. Truman's first concern was preventing World War III.[11] That was the situation at the time of the Wake Island conference.

By early November, MacArthur's troops--now including units from the United Kingdom and other nations--were deep in North Korea, the enemy capital of Pyongyang had been captured, and the first evidence of Chinese Communist forces in Korea had been confirmed. Early reports of United Nations forces fighting Chinese "volunteers" were temporarily pushed out of the headlines by news of the attempted assassination of President Truman.[12]

On Thanksgiving Day, 1950, all was quiet at the front and there were hints in the press of peace negotiations in progress.[13] On November 24, MacArthur lauched his "end-the-war offensive." The Grand Rapids Press reported:

> The roar of warplanes . . . drowned out talk of a negotiated peace which had blossomed Thursday [November 23]. . . . Before leaving the front MacArthur told his field generals "Tell the boys when they get to the Yalu they are going home. I want to make good on my statement that they are going to eat Christmas dinner at home."[14]

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[11] Truman, Memoirs, II, 362.

[12] New York Times, Nov. 2, 1950, p. 1.

[13] Detroit News, Nov. 23, 1950, p. 1.

[14] Grand Rapids Press, Nov. 24, 1950, p. 1.

Before this "final" attack, MacArthur had warned the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the Chinese in Manchuria were massing in such force as "to threaten the ultimate destruction of my command."[15] Nevertheless, the general appeared confident of victory when he issued the following press communique:

> If successful this should for all practical purposes end the war, restore peace and unity to Korea, enable the prompt withdrawal of the United Nations military forces, and permit the complete assumption by the Korean people and nation of full sovereighty and international equality. It is that for which we fight.[16]

MacArthur's command was divided by the mountainous spine of the Korean peninsula into two independent attacking forces: the Eighth Army and the Tenth Corps. Republic of Korea forces were in the mountains between the two American elements. On November 26, 1950, some 200,000 Chinese Communist soldiers smashed through the central sector of the front. The United Nations' "end-the-war" attack was shattered and thrown back to the south.[17] In Tokyo, General MacArthur's spokeman said the Chinese counterblow had been expected. He claimed that the U. N.

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[15]Truman, Memoirs, II, 375.

[16]Hearings, pp. 1834, 3491-92.

[17]Martin Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back," in American Civil-Military Decisions, A Twentieth Century Fund Study, ed. by Harold Stein (Birmingham, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1963), pp. 606-610.

attack had been "halted temporarily" but was "continuing."[18] This optimism could not be maintained for long because the United Nations forces retreated farther south each day. MacArthur issued an extraordinary communique to reporters on November 28, announcing that "we face an entirely new war" and appealing to his superiors for increased authority to deal with the situation. MacArthur called for diplomatic action to stop Communist China from further aggression and added that "this situation--repugnant as it may be--poses issues far beyond the authority of the United Nations military council."[19]

Editorial reaction to the disaster in Korea was, for the most part, not critical of MacArthur except in lamenting his optimistic "home by Christmas" comments before the Chinese attack. The Grand Rapids Press blamed Washington:

> The responsibility for allowing the Chinese the opportunity to mount their offensive against U. N. forces in Korea rests almost entirely on President Truman and his Secretary of State, Dean Acheson. It was Acheson who counseled against attacking the Chinese bases on the Manchurian side of the Yalu--with, of course, the President's approval. Acheson remained hopeful to the end that gentle words and soft action would deter the Chinese Reds.[20]

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[18] State Journal, Nov. 28, 1950, p. 1.

[19] Grand Rapids Press, Nov. 24, 1950, p. 1.

[20] Editorial, Grand Rapids Press, Nov. 29, 1950, p. 14.

The Flint Journal commented on the sudden reversal of the war in an editorial and said:

> . . . As if things weren't topsy-turvey enough, we continue to refuse the help of the Chinese Nationalist troops because their appearance in the fight might offend the Chinese Communists who are shooting and bayoneting our boys.[21]

The Lansing State Journal said editorially that World War III had started. "The humiliating defeat," said the State Journal editors, should force us to abandon our "fool's paradise." The editorial continued:

> . . . Let's face the fact: we are already at war with Red Russia. We will think clearly if we quit pretending--if we recognize that it is the professors of the Kremlin who are pulling the strings that make us fight puppets in Korea, Europe and elsewhere. . . . Our only course is to take on Russia--now. We don't need to start bombing Moscow tomorrow, but we must get tough, and stay tough.[22]

During the week after the Chinese attack, MacArthur made a major effort to explain to the public his defeat along the Yalu River. The general blamed all of his problems on the political limitations placed on his waging of the war. It was typical of MacArthur that he did not deal with mere reporters in transmitting his message. He gave interviews, in person and by cable, to

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[21]Editorial, Flint Journal, Nov. 30, 1950, p. 30.

[22]Editorial, State Journal, Dec. 3, 1950, Sec. I, p. 10.

such persons as the editor-in-chief of U. S. News & World Report; Hugh Baillie, president of United Press; and Arthur Krock, chief of the Washington bureau of the New York Times.[23] On December 6, 1950, the Detroit Times and the State Journal published an International News Service dispatch with an unusual byline: that of General Douglas MacArthur.[24] In fact, a small note explained, the story was compiled from a MacArthur cable to Barry Faris, editor-in-chief of International News Service. The story began:

> The entire effort to distort and misrepresent the causes leading to the existing situation in Korea represents one of the most scandalous propaganda efforts to pervert truth in recent times.

MacArthur was upset at charges, mostly in European newspapers, that he had invaded North Korea on his own authority. MacArthur also denied that he had violated United Nations directives, and that there had been inadequate coordination between the Eighth Army and Tenth Corps.[25] Indeed, MacArthur was beginning to defend the defeat along the Yalu River as a United Nations victory. He later wrote:

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[23] Hearings, pp. 3491-95, 3532-35.

[24] State Journal, Dec. 6, 1950, p. 1; Detroit Times, Dec. 6, 1950, p. 20.

[25] Ibid.

> I myself felt we had reached up, sprung the Red trap, and escaped it. To have saved so many lives entrusted to my care gave me a sense of comfort that, in comparison, made all the honors I had ever received pale into insignificance.[26]

On December 6, MacArthur received two directives from the President through the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The first was addressed to most members of the executive branch and directed that "until further notification, no speech, press release, or other public statement concerning foreign policy will be released without clearance" from the appropriate office in Washington. The second message said, in effect, that the instructions in the first message specifically did apply to MacArthur's headquarters.[27]

General Courtney Whitney, MacArthur's military secretary and political adviser, interpreted this directive as an attempt to quiet MacArthur "in his defense of American troops against the vilifications of the press." Whitney wrote:

> MacArthur . . . accepted this directive and was meticulously guided by it. As he later said at the Senate hearings, "No more subordinate soldier has ever worn the American uniform."[28]

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[26]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 377.

[27]Hearings, p. 3536.

[28]Whitney, Rendezvous With History, p. 450.

John Fisher, a nationally syndicated editorial columnist for the McClure Newspaper Syndicate, commented:

> If the White House dared to brave public wrath, General Douglas A. MacArthur would be rebuked or summarily relieved of his command by an Administration which is privately furious because he has publicized military and diplomatic difficulties responsible for our unprecedented disaster in Korea, and which he blames on his Washington superiors.[29]

Fisher was almost correct. The President later wrote that he should have relieved MacArthur immediately after his outburst of public statements. "The reason I did not," Truman recalled, "was that I did not wish to have it appear as if he were being relieved because the offensive failed."[30]

Late in January it became clear that United Nations forces had stopped the Chinese advance south of Seoul. Once again, MacArthur's troops began moving north toward the thirty-eighth parallel. By early March, 1951, the breach between the general and his commander-in-chief had become almost beyond repair. Soon after the Chinese Communist attack, MacArthur had called for the commitment of Nationalist Chinese units to reinforce his battered army, but Truman--after sampling United Nations reaction to the idea--decided against such action.[31] As the tide

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[29] State Journal, Dec. 7, 1950, p. 1.

[30] Truman, Memoirs, II, 384.

[31] Ibid., II, 385.

of the battle turned once again, MacArthur was angry that, while his request for reinforcements had been rejected, the administration intended to send four divisions to General Eisenhower's new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) command in Europe. MacArthur told reporters on March 7, 1951, that unless he was given more strength a stalemate would result, causing a "spectacle of unceasing slaughter." He called for decisions that he could not make but were needed, he said, to prevent that stalemate.[32]

Two weeks later, MacArthur was informed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he should not re-cross the thirty-eighth parallel. The decision had been made to return to the original United Nations objective of securing the Republic of Korea from aggression. The President, MacArthur was told, was attempting to open negotiations in diplomatic channels and that these must be given time to work.[33] A few days later, on March 25, MacArthur undercut any hope of a negotiated armistice by a statement to the press that resulted in a furious response from the Chinese Communists and an outraged one from America's European allies. MacArthur's statement was addressed to the enemy commander in Korea and was, in effect, a Far Eastern foreign policy of his own. MacArthur warned the

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[32] Hearings, pp. 3540-41.

[33] Ibid., p. 3541.

Chinese that they were doomed to defeat when the United Nations forces extended operations into China, and he called on the enemy commander to negotiate with him

> . . . to find any military means whereby the realization of the political objectives of the United Nations in Korea . . . might be accomplished without further bloodshed.[34]

President Truman later reported that it was immediately after that statement that he decided to dismiss MacArthur. For a time, however, he kept the decision to himself.[35] The Associated Press reported that "huge shudders" went through the horrified European capitals after MacArthur's public statement.[36] Many American newspapers, however, approved of MacArthur's ultimatum to the Chinese. A State Journal editorial, for example, said:

> While the conduct of foreign policy cannot be turned over to military leaders, General MacArthur may well feel that he has a solemn duty . . . to make clear the need for top-level decision as to the U. N. objective in Korea and effective methods of attaining it.
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> . . . . . .
>
> MacArthur may not be a diplomat, but he could hardly do worse in that field than the professionals have done. When MacArthur's diplomacy is contrasted with State Department diplomacy, the latter is far from impressive.[37]

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[34] Ibid., pp. 3541-42.

[35] Truman, Memoirs, II, 445.

[36] State Journal, March 26, 1951, p. 8.

[37] Editorial, ibid., March 28, 1951, p. 8.

On April 5, 1951, Joseph Martin, Jr., a Mississippi Republican, the minority leader of the U. S. House of Representatives, read a letter from MacArthur on the floor of the House. Martin had written to the general suggesting that Nationalist Chinese troops should be used against the enemy in Korea, and had asked for MacArthur's views on how the war should be prosecuted.[38] In a letter dated March 20, MacArthur replied:

> My views and recommendations with respect to the situation created by Red China's entry into war against us in Korea have been submitted to Washington in most complete detail. Generally, these views are well known and clearly understood, as they follow the conventional pattern of meeting force with maximum counterforce, as we have never failed to do in the past. Your view with respect to the utilization of the Chinese forces on Formosa is in conflict with neither logic nor this tradition.
>
> It seems strangely difficult for some to realize that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest, and that we have joined the issue thus raised on the battlefield; that here we fight Europe's war with arms while the diplomats there still fight it with words; that if we lose the war to Communism in Asia the fall of Europe is inevitable, win it and Europe most probably would avoid war and yet preserve freedom. As you point out, we must win. There is no substitute for victory.[39]

On April 11, 1951, at 1:00 A.M., newsmen and the public were informed that General Douglas MacArthur had

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[38] Hearings, p. 3543.

[39] Ibid., pp. 3543-44.

been relieved of all his commands.[40] MacArthur, like most other Americans, first learned of his dismissal through the news media.[41]

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[40] New York Times, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

[41] MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 395.

CHAPTER V

THE DISMISSAL OF MACARTHUR

During the two-week period preceding the announcement of General MacArthur's dismissal, each of the six Michigan newspapers examined for this study reported that the general was obviously displeased with the Far Eastern policy of the Truman administration. The furor over MacArthur's communique of March 24, directed to the enemy commander in Korea, was the first real indication that the general might have gone too far in challenging the administration's policies. Some historians have concluded:

> It is difficult to review the history of MacArthur's difficulties with his government without concluding that at some point he embarked on a deliberate course of provocation. . . .
>
> At some stage . . . he must have become convinced that his government was pursuing a disastrous course in the Far East and that it was his duty as a patriot to bring about a change.[1]

MacArthur--seventy-one years old in 1951--had been a general officer and a public figure for more than thirty years. He had enormous prestige and many powerful friends in government and industry. Whether or not the provocation

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[1]Rovere and Schlesinger, The MacArthur Controversy, p. 168.

was deliberate, the general's actions had left little doubt as to his views. On March 24, a few hours after the communique to the enemy commander had been released, MacArthur was again directed by the President through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to be silent on foreign policy matters.[2] Despite this instruction, MacArthur gave an interview in Japan to the military correspondent for the London Daily Telegraph. The United Press quoted the London newspaper story in dispatches published in the United States:

> General MacArthur said in an interview published here today [April 5, 1951] that the United Nations forces could easily defeat the Chinese Reds if the United Nations would "take the wraps off" his command.

MacArthur was quoted as having said also that a sea blockade of China and bombing raids on vital targets would quickly defeat the Chinese. "Politicians have encroached on the realm of the military," MacArthur claimed, according to the story, "not vice-versa, and they are not facing the facts in Korea."[3]

There could be little doubt that the Detroit Times, at least, was solidly behind MacArthur. The newspaper condemned the Truman administration late in March with an editorial titled "Time to Get Mad." The language was

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[2]Truman, Memoirs, II, 442-43. Unless otherwise indicated, all messages from the President to MacArthur were in the form of directives from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[3]Detroit Times, April 5, 1951, pp. 1-2.

harsh but mentioned no specific Truman policies. The administration was described as a "spectacular demonstration of bad government," the Korean war was said to be caused by "ineptitude and even treason," and the phrase "bungling and muddling" was repeated three times. The editorial concluded: "It is a proper thing for American people to get mad about bad government, and the present time is a good time for them to do so."[4]

The Detroit Free Press responded to MacArthur's claim that he was handicapped by the politicians with an editorial cartoon captioned "Strange Way to Fight a Title Fight." MacArthur and Mao Tse-tung were depicted as boxers. One of the American general's arms was handcuffed to a ring-post labeled "Lack of Clear-cut U. S. Diplomatic Offensive."[5]

News coverage in the Detroit Times of the controversy over MacArthur's communique and the resulting "muzzling order" by President Truman implied that opinion in the Far East was solidly behind MacArthur. Frank Conniff, correspondent for the Hearst-owned International News Service, reported in a background piece from Tokyo that "all shades of opinion in Tokyo have rallied to the support of the Supreme Commander." Conniff noted that

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[4]Editorial, ibid., March 28, 1951, p. 22.

[5]Detroit Free Press, April 2, 1951, p. 7.

MacArthur had been rebuked by the defense department and wrote:

> I don't know whether General Marshall [the Secretary of Defense] pays much attention to press criticism, but I don't think he would be pleased by the comments around the local press club.[6]

The six Michigan newspapers studied all carried wire service reports of meetings of high government officials on April third and fourth, and rumors that these meetings would result in disciplinary action against MacArthur. Then, on April 5, U. S. Representative Joseph Martin released his letter from the general. The Detroit Times reported the event without immediate editorial comment. Martin S. Hayden, Washington correspondent for the Detroit News, wrote an analysis of the "Martin-letter incident" that was detailed and clear. It was buried, however, in the back pages of the newspaper. Hayden predicted more trouble with MacArthur for the Truman administration. He identified the general's major complaints as the failure of the United States to make use of the Nationalist Chinese troops on Formosa and the placing of Europe ahead of Asia in American foreign policy priority. Hayden also pointed out that the letter to Martin was dated before the muzzling directive from the President. In the administration's view, Hayden concluded, the letter to Martin and

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[6]Detroit Times, April 2, 1951, p. 7.

the general's later interview with the Daily Telegraph reporter was evidence that MacArthur was not going to be silent.[7]

The Grand Rapids Press said editorially that more was being made of the letter to Representative Joe Martin than it deserved since it, like the communique to the enemy commander, had been transmitted before MacArthur had been ordered silent. The Grand Rapids Press and other newspapers were at that point unaware of the President's earlier directive of the same nature in December, 1950. "It wasn't until March 26th," said the editorial, "that word circulated that Washington had told MacArthur he was not to talk about such matters without consulting his superiors."[8]

The Detroit Free Press editors did not agree that the problem was a minor one. A Free Press editorial said that "without question" the general was out of order, and suggested a number of possible explanations for such conduct, as follows: (1) MacArthur was inviting dismissal purposely to come home and advocate his policies; (2) he was compelled to speak out by the strength of his convictions; (3) he was actually speaking for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the face of a weak executive; (4) he was angry

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[7]Detroit News, April 6, 1951, p. 51.

[8]Editorial, Grand Rapids Press, April 7, 1951, p. 14.

and responding to Communist propaganda that described him as a dangerous egomaniac. The Free Press editorial writer concluded that for whatever reason, the general was wrong in his conduct, and the President should act or "relinquish the power and role assigned him by the Constitution."[9] Three days later, another Free Press editorial called for MacArthur to "come home at once in order that [the U. S. Senate] may hear from his own lips what's going on in Korea."[10]

A Detroit News editorial said:

> MacArthur within the last ten days has received a call-down from Washington for interfering in high policy matters. On the surface of the incident, it appeared to the American press and public he was on solid ground and the Administration was being unduly mean and critical.

The Martin letter, the News suggested, had changed the situation. "The letter . . . cannot but further doubts that MacArthur is no longer fitted for his job."[11]

Despite the speculation on a possible reprimand for MacArthur, few people thought that the President had the will to face the storm of disapproval that was sure to follow removal of the general. An Associated Press story, carrying a Washington dateline, reported that

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[9]Editorial, Detroit Free Press, April 7, 1951, p. 6.

[10]Editorial, ibid., April 10, 1951, p. 8.

[11]Editorial, Detroit News, April 7, 1951, p. 8.

> General Douglas MacArthur has proved again that he is one of the Truman administration's hottest potatoes.
>
> While MacArthur's letter to Martin raised speculation about possible disciplinary action against the five-star general, there was serious question whether the White House would risk a bitter fight in Congress by removing him from command. . . .[12]

The Lansing State Journal editorially considered the possibility that MacArthur might just be grasping for the limelight in writing to Martin, but noted an alternative motive:

> On the other hand, it could mean that he has feelings of patriotism so intense that they supersede mere military rules and regulations.
>
> . . . To say that the dictums of the Pentagon and the State Department are sacrosanct and above the reproach of key military leaders in a good position to know the facts . . . would be to strengthen the forces that grind the individual under the heel of statism.[13]

The Grand Rapids Press commented editorially that Martin could be justifiably criticized for making the exchange of letters public, but

> . . . nobody can deny that the House leader of the minority party has the right to ask a general in MacArthur's position for his views, or that a general has a right to reveal them under such circumstances.

The editorial concluded that although the general should not be forced to be silent, "the government could not tolerate indefinitely any attempt on his part to force his views on it."[14]

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[12] State Journal, April 6, 1951, p. 1.

[13] Editorial, ibid., April 8, 1951, p. 10.

[14] Editorial, Grand Rapids Press, April 7, 1951, p. 14.

On April 10, the Associated Press reported from Tokyo that MacArthur was not bending under pressure from Washington: "There are growing indications," the report said,

> . . . that the general and his aides are appealing to American public opinion. . . . For one thing, a close check of editorial comment is made here [at MacArthur's headquarters]. Officers say the general's views are becoming increasingly popular.[15]

On the same day in Washington, most reports speculated that MacArthur continued to have the upper hand. A United Press story reported that an administration source said "President Truman had decided tentatively to do nothing about MacArthur, but to leave action up to the military."[16] According to the Gallup public opinion poll, the President's popularity was at its lowest point in February and April, 1951. The poll reported that just before MacArthur's dismissal only 28 per cent of those sampled approved of Truman's performance of his office.[17]

The feeling that the President would not risk any action that would further reduce his popularity probably contributed to the shock when MacArthur's dismissal was announced at 1:00 A.M. on April eleventh. The unusual

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[15] Ibid., April 10, 1951, p. 2.

[16] Detroit Times, April 10, 1951, p. 1.

[17] Strunk, "The Quarter's Polls," Public Opinion Quarterly, XV (1951), 396.

time of the dismissal announcement--and the reason why MacArthur was not first informed of his dismissal privately--is explained by President Truman in his Memoirs. It was planned, Truman explains, that Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, then visiting in the Far East, would inform MacArthur. Transmission problems and the fact that Pace was then in Korea delayed arrival of his instructions. Then, writes Truman, another problem appeared:

> . . . Late in the evening of April 10, General [Omar] Bradley [chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] came rushing over to Blair House. He had heard, he said, that the story had leaked out and that a Chicago newspaper was going to print it the next morning. That was when I decided that we could not afford the courtesy of Secretary Pace's personal delivery of the order.[18]

The President's announcement was only three paragraphs long. The first announced the dismissal of MacArthur because the general was "unable to give his whole hearted support to policies of the United States Government . . . ," and the last paragraph saluted MacArthur's "distinguished and exceptional service" to his country.[19] The heart of the statement was the middle paragraph:

> Full and vigorous debate on matters of national policy is a vital element in the constitutional

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[18]Truman, Memoirs, II, 449.

[19]Hearings, p. 3547.

> system of our free democracy. It is fundamental, however, that military commanders must be governed by the policies and directives issued to them in the manner provided by our laws and Constitution. In time of crisis, this consideration is particularly compelling.[20]

A number of other documents were distributed with the announcement, including the official dismissal order, the December directive to MacArthur (and others) ordering him to be silent on foreign policy matters, notification of the President's intention to seek negotiations in Korea, MacArthur's public and private statements, and other supporting documents.[21]

The editors of the morning Detroit Free Press hastily compiled a story from its wire services for late editions.[22] Inside was an editorial, written before the announcement, that attacked the Truman administration and British critics of MacArthur. The editorial conceded that MacArthur's voice might have been raised at the wrong time, but explained that the only person who could legitimately deal with both military and political questions was the President, who had failed to do so.[23]

In Lansing, the State Journal informed readers of MacArthur's dismissal with wire service stories from

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Truman, Memoirs, II, 449-50.

[22] Detroit Free Press, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

[23] Editorial, ibid., p. 4.

Associated Press and one local feature on the reaction of the public. An editorial in the State Journal was angry and bitter:

> General MacArthur was discharged because he had the courage to speak out against the blundering tactics of the Pentagon and the White House. . . . He lost his job because he refused to be a pawn of the national and international blunderers, who by their stupidity, brought about the war in Korea and then left the United States the task of fighting it almost alone and with one hand behind its back.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> We point to Munich and say in all solemnity that never will such be allowed to happen. We look at what happened to General MacArthur and see again another Munich in the making--with an aftermath more tragic and more terrible than anything which Hitler and his minions ever devised.[24]

Martin Hayden wrote the lead story appearing in the editions of the Detroit News the afternoon of April 11. It was a concise summary of the events of the morning, including the texts of the documents released by the government. The News carried three United Press stories--on the reaction of Republican leaders, on the reaction in Tokyo, and on the history of MacArthur's past conflicts with political leaders--all on page one. Also on the first page was a local "man-in-the-street" feature. Almost all of the Detroiters interviewed sided with MacArthur. There was no editorial comment.[25]

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[24]Editorial, State Journal, April 11, 1951, p. 8.

[25]Detroit News, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

The Grand Rapids Press supplemented its wire service dispatches with a report from the "Grand Rapids Press Washington Bureau," or more accurately, from the Washington bureau for Booth Newspapers, Incorporated. The Booth reporter had interviewed Gerald R. Ford of Grand Rapids, Michigan, U. S. Representative for the Fifth Congressional District. Ford, a Republican, tied the removal of MacArthur to the case of Alger Hiss. Hiss, a former state department officer, had been accused before the House Un-American Activities Committee of passing government papers to the Soviet Union. He was later convicted by a New York Federal District Court of perjury for his testimony during the committee investigation. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, asked to comment on the conviction of Hiss, had refused to do so but affirmed his belief in Hiss's integrity and said: "I do not intend to turn my back on Alger Hiss."[26] Said Representative Ford:

> Mr. Truman has by such action [removing MacArthur] . . . aligned himself with the Alger Hiss gang in the department of state. For all practicable purposes, the President, like Acheson, refuses to turn his back on Alger Hiss."[27]

The Flint Journal, a Booth newspaper, restricted its reporting of the story on the first day to wire service accounts, using as its lead story a complete account

[26]Acheson, Present at the Creation, pp. 359-60.

[27]Grand Rapids Press, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

written by Associated Press reporter John M. Hightower.[28] The Flint daily was the only newspaper of the six examined in this study that printed full texts of all the documents released by the government.[29]

The Detroit Times devoted much more space to the story than any of the other newspapers examined. Virtually all of the editorial copy on the first twenty-nine pages of the issue concerned MacArthur's dismissal and the reaction to it. The lead stories were headlined: "M'Arthur to Tell U. S. His Story" and "Impeach Truman, GOP Chiefs Urge."[30] Truman's statement and some of the documents released by the government were printed or summarized on inside pages. The opinions of the U. S. Embassy staff in Tokyo, those of members of the Detroit city council, and those of survivors of the Bataan "death march," among others, were presented in the Times. An International News Service story from Tokyo described the reaction of American soldiers in Korea as "open-mouthed, pop-eyed amazement." The soldiers, said the INS story, "had come to love MacArthur."[31]

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[28] Flint Journal, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

[29] Ibid., p. 6.

[30] Detroit Times, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

[31] Ibid., p. 2.

The Detroit Times was the only Detroit newspaper to publish an editorial comment on the day of the dismissal. It was unsigned and not identified as an editorial except by its content. It appeared high on page one, titled, "A Tragic Day For America." The Times editorial said the removal of MacArthur demonstrated the

> . . . insidious power over the President of Secretary Acheson and General Marshall, who are jointly responsible for selling out China to communism and who have bitterly resented General MacArthur's efforts to establish a realistic and effective American foreign policy in the Orient.

The editorial dismissed MacArthur's alleged insubordination as merely a failure to "clear his statements through the censorship of the state and defense departments," and concluded that

> . . . the American people will not be fooled by the ostensible reason for General MacArthur's relief of command. They know that he is being removed to pave the way for a humiliating deal with communism.[32]

Before April 11, 1951, was past, MacArthur had accepted an invitation to address a joint session of the Congress, hearings on Far Eastern policy had been proposed, and the President had addressed the nation by radio to explain his policies and the necessity for MacArthur's relief. The nation was in an uproar and the press, as well as the public, was choosing sides. Marquis Childs,

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[32]Editorial, ibid., p. 1.

editorial columnist for United Features Syndicate, wrote that there was a "storm sweeping over Washington."[33] The extreme of press reaction was probably that expressed in a Chicago Tribune editorial that concluded: "The American nation has never been in greater danger. It is led by a fool who is surrounded by knaves. Impeachment is the only remedy."[34]

A Detroit Free Press editorial warned: "Never, perhaps, in the history of the American nation has there been such a spontaneous outburst of public feeling, coming perilously close to national hysteria. . . ."[35]

Richard Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., analyzed the turmoil of those days shortly afterward, and concluded:

> Now that the passion . . . has largely spent itself there is a tendency on the part of those who never liked it to deny that it ever existed. . . . Yet it has to be recorded in all candor that, in the two or three weeks that followed the recall, the American citizen . . . seemed a deeply aggrieved and affronted man. He took MacArthur's recall as if it were an outrage to his own person.[36]

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[33] Grand Rapids Press, April 13, 1951, p. 18.

[34] Editorial, Chicago Tribune, April 12, 1951, p. 1.

[35] Editorial, Detroit Free Press, April 13, 1951, p. 6.

[36] Rovere and Schlesinger, The MacArthur Controversy, p. 5.

MacArthur returned to the United States a week after his dismissal and was greeted as a hero in Honolulu and San Francisco. The Grand Rapids Press reported that in Traverse City, Michigan, where the MacArthur family had once spent their summers, all the bells of the city were rung as MacArthur's aircraft touched down in California.[37]

On April 19, MacArthur addressed the Congress, restating his views in eloquent language. William S. White, author of Citadel: The Story of the U. S. Senate, was present in the gallery. He wrote:

> The atmosphere was the most curiously emotional I had ever seen in service as a correspondent, including such matters as D-day in Normandy, the liberation of Paris, and the death of Franklin Roosevelt.[38]

MacArthur concluded his speech with words that became etched into the American consciousness in the weeks that followed. He recalled an old barracks ballad that ended, "old soldiers never die, they just fade away." Said MacArthur:

> . . . Like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away--an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty.
> Good-by.[39]

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[37] Grand Rapids Press, April 18, 1951, p. 1.

[38] William S. White, Citadel: The Story of the U. S. Senate (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 244.

[39] New York Times, April 20, 1951, p. 4.

David Lawrence, an editorial columnist for the New York Herald Tribune syndicate, wrote of the speech:

> His speech was the voice of the America of yesteryear, when Americans did not prate of defeat and speak with fear and trembling to the enemy that had despoiled a weaker nation and tortured or killed prisoners.[40]

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[40] Grand Rapids Press, April 20, 1951, p. 14.

CHAPTER VI

PRESS ANALYSIS: THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

The debate over the dismissal of General MacArthur centered on two issues: The challenge to the doctrine of civilian control of the military--the constitutional issue--and the question of the proper course for American foreign policy in the Far East. These issues were in many respects inseparable because the challenge to the authority of the President rose from the foreign policy dispute. Similarly, other issues to be discussed in the next chapter overlapped with those discussed below. Within this limitation, it is possible to examine the performance of the six Michigan daily newspapers in this study to determine how well they performed their function of providing the people with information, and the interpretation of that information, needed by the citizenry to make rational political judgments. Some of the issues were clear from the start, despite the emotional atmosphere. The most basic of these was the matter of civilian control of the military.

The Constitutional Issue

On April 11, 1951, General Dwight D. Eisenhower was in Germany observing the maneuvers of his newly-created North Atlantic Treaty Organization command. When informed by reporters of MacArthur's dismissal, Eisenhower reacted with a magnificent understatement: "I'll be darned," said the NATO commander. "I hope that he will not return to the United States and become a controversial figure." After recovering from his obvious surprise a few moments later, however, Eisenhower clearly identified one of the key issues of the MacArthur controversy. "When you put on a uniform," Eisenhower said, "there are certain inhibitions you accept."[1]

The constitutional principle involved in the dismissal of MacArthur was obvious, perhaps so basic that it did not get the attention it deserved from the press. The Detroit Free Press had pointed out months before the dismissal that a constitutional struggle was in progress involving the legislative and executive branches of the federal government. In the last quarter of 1950 and the first of 1951, the term "Great Debate" recurred frequently in news columns and editorials. The term referred to the long and heated debate in the U. S. Congress over the proposal to send American troops to Europe in peacetime to

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[1]Detroit Times, April 11, 1951, p. 12.

implement the North Atlantic Treaty. The Free Press suggested editorially that Truman had precipitated the power struggle by asserting that the President had the authority to send American troops anywhere, at any time, and in whatever numbers he saw fit, and that any consultation was a matter of courtesy only.[2] While the Congress rebelled at this assertion, few members went so far as to question the President's authority as commander-in-chief to remove MacArthur. One of the exceptions was Joseph McCarthy, the Republican senator from Wisconsin, who was then growing in influence but who was not yet at the peak of his power. McCarthy, in a speech delivered two days before the dismissal of the general had made clear his view of presidential authority over MacArthur. He said: "It is high treason to refuse General MacArthur permission to use Chinese Nationalist troops."[3]

Most editors declined to question the constitutional authority of the President. Walter Winchell, King Features Syndicate newspaper gossip columnist, however, stated:

> MacArthur, contrary to the general impression, is within his rights even as a soldier in defying the

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[2]Editorial, Detroit Free Press, April 4, 1951, p. 6.

[3]New York Times, April 9, 1951, p. 3.

> President. His oath is to the Constitution and to the men under his command.[4]

The view that the supremacy of the civilian executive was something less than absolute was best expressed in a reader's letter to the Grand Rapids Press. The outraged citizen accused Truman of assuming dictatorial powers over the military "because by a political technicality he became head of the armed forces."[5] Even among those who saw the principle of civilian supremacy as something more than a "political technicality," there were some who claimed that it was irrelevant in MacArthur's case. MacArthur himself was of that opinion. In Tokyo soon after his dismissal, MacArthur claimed through his spokesman, Major General Courtney Whitney, that he had always been "meticulous in obedience."[6] MacArthur wrote in his memoirs years later:

> The legal authority of the President to relieve a field commander, irrespective of the wisdom or stupidity of the action, has never been questioned by anyone. The supremacy of the civil over the military is fundamental to the American system of government, and is wholeheartedly accepted by every officer and soldier in the military establishment. It was not an issue in this case.[7]

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[4] Detroit Times, April 13, 1951, p. 25.

[5] Grand Rapids Press, April 14, 1951, p. 14.

[6] Detroit Times, April 12, 1951, p. 1.

[7] MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 393.

The general explained that the letter to Representative Joe Martin was incorrectly interpreted as a deliberate violation of orders to be silent on policy matters. MacArthur said that letters from legislators were always answered promptly by him as a routine courtesy:

> I attached little importance to the exchange of letters, which on my part was intended to be merely a polite response couched in such general terms as to convey only a normal patriotic desire for victory.[8]

To the editors of the Detroit Times also, civil control of the military was not at issue in the case. The Times said editorially that the President's action was caused by men of "insidious power" who "bitterly resented" MacArthur's successes and removed him to "pave the way for a humiliating deal with communism."[9] In another editorial, the Times characterized the President as being motivated by revenge. MacArthur's career had been "vengefully exacted" by the President, the editorial said, because the general "did not agree with him and therefore grievously offended him." Truman was determined, the editorial concluded, "to rule dictatorially and absolutely over the affiars and lives of the American people." The editorial

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[8] Ibid., p. 386.

[9] Editorial, Detroit Times, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

suggested that the American people should compel the government to restore MacArthur to his posts.[10]

An editorial in the Flint Journal suggested that the President was not correctly interpreting his proper duty as commander-in-chief, commenting, in part, that

> We can understand how Captain Harry S. Truman, Battery D, 129th Field Artillery, 35th Division, World War I, could recognize an instance of military insubordination but we wonder if President Harry S. Truman of the United States of America can appreciate all of the consequences of what amounts to a repudiation of the world's No. 1 symbol of anti-Communism and the man who has been most forthright and effective in his resistance to the greatest menace to world peace and national security.[11]

David Lawrence, then an editorial columnist for the New York Herald Tribune syndicate, wrote in a column that appeared in the Grand Rapids Press that the administration was observing a double standard in restricting policy statements by military officers. Lawrence observed that General Omar Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had made "party-line" speeches supporting administration policy without raising a ripple of protest from anyone.[12]

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[10]Editorial, ibid., April 12, 1951, pp. 1-2.

[11]Editorial, Flint Journal, April 12, 1951, p. 30.

[12]Grand Rapids Press, April 18, 1951, p. 14.

Before MacArthur was dismissed, the Detroit Free Press had called editorially for the President to act or "relinquish the power and role assigned him by the Constitution."[13] The Free Press made no additional editorial comment on the constitutional issue after the dismissal. John S. Knight, the publisher of the Free Press, in a signed column, implied that he regarded the propriety of MacArthur's dismissal as a closed subject, for better or worse, and called instead for an examination of future foreign policy decisions.[14]

The Lansing State Journal made no editorial comment on the constitutional principle asserted by the President in dismissing MacArthur. An editorial-page column in that newspaper by James Marlow, an Associated Press political news analyst, reviewed the issues involved in the controversy and pointed out clearly the constitutional relationship of the President and his generals. The basic question in the controversy, wrote Marlow, was: "Should the President of the United States let any military commander defy him?"[15]

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[13]Editorial, Detroit Free Press, April 7, 1951, p. 6.

[14]Editorial, ibid., April 12, 1951, p. 10.

[15]State Journal, April 12, 1951, p. 10.

The Detroit News reported in detail the instances of insubordination alleged by the administration and also the response from MacArthur's aide and spokeman in Tokyo, General Whitney, that MacArthur had never been disobedient.[16] The News reminded its readers in an editorial that the President has final authority over the military. It would be intolerable, the News said editorially, that subordinates

> . . . should deliberately overrule the President of the United States. . . . During his last several months as Supreme Commander in the Far East, General Douglas MacArthur had given repeated and deliberate offense to this concept of how the nation should be governed.[17]

In another editorial the following day, the Detroit News examined in detail the reasons why the letter to Representative Joseph Martin was a "grievous error."[18]

The Grand Rapids Press, a newspaper that had earlier expressed editorially the view that "no one could deny" that MacArthur and Martin had the right to correspond,[19] changed its opinion to a degree after the announcement of MacArthur's dismissal:

> Heretofore-secret papers which passed between Washington and General MacArthur shed an entirely new

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[16] Detroit News, April 12, 1951, p. 1.

[17] Editorial, ibid., p. 12.

[18] Editorial, ibid., April 13, 1951, p. 30.

[19] Editorial, Grand Rapids Press, April 7, 1951, p. 14.

> light on the general's position and point to the conclusion that removing him . . . was not to be avoided. It might have been more delicately handled, but a cool appraisal of the situation will convince any unbiased person that it had to come.[20]

History will judge whether MacArthur's policies were right, the Grand Rapids Press editorial concluded, but his actions were wrong. "The Constitution leaves no room for doubt on this score."[21]

To the editors of at least three of the six newspapers in this study, MacArthur was clearly in the wrong on the constitutional issue. As General Matthew B. Ridgeway--who replaced MacArthur in the Far East--later wrote:

> The real, basic issue was neither the wide divergence of views between Mr. Truman and General MacArthur on enlarging the Korean War nor the clash of two strong personalities. It was simply, as General Marshall pointed out in his testimony before the Senate Committee, the situation of a local Theater Commander publicly expressing his disagreement with a policy which superior authority had repeatedly communicated to him in the clearest terms.[22]

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[20]Editorial, ibid., April 12, 1951, p. 22.

[21]Editorial, ibid.

[22]Matthew B. Ridgeway, The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge, How All-Out Asian War Was Averted, Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, Why Today's War Must Be Limited (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1967), p. 142.

The Foreign Policy Issue

The divergent views of General MacArthur and President Truman on the proper course for American foreign policy in the Far East were stated in two speeches. On April 11, the President presented his position in a radio address to the nation explaining his reasons for removing MacArthur. History has taught us, said Mr. Truman, that Aggression anywhere in the world is a threat to world peace. For that reason the United States had worked with other free nations to check aggression in such places as Berlin, Greece, and Korea since the end of World War II. That action had prevented aggression from succeeding, the President said, and had prevented the eruption of World War III. The President continued:

> We do not want to see the conflict in Korea extended. We are trying to prevent a world war--not to start one. The best way to do that is to make it plain that we and the other free nations will continue to resist the attack.
>
> But you may ask why we can't take other steps to punish the aggressor. Why don't we bomb Manchuria and China itself? Why don't we assist Chinese Nationalist troops to land on the mainland of China?
>
> If we were to do these things we would be running a very grave risk of starting a general war. If that were to happen, we would have brought about the very situation we are trying to prevent.
>
> If we were to do these things, we would become entangled in a vast conflict on the continent of Asia and our task would become immeasureably more difficult all over the world.
>
> What would suit the ambitions of the Kremlin better than for our military forces to be committed to a full-scale war with Red China?

> It may well be that, in spite of our best efforts, the Communists will extend the war. But it would be wrong--tragically wrong--for us to take the initiative in extending the war.[23]

MacArthur was relieved, President Truman said in conclusion, "so that there would be no doubt or confusion as to the real purpose and aim" of United States policy.[24]

The general explained his position in his speech to the Congress on April 19. Asia contained half the world's population, MacArthur said, and 60 per cent of the world's resources. It was there that the Communists were making their main effort at world conquest. After World War II, MacArthur said, the western edge of the Pacific Ocean had become America's defense line, with Formosa being an important key to that line. The loss of Formosa to the Communists

> . . . would at once threaten the freedom of the Philippines and the loss of Japan, and might well force our western frontier back to the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.[25]

The decision to intervene in Korea was militarily sound, MacArthur said, but the intervention of the Communist Chinese had changed the situation.

> . . . While no man in his right mind would advocate sending our ground forces into continental China . . .

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[23] Hearings, pp. 3548-52.

[24] Ibid., p. 3552.

[25] New York Times, April 20, 1951, p. 4.

> the new situation did urgently demand a drastic revision of strategic planning if our political aim was to defeat the new enemy as we had defeated the old.
>
> Apart from the military need as I saw it to neutralize sanctuary protection given to the enemy north of the Yalu, I felt that military necessity in the conduct of the war made necessary:
>
> First, the intensification of our economic blockade against China.
>
> Second, the imposition of naval blockade against the China coast.
>
> Third, removal of restriction on air reconnaissance of China's coastal areas and of Manchuria.
>
> Fourth, removal of restriction on the forces of the Republic of China on Formosa, with logistical support to contribute to their effective operation against the Chinese mainland.[26]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . I have constantly called for the new political decisions essential to a solution [the general told the Congress]. Efforts have been made to distort my position. It has been said in effect that I was a warmonger. Nothing could be further from the truth. I know war as few men now living know it, and nothing is to me more revolting. . . . But once war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end. War's very object is victory--not prolonged indecision. In war, indeed, there can be no substitute for victory.[27]

In simple terms, the Truman administration's policy was to contain the Communist threat in Korea, restore the military strength of Europe--still regarded by

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[26] New York Times, April 20, 1951, p. 4. (In his Reminiscences (pp. 378-79), MacArthur included the text of a message to his superiors in Washington in which he recommended the four points mentioned above, with one exception. In place of "intensification of our economic blockade," MacArthur recommended that the United Nations should "destroy through naval gunfire and air bombardment China's industrial capacity to wage war.")

[27] Ibid.

the President as the "key to world peace"--and prevent the outbreak of World War III.[28] Even before the dismissal of MacArthur, some newspaper editorial writers had interpreted this policy of restraint as appeasement of the Communists, or even treason. The Detroit Times commented editorially that "the blundering and disloyal foreign policies of the New Deal are taking this country into complete disaster." The solution, the Times editorial suggested, was to pull out of Korea, pull out of the United Nations, and stop all aid to Europe, even "marxist England." The editorial concluded:

> Since obviously we STAND ALONE, we should have the wisdom and courage to ACT ALONE. For our duty is to protect our own people and to foster our own nation.[29]

During the uproar following MacArthur's communique of March 24, addressed to the enemy commander in Korea, Fulton Lewis, Jr., an editorial columnist for the Hearst newspapers, criticized the state department for "dropping to a new low" in the MacArthur dispute. Secretary of State Dean Acheson was identified by Lewis as the greatest villain:

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[28]Truman, Memoirs, II, 380.

[29]Editorial, Detroit Times, Dec. 5, 1950, p. 1. The use of words or word phrases set in all capital letters and the shift to italics for emphasis from the usual roman body type was typical of Hearst-owned newspapers.

> If the President is smart he will send Acheson's pip-squeaks trotting back to the state department. MacArthur is in Korea, he knows war and he knows when an enemy is beaten. . . . It is certain that the American soldiers still alive in Korea would welcome a Communist flag of surrender even if Acheson and the U. N. representative are not present to sign the capitulation papers.[30]

President Truman's speech of April 11, explaining his policies, was more or less prominently placed on the front pages of all the Michigan newspapers studied except the Detroit Times. The Times made little apparent effort to present the administration's views even in its new columns. On the day after the President's speech, the Times printed on page one a two-column photograph of Truman delivering his address, with a caption above it which read: "His Side of Story." The cutlines under the photograph said: "President Truman telling the nation in a radio-television address why he fired MacArthur. He said MacArthur's stand invites world war and 'we want peace.'"[31] Nothing else that the President said was mentioned on the front page. Under the picture, however, was a two-column headline: "President Loses Mink-Coat Typist," which topped an International News Service story reporting that an assistant to the President's secretary had resigned three days earlier. Her name, said the Times story, had

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[30] Ibid., April 2, 1951, p. 19.

[31] Ibid., April 12, 1951, p. 1.

been "mentioned in the Senate 'influence' investigations."[32] Also on page one was a story reporting a prominent Republican senator's reply to the Truman speech. The text of the President's remarks appeared on page forty-three.

On April 13, a Detroit Times editorial continued the attack on Secretary of State Dean Acheson:

> [The people] understand that the President, willingly and ignominiously, yielded to the sinister influences led by Secretary Acheson and [the Secretary of Defense] General [George] Marshall, which betrayed China to the Communists and have piously shielded treachery at home.
>
> It has been no secret, of course, that the British, French, and Italian Communists were determined to destroy or at least discredit MacArthur.[33]

Repeatedly, Detroit Times editorials hinted broadly that the administration's policy was little short of treasonous. Claiming that the restrictions placed on MacArthur in Korea could not have helped the enemy more if they had been intended to do so, the Times said editorially that "it is not altogether clear that the element of deliberate calculation by our supposed enemies did not fashion the crippling restrictions of the MacArthur command."[34] The Times supported MacArthur's foreign policy position without discernible reservation. MacArthur's dismissal,

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Editorial, ibid., April 13, 1951, p. 24.

[34] Editorial, ibid., April 12, 1951, p. 2.

another editorial in the Hearst newspaper said, was a victory of "the politicians who have been consistently wrong, over the strategist and statesman who has been consistently right."[35]

MacArthur himself was of the opinion that his removal had thrown the Far East into chaos.

> Moscow and Peiping rejoiced. The bells were rung and a holiday atmosphere prevailed. The left-wingers everywhere exulted. But in the Far East, there was bewilderment and shock. I had been there so long in supreme command that I had become a kind of symbol of the free world--a bulwark against the spread of Communism. The removal of that symbol was not understood, and tended to shake faith in our ways and methods.[36]

At the Senate hearings held after his dismissal to investigate the situation in the Far East, MacArthur claimed that the administration had no policy in the area. "I was operating in what I call a vacuum," the general testified. "I could hardly have been said to be in opposition to policies which I was not aware of, . . . I don't know what the policy is now."[37]

John S. Knight, publisher of the Detroit Free Press and then of three other metropolitan newspapers, agreed to an extent that there was a policy "vacuum" in

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[35]Editorial, ibid., April 11, 1951, p. 1.

[36]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 395.

[37]Hearings, p. 30.

the Far East. The conflict between Truman and the general was a symptom of that lack of a sound foreign policy.[38] MacArthur's removal was justified, said Knight, and his policies were dangerous, but "now we demand to know where we go from here."[39] Early in April, the Free Press had suggested editorially that, to clarify policy questions, the Senate should ask MacArthur to "come home at once in order that it may find out from his own lip's what's going on in Korea."[40] The Free Press was critical of both MacArthur and Truman, an attitude that was shared by Free Press editorial columnist Malcolm Bingay. Bingay regarded Truman as incompetent and inept, and had long been critical of the Truman administration. Bingay also wrote, however, that MacArthur was no saint either. "A pox on both your houses," he concluded.[41]

A Flint Journal editorial offered a historical parallel as precedent for a solution to the Far East policy dispute:

> [This] is the problem--greatly oversimplified, of course. Which is it to be? Europe or Asia? Asia or

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[38]Editorial, Detroit Free Press, April 15, 1951, sec. B., p. 4.

[39]Editorial, ibid., April 12, 1951, p. 6.

[40]Editorial, ibid., April 6, 1951, p. 6.

[41]Ibid., April 13, 1951, p. 6.

> Europe? Where do we draw the line and say to Russia, "This far and no farther?"
>
> Is there no compromise between these conflicting theories? . . .
>
> Do we need to go any farther back in history than 1941 for the answer?
>
> Then the decision was made to concentrate on Europe because it was recognized that the permanent loss of European resources would be disastrous.
>
> Are conditions so much different now?[42]

The Lansing State Journal editorially supported MacArthur's policy views. In an editorial responding to the general's announcement in March that a stalemate was imminent in Korea, the Lansing newspaper said:

> General MacArthur's appraisal of the situation in Korea emphasizes the need for a prompt decision as to whether American and other U. N. forces are in Korea for the purpose of crushing Red aggression or merely to engage in a costly stalemate of indefinite duration.[43]

After the general's dismissal, the State Journal analyzed President Truman's explanatory speech of April 11, and expressed editorial disagreement. The State Journal asserted editorially that Truman's contention that his policy would limit Communist aggression was invalid:

> The idea that this country has avoided a full-scale war with Red China is a tragic illusion. The fact is that whatever our government's intentions, Communist China is engaged in a full-scale aggression against the United Nations forces in Korea.
>
> His talk must have been heard with more than ordinary satisfaction in Peiping and Moscow.[44]

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[42]Editorial, Flint Journal, April 14, 1951, p. 10.

[43]Editorial, State Journal, March 16, 1951, p. 14.

[44]Editorial, ibid., April 12, 1951, p. 10.

A State Journal editorial four days later was less moderate in tone. The title asked the question: "Treason?" "Yes--in a way," the newspaper answered editorially.

> . . . The firing of MacArthur is not really a question of military discipline. The real issue is whether the President . . . will try to bring about a second Munich in which . . . the Communists would be left unopposed in Asia.
>
> American foreign policy under Truman and Russian plans of conquest have strangely coincided in Asia. No ally of the Kremlin could more effectively have helped Mao [Tse-tung] into power than American diplomats.
>
> President Truman has revealed his incompetence to deal with the vast problems of his office.[45]

The Detroit News was, editorially, relatively silent on the foreign policy issues of the MacArthur controversy. The newspaper reported the views of the various advocates in its news columns, without apparent bias or distortion, but made little attempt to examine the various policy alternatives. Blair Moody, Detroit News reporter and political commentator, was an exception. Writing just before the dismissal of the general, Moody concisely summarized the policy differences between Truman and MacArthur and identified the central problem as dispute over the best way to prevent world war. The evidence was great that the Joint Chiefs of Staff backed President Truman in

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[45]Editorial, ibid, April 15, 1951, p. 10.

placing Europe first in American foreign policy priority, Moody wrote.[46]

On the eve of General MacArthur's speech to the Congress after his return to the United States, tne News called on the public to "lend and ear to General MacArthur":

> No differences of opinion as to the wisdom and justice of his removal, and no disagreement with his view of the course that the nation should take, can shade the significance of the event or lessen the need that his every word should be pondered carefully by an attentive nation.[47]

MacArthur's speech to the Congress was extensively reported by all of the newspapers in this study, although it was pushed from the lead position on the front pages by the death of a native son and national political figure, U. S. Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg. After the speech, Detroit News editors saluted the general for "not speaking in generalization or bitter partisanship, but laying it on the line as he sees it." The newspaper took issue editorially with much of what MacArthur had recommended, but the editors took no specific position of their own.[48]

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[46]Detroit News, April 10, 1951, p. 33. A few weeks later, Blair Moody was appointed by the governor of Michigan to fill the unexpired portion of Senator Arthur Vandenberg's term in the United States Senate.

[47]Editorial, ibid., April 18, 1951, p. 32.

[48]Editorial, ibid., April 20, 1951, p. 20.

Two days after the dismissal of MacArthur, when the furor was at its peak, the Grand Rapids Press noted editorially that in the debate over Far Eastern policy, it was being overlooked that Korean policy was a United Nations question, not merely one concerning the United States.[49] Also from the Grand Rapids newspaper came perhaps the most practical criticism of MacArthur's proposed foreign policy. The newspaper reviewed MacArthur's speech to the Congress and concluded editorially:

> . . . There is no way to prove MacArthur is right except by doing the things he advocates. Several million Americans appear willing to put the general's theories to the test without further ado. They are being swayed more by their emotions than by their thinking.[50]

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[49]Editorial, Grand Rapids Press, April 13, 1951, p. 18.

[50]Editorial, ibid., April 20, 1951, p. 14.

CHAPTER VII

PRESS ANALYSIS: THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY ISSUES

In 1951, the most important issues of the MacArthur controversy, and those naturally commanding the most attention from the news media, were the constitutional and foreign policy issues discussed in chapter vi. Lesser aspects of the controversy are also important, however, in any examination of press performance. To some extent, these secondary issues involved the "supporting players" in the drama, rather than those at center stage. The issues can be identified as, first, how the press reported the partisan political factors that entered into the MacArthur controversy; and second, how the press reported MacArthur's performance as a military officer and combat commander.

MacArthur and the Politicians

Richard Rovere and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., suggest that MacArthur was, until the moment of his dismissal, more of a figure in American history than a participant in contemporary events.

> But when MacArthur a week after being notified of his discharge in Tokyo, flew inward from the perimeter of American power, he made a similar journey to the center of the American consciousness.[1]

It was certainly true, at least, that MacArthur journeyed to the center of American political consciousness. Each of the Michigan newspapers in this study quickly reported that the MacArthur debate had become a partisan issue. The editors of the Lansing State Journal, for example, saw clearly that MacArthur's dismissal was not being debated entirely on its own merits:

> It was to be expected that some politicians in both Democratic and Republican parties would attempt to make as much political capital as possible out of the differences between President Truman and General MacArthur. In consequence, the issues of Far Eastern policy and of [the authority of] the commander-in-chief have been in danger of being overshadowed by a struggle for political advantage . . . .[2]

MacArthur himself was not innocent of responsibility for the insertion of partisan political considerations into the controversy. It seems unlikely that any high-ranking American military officer, especially the supreme commander of an international force with continental responsibilities, could ever hope to divorce himself completely from American politics. The difference in this

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[1]Rovere and Schlesinger, The MacArthur Controversy, pp. 4-5.

[2]Editorial, State Journal, April 20, 1951, p. 10.

respect between MacArthur and Dwight Eisenhower was not that Eisenhower remained aloof from all things political while MacArthur did not. The difference was rather that Eisenhower was less obviously partisan than MacArthur. MacArthur apparently did not consider himself a partisan man. "Although nominally Republican," MacArthur wrote in his memoirs,

> . . . probably because of my attraction to Abraham Lincoln, I had always expressed admiration for the basic accomplishments of the Democratic party, and appreciation of its many great leaders.[3]

Even if it were entirely true that MacArthur was but "nominally" Republican, the politicians who supported and admired him most--at least after 1932--were emphatically and thoroughly Republican. Among the first to speak in MacArthur's support during the 1951 controversy were his superiors during his tenure as U. S. Army Chief of Staff, former President Herbert Hoover and former Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley. Before MacArthur's dismissal, Hurley told reporters:

> If the administration does not want to win the war in Korea they should relieve MacArthur of his command. If the administration does wish to win they should take the wraps off MacArthur and allow him to employ the forces necessary. . . .
> Our state department should limit its role to policy and leave military strategy to those better qualified to formulate it.[4]

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[3]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 389.

[4]Detroit Times, April 8, 1951, p. 2.

Robert A. Taft, United States Senator from Ohio, was another Republican leader who quickly spoke in support of MacArthur's position. He called Truman's refusal to allow the use of Chinese Nationalist troops against the Chinese mainland "idiotic, ridiculous, and utterly indefensible."[5] Taft, like Hoover and Hurley, was associated with the semi-isolationist, "America-first" segment of the Republican party rather than the "internationalist" faction represented by Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan.

Douglas MacArthur was nobody's puppet, but the evidence is strong that his differences with the President were deliberately exploited by the Republican minority in the Congress. Joe Martin, minority leader of the House, explained years later his reasons for writing to MacArthur:

> I felt that the Republicans were entitled to the truth if we were effectively to defend our side of the argument. Since MacArthur was an old friend of mine, I was confident that he would give me an expert opinion on which I could rely in presenting our case.[6]

As Martin had expected, MacArthur replied promptly, and the release of the general's letter was the final provocation leading to MacArthur's dismissal. Martin, however, was not dismayed by this result:

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[5] Ibid., p. 1.

[6] Martin, My First Fifty Years in Politics, as told to Robert J. Donovan (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960), p. 203.

> Already I had visions of him as the Republican nominee in 1952. This deposed hero, I thought, might truly be the answer to our prayers. When [MacArthur's aide, Major] General [Courtney] Whitney, who preceded MacArthur home, came to see me, I bared my thoughts to him and he embraced them without reservation.[7]

MacArthur's name had been mentioned in connection with the presidential nomination before 1951. In both 1944 and 1948, his candidacy had been actively supported by the Hearst newspapers, but with little success. John S. Knight, publisher of the Detroit Free Press, wrote of the effort to nominate the general in 1948. "In the history of personal journalism," Knight wrote, "it would be hard to find such a waste of clumsy effort as the Hearst press put out in [MacArthur's] behalf."[8]

John Tebbel, one of the biographers of William Randolph Hearst, reported a conversation in Paris between Hearst's son, William junior, and Art Buchwald, then a reporter for the Paris edition of the New York Herald Tribune. Hearst's son is quoted as saying, shortly before his father's death in 1951:

> We've supported MacArthur for a long time, long before any of the other papers jumped on the bandwagon. This policy was based on Pop's judgment. Pop doesn't know anything about the Far East and depends on Mac's judgment. He and the old man are very close. . . .
> It was Pop's idea to run MacArthur for President in 1948. He did it without Mac's permission . . . .

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[7] Ibid., pp. 209-10.

[8] Detroit Free Press, June 27, 1948, p. 4.

> Our editorial policy on the Far East will be guided by Mac's thinking.[9]

The Detroit Times, more than the other newspapers in this study, tended to favor the opinions of those politicians who supported MacArthur's views. The Times was the only newspaper examined that printed, on the day after the dismissal, the full text of a 600-word statement by the House Republican Policy Committee that warned of a "super-Munich" and a "holocaust that will end civilization as we know it." The report concluded: "The future of America is at stake. Plainly, if America is to be saved, the Congress must do it."[10]

Two columns of the Detroit Times front page on April 12, were reserved for an editorial followed by a blank form to be filled in and sent to Washington. The Times reader merely had to check whether he approved of the President's action or not, and mail the form to his congressman. Addresses were provided on page two.[11]

Another story in the Hearst-owned newspaper, identified as from the Detroit Times Washington bureau, reported at length the reactions of many senators and

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[9]John Tebbel, The Life and Good Times of William Randolph Hearst (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1952), p. 265.

[10]Detroit Times, April 12, 1951, p. 2.

[11]Ibid., pp. 1-2.

representatives. Among those quoted were Richard M. Nixon, freshman senator from California, who attacked the President for "matching his military strategy in the Far East against the concepts of General MacArthur;" and U. S. Representative Paul Shafer of Battle Creek, representing Michigan's Third Congressional District, who reportedly waved a copy of the Daily Worker on the floor of the House and pointed out stories in the Communist party newspaper exulting over the firing of MacArthur.[12] The Times also printed, two days in a row, a story reporting that a Chinese Communist radio station had called the dismissal of MacArthur "a great victory for the Chinese and Korean people in their fight to resist American aggression."[13]

In the Sunday editions following MacArthur's dismissal, the Detroit Times celebrated MacArthur's imminent return with a front-page salute. Below a two-column centered portrait of the general was the tribute: "An

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[12] Ibid., April 13, 1951, p. 1.

[13] Ibid., April 14, 1951, p. 2; and ibid., April 15, 1951, p. 8. Communist party leaders in the U. S. were not as overjoyed about the dismissal of MacArthur. In a letter distributed in pamphlet form, party general secretary Eugene Dennis told members of the Communist party in the U. S. that although millions of people properly saw the general as a "Number One warmonger and pro-fascist," they had not realized that Truman was just as bad. The President, Dennis wrote, continued to "pursue Wall Street's aggressive war policy." (Letter, Eugene Dennis to members of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., n.d., call no. CPA VF 505.11, Michigan State University. Special Collections Library.)

American Welcome To General MacArthur." The text--bordered by eighty tiny American flags--was almost biblical in tone:

> There will be a great outpouring of the people in honor of General MacArthur.
> Let there be a great and swelling volume of acclaim everywhere in the land.
> Let sirens and bells ring in all our cities.
> Let the beloved flag of our country fly in pride and beauty from housetops and public buildings.
> Fourteen years almost to the day have elapsed since General MacArthur last saw the blessed sight of the American flag streaming in the free skies of his native land. . . .[14]

In contrast, the Detroit Times implied editorially that Truman was utterly incompetent to be President. Responding to his radio speech of April 11, explaining the dismissal of MacArthur to the nation, the Times editors commented:

> Mr. Truman's speech was stumbling and fumbling.
> He was plainly confused and uncertain, even apologetic.
> The strongest impression made by the speech upon the attentive listener was that the President was not only wrong, but that he knew it.[15]

Although the Times was the most partisan of the newspapers examined in this study, it was by no means alone in editorially supporting MacArthur. The Times was unique, however, in the undisguised bias of the news columns and the violence of the editorial language. Only the Detroit Times, for example, used as news a story that

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[14] Ibid., April 15, 1951, p. 1.

[15] Editorial, ibid., April 14, 1951, p. 8.

Cosmopolitan magazine, also a Hearst publication, had carried an article supposedly explaining Truman's "terrible temper" in psychological terms. The Times story carried a three-column headline, was placed opposite the comics page, and quoted the Cosmopolitan article at length. The article, the Times story explained, analyzed Truman's childhood. Truman's father had never missed a meeting of the county Democratic party, the article writer had said, and had gotten into a fight at every meeting. Truman's mother was said to have believed that "the only sensible way to deal with varmints was to attack them with fists, shotgun, or meatcleaver." This background, the magazine writer had explained, had scarred the President's life:

> . . . As a boy, he was called a sissy, as a man a deadbeat, as a public official a water boy for political gangsters. He married late in life after courting his wife twenty years. He failed in business in 1922 and has owed money ever since.

Now, concluded the author of the Cosmopolitan article, Truman was striking back at the world.[16]

General MacArthur apparently accepted, to some extent, the view that Truman was motivated by his emotions. In his memoirs, MacArthur reported his reaction upon learning of Truman's angry note to Paul Hume, music

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[16]Detroit Times, March 30, 1951, p. 44; Cosmopolitan, April, 1951, pp. 30-33.

critic of the Washington Post, who had criticized Margaret Truman's singing. That incident, wrote MacArthur, had made him realize that "I was standing at the apex of a situation that could make me the next victim of such an uncontrolled passion."[17]

Each of the newspapers in the study made it clear that, in the government at least, the dismissal of MacArthur was a partisan issue on which there was little breaking of ranks. One after another, political leaders came forward to support the general or the President, according to their party loyalties, and were dutifully reported by the press. Most of the politicians' statements were routine but a few were as colorful as the Detroit Times editorials. Senator Joseph McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin, told reporters that the dismissal of MacArthur was "treason," accomplished by men who "knew how to get the President cheerful . . . a Communist victory won with the aid of bourbon and benedictine. The _ _ _ [sic] should be impeached," said McCarthy.[18]

Republican party leaders called for the impeachment of the President and the secretary of state, and the Democratic party leadership demanded an investigation into MacArthur's conduct of the war. The Detroit News, however,

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[17]MacArthur, Reminiscences, p. 394.

[18]State Journal, April 12, 1951, p. 1.

editorially dismissed all of those threats and accusations as partisan gambits that would eventually come to nothing:

> The President, knowing the nature of his countrymen, can rest secure in the faith that nothing as emotional as the furor of these recent days can last, and that when the intoxication of the moment passes, it will be generally conceded that he did what he had to do.[19]

On April 12, the Lansing State Journal reported that the Republican-controlled Michigan legislature was debating a resolution condemning Truman's dismissal of MacArthur. A provision calling for the impeachment of the President had been considered, the story said, but had been defeated.[20] The next day, editions of the State Journal reported that the modified resolution had been passed. In addition, the Lansing newspaper reported, the state senate had censured G. Mennen Williams, Democratic governor of Michigan, who had opposed the resolution condemning Truman. Williams was censured by the senate, the story reported, for "his official joining of the English socialistic program . . . and associating himself with the Acheson-Alger Hiss foreign policy programs."[21]

A Flint Journal story suggested Governor Williams

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[19]Editorial, Detroit News, April 17, 1951, p. 24.

[20]State Journal, April 12, 1951, p. 1.

[21]Ibid., April 13, 1951, p. 1.

might have trouble getting reelected in 1952 because of Truman's political unpopularity.[22]

An Associated Press story in the Flint newspaper reported that tempers were unusually hot in the Congress:

> The long and angry "great debate" about troops-to-Europe and the explosive arguments about firing General MacArthur have lowered the boiling point of some Senatorial tempers.
>
> Barbed remarks about each other--a violation of Senate rules--crop out daily. Most veteran Senators try to avoid and suppress this. Younger members often let fly.[23]

Columnist Marquist Childs pointed out what he called a "puzzling contradiction" in the political position of the Republicans:

> During the debate on the issue of troops for NATO, Republican senators warned in ominous language of the dangers of a military dictatorship. To give . . . General Eisenhower the right to determine whether additional divisions should be sent to Europe without the approval of Congress would be to surrender the pre-eminent right of civilian control of the military. Yet they supported, without apparent reservation, a commander in the field who decided to establish a new policy in the Far East.[24]

For a period of seven weeks beginning on May 3, 1951, the Joint Senate Committee on Armed Services and Foreign Relations conducted hearings on the military situation in the Far East and the events surrounding the

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[22] Flint Journal, April 13, 1951, p. 1.

[23] Ibid., April 15, 1951, p. 14.

[24] Grand Rapids Press, April 12, 1951, p. 22.

dismissal of MacArthur. The general was the first witness and he testified for three days. The hearings were not open to the public or the press, but censored transcripts of the testimony were made available to the press as quickly as possible. As a result, many newspapers published much of the early testimony verbatim. The final transcript of the hearings was over three thousand pages long, so it is obvious that there was much that the press could not print. The hearings concluded late in June, 1951, without reaching any dramatic conclusions. By that time, the emotionalism of the early days of the controversy had abated. William S. White, a student of the U. S. Senate, regarded those hearings as an example of Senate investigation at its best. The MacArthur hearings, wrote White, were not loud, dramatic, or ostensibly partisan. White concluded, however, that the hearings did more than just shed light on a difficult area of American foreign policy:

> . . . It is always a tricky thing confidently to assert that any action at a given time in history had directly and indisputably a clear and immediate effect . . . .
>
> Coincidentally or not, a part of the aftermath of the hearings was the almost incredible collapse of the boom for MacArthur for the Presidential nomination.[25]

Pollster Elmo Roper had a different explaination for MacArthur's rapid decline from public notice:

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[25]White, Citadel, p. 251.

> One of the interesting phenomenon of American politics is that although the American people often entertain extravagant sentiments about figures in public life, they are wary and somewhat unpredictable about transferring their emotions about a leader in one sphere of endeavor to his attempted leadership in another sphere. At times, as in the case of Generals Marshall and Eisenhower, the transference has been made. With MacArthur, the case was different. Most people admired him as a great general, but only a small segment had faith in his abilities as a civilian leader.[26]

MacArthur and the Military

On April 11, Russell Brines, Associated Press bureau chief in Tokyo, reported:

> Today, at the apparent end of a career which has included two temporary but bitter military defeats, MacArthur was relieved without a public hint of criticism for his military ability. To the old soldier, that must have been comforting.[27]

Mr. Brines observation that there was no criticism of MacArthur's military skill was essentially correct. As has been described in earlier chapters of this study, there is little doubt that Douglas MacArthur was a brilliant soldier. His combat record in World War I was impressive, and his Pacific campaign during World War II was conducted efficiently and economically despite truly limited resources. During the Korean War, MacArthur earned full credit for the successful delaying action that

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[26] Roper, You and Your Leaders, p. 153.

[27] Grand Rapids Press, April 11, 1951, p. 1.

permitted the establishing of the defensive perimeter at Pusan during the early days of the war, and the amphibious landing at Inchon that destroyed the North Korean Army in 1950 was MacArthur's plan, and his alone.

MacArthur was a good general, but he was not as infallible as his admirers in the public--and the press--sometimes seemed to believe. The Detroit Times remained editorially steadfast in the belief that, even during the darkest hours in Korea, "General MacArthur's military leadership had been superbly successful and inspiring."[28] The other newspapers in this study, however, were not entirely free of criticism of the supreme commander. Most of the critical commentary appeared in wire service stories from Korea after the intervention of the Chinese Communists.

Don Whitehead, a correspondent in Korea for the Associated Press, reported after the Chinese attack that there was "sharp criticism" from combat officers in Korea of the command arrangements in Korea. The Chinese had struck at the boundary between the Eighth Army and the Tenth Corps, which were independent units commanded from MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo. Some officers felt, Whitehead reported, that a single commander on the ground

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[28]Editorial, Detroit Times, April 1, 1951, p. 16.

in Korea should have had overall responsibility for the entire front.[29]

Another Associated Press reporter, Hal Boyle, wrote that many observers were asking why the U. S. command did not know, before launching the "end-the-war" offensive on November 24, that the assault would be against such a force that victory would be impossible.[30] MacArthur's intelligence chief, General Charles A. Willoughby, told reporters in answer to such questions that the United Nations offensive was the only way to determine the Chinese intentions. Until then, Willoughby said, the allies had hoped that the Chinese intervention was only a gesture.[31]

In the face of the disaster along the Yalu River, increased criticism of the commanding general would seem to be a natural development, whether justified or not. MacArthur apparently did not see it in that light. He reacted, first, by denying that the defeat could have been avoided. As he later testified before the Joint Senate Committee:

> My mission was to clear out all North Korea . . . . The number of troops I had was limited, and those conditions indicated the disposition of the troops I had.

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[29] Grand Rapids Press, Nov. 30, 1950, p. 24.

[30] Detroit Free Press, Nov. 30, 1950, p. 1.

[31] State Journal, Dec. 1, 1950, p. 2.

> As a matter of fact, the disposition of those troops could not have been improved upon had I known that the Chinese were going to attack.[32]

In addition, MacArthur, or at least some members of his personal staff, concluded that the press was engaged in a deliberate conspiracy to discredit him. Major General Courtney Whitney, MacArthur's military secretary and adviser, later wrote:

> . . . As the U. N. forces had to withdraw temporarily before the numerical superiority of the Red Chinese, it became more and more apparent that the real danger from the press in Korea was not from the exposure of military secrets . . . . MacArthur found himself bitterly arraigned by a few segments of the press in England, France and the United States, aided by a few sensation-seekers among the war correspondents at the front who seemed more intent upon finding a whipping boy than in aiding the defenses against the big onslaught.
>
> In cleverly worded propaganda articles attributed to anonymous sources but calculated to create the impression of the highest official authenticity, they attempted not only to blame MacArthur . . . but also to disparage the courage and fighting ability of his men.[33]

Whitney did not blame the alleged campaign of vilification entirely on the press, however. It was a carefully organized campaign of propaganda, he wrote, supported by some anonymous sources within the Pentagon itself.[34] No editorial criticism of MacArthur's military capacity

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[32] Hearings, p. 19.

[33] Whitney, MacArthur: His Rendezvous With Destiny, pp. 445-46.

[34] Ibid., p. 454.

during the Korean war could be found in the newspapers examined for this study.

Another aspect of the military problem concerned the relationship between MacArthur and his military superiors, the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There was little comment on this matter in news or editorial columns, but some information was available and could, perhaps, have contributed to a better understanding of the controversy. As was discussed in chapter i, MacArthur had been a general officer long before his superiors in 1951 had reached high rank. Each of the newspapers in this study made that point clear in background stories or serialized biographies of MacArthur. In addition, MacArthur's personal staff had been with him for a long time, most of them since World War II, and they were intensely loyal. Dean Acheson reported a conversation between General George Marshall and MacArthur during World War II in which the latter began a sentence, "My staff tells me. . . ." General Marshall reportedly interrupted MacArthur and said, "General, you don't have a staff, you have a court."[35]

It may have been that the protection of an uncritical and admiring staff of advisers, in combination with long years of supreme command, led MacArthur to assume that the Joint Chiefs of Staff supported his position

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[35]Acheson, Present at the Creation, p. 424.

rather than that of the President. Whatever the reason, MacArthur implied in his speech to the Congress on April 19, that the Joints Chiefs had, at one time, supported his recommendations to extend the war against China.[36] This assertion was the lead for many newspaper stories about the MacArthur speech. In the Grand Rapids Press, a banner headline asked, "Did JCS Once Support Mac View or Not?"[37]

The question was answered by General Omar Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in his testimony before the Joint Senate Committee:

> . . . We have recommended against enlarging the war. The course of action often described as a "limited war" with Red China would increase the risk we are taking by engaging too much of our power in an area that is not the critical strategic prize.
>
> Red China is not the powerful nation seeking to dominate the world. Frankly, in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this strategy would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy.[38]

Bradley's phrase divorced MacArthur from the military establishment and, for all practical purposes, marked the end of the MacArthur controversy.

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[36] New York Times, April 20, 1951, p. 4.

[37] Grand Rapids Press, April 20, 1951, p. 1.

[38] Hearings, pp. 730-32.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Author William S. White has called the MacArthur controversy "perhaps the gravest and most emotional Constitutional crisis that the United States had known since the Great Depression":

> This is of course strong language [White wrote]. It rests not on the authority of this writer but on his conversations at the time with some of the most responsible and ordinarily imperturbably men in the Government of the United States in both the Legislative and Executive Branches.[1]

One week after the dismissal of MacArthur, Detroit News editorial columnist W. K. Kelsey reviewed the events of the seven days just past. Noting the extreme reactions from some public officials and prominent citizens he concluded that, in comparison, his own profession had not performed badly:

> The press has pretty well kept its head. The great independent newspapers, untied to a party, have largely supported the Administration, or not willing to go so far, have pleaded for calm consideration of the evidence presented or still to come.[2]

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[1] White, Citadel, pp. 241-42.

[2] Detroit News, April 18, 1951, p. 32.

Richard Rovere and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., writing some time later, reached a similar conclusion:

> . . . We know how adroit the American press has become in exaggerating, when exaggeration suits its purpose, the volume and extent of such political feeling as exists at any given moment. In this instance, however, the press was far less active than usual in its efforts to work up the public. In the history of the Truman administration there had been at least a dozen presidential acts that had been far more sternly condemned than the dismissal of General MacArthur.[3]

In evaluating the performance of the six Michigan daily newspapers in this study, it should be kept in mind that a newspaper's performance can be measured both in terms of its role as a channel of news information and its role as commentator on and interpreter of issues and events. It should also be remembered that the newspapers examined were not the only sources of information available to the public in regard to the MacArthur dismissal, and also that the newspapers and other media were operating in an atmosphere of extreme emotionalism. With these limitations in mind, it is possible to draw some general conclusions about the performance of some representative Michigan daily newspapers in reporting and analyzing the issues of the MacArthur controversy:

1. Douglas MacArthur was not just another army general. By 1951, he had become an institution and represented an older tradition--perhaps an outdated tradition--

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[3]Rovere and Schlesinger, The MacArthur Controversy, p. 6.

of American patriotism. To many people he represented all that America once was and still ought to be. As such a figure, he was handled delicately by both Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman; he was given more autonomy and permitted more liberties by his military superiors than they would have permitted any other officer; and, in the opinion of the author, he was far less often criticized by the press than his performance warranted.

2. The events leading to MacArthur's dismissal were, for the most part, adequately reported by all of the newspapers examined. This was largely due to wire service accounts, the best of these by Associated Press correspondents James Marlow, DeWitt MacKenzie, and John M. Hightower. The clearest and most complete account of the events of April eleventh and twelfth appeared in the Detroit News. In particular, the report from Washington by News reporter Martin S. Hayden provided an excellent account of developments leading to the President's decision to dismiss the general. The morning Detroit Free Press was at an obvious disadvantage in covering the dismissal story as it broke in the early morning hours. Even so, Free Press stories on April 12, failed to add much form to the hasty stories of the day before. Those readers who relied entirely on Free Press coverage of the first two days of the story would have been more confused than many of their fellow citizens.

3. The Detroit Times was unique among the newspapers examined in this study, as the single example of an apparently vanishing philosophy of American journalism. Among the newspapers studied, the Lansing State Journal was closest in its editorial position to the Detroit Times, but the style of the two publications was vastly different. A reader of the Hearst-owned newspaper would have been restricted to virtually a single viewpoint. The Times all but ignored administration policy statements and arguments by Truman's supporters in the news columns, and supported without reservation MacArthur's recommendations, relying heavily on the editorial tools of ridicule, accusation and patriotic rhetoric. There could be little doubt, at least, that the Detroit Times was willing to take a stand on the issues. The newspaper consistently favored the "pro-MacArthur" position in its news stories, headlines, make-up, and allocation of space.

4. The constitutional authority of the President as commander-in-chief of the armed forces was editorially asserted by all of the newspapers in this study, although the Detroit Times and--to a lesser extent--the Lansing State Journal regarded the matter as irrelevant to the controversy. It may be, as some have suggested, that newspaper editors are more reluctant to challenge the Constitution than most of the general public.[4] The Detroit News

[4] Ibid.

and the Grand Rapids Press were outspoken in their editorial support for the principle of civil control of the military. The other newspapers, however, while they did not deny the President's authority, apparently felt no responsibility to editorially emphasize that important matter. The simple truth that, for whatever reason, MacArthur had repeatedly disregarded the instructions of his commander-in-chief was, for the most part, not made adequately clear to the public by the Michigan daily newspapers examined in this study.

5. Each of the newspapers made it clear that the opinions of public officials on the MacArthur controversy were essentially partisan positions. There was little effort, however, to relate this political issue to other partisan matters, such as the struggle between the Congress and the President over executive authority in relation to the North Atlantic Treaty, or the maneuvering of potential Republican candidates for the 1952 presidential nomination. The best analysis of the domestic political aspects of the MacArthur controversy was presented by syndicated political columnist Marquis Childs, whose column appeared regularly in the Flint Journal and the Grand Rapids Press and frequently in the Detroit Free Press

6. The Flint Journal and the Grand Rapids Press, both Booth newspapers, were not identical in their editorial position. Although the difference was not great,

the Flint newspaper tended to be pro-MacArthur, while the Grand Rapids daily appeared most often to editorially favor the administration view.

7. Although his actions and policy recommendations were sometimes criticized, MacArthur was, in general, favorably presented in each of the Michigan newspapers. No personal attacks on the general's character, such as those directed at the President and his advisers, appeared in the Michigan newspapers. Although there had been some small criticism of the general after the Chinese attack in November, 1950, editorial criticism of MacArthur's military ability was virtually non-existant after his dismissal. There was never the slightest suggestion in the press that MacArthur, seventy-one years old in 1951, was hampered in any way by his age. In general, the press appeared reluctant to point out any weaknesses or possible flaws in the general's character or reputation.

Perhaps the best definition of MacArthur's character came years later, not from the press but from the man who replaced MacArthur in Korea and Japan, General Matthew B. Ridgeway. Ridgeway had served under MacArthur in Korea and other places many years before. He wrote of MacArthur:

> . . . I came to understand some traits of his complex character not generally recognized: the hunger for praise that led him on some occasions to claim or accept credit for deeds he had not performed, or to disclaim responsibility for mistakes that were clearly his own; the love of the limelight that continually

> prompted him to pose before the public as the actual commander on the spot at every landing and at the launching of every major attack . . . ; his tendency to cultivate the isolation that genius seems to require, until it became a sort of insulation . . . ; the headstrong quality (derived from his success in forcing through many brilliant plans against solid opposition) that sometimes led him to persist in a course in defiance of all seeming logic; a faith in his own judgment that created an aura of infallibility and that finally led him close to insubordination.[5]

Keyes Beech, a reporter for the Chicago Daily News, was one of the first correspondents into Korea after the North Korean invasion in 1950. He was not one of MacArthur's admirers. Beech had written critically of MacArthur's policies in Japan and would later write to Editor & Publisher that MacArthur manipulated the press for his own purposes and regarded reporters with "good-natured contempt."[6] The Daily News reporter recalled some years later a confrontation with MacArthur during the early, confusing days of the Korean War. There was fear and panic among the Koreans and Americans, Beech remembered:

> The mere presence of MacArthur changed all that. I had just escaped from Seoul one jump ahead of the Communists and when I saw MacArthur's tall, confident figure striding across the air strip I was never so glad to see anyone in my life.
>
> "General, sir," I said, shaking his hand, "I'm glad to see you here."
>
> "Glad to be here," said Douglas MacArthur.[7]

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[5]Ridgeway, The Korean War, p. 142.

[6]Editor & Publisher. April 14, 1951, p. 9.

[7]Beech, Tokyo and Points East, p. 62.

Keyes Beech was not magically transformed into one of the general's faithful apostles in the press corps. But, on that day, it was clear to that professional newsman--later a Nieman Fellow and Pulitzer-Prize winner--that Douglas MacArthur was an authentic American hero, by Daniel Boorstin's definition or almost any other.

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