

THE ENACTMENT OF LEND-LEASE

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Richard Laughlin McBane

1958



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THE ENACTMENT OF LEND-LEASE

By

Richard Laughlin McBane

A THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE HAND OF WAR

When France collapsed suddenly in the late spring of 1940 the full weight of German might rested against Great Britain. With their back against the sea and facing a hostile continent the English felt the force of what was to come when the first air raids over eastern and southeastern England were staged on June 18. Throughout the summer British industrial centers and ports were subjected to attack, and early in September London became the chief Nazi target. The London "blitz" continued into the long winter nights and reached a height on December 29 when the square mile of the City of London proper was bombed, destroying the Guildhall and eight Wren churches, along with other historic buildings.

The prospects for the approaching spring held but little hope for the British as the end of winter storms would allow German submarines to operate more effectively and would increase the rate of shipping losses which had been temporarily reduced. It was also expected that Hitler would launch his all out invasion attempt on England as soon as the weather permitted in the spring of 1941. With this in mind, not only the British but also the American public officials and private citizens came to view the first six



months of 1941 as a crucial period in the war.

The British, however, were not idle during these winter months. In December they opened a drive against the Italians in Libya, and in January they launched another in Ethiopia. British warships were also engaged off the Italian coasts in an effort to put Italy out of the war before the spring. Greece, the only other nation fighting the Axis in Europe, continued to make gains in Albania.<sup>1</sup>

Both the British and the Greeks went into this phase of the war with high morale, and the British, on the fighting fronts as well as at home seemed to prove that this was indeed their finest hour. In Libya the Australians were soon to swing in to capture Bardia singing "We're off to see the Wizard, the wonderful Wizard of Oz," while in London revellers gathered in the darkened city to greet the new year with shouts of "to hell with Hitler." In fact three associated press correspondents returning from England at the end of December, 1940, were able to say that the British didn't think it possible for them to lose the war. They were encouraged by gains against the Italians. Still, the warning that they thought it would be difficult to win without aid was carefully present.

This was just another way of saying that it was necessary to have more than fire-bomb wardens standing in the streets and chanting "we want more" at the retreating

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Trevelyan Miller, History of World War II (Philadelphia, 1945), pp. 224, 226, 229; New York Times, January 5, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 5, 1941.

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German planes, or boys in a bombed hospital ward singing "There'll always be an England." It would take both money and material, and the officials became increasingly aware that both were running short.<sup>2</sup>

A Royal Air Force officer in reviewing the war in 1940 made plain the need for material aid in a statement on December 31, when he pointed out that American production of airplanes would be an important factor in the war during the coming year. This was a view twice given strong support from the Greek front within the following ten days. From southern Albania General Papagos, commander-in-chief of the Greek forces, called for speed in American aid, claiming that 300 good airplanes in Greek hands could have won the war. Only a few days later it became known that the Greeks had been reduced to dropping stones on the Italians in lieu of bombs.<sup>3</sup>

The bare outlines of the British financial picture also began to become evident as the report on the first nine months of the fiscal year in Britain showed government revenues up £ 207,944,033, but still far short of expenditures. Even more revealing was a United States State Department report which showed a decrease in export licenses on war exports to Britain of \$16½ million in the month of November

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<sup>2</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 1, 1941; New York Times, January 5, 1941; Washington Post, January 1, 1941.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, January 1, 1941; Washington Post, January 5, 11, 1941.

1940. This represented a reduction of 96 per cent from the October figure. Private relief from the United States to Britain, including that of the British War Relief Society which collected \$4,200,000 in cash contributions in the first week of 1941, could not hope to make up what was needed.<sup>4</sup>

The American government as well as the public had had clear warning of these trends for some time, and the pressures for American governmental action had long been building up. Indeed, the United States government had been far from inactive in assisting the British in every way possible within the limits open to them under the neutrality legislation. By early June of 1940, after the British had succeeded in withdrawing their troops from Dunkirk, actions were taken on several fronts. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, interpreted the regulations of the Neutrality Act to allow American pilots to transport planes to the Canadian maritime provinces. An old law, dating from 1917, was uncovered which would allow Army and Navy aircraft to be traded back to the manufacturer for resale to the Allies. The most important action was the supply of Britain with surplus World War I equipment in order to make good the Dunkirk losses.

Early in September another agreement was concluded which was essential to survival of the British, and which clearly indicated America's intention to give them aid against Hitler. By this agreement, closed after difficult

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<sup>4</sup>New York Times, January 5, 8, 1941.



negotiations, the United States exchanged fifty over-age destroyers with Britain for leases on bases in the Western Hemisphere. Roosevelt announced the trade on September 3, 1940 after having informal assurances that Wendell Willkie, his opponent for the presidency, would not make it an issue in the campaign. The President further demonstrated publicly the fact that assistance would be an integral part of the national defense under his continued administration in the speech he delivered at Boston on October 30.<sup>5</sup>

But these actions, while assisting the British, were not designed to solve their problems of money and transportation, and immediately after the election had returned Franklin Roosevelt as the first third term president the administration began to consider other methods. On November 7 Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau arranged a White House luncheon with the President and Arthur Purvis of the British Purchasing Commission. Purvis outlined the needs of the British, particularly in regard to airplanes and shipping. As these talks were closing Roosevelt voiced the idea of building cargo ships and leasing them to Britain. Nothing immediate seemed to come from the lease idea, but immediate action did

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<sup>5</sup>Forrest Davis and Ernest K. Lindley, How War Came, An American White Paper; From the Fall of France to Pearl Harbor (New York, 1942), pp. 104-105; Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, 1948), I, 775; William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Undeclared War 1940-1941 (New York, 1953), p. 189; Edgar Eugene Robinson, The Roosevelt Leadership 1933-1945 (New York, 1955), p. 267; Dexter Perkins, The New Age of Franklin Roosevelt 1932-45 (Chicago, 1957), p. 114.

follow, as the President announced that henceforth production of airplanes and other weapons would be divided with the British on a fifty-fifty basis.<sup>6</sup>

On November 9, however, it was still clear that the administration did not realize the plight of Britain financially when Roosevelt said at a cabinet meeting that she still had \$2.5 billion in credits and property which could be used. Not all of this could be actually realized, though, and large parts of it were already committed, so that the real sum was a great deal smaller. The President did look toward the future, however, and suggested leasing ships again, along with other properties.

It was only a few days until the imminence of a complete British financial breakdown was made clear. Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador, had returned to England during the Presidential campaign, and he arrived again in the United States on November 23. Without consulting American officials he announced on leaving his plane that Britain would need financial help in the near future and that Sir Frederick Phillips of the British Treasury would soon arrive to confer with American officials. Lothian himself conferred with Hull on November 25 over credits and the long range need for ships.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Davis and Lindley, p. 114; Hull, I, 870; Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, pp. 214-215, 217.

<sup>7</sup>Hull, I, 871-872; Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes (New York, 1954), III, 367; Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, pp. 225-227.



The United States government was now squarely faced with new problems in aiding Great Britain, as British orders had almost ceased, and their need for war materials was becoming more and more acute. An official silence settled over the administration, as Roosevelt, having mentioned the possibility of leasing once more to Morgenthau on December 1, went to sea on December 3 to take a look at the new Caribbean bases. Sailing with Harry Hopkins on the cruiser Tuscaloosa, his rumination over means of British aid was given a boost when he received a December 8 letter from Winston Churchill. This nineteen paragraph letter included two alternatives on the aid question. The first of the Churchill proposals was a repeal of the Neutrality Act so that American ships could carry cargoes to Britain. The second proposal, and the one which must have struck a familiar cord, was the "gift, loan, or supply" of American warships, along with the extension of other United States sea commitments.<sup>8</sup>

While Roosevelt was considering means of aid on the Tuscaloosa, the cabinet was conferring in Washington and keeping in touch with the President by cable. The lease idea seemed to take hold in Roosevelt's mind and appeared to be the best method, while in the United States the cabinet encouraged the giving of speeches to prepare the public for a new departure in British aid.

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<sup>8</sup>Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, pp. 227-228; Basil Rauch, Roosevelt, From Munich to Pearl Harbor (New York, 1950), pp. 290-292.

The leasing solution was by no means a new one, as the several remarks by Roosevelt illustrated, and there are even some grounds for believing that the idea had roots farther back than the summer and fall of 1940. When Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the first world war he proposed trading destroyers for battleships. At about the same time he discovered an old law which would have permitted him to lease guns to arm private merchant ships. In 1940 several sources contributed to the idea, as Secretary of War Henry Stimson found an old 1892 statute that permitted the leasing of army property, and treasury department lawyers uncovered the same law.<sup>9</sup>

Whether it was to be leasing, a new idea to the public, or some other means, there was little question of public support for aid to Britain. William Allen White, then chairman of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, editorialized in the Emporia Weekly Gazette in the middle of December that, "it is our cause and by our industrial organization we can help it . . . ." At the beginning of that month he had republished an editorial from the Providence Evening Bulletin, that pointed out how British opposition to

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<sup>9</sup>James M. Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York, 1956), p. 63; Richard N. Current, Secretary Stimson, A Study In Statecraft (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1954), p. 149; Jonathan Daniels, The End of Innocence (New York, 1954), pp. 267-268; Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Lend-Lease, Weapon for Victory (New York, 1944), pp. 62-63; Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, pp. 234-235.

totalitarianism was tied to the vital national interests of the United States. A Gallup poll at the end of the year showed 85 per cent of those questioned thought American aid was essential to British victory, and 68 per cent felt that the continued safety of the United States depended upon English victory. As far back as the time of Munich, 55 per cent in such a poll had favored aiding England in case of a war. Now, with the hand of war resting far from lightly on the British, the United States both publicly and privately seemed set on relieving the pressure.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Emporia Weekly Gazette, December 5, 19, 1940; New York Times, January 3, 1941; George Gallup, "Public Opinion, 1941," Current History and Forum, January 23, 1941, p. 13.

## CHAPTER II

### A WORLD SAFE FOR AGGRESSION

Winston Churchill had ample cause for suggesting repeal of the Neutrality Act in his December 8, 1940, letter to President Roosevelt, for that Act, and its predecessors dating back to 1935, had circumscribed the actions of the administration, and were still the major obstacle in the way of direct aid to Great Britain. This law as amended in 1939, permitted the purchase of war materials by belligerents only on a cash and carry basis, while carefully keeping the United States government and American individuals out of "danger" by setting up war zones, and limiting the activities of the American merchant marine. Another separate law forbade the extension of credit to countries which had defaulted on World War I debts. This, with the neutrality law, was a stronghold and a rallying point for isolationists and the administration had found that out-right attack was both futile and unwise. It was partly for this reason that Roosevelt and the cabinet were searching for new methods of aid in the closing weeks of 1940.

American neutrality legislation had its beginning in 1935, and was the child of the Senate's Nye Committee, a

special body originally charged with the investigation of the manufacture and sale of arms and munitions in World War I. Once underway this committee was ruthless in condemning bankers and munitions makers as responsible for American entrance into the first world war. As the committee seemed to be getting somewhat out of hand, Secretary of State Hull suggested to Roosevelt that he call it in and try to limit its investigation so that it would not adversely affect foreign affairs. Roosevelt did call in the committee, but unfortunately Hull was not present, and the committee seems to have understood the President's discussion of the causes of war to be an invitation to devise neutrality legislation.<sup>1</sup>

The clearly approaching conflict between Italy and Ethiopia served as an added incentive toward neutrality and the committee quickly jumped into the breach. While Roosevelt and Hull would have been pleased with a law permitting them to embargo the aggressor, the trend was not in that direction. As a result Hull tried to suppress the neutrality sentiment, particularly that of Senators Gerald P. Nye and Bennett Clark, but he was eventually faced with the very policy which he wanted most to avoid. Together with the President he attempted to persuade Senator Key Pittman, then Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, to report the

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<sup>1</sup>Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, 1948), I, 398, 405; John T. Flynn, The Roosevelt Myth (New York, 1956), p. 169.



bill unfavorably, but they were unsuccessful. This failure was also partly due to an increasing public opinion in the support of neutrality. This trend was such that William Allen White thought a Congressional enactment would help to keep the United States out of war. As a result some fifteen bills were introduced in Congress in the summer of 1935, including a State Department version produced at the last minute in an attempt to save something of the President's maneuverability in foreign affairs. It was, however, too late, and by August 31, the United States had its first neutrality act.<sup>2</sup>

This bill had not passed without some of the strong divisions of opinion which characterized the entire course of the legislation. Senator Tom Connally, not one to view anything complacently, lashed out at the isolationists, labelling Bennett Clark of Missouri and Burton Wheeler of Montana as biased, and Nye of North Dakota and Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, as acting on evidence which would fail to convince a justice of the peace from their respective states. He insisted that the bill was not neutrality, but one which proclaimed the United States would not fight under any condition. He might not have been far wrong as one of the isolationist views was that the purpose of the law was

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<sup>2</sup>Selected Letters of William Allen White 1899-1943, ed. Walter Johnson (New York, 1947), p. 355; Donald F. Drummond, The Passing of American Neutrality 1937-1940 (Ann Arbor, 1955), p. 44; Allan Nevins, America In World Affairs (New York, 1942), pp. 87-88; Charles Callan Tansill, Back Door To War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy 1933-1941 (Chicago, 1952), p. 220.

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to insulate the country against all foreign wars.

The 1935 Act was characterized mainly by a mandatory embargo on arms, ammunition, and other war materials which amounted to little in addition to lethal weapons. The bill also established a munitions control board to regulate the export of these materials. Among the blessings of the bill was the fact that it was designed to last only six months. This bill was a significant departure from historic policy, and waived some of the neutral rights which the United States had previously defended. Under these conditions the act was signed by Roosevelt, although he criticized the inflexible nature of the embargo, and thought that these provisions could even drag the United States into war rather than keep it out.<sup>3</sup>

With its six month time limit the 1935 Act was due to lapse early in 1936. Although the administration had hoped to obtain revision of the act in the direction of larger Executive discretion, the tide was running in the opposite direction. The failure of sanctions imposed by the League of Nations against Italy apparently encouraged the isolationist viewpoint. Pressure was also applied by an Italian-American group to defeat any serious changes in

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<sup>3</sup>Edwin Borchard and William Potter Lage, Neutrality for the United States (New Haven, 1940), pp. 315-316; Tom Connally, My Name Is Tom Connally (New York, 1954), pp. 214, 220; Nevins, p. 91; Harold Bartlett Whiteman, Jr., Neutrality, 1941 (New Haven, 1941), p. 23; The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt, ed. Samuel I. Roseman (New York, 1941), VIII, xxxii; William T. Stone, "Will Neutrality Keep U. S. Out of War?", Foreign Policy Reports, October 1, 1939, pp. 166-167.

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the law, and coupled with a fear of rash action by Roosevelt in foreign affairs, this was enough to produce an even more restrictive law.

The arms embargo was made tighter by substituting shall for may in its wording, and in addition it prohibited loans and credits to belligerent countries, and even provided against the purchase or sale of bonds, securities and other obligations of such countries in the United States. American vessels were also prohibited from carrying embargoed items. Again, however, this was a temporary act and would be in effect for only 15 months.<sup>4</sup>

This 15 month period ended on May 1, 1937, but new legislation was introduced in both houses long before that date. As usual the administration wanted more discretionary power, and the fight over the bill was one of sharp division. The bill which finally passed, under Senator Pittman's name, had two new provisions. It extended the scope of materials listed as contraband and placed the list under Presidential discretion. It also provided that belligerents purchasing raw materials must pay in cash and must transport the materials in their own ships. The act was approved on March 3, 1937, as permanent legislation, to take effect on May 1, and the clause regarding purchase of materials by belligerents, known as "cash and carry" was to have a life of two years.

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<sup>4</sup>Dexter Perkins, The New Age of Franklin Roosevelt 1932-45 (Chicago, 1957), p. 100; Hull, I, 461; Drummond, p. 45; Tansill, p. 247; Whiteman, p. 23; Borchard and Lage, p. 327.

While the President did have discretion under this act as to the use of "cash and carry" and also as to the existence of "a state of war", the legislation marked a high point of isolationist strength for this was the most complete program enacted, and also was to be permanent unless changed by Congress itself.<sup>5</sup>

The world situation continued to deteriorate throughout the following two years, and the Neutrality Act had imposed narrow limits on the conduct of affairs by Roosevelt and Hull. Thus, as the date for the expiration of the "cash and carry" provisions approached in 1939, the administration wished an extension of cash and carry and an arms embargo repeal. The stage was set for the biggest fight yet on the neutrality and isolation of the United States.

In addressing the Congress on January 4, 1939, Roosevelt hinted at the desirability of repealing the arms embargo, if nothing else, as he warned that the neutrality laws "may operate unevenly and unfairly - may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to the victim." He continued to make statements through out the spring even remarking at a press conference that such legislation had not contributed to the cause of peace. Together with Secretary Hull he again worked actively toward revision, and Pittman in the Senate, and Sol Bloom, chairman of the Foreign Affairs

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<sup>5</sup> Sol Bloom, The Autobiography of Sol Bloom (New York, 1948), p. 231; Borchard and Lage, pp. 337-338; Connally, p. 223; Drummond, p. 46; Whiteman, p. 25.

Committee in the House, both introduced bills.<sup>6</sup>

Pittman's bill did not go as far as Hull would have liked, but did include a renewal of cash and carry which included arms, ammunition, and implements of war. The Bloom resolution, also included the same type of provision. During the period of May, June and July the President and Secretary Hull based their activities in foreign affairs on the assumption that an arms embargo repeal would go through and that cash and carry including munitions, would be reinstated. They had hoped to use these provisions as influences toward peace in Europe. They were disappointed, however, as a 159 to 157 vote in the House on June 30 amended Bloom's bill in what he himself termed "a bitter defeat", and what Hull called "a real tragedy." The amendment, offered by John M. Vorys of Ohio, removed cash and carry from the bill.

Pittman fared no better in the Senate, for after assuring the administration that the desired bill would be favorably reported from his committee, it voted by 12 to 11 to defer any action on peace and neutrality legislation until the next session of Congress in January 1940.<sup>7</sup>

The administration felt these defeats profoundly. The day after the Vorys amendment passed in the House the

<sup>6</sup>Public Papers, VIII, 3-4, 155; Hull, pp. 613; Charles A. Beard, American Foreign Policy in the Making 1932-1940: A Study in Responsibilities (New Haven, 1946), p. 226

<sup>7</sup>Beard, p. 226; William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation 1937-1940 (New York, 1952), pp. 136-137; Bloom, p. 235; Hull, I, 646; Perkins, pp. 106-107.

President wrote a brief note to the Attorney General inquiring how far he might go in ignoring neutrality legislation even though he had signed it. He followed this by a personal appeal to Senator Pat Harrison on July 6, and after the vote of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he sent a formal message to Congress stating that he felt action was "highly advisable." This July 14 message included a statement by Hull urging action without "unnecessary or undue delay."

As a final attempt a conference was held on July 18 at the White House with Roosevelt, Hull, and the Congressional leaders. Both Roosevelt and Hull painted the gloomy hues of the deepening crisis in Europe, and outlined the possibilities of war before the end of the summer. Senator Borah, the outstanding isolationist, spoke for the opposition, and clearly implied that from his private sources in Europe he had better information than the Department of State. Vice-President Garner finally announced that the administration did not have the votes, and the Republicans agreed to assume the responsibility. The President and Hull issued the statement that failure to take action "would weaken the leadership of the United States in exercising its potent influence in the cuase of preserving peace among other nations in the event of a new crisis in Europe between now and next January." The subject was closed - temporarily.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>U. S. Department of State, Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy 1931-1941 (Washington, 1943), p. 67; Public Papers, VIII, 381, 387; F.D.R. His Personal Letters 1928-1945, ed. Elliott Roosevelt (New York, 1950), II, 899, 902; Perkins, p. 107.



This temporary period ended abruptly with the German invasion of Poland and the beginning of European War in September 1939. Roosevelt issued a call for a special session of Congress, and addressed that session on September 21. At that time he stated that he regretted both the passage of and his signature of the Neutrality Act, and he requested a change of the embargo provisions because they were dangerous to "American neutrality, American security and, above all, American peace."<sup>9</sup>

The administration had been preparing Congress for such a message. Two weeks before Stephen Early had reported to the President that 60 Senators would favor cash and carry with 25 opposed. Senator Arthur Vandenberg, writing on the arms embargo, recorded on September 15 that "The story of 1917-18 is already repeating itself. Pressure and propaganda are at work to drive us into the new World War." On the following day Harold L. Ickes, recorded in his diary that Senator Borah of Idaho was to speak on the radio against Neutrality repeal and the administration was seeking a non-administration voice to reply. Frank Knox, later Roosevelt's Secretary of the Navy, filled this job. Borah, with arguments furnished by professors Edwin Borchard of Yale and Thomas Healy of Georgetown, led the isolationist fight. He was ably assisted by Senators Vandenberg, Bennett Clark of Missouri, Hiram Johnson of California, and Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Public Papers, VIII, 516.

<sup>10</sup>F. D. R. Letters, II, 918; The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg, ed. Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr. (Boston, 1952), pp. 2-3; Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes (New York, 1954), III, 7-8, 10; Connally, p. 229; Tansill, pp. 563-564.

Senators Alben Barkley, the majority leader, Minton of Indiana, and James Byrnes of South Carolina were strongest in the cause of the administration, and as the fight progressed in the Senate, outside influences also were felt on the side of amendment or repeal. Al Smith, temporarily forgetting old animosities, spoke for neutrality amendment over the radio, as an antidote to Father Coughlin. Henry Stimson, former Secretary of State, and later to be Secretary of War for Roosevelt, testified at hearings in favor of the bill. William Allen White, who had favored neutrality in 1935 changed to administration support, and was a moving spirit in a non-partisan committee fighting for repeal of the arms embargo. He devoted three or four weeks to the cash and carry bill, as it was called, and received letters of thanks from both Roosevelt and Hull.

The fight closed in the Senate on October 27 when the administration bill passed by 63 to 30. Meanwhile, the House had also been considering the same legislation. A revolt against the bill flared in the House about the middle of October, but Garner was able to report at a cabinet meeting on October 27, that he expected the House to approve it eventually by a margin of 20 to 40 votes. Finally the House, too, passed the bill allowing cash and carry sale of arms early in November by a vote of 243 to 172. Roosevelt made it law by his signature on November 4.<sup>11</sup>

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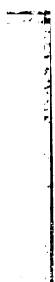
<sup>11</sup>Connally, p. 229; F.D.R. Letters, II, 924; Ickes, pp. 28, 43, 51, 57; Richard N. Current, Secretary Stimson, A Study in Statecraft (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1954), p. 152; White Letters, pp. 399-400; Drummond, p. 109; Hull, I, 696-697; Beard, p. 261.

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The administration was happy to receive the freedom of the "cash and carry" provision, and cash payment was not then considered to present a particular difficulty for aid to the democracies, especially since the Johnson Act, the law designed to prevent extension of credits to countries which had defaulted on World War I debts, could be interpreted not to apply to government loans. The fact remains, however, that the isolationist strength and sentiment were such that they hamstrung administration foreign policy to a large extent from 1935 until after the European War began. Although this might be ascribed to several reasons, it was probably at least partly due to a conservative attitude on the part of the administration on foreign affairs which allowed the Congress, especially the Senate, to seize the initiative. The continued efforts of the administration to win back the initiative were not successful until the situation had seriously deteriorated.

The later administration attitude was represented by Roosevelt who felt that repeal of the neutrality laws would strengthen the weaker nations in Europe and help deter war. Disregarding the earlier administration failure to lead there is, therefore, justification for the opinion that the initial congressional refusal of amendment in 1939 was tantamount to destroying a weapon for peace. In effect, the neutrality laws were designed to prevent the type of involvement which faced the United States in 1917-1918, and the reflections of Senator Vandenberg show clearly that the isolationists had not grasped the changes which had affected the world



since then. The country, under this leadership, was buying peace by refusing responsibility.

This recent history of isolation and administration defeat on foreign affairs in Congress faced Roosevelt in his late 1940 search for methods of aid to Great Britain. The isolationist element was still strong and exceptionally vocal. According to some authorities, apparently by virtue of the events of 1935-1939, they had already made the world safe for aggression. They had in 1940 brought democracy to its most severe trial.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Public Papers, VIII, xxxiv-xxxv; Langer and Gleason, Challenge, pp. 147, 232; Whiteman, p. 23; Harold B. Hinto, Cordell Hull: A Biography (New York, 1942), p. 292.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

#### I. A Length of Garden Hose

President Roosevelt returned from the Tuscaloosa cruise on December 14, 1940. He was determined upon the lease-lend idea, although the exact methods and form were still unsettled. He seemed to be convinced that by this general method the aid he wished to extend to Great Britain could be effective, and the isolationist element could be circumvented.

As Roosevelt's trip was drawing to a close the British need was underlined once more to the American public on December 11 in a speech read at Baltimore for Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador. He graphically pointed out that United States security depended upon British control of the Atlantic, and that responsibility for the action to be taken was now brought clearly down "to every citizen and every nation." On the following day Lothian died.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Roosevelt kept silent on the lease idea and maintained that silence until after his return to Washington. Apparently he was perfecting the idea in his

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<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History, Bantam Enlarged Edition (New York, 1950), I, 275; Marquess of Lothian, "Britain and America," Vital Speeches, January 1, 1941, pp. 165-167.

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mind. On December 17, he was ready for the unveiling. At a White House luncheon that day Secretary Morgenthau and several British guests were present. Toward the end of the meal Roosevelt turned to them and explained that he had been thinking very hard about what to do for England. He stressed the idea that he felt the thing to do was to get away from the dollar sign and the loan idea. He finished the observation with, "We will give you the guns and ships you need, provided that when the war is over you will return to us in kind the guns and ships we have loaned to you."<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after the luncheon the President held a press conference and fulfilled the expectations which had been generated by his return to the capital. Seizing on the most graphic of terms he presented the lend-lease idea for the first time publicly in a manner calculated to capture the imagination of the thousands of people who would not have been interested in the technicalities of British aid.

He first explained that they planned either to lease or sell materials to Great Britain, and came back to the dollar sign he had mentioned at luncheon. "Now," he said, "what I am trying to do is to eliminate the dollar sign. That is something brand new in the thoughts of practically everybody in this room, I think - get rid of the silly, foolish old dollar sign." Then he went on to give the analogy which served to illustrate his idea in the simplest terms.

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<sup>2</sup>William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Undeclared War 1940-1941 (New York, 1953), p. 238; Henry Morgenthau, Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries", Part IV, Colliers, October 18, 1947, pp. 72, 74.

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"Suppose my neighbor's home catches fire," he explained, "and I have a length of garden hose four or five hundred feet away. If he can take my garden hose and connect it up with his hydrant, I may help him to put out his fire." In a few words, using the garden hose as the example, he explained the idea of lend-lease. While other factors gained prominence in newspaper reports the garden hose may have assured the eventual success of the bill.<sup>3</sup>

While Roosevelt used the analogy to the best possible advantage and gained with it publicity which would have been impossible for any one less than the President, there is some reason to believe that the idea was not his. In June of 1940 a column edited by William Allen White included an article by Rupert Hughes in which he wrote; "If your neighbor's house were on fire and a strong wind carrying the flames toward your own home, would you think it wise to join the bucket line and help pass water forward to the firemen desperately attacking the blaze? Would you perhaps go so far as to pass a ladder to those who were willing to climb? Would you hand an ax to a scorched hero?" The similarity is unmistakable.<sup>4</sup>

But while the garden hose analogy struck the first

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<sup>3</sup>Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, p. 240; The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt, ed. Samuel I. Rosenman (New York, 1941), IX, 607; New York Times, December 18, 1940.

<sup>4</sup>Rupert Hughes, "The Allies are Ourselves," Defense For America, ed. William Allen White (New York, 1940), p. 63.

blow, the bill itself was still undrafted, the ideas were still hazy, and the British need was as acute as ever.

Although Roosevelt was again to underline the British need by quoting figures on shipping losses at a cabinet meeting on December 21, the next public move toward eventual British aid did not occur until Sunday, December 29. The President then took to the public, in a radio fireside chat, an explanation of the seriousness of the world situation, and a strong statement which clearly indicated that British aid would be integrated with the American defense program.

Warning the American people that the nation had never before faced such danger, the President went on to explain that the British were conducting a war against the unholy alliance of the Axis powers. "Our own future security," he said, "is greatly dependent on the outcome of that fight. Our ability to 'keep out of war' is going to be affected by that outcome." He was careful, however, to point out that British aid offered only the least risk of American involvement in the war, but he was firm on the idea of aid, stating finally that; "We must be the great arsenal of democracy. For us this is an emergency as serious as war itself."<sup>5</sup>

The response to the speech was immediate and heartening. In so far as it was a move to unify public opinion behind an aggressive aid to England policy it was highly successful.

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<sup>5</sup>Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes (New York, 1954), III, 394; Time, January 6, 1941, pp. 9-10; New York Times, December 30, 1940.

Stephen Early, the White House secretary, announced that messages were running 100 to 1 in favor of the speech, and the response was far heavier than had been anticipated. New Deal critic Frank Kent of the Baltimore Sun wrote that the message voiced what the people had in their hearts, while in the South, where sentiment for aid was strongest, the Atlanta Constitution said editorially that it had reawakened the spirit of America. The German American Congress for Democracy, an organization to mobilize the loyalty of Americans of German birth, endorsed the message on January 1, 1941.<sup>6</sup>

By the following week the New York Times had completed a survey of the opinion in centers around the country. The reports of its correspondents were far from uniform, but were generally favorable. Reports from Birmingham and Dallas in the South reflected strong agreement, as did those from Philadelphia and Cleveland. In Ohio only one leading newspaper withheld at least qualified approval. Elsewhere, in Boston, Chicago, and Omaha, the reaction seemed to be carefully conservative. San Francisco was reported to have a spirit of fatalism, and the same effect seemed to be evident in the Los Angeles Times. The report from St. Paul, however, was that the speech had regained for Roosevelt a moral leadership over the isolationists. On the whole he had cause to feel, in the concluding words of the Fireside Chat, that "our common

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<sup>6</sup>Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, p. 249; Time, January 13, 1941, p. 9; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 3, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, January 1, 1941; New York Times, January 2, February 27, 1941.

cause will greatly succeed."<sup>7</sup>

## II. The Forces Take The Field

In the days while the American people were adjusting to the wide impact of becoming the "arsenal of democracy" the Congressional forces, and also the public pressure groups, were aligning themselves for the battle to decide whether or not the United States would really assume the role marked out for it by President Roosevelt.

Senator Burton K. Wheeler, a Democrat from Montana who had disagreed with the President on other occasions, and who was a strong isolationist, took the lead in opposing the President's policy. Wheeler has been described as a very suspicious man, whose entire career was marked by a high degree of incredulity. Certainly no one surpassed him in incredulity on the proposition of lend-lease.<sup>8</sup>

He immediately counter-attacked on the aid issue by replying to Roosevelt's fireside speech with a radio talk on December 31. Warning in part that, "if we lend or lease war materials today, we will lend or lease American boys tomorrow," he presented an eight point program for peace in Europe.<sup>9</sup>

This New Year's Eve speech, which was carried by about only one tenth as many radio stations as Roosevelt's speech, also produced an immediate response for Wheeler. On January 1, 1941, he was able to report that he had received over 1,000

<sup>7</sup>New York Times, December 30, 1940, January 5, 1941.

<sup>8</sup>New York Times, February 9, 1941.

<sup>9</sup>Burton K. Wheeler, "America's Present Emergency," Vital Speeches, January 15, 1941, p. 204

telegrams and 99 per cent of them were in favor of the speech. Three days later he reported he had received twice as many telegrams and letters than he had in response to any previous speech. Although he now said the percentage of telegrams favorable to his position was down to 93 per cent, he expected the letters to be far more favorable.<sup>10</sup>

The favorable responses to Wheeler's proposal were far from including influential elements of the press and opinion forming media. He was immediately more thoroughly and directly attacked than was anyone else in the following two months. Time magazine that week characterized Wheeler as being "most exquisitely befuddled," and it was extremely kind in comparison to other commentators.

Editorially, the Los Angeles Times attacked him for failing to realize the significance of the British navy to American defense. The Washington Post, admitting that his eight point program had much to recommend it, attacked him on the issue of historical geography and dismissed the idea that Hitler would accept the plan as "wishful thinking of the most extreme sort." The Atlanta Constitution, notably more partisan, said simply that he "seems to have lost all sense of reason . . . ." The Cleveland Plain Dealer, however, surpassed them all by calling his eight point program more childish than Henry Ford's peace ship of the first World War. The coup de grace was administered editorially by William Allen White in the Emporia Gazette. "Here is

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<sup>10</sup> Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 1, 5, 1941.

just another appeasement," he wrote. "Sen. Bert Wheeler is only Chamberlain in a 10-gallon hat and chaps."<sup>11</sup>

The opposition to Wheeler's speech was equally as vocal among some of the popular newspaper columnists.

Ernest K. Lindley analysed Wheeler's problem as being mired in the past, and decided that while Bob La Follette might have been correct at the time of the first World War,

Senator Wheeler certainly was not correct in 1941.

Walter Lippman evaluating Wheeler's peace plan, found it curious that an isolationist would propose a program that would fix European boundaries.<sup>12</sup>

But the unfavorable publicity on his reply to the Fireside Chat did not affect Wheeler and he quickly moved into the position of opposition leader in the Senate and in the Congress as a whole. He met groups that espoused his point of view and generally missed no opportunity to express his views. However, he was fighting a tide that was bringing more and more of the members of Congress into the aid camp. Representative Cox of Georgia insisted in the House that Roosevelt's policy "expressed the will, the wish, and the determination of the American people." More influential members also raised their voices on the aid issue. Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire wanted more ships sold to England. Senator Lee of Oklahoma claimed that England

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<sup>11</sup>Time, January 6, 1941, p. 12; Los Angeles Times, January 6, 1941; Washington Post, January 1, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 1, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, January 4, 1941; Emporia Gazette, January 9, 1941.

<sup>12</sup>Washington Post, January 1, 2, 1941.



was the only hope of the United States to escape war.

Senator George of Georgia, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, asserted that there was less danger in aiding England than in following a negative course. But the venerable Senator Carter Glass, Democrat of Virginia, and shortly to become a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, celebrated his eighty-third birthday with the strongest statement of all. The navy, he said, should be sent "over to blast hell out of Germany."<sup>13</sup>

These friendly voices were matched by others from outside the government. Not only did editorials and newspaper columns reflect support for the yet undisclosed Roosevelt program, but individuals spoke for the principle of aid. Wendell Willkie, the 1940 Republican presidential candidate was among those who gave their support. He was promptly applauded by William Allen White in the Emporia Gazette who took an added slap at the Republican National Committee. Among his other admirers was the Cleveland Plain Dealer which characterized those who opposed the "arsenal of democracy" view as among other things, misguided pacifists, stupid isolationists, and henchmen of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Willkie was joined in his support by such influential figures as Bishop William T. Manning of New York, and Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University. In the New York Times an advertisement appeared urging letters supporting aid to be sent to Congressmen. It was signed by a long list of influential Americans, including

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<sup>13</sup>New York Times, January 1, 3, 5, 1941; Washington Post, January 1, 1941.

Dean Acheson, Herbert Agar, James B. Conant, and Robert Sherwood.<sup>14</sup>

But during this period, and for a long period preceding the administration move toward an effective aid to England policy, the most influential of the forces working in the American public were the groups formed in favor of and against American aid to the democracies. These groups seemed to proliferate particularly among those who opposed aid, but two organizations, one on each side, stood out. They were The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, and the America First Committee.

The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies was definitely at the head of the field of aid proponents. Headed by William Allen White, and commonly referred to as the White Committee, it was able to form chapters all over the country and to conduct meetings of the type held in Cleveland soon after Roosevelt's speech. On that occasion 1,800 women unanimously pledged support to the program.<sup>15</sup>

The program supported by the White Committee could be roughly broken down into five parts. All of them had to do either with aid directly or with the expansion of United States efforts, or changing restrictions in a manner which would benefit the allies. Specifically they were; first, to give the allies anything which would not weaken United States defenses; second, to increase American production so more could be given; third, to amend interfering legislation;

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<sup>14</sup>New York Times, January 1, 5, 6, 1941; Emporia Gazette, January 9, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 4, 1941.

<sup>15</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 4, 1941.

fourth, to make it easier for Americans to volunteer in allied forces; and fifth, to make sure materiel did not reach the Axis.<sup>16</sup>

However, just at the critical moment when the lines were being drawn for a fight over aid the White Committee ran into difficulties. Challenged to present his views on aid, William Allen White defined his position as being in favor of aid, but not to an extent that would involve war, troops, or convoys. When White's views were made public cries went up from both sides. Some members of the committee voiced strong disapproval, and a few, like General John F. O'Ryan, strongly pro-war, resigned. General Robert E. Wood and Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, of the America First Committee endorsed White's statement. Complaints promptly flowed from the rank and file of that organization, too.

On January 2, White defended and explained his views in the Emporia Gazette, and then, the same day announced his resignation as chairman of the Committee. He issued a strong statement with his resignation, warning that the "menace of appeasement is heavily financed," and urging that public sentiment be kept alert. He agreed to serve as an honorary chairman of the Committee.<sup>17</sup>

The resignation was a surprise to the country, but after the interchange which had preceded it, the newspapers

<sup>16</sup> Washington Post, January 5, 1941.

<sup>17</sup> Time, January 6, 1941, p. 11; Emporia Gazette, January 2, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 3, 1941; New York Times, January 3, 1941.

which were predisposed to oppose the aid position were quick to assume the point of view voiced by General Wood. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch noted that if the committee was too radical for White it was "too radical for the American people." The Akron Beacon Journal, more strongly isolationist, editorialized, "White's definition of his own views served the useful purpose of revealing the true aims of the 'America Second' pressure group that had been using the Kansan's name and unquestioned patriotism to allay suspicion of its motives." The Chicago Daily Tribune hailed the resignation and noted in regard to the rest of the committee that White "didn't want to throw them red meat." But a few more astute heads prevailed, and the Republican Los Angeles Times, noting his position as honorary chairman, pointed out that White was "too forthright a man to keep on with a committee with which he was fundamentally at odds. If there were disagreements, they evidently were on relatively minor questions."<sup>18</sup>

General Wood fired a parting shot a few days later when he invited White to become a member of the America First Committee, but the furor quickly died down as the committee began to map reorganization plans the day after White's resignation.<sup>19</sup>

The opposition to the Roosevelt aid policy, and to

<sup>18</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 3, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 3, 1941; Los Angeles Times, January 4, 1941; Chicago Daily Tribune, January 4, 1941.

<sup>19</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 8, 1941; New York Times, January 4, 1941.

what was generally called "all aid short of war" did not consist merely of Senator Wheeler. Equally influential Senators joined him in his attack, and they had several vocal colleagues in the House. Senator Vandenberg of Michigan, a leading isolationist, and a respected member of the upper chamber, released a peace plan of his own soon after Wheeler's radio address. The following day he explained his proposed tight restrictions on any aid to Britain. The same day Representative Woodruff, also of Michigan, attacked the "arsenal of democracy" program as a means of involving the country in war. On the closing day of the seventy-sixth Congress, Senator Rush Holt of West Virginia, a lame-duck member, echoed Woodruff's charges of war, accusing President Roosevelt of concealing his true war-like intentions.<sup>20</sup>

The Congressional leaders in opposition were also able to point to public support as easily as were those in favor of aid. Editorially, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch was clearly reluctant to accept "another great crusade for democracy," and a few days later they were ready to question whether or not agreements had been made secretly with the allies. On January 1 the Chicago Daily Tribune had accused Roosevelt of aiming at an economic dictatorship. At the same time the Akron Beacon Journal was criticising the President for intolerance of opposition to his views, and later for his deprecating remarks about money. General Hugh Johnson, in

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<sup>20</sup> New York Times, January 2, 3, 1941.

his newspaper column, was more straightforward. He was willing to label the proposed policy as "the most futile and pusillanimous ever followed by an honorable nation." Individually, Phillip La Follette, former Governor of Wisconsin, lashed at the President in a speech in Chicago on January 5, while two days before twenty-eight pickets had paraded in the rain and fog in front of a Philadelphia hotel. They were picketing a ball for Britain and her allies which was attended by 3,000.<sup>21</sup>

But just as the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies was at the head of the proponents forces, so the America First Committee, was in the first rank of opposition to aid. It was for a strong American defense in the belief that no country could attack a prepared America successfully. They were opposed to any extension of American aid beyond the cash and carry neutrality provisions finally passed in 1939, and they felt it was necessary to stay out of the European war in order to preserve democracy in America. They were strongly attacked from several quarters, and accused, as by the Atlanta Constitution of "doing exactly the thing which Hitler and all his Nazis would have them do." The Committee, as did the White Committee, lost a few prominent members as the 1941 aid battle opened.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 2, 3, 6, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 1, 6, 1941; New York Times, January 4, 6, 1941; Chicago Daily Tribune, January 1, 1941.

<sup>22</sup>Washington Post, January 5, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, January 1, 1941; Time, January 6, 1941, p. 11.

The immediate attack on the America First Committee was nothing, however, compared to what opened up shortly on another of the many anti-aid groups. Organized late in 1940, the No Foreign War Committee emerged suddenly into the lime-light just before the New Year. Under the direction of Verne Marshall, the editor of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Gazette, the Committee claimed that the White House had refused to consider peace proposals earlier brought from Germany. Almost immediately Senator Lee of Oklahoma asserted that the financial backer of the Committee, and the bearer of the supposed peace plan, was an oil merchant with a financial stake in Nazi victory. On January 2 Marshall announced that William Rhodes Davis, the committee backer, would explain his Mexican oil deals which had involved the Nazis. The situation was not clarified, however, for on January 5 Davis denied that he was a backer of either Marshall or the Committee.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, Marshall had indicated that the committee had respectable support, and that he expected Senator Holt of West Virginia to become a director. Senators Wheeler and Bennett Clark of Missouri were expected to stump for the committee.

After a temporary respite Marshall was back in the news, when on January 9, in a radio debate, he again accused the Roosevelt administration of turning down a peace plan. The next day L. M. Birkhead, director of the Friends of

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<sup>23</sup>Time, January 6, 1941, p. 11; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 1, 3, 1941; New York Times, January 3, 6, 1941.

Democracy, took Marshall up on an invitation that the Committee's financial records would be open to anyone. He was refused a chance to view them. On January 11 it was reported that O. K. Armstrong, an originator of the committee was planning to resign, and two days later Armstrong confirmed his resignation. The next day, January 14, Marshall discharged one-third of the office staff maintained by the Committee, and announced the election of ten directors.<sup>24</sup>

### III. The Four Freedoms

But while the story of the difficulties of the pressure groups that were to battle over Roosevelt's policy was unfolding, the administration itself was working toward a double goal - the State of the Union Message and the introduction of the aid-to-England bill in Congress.

After the fireside address of December 29, speculation was continual and intense over the exact form the lending idea of aid to Britain would assume. In his press conference on January 1 Roosevelt indicated that plans were proceeding along the lines he had outlined. He also indicated that he was not concerned over the British financial condition.<sup>25</sup>

This but added fuel to the fire of speculation and gradually attention was focused toward the President's address on the State of the Union to be delivered to the new congress on January 6. Those who were looking for a specific discussion of the proposed aid policy were disappointed, but

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<sup>24</sup>New York Times, January 1, 10, 11, 12, 15; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 14, 1941.

<sup>25</sup>New York Times, January 1, 1941.



Roosevelt could scarcely have given a more ringing declaration of American intentions than he delivered to the Congress and the nation.

The solemnity on the occasion of the speech was apparent throughout. A heavy guard surrounded the President on his way to the Capitol, and the precautions were not relaxed inside the building. In the House Chamber, where bare steel structuring was supporting the roof, a relatively small crowd gathered in the galleries. Crown Princess Martha of Norway entered with Mrs. Roosevelt, and in the adjoining diplomatic gallery Wilhelm de Morgenstierne, the Norwegian Minister, sat on the carpeted stairway with Mohammed Schayesteh, the Minister of Iran.<sup>26</sup>

Before an audience which showed little enthusiasm and which Mrs. Roosevelt later attacked for an apparent failure of Republicans to applaud, the President outlined strongly the sharp division between the Axis nations and Britain and her allies. Placing the United States firmly in the democratic camp, and pledging support to the nations keeping war away from the western hemisphere, he reminded his listeners that: "In times like these it is immature - and incidentally untrue - for anybody to brag that an unprepared America, single-handed, and with one hand tied behind its back, can hold off the entire world."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., January 7, 1941.

<sup>27</sup> Time, January 13, 1941, pp. 9-10; New York Times, January 7, 8, 1941.



He asked the Congress, in this speech, for the authority and funds for the contemplated aid policy, and he reminded them that under his proposal the United States would be repaid in kind, "or, at our option, in other goods of many kinds which they can produce and which we need." With these statements in the record he concluded his address with the delineation of the four freedoms - speech and expression, worship, want, and fear, everywhere in the world - the most impressive statement of aims which could have been produced at that time.<sup>28</sup>

The reception of the address was as varied as the opposition to aid in general. Senator Vandenberg, one of the most responsible among the isolationists, assessed Roosevelt's appearance and speech as a flop, and publically described it as a "Peace Through War By Proxy" speech. Taft of Ohio objected to the unlimited nature of the contemplated loan, and Senator Wheeler of Montana commented that: "It is too bad this speech was not made before the election. It was intended to frighten the American people to a point that they would surrender their liberties and establish a war-time dictatorship in this country."<sup>29</sup>

Ample opposition was also evident in the House of Representatives where comment ranged from the weak ineptness of Mrs. Frances Bolton of Ohio who complained, "I can't

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<sup>28</sup>Time, January 13, 1941, pp. 9-10; New York Times, January 7, 1941.

<sup>29</sup>New York Times, January 7, 1941; The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg, ed. Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr. (Boston, 1952), p.8.

follow his reasoning," to the strong condemnation of R. F. Rich of Pennsylvania, W. D. Barry of New York, and Hamilton Fish of New York. While Barry called the ideas extravagant and absurd, and Rich asserted that the will of the President would mean dictatorship, Fish, ranking minority member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, offered a reasoned statement on the condition of British finances, intimating that aid was not necessary in the scope proposed.<sup>30</sup>

Other Senators and Representatives rushed to the support of the President's freshly outlined program, and the majority opinion seemed to be with them. Senator Barkley said that it expressed the "overwhelming determination of the American people" while Senator George of Georgia, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called it a strong statement. Senator Austin, an outstanding Republican favoring aid, hailed it as enlisting the United States on the side of freedom. In the House the statements of Speaker Sam Rayburn and Sol Bloom, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, both key men in the administration plans, closely resembled those of their senatorial counter-parts.<sup>31</sup>

The reactions to the speech outside Congress were more uniform. In a break-down published by the Cleveland Plain Dealer only the New York Daily News and the Chicago Daily Tribune had strongly worded critical editorial comments. But while the Tribune was crying hysteria and saying the

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<sup>30</sup>New York Times, January 7, 1941.

<sup>31</sup>New York Times, January 7, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 7, 1941.

President was "in an excited frame of mind," the New York Times hailed it as a "sound and necessary policy," and papers like the Los Angeles Times and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, normally only luke-warm on aid, also praised it.<sup>32</sup>

While Alfred M. Landon, the 1936 opponent of Roosevelt, and former Governor Philip La Follette of Wisconsin, both had critical statements to make, especially La Follette who spoke for the America First Committee, the President still had the pleasure of knowing his message was strongly supported in the United States as well as being considered an inspiration and source of strength in the allied countries.<sup>33</sup>

#### IV. H. R. 1776

Meanwhile Roosevelt had put into operation the machinery that was drafting the bill to carry out his program. After the initial idea had been talked over to the President's satisfaction, he called Henry Morgenthau at the Treasury on January 2. Previously he had decided to have the bill drafted through the Treasury, and now Morgenthau put his general counsel Ed Foley to work on the proposal. Together with Oscar Cox, a Foley assistant, and a representative of the British Purchasing Commission, they talked over the requirements. By midnight that night Foley and Cox had produced a draft of

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<sup>32</sup>New York Times, January 7, 8, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 7, 1941; Los Angeles Times, January 7, 1941; Washington Post, January 7, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 7, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, January 7, 1941; Chicago Daily Tribune, January 7, 1941.

<sup>33</sup>New York Times, January 7, 8, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 7, 1941.

the bill. Consultations with the other government departments produced some changes, and on Monday, January 6, Foley and Morgenthau took the bill to the White House. Then on the advice of Congressional leaders the draft was submitted to the Legislative Counsel of Congress and with the experts from the Treasury and State Departments still another draft was worked out.<sup>34</sup>

While the drafting was in progress a few hints leaked out as to its form. A January 1 press conference by Morgenthau, before the go ahead on the bill from Roosevelt, indicated that the provisions might apply to Greece and China as well as Britain. This was, as it turned out, the most accurate of all the speculation. On January 4 Senator Barkley said that a government corporation was being proposed as a possible financing scheme, and the New York Times repeated this on January 7.

On the following day more accurate information was available as Secretaries Morgenthau and Hull held separate meetings with Speaker Rayburn and Majority Leader McCormack of the House and Senator Barkley, Majority Leader, and Senator Harrison, Finance Committee chairman, of the Senate. A final conference was held at the White House with the administration leaders, Morgenthau and Foley, Hull, Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, Jesse Jones, Secretary of Commerce, William S.

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<sup>34</sup>Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, p. 254; "Morgenthau Diaries", Colliers, p. 74; New York Times, January 7, 1941.

Knudsen, Office of Production Management, and the legislative leaders, Senators Barkley, Harrison, Connally, and George, and representatives Rayburn, Bloom, Luther Johnson, and McCormack. Roosevelt stressed the necessity of speed in enacting the bill, and on leaving the White House Barkley announced that the next day he would introduce the bill in the Senate and McCormack would do so in the House.<sup>35</sup>

While these events were transpiring another thread of the complex pattern of Roosevelt's policy also came into evidence. On January 3, while the Treasury was drafting the aid bill, Roosevelt appointed Harry Hopkins as his personal representative to London. Hopkins, described as studiously unsuave and a reformer who was sometimes intolerant and tactless, had been Secretary of Commerce and earlier the Administrator of Federal Work Relief. He was in too poor health to serve in any official capacity, but was probably closer to Roosevelt than any other individual. After a conference at the State Department Hopkins was ready to leave on the Pan American Clipper from New York on the sixth. He steadfastly refused to make any comment, and the nature of his mission was reliably supposed to be to keep Churchill informed on Roosevelt's plans, as well as to observe English conditions. On January 9 he arrived in London in the midst of an air-raid, and on the tenth he lunched with Churchill after conferences with Anthony Eden and Viscount Halifax,

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<sup>35</sup>Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, pp. 257-258; New York Times, January 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 10, 1941.

the Ambassador-Designate to the United States.<sup>36</sup>

But with the advent of January 10 the attention that might have been focused on Hopkins mission was brought suddenly back to the United States Congress. In the Senate, soon after its twelve o'clock meeting time, Senator Barkley introduced what was promptly called the lend-lease bill. He offered a brief explanation of the bill, and although a short-time later Senator McKellar spoke in favor of aid no real comments were made on the floor in regard to the bill. In the House, Majority Leader McCormack had more difficulty. After introducing the bill he requested unanimous consent to have it inserted in the Congressional Record. Joseph Martin, the Minority Leader, immediately took the opportunity to inquire over the partisan nature of the bill. After Martin had yielded, Congresswoman Rogers of Massachusetts objected to having the bill printed, but later McCormack renewed his request successfully.<sup>37</sup>

The bill, entitled "A Bill To Further Promote the Defense of the United States, and For Other Purposes," was given the historic number H. R. 1776. Immediate evaluations were that the bill was broad and the powers granted to the President very great. Brief in itself, the bill was comprised of only nine sections. After the enabling section of the

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<sup>36</sup>New York Times, January 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 4, 1941; Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, I, 1-2.

<sup>37</sup>Congressional Record, 77th Congress, 1st Session, 87, 101-102 (January 10, 1941).



bill "defense articles" and "defense information" were defined. Then "notwithstanding the provisions of any other law" the President was permitted to aid the countries whose defense was deemed vital to the defense of the United States. This article, one of the broadest in the bill, included the phrasing which gave the bill its name: "To sell, transfer, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of, to any such government, any defense article." The other sections of the bill were essentially limitations on the broad nature of the first three sections.<sup>38</sup>

Roosevelt made a public bid for Congressional support of the bill in his January 10 press conference, when he called for swift action. The support for the bill was, in fact, impressive, but it came in Congress mostly from the expected administration spokesmen. Speaker Rayburn endorsed the bill, and in the Senate Hill of Alabama and Thomas of Utah were particularly strong in support of the bill with Thomas claiming that it did not go far enough. Senator George, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to which the bill was referred, did not flatly endorse it until the following day, while Senator Austin, a Republican expected to support the bill, suggested a time limit amendment.

Outside Congress the Committee to Defend America by

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<sup>38</sup>Time, January 20, 1941, p. 15; United States Congress House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings on H. R. 1776: A Bill Further To Promote The Defense of The United States And For Other Purposes, 77th Cong. 1st sess., pp. 1-2.

Aiding the Allies issued a strong call for action on the bill. Al Smith, Winthrop W. Aldrich, chairman of the Chase National Bank, and various British sources also endorsed the bill. Probably the strongest unexpected endorsement of the bill itself came from Wendell L. Willkie. Roosevelt's Republican challenger in the 1940 election on January 12 issued a statement giving his approval to the bill with modifications. At the same time he announced his intention to fly to Britain to survey the situation. He expressed hope that the bill would be debated on its merits rather than on attempts to sabotage any aid program. By the following day he had received about 800 messages commending him for his stand. The total in opposition was around 40.<sup>39</sup>

Several newspapers and columnists also sprang to the support of the bill. The Cleveland Plain Dealer said that: "We are willing to trust President Roosevelt with this tremendous amount of power." A few days later the same paper criticized Landon for opposition to the bill, but also recommended some amendments. The Atlanta Constitution was even stronger in its support claiming that: "The Congress will stand higher in public approval the quicker it enacts the measure into law." A fair proportion of newspapers across the country, as indicated in a survey published by the New York Times had favorable editorial comments. Among the columnists Robert C. Allbright writing in the Washington

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<sup>39</sup>Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, p. 259; New York Times, January 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 11, 13, 1941; Time, January 20, 1941, p. 14.

Post pointed out that the power conferred on the President had not been directly proposed by Roosevelt at all, while Ernest K. Lindley, speaking in Cleveland, claimed that the power granted to the President was not as great as supposed. Robert Quillen of the Atlanta Constitution and Arthur Krock of the New York Times in essence agreed that while parts of the bill might be objectionable there was no use quarrelling with facts.<sup>40</sup>

Initial opposition to the bill, however, was much stronger than support. In Congress Senator Wheeler, as expected, led off the opposition, and took a slap at Willkie's endorsement on a radio broadcast on January 12. Many Democrats who usually supported the administration were also skeptical about the broad powers of the bill. Senator Hiram Johnson, the last survivor of the League of Nations fight called the bill monstrous and leading toward dictatorship. His view was also backed by Senator Clark of Missouri. Senator Bob LaFollette, Jr., of Wisconsin called it "a bill for Congress to abdicate." Senator Taft of Ohio, who was opposed to the crusading spirit of the four freedoms, advanced the idea of a \$1 billion loan. Senators Nye of North Dakota, McCarren of Nevada, Ellison D. Smith of South Carolina, Capper of Kansas, and Burton of Ohio also spoke out in opposition.

In the House Representative Maas of Minnesota announced

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<sup>40</sup> Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 11, 14, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, January 12, 13, 1941; New York Times, January 11, 15, 1941; Washington Post, January 12, 1941.

he would offer an amendment to take over the British West Indies and the Falkland Islands. Frances Bolton of Ohio implied dictatorship, while Dewey Short of Missouri, called it the "most dangerous proposal ever made by the New Deal." John M. Vorys, another Ohio Representative and a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the bill seemed a "stream-lined declaration of war." Representative Shanley of Connecticut, another committee member, criticized the bill on the grounds of international law.<sup>41</sup>

At the same time widespread opposition was also voiced outside the government. General Robert E. Wood wasted little time in requesting a hearing before the House committee for the America First Committee. He also announced his group would fight the bill "with all the energy it can exert." A Republican trinity of Alfred M. Landon, Herbert Hoover, and Thomas E. Dewey all warned against the great powers and the dangers of war which were implicit in the bill. Later even Henry Morgenthau had to admit that the mail he received on the bill was antagonistic.<sup>42</sup>

The newspaper opposition was even more widely spread. The New York Times survey which had indicated approval showed an equal amount of disapprobation across the country. Papers

<sup>41</sup>New York Times, January 11, 12, 13, 15, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 11, 12, 15, 16, 1941; Vernon Van Dyke and Edward Lane Davis, "Senator Taft and American Security," The Journal of Politics, May, 1952, p. 181.

<sup>42</sup>New York Times, January 11, 12, 15, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 11, 12, 1941; Langer and Gleason, Undeclared War, p. 271.

like the Akron Beacon Journal and the Chicago Tribune were no surprise in the camp of the opponents, and the Tribune's dictatorship charges, including the observation that "American liberties are in greater danger from forces here than anywhere else," could almost have been predicted. But the broad powers included in the bill, along with frequent references to the dangers of war, were criticized by papers normally agreeable to the idea of aid, and this opposition was found in New York, Washington, St. Louis, and Los Angeles.<sup>43</sup>

In a country which still had a very strong anti-war sentiment, despite a determination to aid Britain, and which was in many quarters sensitive to threats of a dictatorship because the no third term tradition had been broken for the first time, the broad terms of the bill came as a surprise and a threat. This produced a more wide-spread initial opposition than might otherwise would have been evident. Even so, the scope of the opposition could well have given the administration pause. The strongly favorable atmosphere which had surrounded the "Four Freedoms" only a few days before seemed to have largely disappeared.

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<sup>43</sup>New York Times, January 11, 14, 1941; Los Angeles Times, January 11, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 11, 13, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 11, 13, 1941; Washington Post, January 11, 12, 1941; Chicago Daily Tribune, January 11, 1941.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GAME'S AFOOT

#### I. The Best and Simplest Plan

As soon as the lend-lease bill was introduced in the House, Speaker Sam Rayburn referred it to the Foreign Affairs Committee. Sol Bloom, prognathous, and gnomish, with a black ribboned pince nez somewhat in the style of Disraeli, was the chairman of that committee, and by the evening of January 10 he had announced that his committee would approve the bill by the following week and that it would pass the House the week after. On the following day, after a meeting of the committee, he said that Secretary Hull would be the first witness and would be followed by Morgenthau, Stimson, and Knox.<sup>1</sup>

But Bloom and the administration faced one immediate problem before the hearings could begin. Representative May of Kentucky, a man who replied when asked that he was emphatically in favor of the bill, insisted that it should be referred not to Bloom's Committee, but to his own, The Military Affairs Committee. On January 11 May's Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 11, 12, 1941; Time, January 20, 1941, pp. 15-16; I. F. Stone, "A Time For Candor," The Nation, January 25, 1941, p. 91.

voted 15 to 4 to demand control of the measure. Bloom was confident that Rayburn would be upheld when the issue was brought to the House floor, and scheduled his hearings to begin on January 15.

On January 13 May took the floor of the House to make his motion for reassignment of the bill. He was opposed by Cox of Georgia, Majority Leader McCormack, and Luther Johnson of Texas. After Rayburn himself offered to explain his assignment of the bill the motion was defeated by a voice vote.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, one of the first serious attempts was started for a responsible revision of the bill. Kenneth F. Simpson, a newly elected representative from New York, and former chairman of the Republican Committee of New York county, introduced an amended bill that was designed to restrict lend-lease to Britain and Ireland, and to allow Congress to name any other nations to be aided. Simpson, although he made no claim that his bill represented Willkie's point of view, had read it to Willkie over the telephone and apparently had his tacit support.<sup>3</sup>

That same day also saw the first real attacks on the bill from the floor of the Congress. Senator Capper, who had previously been described as middle of the road on the aid issue came out in ringing opposition in a Senate speech.

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<sup>2</sup>New York Times, January 11, 12, 13, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 12, 14, 1941; Congressional Record, 77th Congress, 1st Session, 126-128, (January 13, 1941).

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, January 14, 1941; Time, January 20, 1941, p. 16.

In the House Hoffman of Michigan and Jenkins and Vorys of Ohio all made speeches against the bill. Hamilton Fish also made his first attack, partly in reply to a Bloom pronouncement that hearings could be concluded in three days. Fish suggested a list of witnesses to be called before the committee and concluded: "I believe the House Democrats and the House Republicans will work their will upon this bill and that they will rewrite the measure, and they will put it in such shape as to expedite aid - all possible aid - to Great Britain, but they will insist on maintaining representative and constitutional government and preserving free institutions and government in America."<sup>4</sup>

Subsequently Bloom revised his rather rash statement on three days of hearings, and adopted the point of view that his committee would never have to meet an accusation that full hearings had not been permitted. Although this may have caused some lengthening of the hearings, in the end it was a beneficial point of view which may have speeded the ultimate passage of the bill.<sup>5</sup>

But before even the hearings opened, one exchange transpired which set the tone for much of what was to come after, and unfortunately to doom Willkie's statesmanlike hope for a debate largely on the merits of the bill. In a Sunday night radio debate Senator Wheeler, in a brilliant

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<sup>4</sup>Cong. Record, 77th Cong., 1st Sess., 129-131, 135-136, 143 (January 13, 1941); New York Times, January 12, 1941.

<sup>5</sup>Sol Bloom, The Autobiography of Sol Bloom (New York, 1948), pp. 241-242.



flash of calumny, branded the lend-lease bill as the "New Deal triple A foreign policy - plow under every fourth American boy."

The next afternoon President Roosevelt had a chance to reply, and he did so with a verbal explosion. Asked to comment on the expression "blank check powers" at his press conference, he did so and then authorizing direct quotation, he continued: "That is not an answer to those, at all, who talk about plowing under every fourth American child, which I regard as the most untruthful, as the most dastardly, unpatriotic thing that has ever been said. Quote me on that.

"That really is the rottenest thing that has been said in public life in my generation."<sup>6</sup>

Wheeler made a more calm and measured reply, but one which nonetheless also accused Roosevelt, in his turn, of being all but a traitor, saying: ". . . nothing could be more unpatriotic than to try to fan the passions of the American people to the point where they will accept a program that will eventually send American boys to be killed upon foreign battlefields." The newspapers immediately jumped into the fray. The Chicago Tribune, in a rather calm editorial, defended Wheeler, while the St. Louis Post-Dispatch took the exchange as a guide to Roosevelt's foreign policy thinking. The Washington Post observed that the remarks would bring more support to the bill than they would take away. The Los Angeles Times, however, made probably the most profound

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<sup>6</sup>New York Times, January 15, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 15, 1941.

and accurate appraisal. They wrote: "The interchange between the President and Senator Wheeler is unfortunate because it tends to distract attention from the main business at hand - which is to provide, swiftly and efficiently, for the national defense."<sup>7</sup>

So, on January 15, in the ornate room of the House Ways and Means Committee, the hearings on the lend-lease bill opened. Before 10 a.m. the room was crowded and 23 of the 25 committee members were seated behind the horseshoe desk. Sol Bloom, described by Time as a Neanderthal man dressed up in clothes, descended to be photographed with Secretary Hull when he appeared as the first witness.

The Secretary led off the hearings with a carefully prepared, powerful, and strongly argued statement. He early set the tone for the administration witnesses, and established the principle of self-defense as that which should motivate the United States. "In the face of the forces of conquest now on the march across the earth," he said, "self-defense is and must be the compelling consideration in the determination of wise and prudent national policy." Very quickly he closed the issue of the bill itself, saying: "The present bill sets up machinery which will enable us to make the most effective use of our resources for our own needs and for the needs of those whom, in our own self-defense, we are determined

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<sup>7</sup>New York Times, January 15, 1941; Washington Post, January 15, 1941; Chicago Daily Tribune, January 16, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 16, 1941; Los Angeles Times, January 16, 1941.

thus to aid." Effectively pointing out that speed was the greatest need, Hull also dealt with the statutes and agreements which might be affected under the new law. Monetarily, he pointed out that the Johnson Act and Section 7 of the Neutrality Act of 1939 would not seem to be directly affected, although the neutrality provision would be superseded as far as the government was concerned. On the provision in the bill that would apparently permit the repair of British warships in American ports, he said it would suspend sections 23, 24, and 33 of United States Code, title 18, which made such actions illegal in accord with international law. He also observed that while parts of the Hague Convention XIII of 1907 were in opposition to provisions of the bill, that the Convention was not applicable in the present war because all of the belligerents were not signatories of the Convention.<sup>8</sup>

Then the committee took over questioning Hull, and Luther Johnson carefully posed a situation that enabled Hull to again point out the importance of self-defense. However, when Hamilton Fish began his questioning the tone of the hearings changed, and one of the questions which was to plague the hearings through-out, the authorship of the bill, was first raised. Hull, in reply to Fish, pointed out that

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<sup>8</sup>United States Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings on H. R. 1776; A Bill Further To Promote The Defense Of The United States And For Other Purposes, 77th Cong., 1st Sess., 6-9; Time, January 27, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 16, 1941.



he did not wish to discuss mechanics of the bill, and that Morgenthau could do so because the bill had been drawn by the Treasury Department.

A few minutes later he repeated the same thing to Tinkham of Massachusetts. But burly bearded big-game hunter George H. Tinkham had other roaring to do, and he and Hull were soon entangled despite the efforts of Sol Bloom, the chairman.

One of the first shots from Tinkham's gun was on whether the United States would aid Russia if she were attacked. Hull replied, "That is so theoretical I think it would not help to discuss it." "I do not think it is theoretical at all," Tinkham rejoined.

Bloom interrupted then to end the interchange, but in a few minutes they were again at odds over the question of whether the bill might include manpower. Hull told him, "I have not heard that discussed by anybody."

Mr. Tinkham. You do not want to answer in any other way?

Secretary Hull. No; I have not heard anybody discuss that.

The Chairman. The Secretary has answered the question.

Mr. Tinkham. I gave him an opportunity of answering in any other way that he wants to.<sup>9</sup>

Then under Tinkham's guiding they moved on to the issue of the power of the President under the bill, and then to the question of giving away the United States Navy. Hull was

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<sup>9</sup>House Hearings, pp. 11, 14, 18, 20-21; Alben W. Barkley, That Reminds Me (New York, 1954), p. 128.

careful to point out that the President did not need any additional power to commit acts of war, and therefore that could not be an objection to the bill. Then finally Tinkham asked:

Now, I want to know, Mr. Secretary, whether under the terms of this bill, and you have read it, of course, the President can give away any part of the United States Navy?

Secretary Hull. Oh, that is such a violent assumption I am surprised that even you would want to take up time to discuss it.

Mr. Tinkham. It seems to me it is implicit. I do not want to read the bill, but it seems to me it is quite implicit in the language as drawn. I could read the bill. Is the bill here?

Secretary Hull. I say, it is such a violent assumption that anybody would try to give away a dreadnought.

Mr. Tinkham. Mr. Secretary, we are in days when the most violent assumptions are liable to be the correct assumptions.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, light was thrown on one of the earliest and most consistently mentioned of possible amendments. Under questioning by Foster Stearns of New Hampshire, Hull intimated that no objection would be made to putting a time limit on the provisions of the bill.<sup>11</sup>

This time limit modification, which was first mentioned by Willkie, and was also included in the amended bill introduced by Kenneth Simpson, brought wide praise, and the same day Hull voiced tacit approval the Cleveland Plain Dealer had editorialized that: "It is in this spirit of co-operation that American will make her aid to the embattled Allies count toward victory." On the day following his appearance Hull

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<sup>10</sup>House Hearings, pp. 24, 28.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

received outright praise for his "cogent arguments" in the Washington Post.<sup>12</sup>

After a luncheon recess the committee reconvened to hear Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Hull had appeared alone, but Morgenthau came with seven aides. In a long and technical statement Morgenthau, with British approval, revealed the financial condition of the British. The complete figures showed that the British had exhausted all their assets which were quickly convertible into dollars, and had either spent or obligated them before January 1, 1941. The other assets could not be converted quickly enough to help, and their gold was virtually exhausted. The figures which showed the British would need at least \$3 billion from the United States in 1941 were quickly challenged by Hamilton Fish who produced a Federal Reserve Board statement. Morgenthau, however, noted that the statement in question was dated August 1939, before the war began, and that the war had depleted the resources very drastically. He underlined all that had gone before in a reply to a question put to him by Herman P. Eberharter of Pennsylvania. "But when it comes to finding the dollars," he said, "to pay for anything like what they need in the future, they just have not got it."<sup>13</sup>

The questioning of Morgenthau also strayed from the strictly monetary aspects of the bill, and came back once

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<sup>12</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 15, 1941; Washington Post, January 16, 1941.

<sup>13</sup>Time, January 27, 1941, pp. 13-14; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 16, 1941; House Hearings, p. 55.

more to the powers of the President. Fish questioned him as to whether the President would have power to convoy belligerent ships, and received the reply that the bill gave him no additional power. Morgenthau was also examined over the possible cost of the bill. He refused to be committed to any figure, but did leave the impression that all repayment for leased materials might not be either in goods or in money, but in the service of keeping the United States free from attack.<sup>14</sup>

The same day that the committee heard Hull and Morgenthau, the divisions on the bill were becoming more clearly cut. Herbert Hoover wrote a letter to Sol Bloom, warning the committee that the bill could cancel parts of the very laws and agreements which Hull had mentioned in his testimony, and adding the labor laws for good measure. The Cleveland Plain Dealer was able to report, without approval, that both Ohio senators, Taft and Burton, opposed the bill along with 10 Republican representatives from Ohio. But a Gallup Poll released the same day showed 60 per cent of Willkie's supporters and 62 per cent of Roosevelt's would help England even at the risk of war. Clearly the issue between those who favored lend-lease and those who opposed it was not to turn on the question of aid alone. The powers, intentions, and judgement of the President were to assume a larger and larger position in the following days.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>House Hearings, pp. 58-59, 68, 77.

<sup>15</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 15, 16, 1941; New York Times, January 17, 1941; Herbert Hoover, Addresses Upon the American Road 1940-1941 (New York, 1941), p. 64.



This was largely true because of the vague charges of dictatorship time and time again leveled against the bill by its opponents. These charges always seemed to escape exact definition but centered around the clauses "notwithstanding the provisions of any other law," and "or otherwise procure" as they appeared in the original bill. Generally they were based on the idea that these clauses would allow the President to seize private property, conscript labor, and more commonly to give away virtually anything that belonged to the United States without recompense or without control. Economic considerations, hidden under the guise of patriotism, were a main factor in the thought of the opponents.

On the second day of the hearings Henry Stimson, the Secretary of War, came before the committee to take up where Hull and Morgenthau had left the defense of the bill and to warn the Congressmen and listeners in the committee room of the danger that would face the nation should the bill fail to pass. In his prepared statement Stimson pointed out that the bill was similar to the Pittman Act passed the year before, and summarized his thoughts, and those of the administration. "I feel," he said, "that the proposed bill is a forthright and clear grant of power which will enable the President to place in operation the best and simplest plan to carry out a national policy many times stated and endorsed."<sup>16</sup>

In the subsequent questioning Stimson and Hamilton Fish

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<sup>16</sup>Time, January 27, 1941, p. 14; House Hearings, pp. 89-90.

occupied the spot-light. As Stimson put strongly the proposition that the defense of the United States depended upon a successful defense of Great Britain several clashes occurred. After Stimson had discouraged the idea of taking the British West Indies as collateral for loans Fish jumped on the defense idea.

"Is it not rather cowardly of us," he asked, "if England is fighting our battle, not to go into the war?"

Stimson side-stepped with, "I am not going to pursue this line of argument. We are not concerned with it in this bill."

But Fish's insistence on the issue of the danger to the United States brought Stimson to his feet. After a question on the danger of invasion Stimson rose to point his finger at Fish before he gave a slow, measured, and emphatic answer. "I think we are in very great danger of invasion by air in the contingency the British navy is destroyed or surrendered."<sup>17</sup>

The questioning of Stimson could not be concluded in one session and the Secretary agreed to return the following morning to allow the other Congressmen a chance to question him. Neither could the fire-works be confined to the open session of the committee. Despite Stimson's warnings on the need for speed on the bill the administration forces were not able to block invitations to witnesses by minority members of the committee. After the committee adjournment Bloom

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<sup>17</sup>House Hearings, pp. 98, 101-102; New York Times, January 17, 1941.

accused Fish of inviting witnesses, including Wendell L. Willkie, and Joseph P. Kennedy, the retiring Ambassador to Great Britain, without the consent of the full committee. Fish contended that Bloom had authorized him to do so. Before a group of spectators who had been attracted by the interchange the two New York congressmen found themselves shouting at each other toe to toe over Fish's calling the bill "the President's dictator bill." The committee, in executive session, agreed to meet later to consider the question.<sup>18</sup>

The immediate comments on Stimson's testimony were, as usual, varied. Senator Wheeler, with his biting attitude, told reporters: "Every informed person in Washington knows that Mr. Stimson was placed in the War Department because of his known prowar attitude." But the Washington Post in its editorial the following day praised Stimson's testimony, and observed that congress could modify the bill and still accomplish the administration purposes.<sup>19</sup>

In the meantime action was taken on other fronts in addition to that of the committee room. Some of it was publicly known, and some of it was not. As a quiet reminder that harmony was not the key-note among the opponents of the bill Colonel Charles A. Lindberg denied any connection with the No Foreign War Committee, although he had been listed

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<sup>18</sup>New York Times, January 17, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 17, 1941.

<sup>19</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 17, 1941; Washington Post, January 17, 1941.

among its backers by Verne Marshall. More important activities turned on the pivot of the White House. Roosevelt, in a note to Churchill, guessed that the bill might pass by February 15, but observed that a Senate filibuster might delay it. He also received Joseph Kennedy for a conference. When he left the White House Kennedy commented on the radio speech he had scheduled for that Saturday, saying: "For once, I am going to say for myself what I have in my mind." After the Roosevelt conference Kennedy also talked with Wheeler, and the Senator soon afterward demanded that the President make public Kennedy's report on European conditions, although he denied any connection between the two events.<sup>20</sup>

Action was also taking place on the floor of the House as John M. Costello of California introduced another substitute bill, and explained that he felt the administration should have introduced separate legislation to repeal the Johnson Act and the Neutrality Act, if they intended to do so with the lend-lease bill. Shortly after this appearance George Tinkham, fresh from the committee hearings of Stimson, appeared on the floor to unlimber his big-game guns. He took the floor at the close of general orders for that day in the House and after yielding briefly to Marcantonio and to Hoffman of Michigan, he proceeded to briskly accuse Roosevelt and Hull, not of unpatriotic conduct in the style of Senator Wheeler, but of outright treason. "Mr. Speaker," he began,

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<sup>20</sup>New York Times, January 17, 1941; F.D.R. His Personal Letters 1928-1945, ed. Elliott Roosevelt (New York, 1950), II, 1107.

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"President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull have plotted against the peace and safety of the United States. They have purposely created a war hysteria and they are now projecting the United States into war. Their conduct is disloyal and traitorous."<sup>21</sup>

The press comments that same day ranged over all the fronts of the aid-to-Britain battle. Since Wendell Willkie had made an unscheduled appearance in the audience of the Town Hall of the Air Meeting the preceding night, his stand was praised in William Allen White's Emporia Gazette, and the independence of his action was recognized in Paul Mallon's Column in the Cleveland Plain Dealer. The preceding day Plain Dealer had praised the endorsement of the bill by Winthrop W. Aldrich of the Chase National Bank, and on January 17 attacked the bill opponents. Morgenthau related again the great British financial need at a press-conference on January 16, and the following day the New York Times carried an editorial supporting his position. The national board of the League of Women Voters also endorsed the bill. The Akron Beacon Journal, taking an opposite tack accused Hull of one-sided testimony and condemned Roosevelt for his attack on Wheeler.<sup>22</sup>

When Stimson resumed the witness chair for the third

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<sup>21</sup>New York Times, January 17, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 164, 178 (January 16, 1941).

<sup>22</sup>Emporia Gazette, January 16, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 16, 17, 1941; New York Times, January 17, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 16, 1941.

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day of the House hearings George Tinkham was again in the forefront with a barrage of questions. But no matter how strongly he tried to beat the Secretary out of his stand on a wide range of issues, he was uniformly unsuccessful.

Ranging from the possibility of buying French warships lying at Martinique, through aid to China, to the question of ships in belligerent waters and the use of manpower, Tinkham was foiled. In reply to a question from Bartel J. Jonkman of Michigan, however, Stimson was again able to assert the necessity of the bill to Britain's survival, and finally under friendly questioning from Luther Johnson, he was able to emphasize the need for speed.

"Mr. Johnson," he replied, "I cannot state too emphatically the apprehension that I feel as to the possibility of a crisis, which I think even my friends on the right would recognize as a crisis, within the next 60, or at most, 90 days."<sup>23</sup>

Colonel Frank Knox, the ruddy and tough Secretary of the Navy, followed Stimson on the stand. He had listened to the final quarter hour of questioning directed at Stimson and had received the chair from Stimson with his comment, "I resign this rather warm chair to you." Stimson left the room amid applause from the committee members and the standing-room-only crowd that included many other congressional members since the House was not in session.

Knox launched into his testimony combatively and strongly defended the importance of Britain and the British navy to

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<sup>23</sup>House Hearings, pp. 107-110, 112-133, 115, 146, 150-151.



American defense. He emphasized the fact that the British navy really made the Monroe Doctrine possible, and that it would be six years until the United States had an effective two ocean navy. He made the danger of a British defeat clear once more, and reiterated Stimson's 60 to 90 day crisis prediction. Then he defended his views stoutly from the questioners.<sup>24</sup>

And again, the events outside of the Ways and Means Committee room were almost as important as those within. In Great Britain Winston Churchill made an unexpected appearance before a large audience in Glasgow. Seated with him on the platform was Harry Hopkins. Churchill made a point of introducing Hopkins to the audience and then made a widely hailed speech, denying the need for American troops in 1941, but calling for weapons, ships, and planes beyond Britain's capacity to pay.

Almost automatically Senator Wheeler had a statement that he had learned from "reliable sources" that Churchill had been pressing for an American declaration of war and that Hopkins was in Britain to see what steps short of a declaration could be taken. In his haste to condemn he apparently overlooked the fact that this might be exactly the "short-of-war" formula which practically everyone supported verbally. Sol Bloom was quick to point out the similarity between the

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<sup>24</sup>New York Times, January 18, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 18, 1941; Time, January 27, 1941, p. 14; House Hearings, pp. 155-187.

the views of most Americans and those of Churchill's speech.<sup>25</sup>

This same day the Los Angeles Times had another reminder that neutrality was meaningless anyway, and labeled the lend-lease bill, interestingly, "The Arms Pool Plan." On January 18 the Chicago Tribune also jumped back into the publicity battle over aid, and for it dictatorship, with an attack reading Wendell Willkie out of the Republican party for his support of the Roosevelt bill. "Mr. Willkie entered the Republican party as a mysterious stranger, suddenly and to the astonishment of thousands of the party members who didn't recall the face or the name," it wrote. "He may now take his leave, quite as suddenly, still a stranger to the party's principles, although no longer mysterious." Neither did it miss a chance to attack the bill, and warned that passage would make congress "only another reichstag." On the nineteenth it made another attack on Willkie.<sup>26</sup>

Concluding the initial testimony for the administration and for the best and simplest plan, William S. Knudsen, Danish-American and newly appointed head of the Office of Production Management, had the briefest time on the stand, and in essence made two important points. The first was that it was essential to arm rapidly, and the second was that it was essential to aid Britain whether or not the United States was ever paid. He defended the bill on the grounds that the

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<sup>25</sup>New York Times, January 18, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 18, 1941.

<sup>26</sup>Chicago Daily Tribune, January 18, 19, 1941; Los Angeles Times, January 17, 1941.

combination of purchases and procurement would make his job simpler.<sup>27</sup>

The Washington Post took the opportunity to point out that Knudsen's testimony was evidence of "yet another intelligent man who has the wit to see the ugly shape of things to come under the heels of Axis victory." They took the view that his testimony made clear the need to furnish British needs out of existing stocks of weapons. But their analysis could be easily lost in the sea of surrounding events. The Los Angeles Times was praising Hoover's letter to Bloom, and the preceeding testimony of Knox was eliciting critical comment from the Akron Beacon Journal, which claiming that "The Truth Becomes Plainer," wrote: "His statement should be rejected by every self-respecting American." It concluded, in capitals, "THE ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT TRUST CONGRESS TO DECLARE WAR SOON ENOUGH." Demonstrating clearly at least part of the sectional differences in point of view the Atlanta Constitution editorialized on the numerical designation of the bill, and hoped "that it will bring to the congress something of the spirit that animated the men of the year designated by the same numerals - 1776." Wendell Willkie, in an apt reply to the Chicago Tribune's attack upon him warned Republicans they would never regain control of the government if they made

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<sup>27</sup>House Hearings, pp. 194-195, 197, 214; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 19, 1941; Time, January 27, 1941, p. 14; New York Times, January 19, 1941.

blind opposition to the lend-lease bill.<sup>28</sup>

But the real attention was focused away from Knudsen and toward Joseph P. Kennedy, for his radio address the evening of Knudsen's testimony. In the face of statements made the same day by such varied sources as Ernest Gibson, the newly elected head of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, Sir Arthur Salter of the British Ministry of Shipping, and by salty old Senator Carter Glass, Kennedy made a clear but ambivalent speech which left him approximately where he began - in favor of the "utmost aid to England" but opposed to the lend-lease bill. Among those who had fear of the extensive powers which were supposedly claimed by the President under this legislation, this was not an unusual position.

It was, however, a position which left him open to attack. Dorothy Thompson, concluded in her column that "he had out-Hamleted Hamlet, for instead of posing the question, 'to be or not to be,' he managed to make it 'To be and not to be.'" The Washington Post wrote that "The negativeness in Mr. Kennedy's speech, in short, doesn't comport with his constructive approach," while the Cleveland Plain Dealer decided that the people were with Willkie and Roosevelt rather than Kennedy. Of course, he had his supporters too. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch evaluated his address as "Sensible, temperate, realistic, patriotic . . ." and the Akron Beacon

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<sup>28</sup>Washington Post, January 19, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 18, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, January 18, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 19, 1941; Los Angeles Times, January 18, 1941; New York Times, January 19, 1941.

Journal wrote, "Naturally we consider his speech an excellent work."<sup>29</sup>

For those in doubt, Kennedy would soon have a chance to either redeem or prove himself when the hearings reopened after Roosevelt's inauguration, for he was scheduled as the witness to appear on January 21.

## II. Away From Democracy

On Sunday, January 19, another in a lengthening series of unprecented acts was taken when President Roosevelt received Wendell Willkie at the White House. He personally wished Willkie a good trip to England, and gave his defeated rival a note of introduction to Churchill. Written with his own hand, it said:

To a Certain Naval Person:

Dear Churchill:

Wendell Willkie is taking this to you. He is being a true help in keeping politics out of things.

I think this verse applies to you people as well as to us:

"Sail on, O Ship of State!

Sail on, O Union, strong and great!

Humanity with all its fears,

With all the hopes of future years

Is hanging breathless on thy fate!"

Franklin D. Roosevelt<sup>30</sup>

The third inauguration of Roosevelt as President of the United States took place on the following Monday. The same day John G. Winant was announced as the new United States

<sup>29</sup>New York Times, January 19, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 19, 20, 1941; Washington Post, January 20, 22, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 20, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 20, 1941; House Hearings, pp. 264-265.

<sup>30</sup>F.D.R. Letters, II, 1109; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 20, 1941; New York Times, January 20, 1941.

Ambassador to the Court of St. James. He was to succeed Joseph Kennedy whose appearance before the House Committee was eagerly awaited. The first of the proposed opposition witnesses, he was expected to indicate something of the drift away from democracy in his testimony.

In this appearance on January 21, Kennedy frequently brought applause from the crowd and Chairman Bloom occasionally had to warn them against displays of approval or disapproval. But Kennedy completely failed to make clear his own position on the proposed legislation. Having no qualms at all about stating, "I am against the bill in its present form," in reply to a question by Robert B. Chipfield, he nonetheless had no amendments or suggestions to offer, and the questioning on the whole tended to confirm him in the camp of those who would give greater powers to the executive.<sup>31</sup>

Kennedy was questioned extensively and sharply, and in reply to a query from Hamilton Fish on the very issue of the possible power of the President to give away the United States Navy, the former ambassador was able to affirm his belief in the administration. He replied to Fish, "Very frankly, as I said in a speech I made on Saturday night, I am a great believer in authority going with responsibility, and I cannot for the life of me believe that there is anybody in these United States that would give away the American Navy."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>House Hearings, pp. 282-283; New York Times, January 21, 22, 1941.

<sup>32</sup>House Hearings, p. 226

The real failure of Kennedy before the committee was his inability to hold any single position against the Congressmen. More than once he seemed to be moved from one camp to the other. Fish, just a few minutes after the statement on giving away the navy, was able to accomplish just such a move in regard to convoying ships.

He asked: "Would you object to an amendment going into this bill stating that our ships should not be convoyed without the consent of Congress?"

Kennedy replied, "I would."

This apparently placed him in opposition to the proposed amendment, but Fish went on, undaunted, to ask, "That is, you would not object?"

Completely reversing himself, Kennedy agreed, "I would not object."<sup>33</sup>

While Kennedy was eventually found in opposition to most of the arguments presented by Stimson and Knox the preceding week, when specific questions came up Kennedy was not willing really to commit himself to the opposition point of view. He was unable to place himself on record against repairing British ships in American yards, nor could he really see that giving material to Britain would lead directly to war. He certainly adopted the administration point of view on the reasons why aid should be extended when he put it on the basis of gaining time for the United States itself to arm.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 226-227.

<sup>34</sup>House Hearings, pp. 227, 230; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 22, 1941.

But when it came down to the question of money to finance the bill, and limiting the amount to be expended, he again ran into difficulty. Charles Eaton, a Republican member of the committee from New Jersey, carefully led Kennedy through a series of questions which ended with Eaton asking: "That we ought to have a definite amount named in the bill?" Kennedy to this replied, "It would seem so . . . ."

No sooner had Eaton left this line of questioning than John Kee of West Virginia took it up and led the ambassador back to his starting point. Kee's questioning on this issue concluded with: "Therefore, there would be no necessity of saying in this bill the amount of the appropriation, or limiting it; is that right?"

"That is right, sir," was Kennedy's answer.<sup>35</sup>

Despite what appeared to be such obvious contradictions in Kennedy's testimony, and his general unwillingness to be specific through-out his testimony, when he concluded he was cheered by the crowd which consisted largely of women, and police were forced to clear a path through eager autograph seekers so that he could leave the hearing room.<sup>36</sup>

Although he could not have known Hamilton Fish's question on convoys, Roosevelt, probably in a definite attempt to reassure anxious Congressional members, announced at his press conference that day that he never considered convoying supplies

<sup>35</sup>House Hearings, pp. 231, 234-235.

<sup>36</sup>House Hearings, pp. 221-317; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 22, 1941.



to Great Britain. And, a Gallup poll, released the same day, seemed to lend strength to the administration pressure for the bill, as the figures showed 62 per cent of the Republicans and 74 per cent of the Democrats willing to endorse in principle the plan embodied in H. R. 1776.

Agreement in principle, however, did not stop many people really in favor of aid from frowning upon the powers of the bill. Indeed, those who might normally discount venomous attacks from the Chicago Tribune, found other responsible and probably less interested organs of opinion voicing essentially the same things. The Christian Century, consistently in favor of neutrality and of peace, called for "No Compromise" in its issue of January 22. "The President's bill 'to promote the defense of the United States'," it decided, "is in its effect a bill to put the United States into the war and to shift the government of this country from its democratic basis to a dictatorship. It is the most un-American proposal which the American people have ever had seriously to consider." A few days later this view was supported by the equally responsible Commonweal which observed: "We find it more difficult than the all-out supporters of this Bill 1776 to make the shift to authoritarianism."<sup>37</sup>

On the day following Kennedy's testimony at the hearings Norman Thomas and Hanford MacNider appeared. Thomas, speaking before the smallest crowd that had been attracted, politely thanked the committee for a chance to appear, and in a concise

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<sup>37</sup> New York Times, January 22, 1941; The Christian Century, January 22, 1941, p. 113; Commonweal, January 24, 1941, p. 339.

and clear, if not eloquent statement presented his arguments. He quickly made clear that he felt the ultimate intention of the bill was to take the United States into the war. MacNider, who followed the perennial Socialist candidate for President, adopted in his brief testimony on behalf of the America First Committee, a position of complete isolation.<sup>38</sup>

The morning of this activity, Wendell Willkie, carrying the letter given him by Roosevelt, began the trip he had planned to survey conditions in England. Boarding the plane for Lisbon he stressed that he was going purely as a private citizen.<sup>39</sup>

The hearings themselves reached another climax on Thursday, January 23, as the bill opponents brought forward their big guns. To lead off that day's hearings was Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, and he was to be followed by General Hugh S. Johnson.

Lindbergh's appearance attracted a large crowd, and one which proved to be the most demonstrative of the hearings. Long lines of prospective spectators formed outside of the Ways and Means Committee room, and once inside Sol Bloom had to make frequent warning against applause and other signs of approval or disapproval. On one occasion Representative Wirt Courtney of Tennessee, a Democrat, was booed for asking

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<sup>38</sup>House Hearings, pp. 317-370; Time, February 3, 1941, p. 13; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 23, 1941; Wayne S. Cole, America First: The Battle Against Intervention 1940-1941 (Madison, 1953), pp. 43-44.

<sup>39</sup>New York Times, January 23, 1941.

Lindbergh which side he wanted to win the war, and the uproar drowned out Lindbergh's answer of neither side.

In a striking contrast to Kennedy, the Colonel was straightforward and definite, and he adopted a strong and consistent position which he defended well from the administration questioners. He opposed the bill chiefly on three counts. First, he felt it reduced the powers of Congress in relation to those of the President, and when he was asked he side-stepped the issue of whether or not a President would act against reliable advice. Second, he felt it weakened the potential United States defense by giving material to Britain, and thirdly, he felt the bill would lead to war. In general he voiced himself in favor of strict, complete neutrality, a negotiated peace in Europe in which neither side would be the victor, and in favor of an American defense force of 10,000 modern planes. He believed that the United States would be safe from any attack with such a force, and he seemed to imply that even the combination of Britain and America could not defeat Germany on the European continent.<sup>40</sup>

After his appearance Lindbergh wrote to Sol Bloom expressing his thanks for a fair hearing, and praising the tact and consideration with which the proceedings were conducted. But from large segments of the press Lindbergh received slight consideration. A few papers praised his position, but elements which had been initially shocked by

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<sup>40</sup>House Hearings, pp. 371-436; New York Times, January 24, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 24, 1941; Time, February 3, 1941, p. 13.

the broad powers of the bill had now returned to administration support. They believed that the bill would be amended in a manner to remove any doubt of potential threats to American liberty. The Washington Post was one of these which attacked Lindbergh all out. In an editorial headed "Will-To-Lose" he was chastised for his attitude that Germany could not be beaten. The Post contended, "At a time when the President, on a mandate from the people, is seeking to evoke the spirit of America in this great national enterprise, the Colonel serves an ill purpose by making out that the British cause is hopeless. Unconsciously, indeed, he serves a Nazi end." The New York Times was another paper which censored Lindbergh, as they ran an editorial proclaiming "Peace When There Is No Peace."<sup>41</sup>

Following Lindbergh on the stand, and benefiting to a large extent from the audience which he had attracted, General Hugh S. Johnson forthrightly expounded his views, pounded the table, and evoked laughter at several points in his exchanges with the committee members. Unlike Lindbergh, Johnson was in favor of aid, but by no means was he in favor of the bill, or of what he called "humanitarian lollipopping all over the world." He was opposed to an amendment that would limit the convoying power of the President, but he was adamant on the amount of aid to be given.

"I have stated over and over again, that I am for such

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<sup>41</sup>Bloom, Autobiography, p. 242; Chicago Daily Tribune, January 25, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 24, 1941; Washington Post, January 24, 1941; New York Times, January 24, 1941.

aid as will insure the defense of the United States, and not for one inch more," he told James A. Shanley, a committee member from Connecticut.

But when it came to considering danger to the United States General Johnson and Lindbergh were in complete agreement. "I do not know why," Johnson opined, "people should begin turning up their nose at 3,000 miles of the Atlantic Ocean and up to 6,000 miles of the Pacific Ocean, after seeing the difficulty that Mr. Hitler is having with 22 miles of the English Channel."<sup>42</sup>

As a final witness that day Dr. Brooks Emeny, director of the Cleveland Foreign Affairs Council, was called before the committee by Congresswoman Bolton of Ohio, but did not represent a majority of the Council. Appearing as an expert in raw materials, he claimed that the United States could maintain itself even if the rest of the world were totalitarian. In essence confirming the testimony of Lindbergh and Johnson, Emeny rounded out a concerted attack which was aimed at making the bill unnecessary on practical considerations of the national self-defense. Although vocally stated, the charges of dictatorial powers slipped temporarily into the background.<sup>43</sup>

The night after the appearance of these witnesses before the committee, Dr. Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, made a radio address warning against the drift toward war, and in effect charging that the American

<sup>42</sup>House Hearings, pp. 436-464; Time, February 3, 1941, p. 13

<sup>43</sup>House Hearings, pp. 465-477; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 24, 1941.

people were "morally and intellectually unprepared" for the policies mapped out by the President. Almost simultaneously a statement was issued by 125 faculty members of the University urging the enactment of the lend-lease bill.<sup>44</sup>

In the meantime, two substitute bills were introduced in the Senate. The bills, introduced by Taft of Ohio and Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado, both proposed large loans to the British and their allies. At the same time a subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate was meeting with Hull, Morgenthau, Stimson, and Knox to plan hearings on the Senate version of the bill. Hull was again to be the first witness at hearings planned to open on the following Monday.<sup>45</sup>

And also on the same day the prospects for definite amendment of the bill, at least in respect to a time limit, markedly improved. James Wadsworth, a Republican Representative from New York conferred with Roosevelt at the White House, and was supposed to have received agreement on several amendments. Luther Johnson announced that he would sponsor the time limitation in committee. This agreement coincided almost exactly with a lengthy and reasoned editorial in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, a paper which was never able to work up much enthusiasm for the bill. In one of the best analyses published, it called for a definite time limit of two years,

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<sup>44</sup>New York Times, January 24, 1941.

<sup>45</sup>New York Times, January 24, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 24, 1941.

a monetary ceiling of \$2 billion, a definite limit on convoys, a ban on the transfer of American ships, either commercial or naval, and a requirement for the President to get a quid pro quo for each transaction rather than leaving repayment to his discretion.<sup>46</sup>

On the eighth day of the hearings, January 24, the attention was largely drawn away from the lengthy list of opposition witnesses by two other events. One of these was another dispute between committee members. This was over whether or not to publicly hear testimony from the heads of the Army and Navy. The other event was the arrival of the new British Ambassador.

Taking still another unprecedented step, President Roosevelt, accompanied by Secretary Knox, and a few other officials drove to Annapolis, Maryland, where they took the Presidential yacht Potomac and sailed down the bay to meet the battleship King George V which was bringing Lord Halifax to the United States. Viscount Halifax had left the British Foreign Office and the inner war cabinet to become Ambassador. Roosevelt extended to him an act of friendship usually reserved for the head of a state. It was another underlining of the essential unity which the administration was attempting to promote with Britain in her struggle against the Nazis. As the Washington Post noted: "It was a gesture which charged with electric current every word he (Roosevelt) has uttered

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<sup>46</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 25, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 24, 1941.

in the last three weeks."<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile the committee dispute was taking place. Republican members wished to obtain public testimony from ranking Army and Navy officers on the conditions of United States defense. The committee divided on the issue, and Hamilton Fish charged after a luncheon recess that the Democrats were afraid the testimony would show the bill to be unwise and unnecessary. The Democrats contended it would not be in the national interest to make public, defense plans and conditions.<sup>48</sup>

But in the time when the committee members were not arguing with each other they were hearing testimony from the largest number of witnesses to appear before the committee in a single day. These people were: William R. Castle, an under-secretary of State in the Hoover administration, Gerald L. K. Smith, the National Chairman of the Committee of One Million, John Burke, a representative of the American Defense Society who read a statement submitted by Amos Pinchot as well as giving his own testimony, Benjamin Marsh, the Executive Secretary of the Peoples Lobby located in Washington, William J. Grace, the Chairman of the Citizens Keep America Out of War Committee from Chicago, George H. Gless, of Glen Falls, New York, and William C. Dennis, the president of Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana.

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<sup>47</sup>Time, February 3, 1941, p. 12; New York Times, January 25, 1941; Washington Post, January 25, 1941.

<sup>48</sup>New York Times, January 25, 1941.



Of these witnesses the testimony offered by Castle, and by Gerald L. K. Smith garnered the most attention. Castle, who had served a total of sixteen years in the State Department and who appeared for the America First Committee, reopened the dictatorship charges, and contended that Roosevelt, under the provisions of the bill could dominate Britain as well as the United States. This would be through his ability to send whatever supplies he saw fit when and where he wanted to.

Smith on the other hand, after explaining the size and importance of his committee, presented a list of five reasons why it opposed the bill. First, it saw the President gaining dictatorial powers; second, it thought the bill abandoned the Monroe Doctrine by entering in European quarrels; thirdly, the bill would imperil America's own defense program; fourthly, he said, his committee did not trust English or any other foreign politicians; and finally the bill was considered the first step toward sending American troops abroad.<sup>49</sup>

The major efforts of the opponents had been concluded and on Saturday, January 25, when another long list of witnesses paraded to the stand, they were speaking in favor of the bill. They were led off by William C. Bullitt, the former Ambassador to France, who presented a logical step by step case building to the conclusion that the United States should buy time by aiding England. He was followed on the stand by General John F. O'Ryan whose well-known and frankly stated pro-war views

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<sup>49</sup>House Hearings, pp. 479-580; Time, February 3, 1941, p. 13; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 25, 1941; New York Times, January 25, 1941; Cole, America First, pp. 43-44.

probably did more harm than good. Dorothy Thompson was next before the committee, and together with Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, the Ambassador to Norway, elaborated still further the idea of national "self-interest" as a guide to reasons why the bill should be approved. William Green, President of the AFL, and Louis Waldman, a labor attorney and National Chairman of the Council of Social Democracy, both supported the bill before Ernest W. Gibson came to the stand.<sup>50</sup>

Gibson was a former Senator from Vermont, and was now the Chairman of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. Although the limitation of time meant that he was not questioned by the committee, the statement he presented effectively faced and indicated as false the dictator charges against the bill. "And to those who claim this 'stop Hitler' bill sets up a dictatorship in America," he said, "I want to suggest this bill does not impose a censorship. It does not restrict freedom of speech. It does not restrict freedom of assembly. It does not suspend the right of habeas corpus. It does not give him the right to seize property. It does not give him the right to conscript labor."<sup>51</sup>

### III. The Early Returns

When the committee recessed after hearing Gibson they were not to meet in public session again until January 29 when they held a brief meeting to hear Representatives William

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<sup>50</sup>House Hearings, pp. 581-677; New York Times, January 26, 1941.

<sup>51</sup>House Hearings, pp. 677-680.

B. Barry of New York, and Frederick C. Smith of Ohio. Previously they had gone into executive session to take testimony from Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, and Major General George H. Brett, Acting Chief of the Army Air Corps. Although the exact nature of this testimony was never revealed, a press conference held by General Marshall on January 29, indicated that he, at least, favored the bill.<sup>52</sup>

Over the period when the House committee was not meeting publicly other developments were taking place. On Saturday, the same day as the last witnesses in favor of the bill, Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, speaking before the New York State Bar Association, attacked the bill as a measure that would make "Uncle Sam the best and biggest Santa Claus the world has ever seen." On Sunday, the day before the Senate hearings were to open Senators Wheeler and Nye announced that they planned to introduce a Senate resolution that would request Roosevelt to find out the war aims of all belligerents, their peace conditions, and "any and all secret treaties for disposition of territorial spoils."<sup>53</sup>

After this resolution was introduced, the New York Times attacked it in a finely written sarcastic editorial entitled, "Territorial Spoils" which voiced the hope that, "Messrs. Nye and Wheeler will now introduce another resolution

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<sup>52</sup>House Hearings, pp. 681-692; New York Times, January 28, 29, 1941.

<sup>53</sup>New York Times, January 26, 27, 1941.

asking the President to ascertain whether there is any truth in these repeated rumors that German troops are occupying Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Belgium, France, and Holland."<sup>54</sup>

On Monday, January 27, the committee also began executive consideration of the bill with a view toward reporting it to the House. Fish announced previously that he had a group of amendments to offer, and the prospects for definite amendment of the bill appeared certain after a White House conference held that same day. Nevertheless, by Wednesday, the Committee had rejected a substitute Aid-to-Britain bill which Fish had offered. Four definite amendments were written into the bill by the committee, however, before it was finally approved.

These amendments, all adopted on Wednesday, provided: first, that nothing should be disposed of without "consultation with the Chief of Staff of the Army or the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, or both"; second, that the powers of the bill would terminate on June 30, 1943; third, that nothing in the act was to be "construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of convoying of vessels by naval vessels of the United States"; fourth, that the President would be required to transmit reports on the operations under the act to Congress at least every 90 days.<sup>55</sup>

On the following day the bill was favorably reported from the Committee to the House by a vote of 17 to 8. Fourteen Democrats and three Republicans made up the majority, while

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., January 28, 1941.

<sup>55</sup>Time, February 10, 1941, p. 17; New York Times, January 27, 28, 30, 1941.

one Democrat and seven Republicans were in the minority.<sup>56</sup>

The majority for the bill apparently correctly reflected the public sentiment as a Gallup poll, although with results from only large urban centers, just before the committee vote showed that 54 per cent of the public was in favor of the bill with 34 per cent opposed and 12 per cent still undecided.<sup>57</sup>

The evaluation of the bill by the majority as voiced in the report to the House was that the amended bill met the requirements of safely providing aid to the countries resisting aggression and thus aiding in the defense of the United States. They felt that the probable effect of the bill would be to keep the United States out of war, and that the bill was consistent with the Constitution and with international law. The evaluation of the Congressmen had previously been and was then agreed to by diverse elements of the public and of the channels of public information, particularly after the amendments.

However, the evaluation of the committee minority was also extensively hailed, and was particularly noted in some sections of the press. In their report they claimed that they were strongly in favor of aid but against a large grant of power to the executive. It was exactly such power, according to them, that threatened democracy. However, seeking to get out from under any charges of obstructing aid, they

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<sup>56</sup>New York Times, January 31, 1941.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., January 29, 1941.

noted: "If there is any delay in reaching this objective (aid) it would be caused by this unprecedented bid for Presidential power."

Speaker Sam Rayburn, having received the committee report of the bill to the floor of the House, announced that the debate on the bill would begin the next Monday. The game was afoot - the chase was on. He expected passage by the end of the week.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., January 31, February 1, 1941.

## CHAPTER V

### IN FREEDOM AND LIBERTY

#### I. With Humility

On the day that the bill was finally ready for the consideration of the House, Britain's continuing crisis was underscored by a report from the British treasury that they were then preparing to use the securities of British controlled industry in the United States to finance the war. According to the report they were selling securities "steadily," and two weeks before the announcement arrangements with a group of investment trust representatives from New York had already started. The last source was about to be exhausted.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Britain was vital to the United States, and was in increasing danger was not apparently lost on the bulk of the American people. A Gallup poll of January 31 showed only 15 per cent of the people in the extreme anti-aid camp occupied by Colonel Lindbergh. The New York Times, just before the debate was to open in the House, went on record for the bill with a call for "heroic action." Many of the other papers also supported it, and the Democratic whip, Representative Patrick Boland of Pennsylvania, predicted

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, January 14, 30, 1941; F.D.R. His Personal Letters 1928-1945, ed. Elliott Roosevelt (New York, 1950), II, 1104.

a victory margin of at least 50 votes.<sup>2</sup>

The opposition, however, had by no means folded its tents. The Akron Beacon Journal found it could praise students at Akron University and the nearby Kent State University for splitting 50-50 on "all-out" aid to Britain, and also was vocal on the danger of a war bill. The Chicago Tribune, noting the beginning of the Senate hearings on the bill, started a series of almost daily attacks which included denying the importance of the British Navy, and again praising the stand taken by Colonel Lindbergh. At the Mecca Temple in New York a protest meeting arranged by the American Youth Congress was attended by 3,000 on January 31. The following day a demonstration against the bill was attempted in Washington by the American Peace Mobilization, and as debate was about to open John T. Flynn of the New York Chapter of the America First Committee launched an attack on the "war-dictatorship" bill.<sup>3</sup>

Flynn's attack was just one phase of a large drive on public opinion which brought into play both the America First Committee and the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. The America First Committee, during the entire period of the consideration of the bill, provided speakers for meetings, radio programs, forums, and debates, and sent transcriptions of speeches by Hanford MacNider, Alfred Landon,

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, January 31, February 2, 3, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 30, February 2, 1941.

<sup>3</sup>Chicago Daily Tribune, February 3, 6, 7, 8, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 26, February 3, 1941; New York Times, February 1, 2, 3, 1941.



and Senators Taft, Wheeler, Shipstead, and Walsh to radio stations all over the country. Many newspapers were a definite help to their efforts and the Chicago Tribune played a particularly key role. The Chicago Chapter of the committee, with the Tribune's help, managed to gain an estimated 628,000 signatures on petitions against the bill. America First also aided the efforts of the Church League of America, and the Ministers No War Committee, which reached 93,000 protestant ministers. After the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies discovered the scope of their rivals activities they launched a wide letter writing campaign, and their leaders, Eichelberger and Gibson, spoke at mass meetings through-out the heart of the area most strongly opposed to the bill, stopping at Minneapolis, St. Paul, Kansas City, and Chicago.<sup>4</sup>

The administration leaders pushed on with the bill and on January 31 secured a unanimous vote of the Rules Committee which set the time for the debate, and made the prospects of passage by the following week-end look extremely good. On Monday, February 3, the debate began with what later proved to be a needed warning from Speaker Rayburn to the House galleries against any demonstrations. When he had concluded, Representative Adolph Sabath called up the resolution which would establish the rule for the debate - three days of general debate equally divided, after which

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<sup>4</sup>Wayne S. Cole, America First: The Battle Against Intervention 1940-1941 (Madison, 1953), pp. 45-48; Walter Johnson, The Battle Against Isolation (Chicago, 1944), p. 208.

the five minute rule would apply as the bill was read for amendment.

Sabath spoke briefly in support of the rule, and Hamilton Fish, ostensibly to save time later in debate, spoke against the bill, saying: "It is with humility and a prayer in my heart that I open the debate against what I term to be in its present form the dictator-war-bankruptcy bill."<sup>5</sup>

In short order the debate on the rules was completed and they were approved. Sol Bloom moved that the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole, and then began one of the great debates in American history. In a long and able speech Bloom analysed and defended the various sections of the bill. But no sooner had he concluded than he found himself entangled with Representative Everett Dirksen of Illinois. This interchange, the only real fire-works of the first days debate, was over a visit of Lord Halifax to Bloom and to Senator George. Halifax, the new British ambassador, had paid courtesy calls on both, and had inquired over how long it would probably take to pass the bill. Dirksen labeled the visit "extraordinary procedure" claiming that the bill was still pending in committee at the time of the visit. Bloom denied that the bill had been pending, pointing out that it had been reported at the time of the visit.

"Mr. Chairman," he exploded, "I think the only thing that is unusual about any procedure is for the gentleman from Illinois to ask such a question. I think it is very improper."

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<sup>5</sup>New York Times, February 1, 1941; Congressional Record, 77th Congress, 1st Session, 484-489 (February 3, 1941).

John Taber, a New York Representative, interjected, "Why not?"

"I am answering this, and that is 'why not', and please obey the rules of the House," Bloom retorted. Then the chair ended the interchange temporarily, and finally it was lost in the other debate of the day.<sup>6</sup>

Charles Eaton, a New Jersey Representative, and a committee member made the first real opposition speech. It was a well-reasoned appeal in which he complained of being placed in the position of opposing something he really wanted because it was tied in with what he called a "dangerous and unnecessary political innovation." But Eaton's presentation was immediately over-shadowed by that of Luther Johnson of Texas, also a committee member, who concisely examined each of the issues and concluded in favor of the bill.<sup>7</sup>

Through-out the remainder of the day, as the House chamber and the galleries both gradually emptied of listeners, only three other really note-worthy speeches were made. Representative Roy Woodruff of Michigan, speaking in opposition to the bill, made the first of these. Equating the issue with basic American rights, he said: "The issue today is whether we shall cling to freedom and liberty or whether it shall be wrested from us by powers without, or whether we shall lose it by lack of wisdom from within. That, in blunt

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<sup>6</sup>New York Times, February 4, 1941; Cong. Record, 77th Cong., 1 Sess., 489-494 (February 3, 1941).

<sup>7</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 494-499 (February 3, 1941).

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words, is the issue we face today."<sup>8</sup>

In his long attack, however, he never quite came to grips with the bill, but devoted considerable time to the dangers of dictatorship, and belabored the eventual cost of such a program, noting that it would probably be necessary to continue it after the conclusion of the war.

Representative Charles Faddis of Pennsylvania immediately followed Woodruff in another able speech and was not worried about such prospects. He dealt primarily with the military threat and reasoned that it was a duty to keep war away from America. The way to do it, he thought, was to aid Great Britain.<sup>9</sup>

But probably the best speech of the day was delivered near the end of the debate when Bloom yielded an initial 30 minutes to Representative Butler B. Hare of South Carolina, and then twice extended his time so that he could complete a fine, well-reasoned, and documented speech. Hare included several Supreme Court rulings on the scope of Presidential powers in his argument, and effectively answered what appeared to be one of the major opposition worries - the ability of the President to give away almost anything without guarantee of return.

In one key paragraph he explained and dismissed this issue, saying:

Practically all of the objectors to the bill

<sup>8</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 500-519 (February 3, 1941); New York Times, February 4, 1941.

<sup>9</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 502-508 (February 3, 1941)

emphasize the words 'or otherwise dispose of' found in subsection 2, where provision is made for the sale, transfer, exchange, lease, or lend such military equipment as may be utilized 'in the interest of national defense,' saying that these words give the President the right to actually give away such military equipment as he may desire. That is, they seem to be very much exercised over the idea that Congress may provide equipment to be used in the defense of our country and the President will then give it away without a consideration. The implication is unwarranted and unjustified because subsection b shows some consideration, and it is absurd to think that any President of the United States would violate such a trust reposed in him.<sup>10</sup>

The debate on the second day of consideration was more lively in some respects than on the first day, and it definitely ranged over a wider range of territory, as many of those opposed to the bill spoke. By the end of the day the tone was notably more partisan than it had been when Bloom began the consideration the day before. However, when Representative James Richards of South Carolina led off the second day's debate it was on a high and reasoned level. Richards, who had given some support to the neutrality legislation of the years before the war appealed to the members to consider the legislation on the basis of its ability to promote the defense of the United States. He concluded that the bill promoted such defense through aiding Great Britain, and in one short passage he revealed what seemed to be one of the attitudes assumed by the opponents toward the bill. It was, perhaps, the key one, for it left their true motives open to question. "The gentleman from

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 513-515 (February 3, 1941).

New York (Mr. Fish)," he said, "says in effect that we should help Great Britain and the other democracies in any way we can, but we (the opponents) refuse to provide proper machinery to do it."<sup>11</sup>

Shortly after this speech Bloom yielded time to Representative Charles Gifford of Massachusetts. He in turn yielded often to other members on the floor, and very quickly found himself entangled with the opposition. After an exchange of remarks over the nature of imperialism, he asserted the importance of the British Navy to the support of the Monroe Doctrine. The opponents of the bill, throughout the hearings as well as the debate, tended to regard the Monroe Doctrine, along with Washington's and Jefferson's views on international affairs, to be endangered by the bill. Gifford, therefore, promptly found himself challenged on this issue. In as much as the relevant parts of the Doctrine had a beginning in a British proposition to the United States, and were to a large extent operative only because of the co-operation of the British, and the known British agreement in Europe, the bill proponents were on sound historical grounds.<sup>12</sup>

But soon after Gifford had concluded almost an hour on the floor, Hamilton Fish yielded what finally amounted to 20 minutes to Representative Burdick of North Dakota who

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 522-567 (February 4, 1941).

<sup>12</sup>Julius W. Pratt, A History of United States Foreign Policy (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1955), pp. 167-181; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 532-536 (February 4, 1941).

promptly reopened the same almost irrelevant issue with the deduction that the Monroe Doctrine had been a warning to Great Britain, with its origins in the War of 1812. But, more importantly, Burdick spelled out, in the latter part of his speech, another of the mental road-blocks in the path of the opponents. Completely ignoring all the warnings of potential dangers inherent in the fall of Britain, and in the inability of the United States to put up an adequate defense at that time, he voiced the same philosophy which other opponents who rejected the idea of buying time in the national self-interest voiced throughout.

"We do not," he concluded, "ask any nation to fight our battles for us, and it is unfair to say that any nation is doing or ever has done that. We are able to defend ourselves, but we cannot police the world."<sup>13</sup>

Then, in the most important speech of the day, James Wadsworth, the New York Representative who had conferred at the White House, took the floor. Although he spoke largely against the bill as it currently stood, Bloom granted him time from that allotted for the proponents. In an excellent speech Wadsworth proposed two major amendments. The first of these was the tentatively accepted limitation on the duration of the act. The second was new. He proposed a limitation on the amount to be authorized under the bill. This was a limitation which would effectively set a level on the amount that could be transferred, by, in effect

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<sup>13</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 538-540 (February 4, 1941).



prohibiting any future appropriations committee from appropriating over a set figure to implement the bill. It could be even more effective than an actual time limitation in ending operations under the act.

Wadsworth's proposal was warmly received by large numbers of both Democrats and Republicans, and the administration leaders were faced with a problem. They decided to seek a liberalization of the amounts Wadsworth initially mentioned if pressure seemed to point toward an acceptance of his amendment.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the following hours of debate the opposition began to use more and more of the time, but only two of the other speakers were truly effective in putting cogently major arguments against the bill. The first of these was Robert Chipfield of Illinois, one of the committee members. Using extensive materials furnished by the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress, he pointed out a major loop-hole in the time limitation amendment reported by the committee. Under the wording of that amendment contracts signed before the terminal date in 1943 might extend the operations of the act indefinitely. He appealed for an effective limitation.<sup>15</sup>

The other speaker was the last for the day, and he was considerably less cogent. Representative Richard Gale

<sup>14</sup>New York Times, February 5, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 540-542 (February 4, 1941).

<sup>15</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 548-550 (February 4, 1941).

of Minnesota, however, expanded on the recurrent theme of dictatorial powers by pointing out the belief entertained by the opponents that under the phrase "notwithstanding the provisions of any other law" the President would be able to virtually conscript labor. The key word, however, in Gale's attack was the word "virtually", for the context of the bill seemed to indicate rather clearly that the President would not have such power since the commonly used terminology of "notwithstanding" could not apply to any of the United States labor legislation.<sup>16</sup>

On Wednesday, the final day allotted for general debate, 63 individual members took the floor either to attack or defend the bill. After Majority Leader John M. McCormack arranged for the House to meet an hour earlier on Thursday and Friday, the fireworks began. Stephen M. Young of Ohio was the third speaker of the day, and presented a reasoned and historically correct speech, but the most spectacular interruption of the debate occurred just as he was telling the members: "There is nothing in this bill that makes for war or dictatorship." As he uttered those words a black-robed woman in a skull-mask arose in the gallery and raised her right arm, crying: "My Novena! My Novena!"

Attendants quickly seized the shrouded woman and took her to the office of the House Sergeant-at-Arms. She explained her strange cry as meaning "death is the victory sic , not Germany, not England," and identified herself as Margaret Russell,

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 567-568 (February 4, 1941).

of New York. Officials were unable to determine how she got into the galleries, and while there was some speculation that she was aided by someone from Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana's office, that office denied any knowledge of the event.<sup>17</sup>

The debate, however, continued, and very shortly the members were treated to two able speeches back to back in the long list of those who addressed the chamber. John Kee of West Virginia in an address of almost half an hour carefully explained that the bill did not yield Congressional powers to the Executive, and that the "notwithstanding" clause did not repeal any laws. He was immediately followed by James Van Zandt of Pennsylvania, in a somewhat shorter but equally able speech. He, more astutely than his companions, charged dictatorship, and compared the lend-lease bill to the enabling act passed by the German Reichstag in 1933.<sup>18</sup>

Then some of the big guns of the debate began to come into play. Bloom, controlling the time for the administration, yielded 40 minutes to John M. McCormack, who went down the line for the bill, describing it as "a peace measure for our people." He was very quickly followed by Dewey Short of Missouri, who, in a speech which stayed on a quite general level, tangled with Bloom over the intention of Washington in the "Farewell Address." Finally, in direct opposition to

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<sup>17</sup>New York Times, February 6, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 571, 576-577 (February 5, 1941).

<sup>18</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 583-589 (February 5, 1941).

McCormack, he charged, "This is a war bill." But Herman Eberharter, a committee member from Pennsylvania, was next on the floor with a defense of the bill which was even better than that put forth by McCormack. Beginning with charges that Nazi propaganda was working actively against the bill, he finally concluded by listing, for the benefit of the members, each of the laws from the Neutrality Act to Statutes on army purchasing, which would be affected by the "notwithstanding clause in the bill."<sup>19</sup>

Karl Mundt, a committee member from South Dakota, raised the next issue of the debate some minutes later when he rose in opposition to challenge the authorship of the bill. In the hearings, after Hull's initial statement that the bill was a treasury bill, none of the other witnesses had been willing to assign a specific parentage to the bill. Even Morgenthau was unwilling to claim complete responsibility. This left an argument open for the opponents of the legislation, and they used it to charge that the author of the bill was concealed because of the evil intention behind its provisions.<sup>20</sup>

The administration forces by this time virtually surrendered the floor to the opponents who proceeded to ring all the changes on America First, war danger, dictatorship, and the deceptive nature of President Roosevelt. Only once, when John Dingell of Michigan took the floor was an exceptionally strong counter-attack forthcoming. Dingell

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 591-595, 599-607 (February 5, 1941).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 610-613 (February 5, 1941).

took issue with the committee testimony of Lindbergh, and decided that: "The sum total of Lindbergh's advice could be totaled at zero." But his speech was at least overcome by John Robsion of Kentucky, James Mott of Oregon, and Vito Marcantonio of New York on the other side.

Robsion was the first of these to speak, and in a curious manner he divined the immediate nature of the bill without understanding the importance of the legislation. He claimed that the real idea of the bill was to give away war materials which the United States then had on hand, and he attacked that action as dangerous to the American defense. He also concluded that the bill would delegate dangerous powers likely to take the United States into war, and that therefore amendments could not improve it.<sup>21</sup>

Mott of Oregon who was second of the three speakers had the shortest of the speeches, but charged effectively, and in a manner calculated to lend additional credence to Robsion's charges, that the bill would permit acts which would result in war. Then Marcantonio took the floor. He was initially given time by Bloom and later had additional time extended to him by Mundt and Fish who were controlling the time of the opponents. He yielded many times for questions and discussions, and after a ringing attack on Willkie, he also settled down to the question of the war dangers inherent in the bill.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 631-633, 639-643 (February 5, 1941).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 652-654, 656-660 (February 5, 1941).

## II. The Price of Unity

With the conclusion of the three days of general debate, it seemed clear that nothing new had been said, nor had any minds been actually changed, but the proposals by James Wadsworth on the second day of the debate had introduced a new element into the consideration. By the close of the debate his proposal for a limitation on the amount to be appropriated appeared as the high spot. The general membership of the House was thought to favor this approach, and although the administration leaders had apparently reached no conclusion on the proposal they too seemed to lean in the direction of compromise. Wadsworth's proposal, indeed, had gained the support of some of the factions most strongly in favor of the bill, and the Cleveland Plain Dealer lauded him for displaying "qualities of statesmanship that have been conspicuous only by their absence in most previous discussions of the proposal by his party fellows."<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, when the consideration of the bill reached the point of being read under the five minute rule for amendments, the administration seemed willing to carefully amend whenever it seemed likely that unity would be improved by a concession. It was judged that many of the Republicans who were most interested in compromise would finally vote against the bill no matter what was done with it, but that

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<sup>23</sup>New York Times, February 6, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 6, 1941.

there was hope of winning the support of men like Wadsworth. Sol Bloom began the consideration of amendments by announcing that he would propose two additional changes in the bill at the proper time in the reading. The administration itself, however, was chiefly concerned with voting down opposition attempts to amend the heart out of the bill, and it mustered an almost consistent majority to prevent this. The first of the opposition attempts was one by Karl Mundt in which he put forward a substitute bill designed to extend \$2 billion to Great Britain in the form of a loan. After a somewhat lengthy debate which rehashed the same issues the substitute was brought to a vote, and on a teller count demanded by Mundt, was defeated 145 to 206.<sup>24</sup>

The next amendment attempted was by Melvin Maas of Minnesota. He proposed that the President be authorized to purchase all of the British possessions in the Western Hemisphere. After some discussion his proposal was ruled not germane to the bill, and John Vorys of Ohio was able to bring up an amendment which would require the President to obtain the specific approval of the Chief of Naval Operations, and of the Chief of Staff of the Army before he could transfer anything under the provisions of the bill. His proposal was more thoroughly and intelligently debated and then defeated on a division of 78 to 109. Then the first of the committee amendments, one merely requiring the President to consult with the Army and Navy chiefs was written into the bill by a

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<sup>24</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 710-725 (February 6, 1941); Time, February 17, 1941, p. 16.

voice vote.<sup>25</sup>

Moving quickly the administration wrote in the recommended time-limit amendment, and tightened the limitation under a recommendation by Luther Johnson, that was exactly in line with the loop-hole pointed out by Robert Chipfield in the debate on February 4. The original amendment, which limited the life of the act set June 30, 1943 as the terminal date. The additional amendment limited any contract concluded before that date to a life extending only to July 1, 1946.<sup>26</sup>

But having demonstrated its ability to control action on the bill, the administration suffered a surprising set-back at the hands of Everett Dirksen of Illinois. Striking quickly while 65 Democrats were out to lunch, Dirksen offered an amendment which would allow Congress to terminate the powers of the bill at any time by concurrent resolution. Bloom attacked the amendment heatedly, and it was quickly brought to a vote. When the House divided Dirksen faced defeat 83 to 107, but he demanded a teller vote, and with the 65 administration supporters missing, he managed to get his amendment approved 148 to 141. Actually, the meaning of the amendment was not too great since Presidential signature is required on concurrent resolutions before they become effective.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 726-733 (February 6, 1941); Time, February 17, 1941, p. 16.

<sup>26</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 734-735 (February 6, 1941); Time, February 17, 1941, p. 16.

<sup>27</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 735 (February 6, 1941); Time, February 17, 1941, p. 17; New York Times, February 7, 1941.



The administration forces, however, promptly resumed control, and an amendment offered by Jerry Voorhis of California to reduce the time limits to 1942, although long and bitterly discussed, was defeated by a division of 93 to 136. Likewise, another amendment by Karl Mundt, this one to specifically rule out any possible convoying, was halted after a debate in which even Sam Rayburn joined. Mundt was defeated on a division vote of 49 to 111, and the amendment first offered by the committee which stated that nothing was to be "construed to authorize or permit the authorization of convoying" was approved before the House ended its first session on amending the bill.<sup>28</sup>

Although the time limitations on the bill were much the more important amendments, the convoy issue seemed to raise more heat, publicly as well as in the House chamber. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, noting only that a shorter time limitation would be preferable from its point of view, devoted much time to a discussion of the convoy issue. It shared, almost exactly, the sentiment expressed by many of the Congressmen. Their argument was that the bill as proposed would enable the President to send convoys into war zones. The administration amendment in actuality could not stop the President from sending ships into war zones, or from convoying, simply because as Commander-in-Chief the President already had such power under the Constitution. The opponents, however, could never seem to grasp this, and their continuing refrain

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<sup>28</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 735-749 (February 6, 1941); Time, February 17, 1941, p. 16.

was that the bill would enhance the President's power, and as the Post-Dispatch said: "There is no sound reason to enlarge the area of his power to make war at a time when so much of the world is already aflame with war."<sup>29</sup>

After McCormack and Fish had set the order of business, the second day of amendment in the House opened with Sol Bloom proposing an additional amendment stating that nothing in the act would permit shipping in violation of section 3 of the Neutrality Act of 1939. This was an amendment of rather wide latitude and was principally designed to further reassure those who had war fears about the bill, without hindering in any way its operation. James Mott of Oregon, however, offered a substitute for Bloom's amendment which would have been more stringent, and which was eventually over-ruled as changing the nature of the Neutrality Act itself. After the substitute had been over-ruled Bloom's amendment was agreed to.<sup>30</sup>

George H. Tinkham then rose to offer an amendment which would specifically exclude Russia from being judged vital to the defense of the United States. On a teller vote he was defeated 94 to 185. Immediately Mott was ready to try again with an amendment which would expand the Neutrality Act, and this time he was defeated by a division of 57 to 91. Moving quickly, an amendment by John M. Costello of California was offered which would have made mandatory a material quid pro quo for anything transferred under the bill.

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<sup>29</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 7, 1941.

<sup>30</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 753-761 (February 7, 1941).

His move was also defeated on a teller vote of 125 to 150.<sup>31</sup>

Hamilton Fish next proposed an amendment which would prevent the President from giving away any naval vessels under the bill. A bitter debate developed between McCormack and Vorys of Ohio on this issue, but the administration maintained firm control over the situation and the amendment went down on a teller vote by 123 to 183. They likewise quickly disposed of three more amendments, all by comfortable margins. The first was proposed by Clifford Hope of Kansas to assure a market for agricultural products. It was defeated 106 to 158. The second was offered by Jesse Wolcott of Michigan. A move to strike out the "notwithstanding" clause, it was stopped by the administration 71 to 114. The third was another offered by Fish, which specified that labor legislation was not to fall under the "notwithstanding" provision. The administration claimed that such legislation would not be affected anyway and defeated Fish again 98 to 153.<sup>32</sup>

The next amendment was then written into the bill. Charles I. Taber of New York proposed an amendment to limit the amount that could be transferred out of current United States stocks of weapons and materials to a value of \$500 million. This, in effect, recognized the give-away thesis that had been voiced by Robsion in debate, and sought to limit its scope. Sol Bloom immediately offered a substitute amendment which would set the limit at 10 per cent of the

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 761-769 (February 7, 1941).

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 769-779 (February 7, 1941).

military appropriation for that year. Taber estimated that Bloom's provision would raise the limit to \$1.3 billion, but was willing to accept it. It was, accordingly, written into the bill as the last amendment to be considered on Friday, February 7. The administration apparently felt that such an amendment would help to increase unity on the bill, and after its approval hoped to go through to a final vote on Saturday with a minimum of difficulty.<sup>33</sup>

American unity, indeed, had become one of the important factors dealt with in the editorial columns of the press, and the New York Times built its entire treatment of the bill around the theme of national unity. The Washington Post, commenting after the preceding amendments had been written into the law, came to the defense of the measure, and of unity, in a strong editorial. After standing firmly against any abridgement of the powers of the President, it reasoned: "It is axiomatic that if the price of national unity is a trimming of the lend-lease bill, such trimming should be made. Unity is even more of a shield and buckler than a two-ocean navy. And it is even more potent as a weapon against Hitlerism than arms. All that proponents of the measure wish to insure is that the purposes of the bill shall not be emasculated."<sup>34</sup>

When the final day of consideration opened on the bill, Bloom asked unanimous consent to change the limitation

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<sup>33</sup>New York Times, February 8, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 780-781 (February 7, 1941).

<sup>34</sup>Washington Post, February 8, 1941.

amendment from 10 per cent to the previously estimated \$1.3 billion. The move was promptly objected to by Frederick Smith of Ohio, thus halting it temporarily. But as soon as a proposal by Charles Dewey of Illinois to take custody of all allied securities in the Western Hemisphere had been ruled not germane, McCormack offered the same \$1.3 billion amendment which Bloom had attempted. Sam Rayburn offered a perfecting amendment to the language of the one offered by McCormack, and they were both approved, writing in a limit of \$1.3 billion rather than 10 per cent of the military appropriations.<sup>35</sup>

Still working on the same section of the bill Karl Mundt proposed to define the \$1.3 billion to consist of the total original cost of the products to be transferred, but was defeated 68 to 97, while John Costello offered an amendment to keep more than one-third of the United States war planes from being given away, and was defeated 73 to 103.<sup>36</sup>

Then Jeannette Rankin, the Montana pacifist, proposed an amendment to specifically limit the ability to send service men outside the Western Hemisphere. It was immediately pointed out that this would impair the operation of the United States Pacific Fleet, and finally after Sol Bloom objected to the amendment she withdrew it. But immediately James Van Zandt offered a similar amendment designed to apply only to the army. After some discussion as to its applicability to

<sup>35</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 785-788 (February 8, 1941); Time, February 17, 1941, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 788-791 (February 8, 1941).

the troops in the Philippine Islands, it was also defeated.<sup>37</sup>

Hamilton Fish next moved to report the bill back to the House with the enacting clause stricken, and was soundly defeated. Immediately he offered an amendment to alter the "notwithstanding" clause, and had it rejected. In a third consecutive unsuccessful attempt he tried to limit the provisions for repair of belligerent ships to the time set for such repairs by international law. On a division vote he was again defeated 70 to 147.<sup>38</sup>

Then a relatively quick series of substitute moves and two amendments designed to provide markets for United States commodities abroad were defeated. The substitute amendments were offered by Eaton of New Jersey and Taber of New York, while the others came from Edith Rogers of Massachusetts and Vincent Harrington of Iowa. But with these finally out of the way, the reading of the bill was able to move rapidly past the third section, and the two remaining committee amendments were proposed. The first of these, requiring Congressional approval of future appropriations and authorizations was quickly adopted. The second, requiring the President to report to Congress at least every 90 days attracted another amendment from Hamilton Fish. His proposal, again rejected, would have required similar reports from the

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 791-795 (February 8, 1941).

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 795-798 (February 8, 1941).

other agencies involved in operations under the act.<sup>39</sup>

With the final administration-sponsored amendment written into the bill the leaders pressed rapidly for final consideration. Seven additional amendments were quickly disposed of, eliciting a "gag-rule" charge from Congresswoman Edith Rogers of Massachusetts. Among the seven rejected amendments were another by Jeannette Rankin to keep men from being sent outside the country, another by James Wadsworth to limit the entire expenditure under the bill to \$7 billion, and one by Vito Marcantonio to assure that the thirteen original colonies would not be declared surplus and deeded back to King George.<sup>40</sup>

When the last amendments had been considered and the reading of the bill completed, the Committee of the Whole House rose and reported the bill back to the House itself. As allowed under the rules adopted for the consideration of the bill, Fish moved to recommit it to the Foreign Affairs Committee, and a roll call vote was taken. With eight of the 431 members then sitting in the House not voting Fish's motion failed by 160 to 263. The stage was set for the final vote.<sup>41</sup>

### III. The First Big Test

In a sense the administration now faced its first big

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<sup>39</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 798-804 (February 8, 1941); Time, February 17, 1941, pp. 16-17.

<sup>40</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 804-814 (February 8, 1941).

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 814 (February 8, 1941).

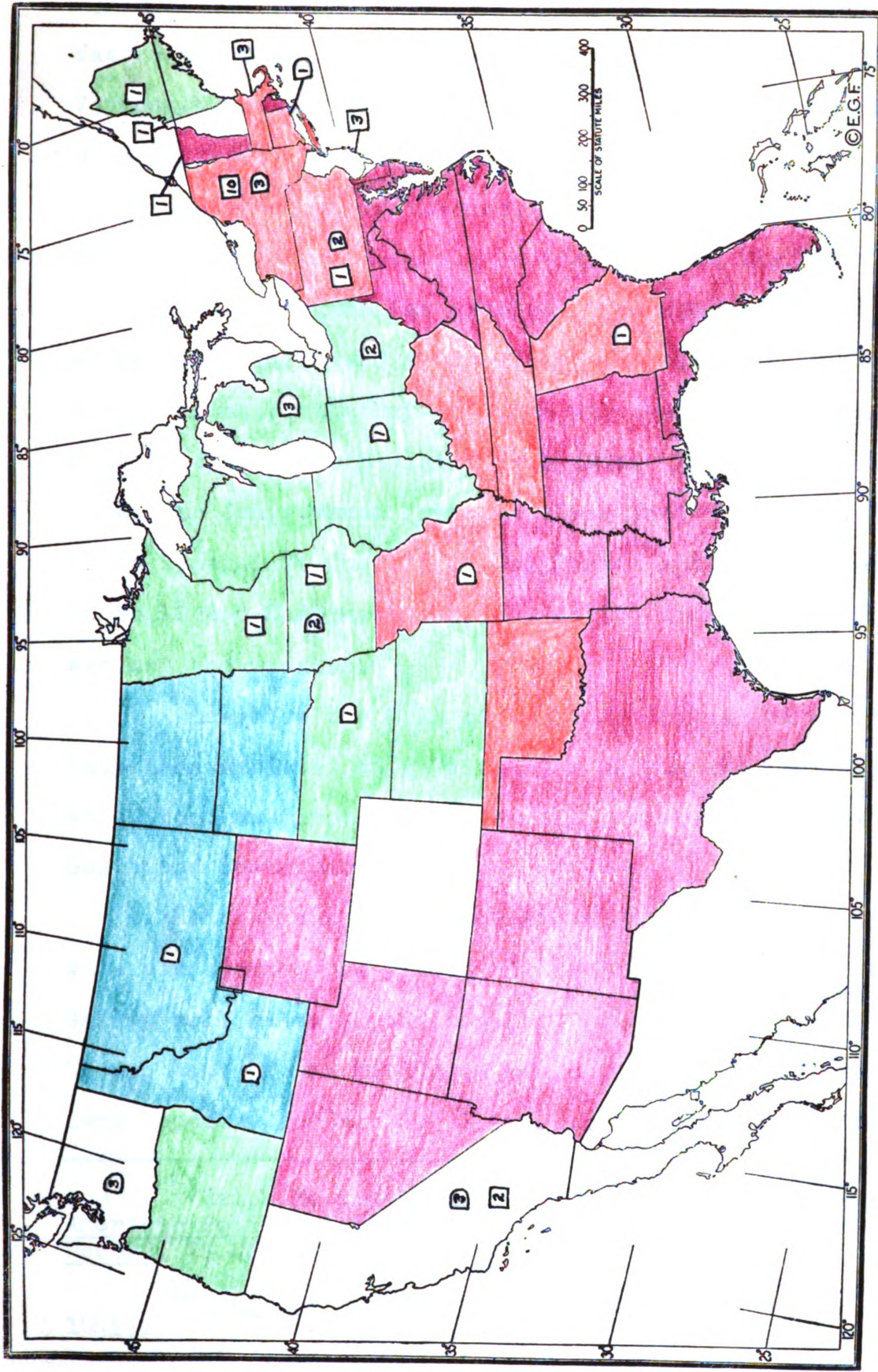
test. Having yielded to many modifications, and some apparent improvements on the original bill, as the price of unity, it was hoping for a big margin of victory as an encouragement to the British and the Greeks, and as a sign of strength to the other nations in Europe and Asia. Since the beginning there had been little doubt about the ultimate passage of the bill, and there was none on February 8 when Sol Bloom at last asked that the final roll be called. The vote showed a total of 260 in favor of the legislation, 165 opposed, and six still not voting. All six of these were paired on the legislation.<sup>42</sup>

The final vote, when tabulated by state delegations, produced some interesting results. Ralph Smuckler, in a study of isolationism made in 1953 found "that a broad band of isolationist strength existed across the northern portion of the United States as compared to a relative lack of isolationism in the southern and southwestern states." For the House of Representatives the twelve most isolationist states, over a period from 1933 to 1950, were, in order, North Dakota, Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Wyoming, South Dakota, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, and Vermont. The vote on the lend-lease bill bore out completely this breakdown. Only 15 states had delegations which were unanimously against the bill, or split with a majority against it. Out of this total, North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho, and Montana were the only states to cast unanimous votes

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<sup>42</sup>New York Times, February 9, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 815 (February 8, 1941).





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# VOTE IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES UNITED STATES

against it. All but one of the states named by Smuckler cast a majority against the bill. The single exception was Vermont. The states which joined those named by Smuckler were Illinois, Indiana, Oregon, and Maine.<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps one of the most interesting areas in the nation in regards to voting on the bill was the Pacific Coast. Although the Los Angeles Times exhibited a high degree of fatalism in regard to American neutrality in the war, there was no doubt that the area was aware of certain dangers from Europe, and especially from Asia. Yet, in the final vote, the Congressmen from the three Pacific states split 14 to 15 against the bill. California split its delegation 10 to 10 and Washington split 3 to 3. Oregon voted 2 to 1 against the measure.

Otherwise the bulk of the vote went about as it might have been expected to go with most of the nineteen states which went unanimously for the bill scattered through the South and Southwest.<sup>44</sup>

Neither was there much question but that the final vote represented the wishes of the nation's people. A Gallup poll released the day following the House vote found 54 per cent of the nation in favor of the bill with 22 per cent opposed, and another 15 per cent giving qualified

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<sup>43</sup>Ralph H. Smuckler, "The Region of Isolationism," The American Political Science Review, June, 1953, p. 391; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 815 (February 8, 1941).

<sup>44</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 815 (February 8, 1941).

answers. This showed a drop of 12 per cent in the number of those opposed to the bill in the week of House debate. Those in favor remained constant. Of course, the party support was much more marked with 69 per cent of the Democrats being registered in favor of the legislation. Republican sentiment was much more divided but the largest single segment of those polled, 38 per cent, was in favor of the bill. This was particularly interesting in the light of the actual vote in the House where the Republicans split 135 to 24 against the bill - a percentage break of almost 85 to 15 in opposition.<sup>45</sup>

|                  | For<br>Bill | Against<br>Bill | Qualified<br>Opinion | No<br>Opinion |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Gallup GOP       | 38          | 30              | 23                   | 9             |
| House GOP        | 15          | 85              | -                    | -             |
| Gallup Democrats | 69          | 13              | 10                   | 8             |
| House Democrats  | 90          | 10              | -                    | -             |
| Gallup National  | 54          | 22              | 15                   | 9             |
| House National   | 61          | 39              | -                    | -             |

Possibly this was mostly due to the strong and vocal opposition to the bill raised in many areas. Among the most vocal leaders of this sentiment was the Chicago Tribune which could see no good at all on the side of the proponents. The Tribune, in analysing the passage of the bill in the House wrote: "The house of representatives passed its war bill,

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<sup>45</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 815 (February 8, 1941); Time, February 17, 1941, p. 16; New York Times, February 9, 1941.

the ironic No. 1776, as was expected. All the arguments advanced against it in Congressman Bloom's committee hearings were sound, and most of them were unanswerable, but reason had no effect on the minds of the majority."<sup>46</sup>

More moderate, and more reasonable voices from the press in St. Louis and Los Angeles accepted the bill and called for further fair consideration, and tightening amendment. Together with responsible organs like Commonweal which still wanted an exact definition of all the powers, and like The Christian Century which called for outright defeat of the bill, these probably carried more weight among the bills opponents.<sup>47</sup>

But with the bill half-way through Congress and largely unimpaired by amendments, the administration had reason to be more confident. The strict party division of the vote in the House could be interpreted as a failure of the attempt to gain unity, and the bitter fight that was shaping up in the Senate was ample indication that the worst was yet to come. Still, the House conduct of both the hearings and the debate could not be legitimately attacked as partisan or unfair to the opponents of the bill. Combined with the passage of the bill in the House, and its apparently safe margin in the Senate, the administration could feel that the United

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<sup>46</sup>Chicago Daily Tribune, February 12, 1941.

<sup>47</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 9, 1941; Los Angeles Times, February 10, 1941; "Policy and Action," Commonweal, February 21, 1941, p. 436; "The Debate on the Lend-Lease Bill," The Christian Century, February 12, 1941, p. 213.

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States was making progress toward responsibility in freedom and liberty. The arsenal of democracy was now half-assured to the allies. The question was one of speed.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SECOND ROUND

#### I. Last Call For Lunch

Speed was the key-note from the day the hearings on the lend-lease bill opened in the Senate, until the day the committee took its final vote on the measure. From the beginning it was fairly certain that the bill would clear the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since a poll taken a few days after the introduction of the bill showed an 8 to 4 split of committee members in favor of the bill. Many of the other members did not express their opinions, but with the assurances of Senator Walter George of Georgia, the chairman, that some amendments would be written into the bill, and with the addition of James Byrnes of South Carolina and belligerent old Carter Glass of Virginia to the committee the margin of passage was considered to be safe.<sup>1</sup>

The hearings, which opened on January 27, a few days before the House hearings finally closed, were tense, and at times, bitter, attracting consistently large crowds into the Senate Caucus Room where they were held. As had been the case in the House hearings, Secretary of State Cordell Hull

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<sup>1</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 12, 1941; Tom Connally, My Name Is Tom Connally (New York, 1954), p. 242; Time, February 10, 1941, p. 17.

was the first witness, but those who had gathered to hear him were disappointed for, as soon as it became clear that the Senators wished to ask him questions he did not feel he could publicly answer, the committee adjourned and went into executive session. There Hull was blunt, according to some of the members, in stating the danger to the United States, and the need for prompt action.<sup>2</sup>

But when the committee met again publicly on the morning of January 28 to hear Secretary Morgenthau, the public was not disappointed, for not only the Secretary, but also two of his assistants appeared on the stand. They gave some phases of the bill the most thorough treatment it was to receive. Morgenthau, repeating to a large extent the statement he had given before the House committee, brought the Senators newer up-to-date figures on the dire condition of British finances, reminding them that Britain didn't have the money to buy what it needed and that American airplane manufacturers would run out of British orders by April unless new ones could be placed. Once more Morgenthau attempted to stay with the monetary aspects of the bill, but was quickly forced into a discussion of its effects on Neutrality legislation.<sup>3</sup>

Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan had been selected to cross-question Morgenthau on these topics for the

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<sup>2</sup>United States Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on S. 275; A Bill Further To Promote the Defense of the United States, And for Other Purposes, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., Part I, 2-8; Connally, p. 242; New York Times, January 28, 1941.

<sup>3</sup>Time, February 10, 1941, p. 17; Senate Hearings, I, 9-76.



opposition, and was polite and mannered in his questioning. Later the Secretary had complaints against Senator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, and Robert Taft of Ohio, who was not a committee member, but who sat with Nye at the hearings and handed him written questions.<sup>4</sup>

Vandenberg began by inquiring what the President would be able to do under lend-lease that he couldn't do under existing law. Morgenthau replied that it would make it "possible for him to make available to any country that he so desires the munitions of war that they need and that they do not have the dollars to pay for." Although this left a wide avenue of attack Vandenberg went on to ask if amendment of the Johnson Act or the Neutrality Act couldn't accomplish the same things, and Morgenthau had to agree that this would be true in so far as credits were concerned.

With this admission in the record Vandenberg asked: "So the net result is that this is an indirect repeal of those provisions in the Neutrality Act and in the Johnson Act?"

Secretary Morgenthau. Not in the Johnson Act, as I understand it.

Senator Vandenberg. Perhaps not literally, but the spirit of the Neutrality Act as you have acknowledged it.

Secretary Morgenthau. No. This is government to government. I don't think anybody who has studied the bill feels that this in any way cuts across the Johnson Act.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Henry Morgenthau, Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries," Colliers, October 18, 1947, p. 75.

<sup>5</sup>Senate Hearings, I, 25.

The Senator continued to pursue the topic by asking why the Treasury Department did not think an amendment of the Neutrality Act would accomplish the same result. Morgenthau requested that his counsel, Ed Foley, who had been a key figure in drafting the bill, be allowed to explain this reason. When Foley took the stand he presented one of the most logical of all the explanations of the bill produced in its entire consideration. He compared the lend-lease method with the method of extending credits, and summed up the difference in cogent terms. He explained:

You simply provide another country with dollars with which to pay for material that it would order here, it would mean that it would be months and months before those materials came off the assembly lines and could be made available. Under the provisions of this bill it would permit the President to make available to a country, whose defense is vital to our defense, materials that we have on hand now which they might need at any time, and it would permit them to marshall those materials and those supplies and put them in the places where they have to have them when they have to have them. That is the principal difference. I think it is not correct to say that it is simply a difference of credit. It is a difference of speed, expedition, and purpose.<sup>6</sup>

Under questioning by Senators Tom Connally of Texas, James E. Murray of Montana, and Claude Pepper of Florida, Morgenthau was able to do a neat job of defending the bill. He pointed out that inasmuch as Britain had paid for everything it had received in the way of supplies it could not be said that the United States was aiding Britain at all, and indeed, he asserted to Murray that it had at times been

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., I, 25-26.

difficult for the British to buy at all. Finally he made it clear, in a statement that was directly opposed to the isolationist position, that he thought the aid policy would be a good buy. "I can answer that in this way," he told Pepper, "I think we would save money by making available to England or any other country that is attacked the implements of war to fight on their own ground rather than be left in this hemisphere alone against the world."<sup>7</sup>

But between the first of these questions and Morgenthau's later statement Senators Hiram Johnson of California and Bob La Follette, Jr., of Wisconsin raised again the question of the authorship of the bill. Morgenthau was unwilling to make a flat statement to La Follette, but indicated that the bill had been drafted through a series of many conferences. When Johnson asked if the bill had been written by Foley, Morgenthau denied it, and indicated that Foley had collaborated with Beaman, and with Hackworth of the State Department, and that conferences had been held which included all of the Congressional leaders. Although this was apparently specific the opponents were never satisfied and contended to the end that the authorship of the bill had been kept secret by the administration.<sup>8</sup>

Finally as Morgenthau's day before the committee drew to a close Senator Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri, by a series of questions on the war debts from the First World War, attempted to indicate that the amount the lend-lease bill would

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., I, 23, 37, 39.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., I, 34-36.

cost the American public could not be estimated. In this effort D. W. Bell, under-secretary of the Treasury, was called to the stand to explain the status of the debts.<sup>9</sup>

But while Morgenthau and his aides had been pointing out the advantages of lend-lease over a simple grant of credits or a loan which would reopen the war debts wounds, the sentiment for just such a loan was having a slight upsurge. A few days before the hearings opened Raymond L. Buell, round-table editor of Fortune and a former director of the Foreign Policy Association, had called for a grant of \$5 billion without a demand for repayment. On the day Morgenthau appeared, Mark Sullivan in his column wrote that any war responsibility could be avoided by just loaning money to Britain. Those who were essentially isolationist were still attempting to avoid the responsibility of world power. The Akron Beacon Journal was certainly in this position when it observed after Morgenthau's testimony that the United States had not asked Britain, Greece, or China to fight. It did, however, see a bit into the future when it observed further that "one or both of the belligerents in every future war will have a right to expect the same consideration from soft-hearted, soft-headed Uncle Sam."<sup>10</sup>

The third witness called before the Foreign Relations Committee was Secretary of War Henry Stimson. Stimson, in

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., I, 76-80.

<sup>10</sup>Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 26, 1941; Washington Post, January 28, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, January 29, 1941.

another fine statement, attempted to outline the purpose and the expediency of the bill. Initially he pointed out that it would centralize the purchase of munitions and make their production thereby both cheaper and speedier. Then he emphasized the idea that the United States was not either actually giving or lending anything to Great Britain, but that it was buying "our own security while we prepare." Continuing to slap at the bill opponents in his statement, Stimson pointed out that under these conditions an ordinary loan was short-sighted, and that furthermore a grant of flexible and effective authority to the executive would enable a day to day dealing with extraordinary situations which the legislative branch of government could not handle.<sup>11</sup>

When the questioning began LaFollette opened the topic of Presidential powers and of convoying. But Stimson was not to be pushed on any topic and he quickly told the Senator that no new powers in regards to the way in which the President could handle the fleet were given in the bill, and that the bill itself did not authorize convoying. After Stimson had entered a series of documents in the record showing which laws authorized the sale of military equipment, established reusable funds, and which ones would be affected under the "notwithstanding" clause, La Follette came back to convoying with a suggestion for an amendment to prohibit convoying. Stimson dismissed it as being not germane to the bill. He did not, however, object to a time limit amendment.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Senate Hearings, I, 85-87, 90.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., I, 95-96, 100-114, 116.

But probably Stimson's clearest warning, and really a call for speed, was in reply to a question by Senator Pepper. "So that this is a method toward the peace of this country," Pepper asked, "and not a step toward getting this country into war?"

Stimson replied: "As I surveyed it in times past, it is about the last call for lunch on that kind of a procedure. This is an effort to do just as you say - to carry out, by nonviolent methods, the protection of our own country through aid to Great Britain. It may be the last."<sup>13</sup>

Stimson's stand was immediately strongly endorsed by the Washington Post, which also put its weight behind the move for speed in the bills consideration. "There is a Latin proverb," it editorialized, "which runs something like this: He who gives now, gives many fold. It should shine out with words of fire from the walls inclosing the legislators who have the lend-lease bill under discussion." Although Stimson's stand on convoys was attacked in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the same day produced a column by Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner which pointed out that the powers granted the President were less than those in the Constitution. In addition, they argued, "The method of preparing the bill was far less dictatorial than methods often employed in the past. And the spirit shown by the White House is conciliatory rather than hectoring."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., I, 125; Time, February 10, 1941, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 30, 1941; Washington Post, January 30, 1941.

If the White House was not hectoring, however, the opposition Senators on the Foreign Relations Committee were, and in a brief respite from administration witnesses, their sharp and belligerent attitude became increasingly evident when James W. Gerard, the former ambassador to Germany, and Reinhold Niebuhr were called to appear on January 30. Gerard got off fairly easily with a strong endorsement of the bill on the basis of his experiences in Europe. Niebuhr, however, seemed to particularly raise the ire of Senators Johnson and Nye. He was a professor of theology at the Union Theological Seminary, and also the editor of Christianity and Crisis, a newly founded magazine, as well as being a member of the executive committee of the Inter-Faith Committee for Aid to the Democracies. Niebuhr came to the strong support of the bill not only because of the national interest, but also because of "the obligations which we owe to the community of nations as one of the nations which may be regarded as an inheritor and custodian of the standards of justice of western civilization."<sup>15</sup>

After making a strong reply to Senator Johnson, Niebuhr met the belligerent questions of Nye with equal force. "May I ask the witness," questioned Nye, "for whom do you pretend to speak?"

"I am not pretending to speak for anybody, Senator, except myself," Niebuhr replied.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Senate Hearings, I, 163-176.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., I, 172-173.

But this testimony was only an interlude before Frank Knox, the Secretary of the Navy, came before the committee for two full days to do battle with the opposition in as strong or stronger terms than those employed by Stimson. After entering his House committee statement and testimony in the record, he proceeded to make mince-meat out of the opposition's star witness, Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh. He strongly stated that any talk of a negotiated peace was "wild fancy."

Then in the questioning he quickly pointed out to Senator Pepper that the cost of the bill would be small compared to the cost should Britain fall. Senator Nye, however, soon was questioning the Secretary about the purposes of the bill. As clearly as possible Knox explained the necessity for British dollar exchange, and that all the powers in the bill were necessary for its operation. The real point of Nye's questioning, however, soon again resolved itself around the issue of convoying. He asked:

Mr. Secretary, will this so-called lend-lease bill, to your way of thinking, permit the convoying of British merchantmen by the American Navy?

Secretary Knox. No more than if we do not pass the bill.

Senator Nye. No more than if we do not pass the bill?

Secretary Knox. Yes.

Senator Nye. In other words, you think the President has that power now?

Secretary Knox. Any time he wants it.<sup>17</sup>

Nye continued questioning Knox until the end of that days hearings and continued briefly again on the following

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., I, 177-182, 185, 202-204; Time, February 10, 1941, p. 17.



day. In the course of this testimony Knox assured Nye that the Navy would not be given away, and that his entire purpose was to buy time, finally concluding that he would not care if the United States never got anything back because he thought it "the most economical way of defense." Shortly after that statement Tom Connally pointed out, "If we can get our safety and security, that is pretty good repayment, isn't it?" "I think so, Senator," Knox replied.<sup>18</sup>

But Knox and the administration, too, were subjects of attack in the following days. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch seizing on Knox's statement about a negotiated peace, opposed going beyond any discussion of British requirements, and decided that the hearings "should not become the forum of American Cabinet officers for personal judgments on an issue not before them or the country for decision." In the light of some of the questions asked by opposition Senators this was a strange view to take. At the same time that Knox was appearing before the Senate Committee a thousand men and women carrying placards denouncing the "war bill" were also parading in front of the White House. This demonstration was organized by the partly Communist-sponsored American Peace Mobilization.

However, the administration also had its supporters and while the House leaders were preparing for the opening of debate in that body, over the week-end following Knox's testimony, the bill's supporters could draw encouragement

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<sup>18</sup>Senate Hearings, I, 205-206, 216, 236, 242.

from such columnists as Walter Lippmann, who reasoned: "We may conclude, therefore, that the structure of opposition, - reared on the assumption that this bill gives the President new power for war and dictatorship, - is contrary to fact and irrelevant and a waste of good energy and precious time." This view was similarly supported in the editorials of the Washington Post, while the Atlanta Constitution, in commenting on Willkie's stay in Great Britain, was again able to urge speed.<sup>19</sup>

## II. The Gates of Hell

If speed were the key-note for the administration witnesses, then eloquence and delay in about equal parts made up the contribution of the opposition witnesses the following week. The crowds were somewhat smaller than usual at the Senate hearings, but they made up in interest what they lacked in size. Senator Connally complained that they were made up of America Firsters who came only to cheer their leaders and heckle administration Senators. Indeed, on February 2, the day before debate opened in the House, and the day before the first opposition witnesses appeared before the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate, the America First Committee held its first mass meeting in Washington, D. C. Still, the administration was not totally silent, and Senator Josh Lee of Oklahoma asserted that same day, that the Congress was being assaulted by Nazi propaganda

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<sup>19</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 1, 1941; Washington Post, February 1, 2, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, February 1, 1941.

in an effort to stop the lend-lease bill, weaken it, or at least delay it until it was too late.<sup>20</sup>

It was in this atmosphere that Philip LaFollette, former governor of Wisconsin and brother of the Senator on the committee, led off the parade of 30 opposition witnesses who appeared that week. He was, initially, in that group which failed to see the necessity of buying time, and considered the policy proposed as an attempt to fool the British into fighting for the United States. He apparently was unable to realize that the British were in the war anyway and had nothing to lose and everything to gain through a lend-lease policy. The chances of their being fooled were extremely thin. But this was not the total extent of LaFollette's testimony. He was also firmly convinced that the President was determined on, and that the bill was, a "mandate for a war policy." This was completely unnecessary in his view, because as he told Senator "Roarin' Bob" Reynolds in answering a question: "They will never come over here, Senator. I am convinced of that."<sup>21</sup>

LaFollette was followed on the stand by Norman Thomas who made his second appearance against the bill. Thomas felt that it had become a waste of time to belabor the point that the powers extended to the President might put the United States into war, but he thought so not on the grounds that

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<sup>20</sup>Connally, p. 242; Time, February 17, 1941, p. 17; New York Times, February 2, 1941; Washington Post, February 3, 1941.

<sup>21</sup>Senate Hearings, I, 263, 274, 287.

the charges were vague, but that the contention had virtually been admitted to by the administration. He strongly supported the contention that the real duty of the United States was to perfect its own democracy, and not to enter into foreign quarrels.

When, however, he was finally brought around to answering questions about the new grants of power he was not able to pinpoint exactly what additional power would be granted to the President. Senator Pepper, attempting to get a flat answer on conveying finally forced Thomas into a position where he all but admitted the President had such power under the Consitution. Senator Pepper asked:

Let's separate them for a moment or two and discuss what new power is conferred on the President by this bill. Take the whole aspect and not the constitutional aspect; what is the source of the greatest danger with respect to getting us into war?

Mr. Thomas. There isn't any one. This bill either gives or confirms other laws in the Constitution which would give the President power to convoy ships.<sup>22</sup>

A third of the opponents' star witnesses led off the hearings on the following day, February 4. This was the historian Charles A. Beard. Beard presented an eloquent brief, pointing out that neither Lincoln nor Wilson, in great national emergencies, had requested power to use anything they wanted, in any way they wanted, and even to give away the materials of the United States. He felt that such a grant of power to the executive was dangerous, and was indeed tantamount to waging an undeclared war. Therefore, he

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., I, 287, 294, 301.

proceeded to ask if Congress was prepared to guarantee the extent of the British Empire, restore the French Republic, return to their rightful owners the territories of Finland and Poland, re-establish democracy in Greece and independence in Albania, and aid China until both the Japanese and the Communists were suppressed, for such a policy, he felt, must lead necessarily to these things. This was, indeed, a fine discussion of the true and eventual extent of world responsibility, but Beard, like the rest of the isolationists, was unwilling to accept this responsibility.

For himself, he saw the problem clearly:

The present business of Congress is to decide now, in voting on this bill, whether it is prepared on a show-down to carry our country into war in Europe and Asia, and thus set the whole world on fire, or whether it is resolved, on a show-down, to stay out to the last ditch and preserve one stronghold of order and sanity even against the gates of hell. Here, on this continent, I believe we may be secure and should make ourselves secure from the kind of conflict and terrorism in which the old worlds have indulged for such long ages of time.<sup>23</sup>

Beard's strongly isolationist position was followed immediately by a short interlude of more soundly reasoned thought by Major George Fielding Eliot. Eliot, who made no bones about his position, was certainly not included in the isolationist camp, and while he said he held "no brief for this particular measure," he was not opposed to grants of executive power either. As he replied to Senator LaFollette: "Therefore, I believe that the powers that the Executive asks for in this bill should be granted him, with proper

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., II, 309-312.

limitations upon their exercise."

These limitations, according to Eliot, should not include one on conveying, but should incorporate limitations as to time, and provisions for legislative review.<sup>24</sup>

But the hearings returned to the normal "war bill" and "dictatorship" level as soon as Eliot left the stand, and with the single exception of Quentin Reynolds, an administration witness at the Saturday session, remained on that level for the rest of the week. The immediate switch was engineered by General Robert E. Wood of the America First Committee who followed Eliot to the chair. In beginning his statement he said: ". . . it is really a war bill, transferring the war-making powers of Congress to the President. As such, I oppose it." On the whole Wood emphasized the broad nature of the bill, but Senator Pepper soon got him into difficulty when he attempted to take the stand that the America First group was not really opposed to aid. In essence Wood supported the administration viewpoint on aid, and Pepper sawed the limb off behind him. The Senator asked:

Now, if you do not think that England's holding out has anything to do with the defense of America, why are you willing to give England supplies?

General Wood. We do, we do.

Senator Pepper. Oh, you do?

General Wood. We believe it is only common sense.

Senator Pepper. Why? Why is it common sense to help England?

General Wood. Because if you have got a potential adversary, it is good policy to weaken him.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., II, 318, 322, 325-326, 330-331.

Senator Pepper. Who is our potential adversary?

General Wood. Germany is the potential adversary.

Senator Pepper. Why is she our potential adversary, if she cannot invade us?

General Wood. Well ---<sup>25</sup>

On the following day the opponents of the legislation brought to the stand Dr. Allen Valentine, the president of the University of Rochester, James S. Kemper, the president of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Dr. Herbert Wright, professor of International Law at Catholic University in Washington, D. C., and Gerald L. K. Smith of Detroit, for his second appearance on the legislation.

In his testimony Smith presented a fairly loosely reasoned and largely emotional discussion of the objections to the bill based on a 15 point program composed from the letters received by his Committee of One Million. Wright, who confined himself largely to the arguments of international law, ignored the realities of international relations, and the inherent right of self-defense so ably presented by Cordell Hull in opening the House hearings. The testimony of Valentine and Kemper, however, was of somewhat wider importance, for in their separate ways they enlarged on the popular theme of dictatorship.<sup>26</sup>

Valentine's statement was as concise and detailed as any on the topic. He said:

My objections to the bill are simple. The

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., II, 342, 344, 362-363, 385, 390.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., II, 401-402, 405, 427, 445-448, 468-470.

bill delegates to one man full power to control completely the industrial life of America down to the smallest factor, for it authorizes full control of the manufacture of all defense materials, and defines defense materials so broadly that they include anything that floats or flies or could be used to injure an enemy, and anything that could contribute to the manufacture of any of these. This amounts to the abnegation of Congress, the nullification of property rights, the centering of complete economic power in one man. Is the emergency so great that the President needs all this power? If he intends to use it, he kills the fundamentals of democratic procedure. If he does not intend to use it, why should he have it?<sup>27</sup>

Kemper also dealt largely with the powers of the President, and after having some difficulty over just how he was authorized to speak for the Chamber of Commerce, his presentation, while it included the time limitation suggestion, centered on the possibilities of the seizure of private property. On this topic Senator Connally of Texas soon reduced him to worse straits than Senator Pepper had General Wood. Connally began a particularly revealing dialogue by saying:

I would like to have you take the bill and point out where there is anything that authorizes the President to seize the property of any citizen and confiscate it.

Mr. Kemper. You have some pretty loose language here, Senator. For instance, will you turn to page 2, section 3 (a) and tell me what you mean in line 20 by "or otherwise procure"?

Senator Connally. It means just what it says - otherwise procure.

Mr. Kemper. How might that be done?

Senator Connally. He could buy it. The Constitution prohibits the Government from taking any private property without just compensation. You know that, don't you?

Mr. Kemper. Yes, I do.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., II, 401.



Senator Connally. If he gets it he could buy it, or if he commandeers it, under existing laws he would have to pay for it. A jury would pass upon the value under condemnation proceedings in the Federal Court.

Mr. Kemper. I should be very happy if the lawyers on the board who are responsible for this were here to answer your question.<sup>28</sup>

The stand on dictatorship in regard to the seizure of private property could not even garner the support of the strongest anti-administration newspapers. The Akron Beacon Journal while subscribing to the idea that property could be seized under the terms of the lend-lease bill, decided that the Chamber of Commerce had used "lamentable judgement in emphasizing the peril to private property as an objection to H. R. 1776." It even went so far as to state that "it is inconceivable that the possessions of individuals or corporations would be taken without compensation." Meanwhile, the newspapers and columnists were to a large extent coming either to the support of the administration, or attacking some of the leading figures of the opposition camp. Philip LaFollette, Charles Beard, and Senator Wheeler all were targets for barbs at their respective knowledge, and Wheeler himself became the target for another attack by President Roosevelt himself. On February 3 Wheeler issued a statement to the effect that five out of every six airplanes produced were going to Britain. On the following day Roosevelt, at his press conference, replied that all kinds of things could be worked out with figures and that Wheeler's

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<sup>28</sup>Senate Hearings, II, 427; Los Angeles Times, February 6, 1941.

computation was probably satisfactory to Hitler.<sup>29</sup>

Colonel Lindberg did not escape the general onslaught either as Dorothy Thompson took him to task early in the week for a "complete lack of knowledge of history and of naval, economic and cultural factors." In an analysis that could apply to the isolationist position as a whole, she wrote: "His program would mean the end of the freedom and equality of the United States as a great nation." These attacks were aided by Walter Lippmann in a column later in the week, and by an editorial in the Emporia Gazette on February 6.<sup>30</sup>

This was particularly appropriate, for Lindbergh, the biggest single attraction that could be mustered by the opposition, appeared before the Senate Committee that same day. To a large extent Lindbergh repeated what he had told the House Committee. He was, if anything, more positive in his opposition to the bill on dictatorship grounds. In his prepared statement he told the committee: "I do not believe that the danger to America lies in an invasion from abroad. I believe it lies here at home in our own midst, and that it is exemplified by the terms of this bill - the placing of our security in the success of foreign armies, and the removal of power from the Representatives of the people in our own

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<sup>29</sup>Akron Beacon Journal, February 6, 1941; Washington Post, February 4, 5, 1941; New York Times, February 5, 1941; Los Angeles Times, February 6, 8, 1941.

<sup>30</sup>Washington Post, February 3, 6, 1941; Emporia Weekly Gazette, February 6, 1941.

land." Later he told Senator Connally, "My general objection to it and my primary objection to it would be that I believe it is a step away from our system of government in this country."<sup>31</sup>

In response to a question from Senator Pepper, Lindbergh was also able to present once more his opposition to aid as a weakening factor in the United States defense. "I oppose aid to England which will carry us into the war," he told the Senator, "or will weaken our own forces in America; yes, sir."

"Weaken us to what point?" Pepper inquired.

"For instance, by sending our new aircraft to Europe when our own forces are in deplorable condition."<sup>32</sup>

Pepper and Lindbergh also provided the hearings with one of their unintentional lighter moments when Pepper in beginning his questions asked him, "When did you first go to Europe?"

His response of "In 1929, sir," brought several minutes of laughter and applause which embarrassed both the Senator and Colonel Lindbergh. Senator George established order by rapping with a glass ash-tray, and later when Lindbergh left, warned the audience after their prolonged applause, that the committee would go into executive session if the audience did not remain quiet. Later, after the audience had applauded the testimony of Hanford MacNider,

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<sup>31</sup>Senate Hearings, II, 492-493.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., II, 526.

George ordered the room cleared, and the committee proceeded in executive session.<sup>33</sup>

But the testimony after Lindbergh was a distinct letdown. MacNider defended the isolationist position stoutly, and the opponents of the bill managed to marshal 19 witnesses to follow him, but none of them, with the exception of Alfred M. Landon, were well known across the country. Probably the most influential of the remainder was Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison, the editor of The Christian Century, who was unalterably opposed to the bill as a war measure. His testimony, looking forward to that of Wendell Willkie, scheduled for the following Tuesday, appealed to the Senators to reject emotional testimony. "You will receive," he told them in an allusion to Willkie, "a fresh injection of this brainstorm stimulant when one or two week end visitors return from England with their eyes and ears full of what they have been shown and told. Does anyone suppose that an American barefoot boy could spend a week end with Hitler at Berchtesgaden and come home with an unbiased mind?" But he pleaded against excitement, requesting, "that Congress shall detach its deliberations from the hysteria, the sentimentalism, the melodramatics and the fantastics in which the President and his supporters have stated the issue, and recast the issue in the more realistic framework in which our national decision must be made."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>New York Times, February 7, 1941; Senate Hearings, II 512, 560, 567.

<sup>34</sup>Senate Hearings, II, 621, 623-624; Time, February 17, 1941, p. 17.

If anyone had been unrealistic, sentimental, or hysterical, it had certainly not been the administration. On February 7 when Morrison made his statement the House had been calmly, if bitterly, debating the measure for five days. It had been almost a month exactly since the bill, on which speed was considered essential, had been introduced in the Congress, and three weeks longer since the idea of lend-lease had been publicly formulated. This, as well as the reasoned and logical testimony of the departmental secretaries, appearing on behalf of the bill, would be enough to demolish the charges of hysteria. On the other hand, the opponents, led by Wheeler, had immediately jumped into the fray with vague charges of dictatorship, and attracted all the fringes of anti-war sentiment into their camp, espousing individually, some truly "fantastic" schemes as substitutes for lend-lease. This was at no time so clear as in the closing days of the Senate hearings. If emotional testimony was to be rejected, the opponents' attempt to over-whelm the administration with weight of numbers was definitely doomed.

Even Alfred Landon was not particularly reasoned in his approach to the bill, and opposed it because it was a concept of unlimited aid while only limited aid had been discussed in the 1940 presidential campaign. He wanted to prepare the United States first, and then "long and seriously consider the wisdom of a 'guess and be damned policy'."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Senate hearings, II, 661, 667.

The quality declined even more rapidly after Landon's appearance and reached the point of unreality when later on February 8, Mrs. Cecil Norton Broy, representing Americans United, Inc., presented, in an appeal that seemed almost pro-German, a plan for a negotiated peace, and an offer of three women to go to Berlin to confer with Hitler. She was almost equaled on February 10, by Rosa M. Farber, who was the Acting National Chairman of the Mothers of the United States of America. Reaching a new pitch of emotionality, she told the Senators: "We repeat, gentlemen, this bill is part and parcel of an alien program to destroy the security of our homes, the respect for our women, and nullify the God-given right of parenthood over children." Concluding, she pointed out: "We suggest for your consideration that history proves the wisdom of heeding the voice of motherhood."<sup>36</sup>

But other action had been taking place as well, including an unscheduled appearance by Jack McMichael of the American Youth Congress before the Senate Committee on February 8. He was ejected from the hearing room for his pains, but the brief of the Congress, in opposition to the bill, was made part of the record on February 10 when the committee met again. The Youth Congress, the afternoon of McMichael's appearance, presented the same protest to President Roosevelt, and a rally 6,000 strong at the Washington Monument was addressed by Representative Vito Marcantonio.

On Sunday, February 9, Wendell Willkie arrived back

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., II, 713-717, 773.

from his trip to England, convinced that to withhold aid from the British would eventually involve the United States in war with the Axis, and even John S. Knight's Akron Beacon Journal was reduced to admitting that his return would mean approval of the bill by the Senate. It did, however, condemn in advance, his testimony as irrelevant.<sup>37</sup>

That same week end Senator Taft of Ohio proposed seven amendments to the bill, supposedly after long consultation with Herbert Hoover, Senator McNary, and Representative Joseph Martin. His program would have eliminated the repair of British ships in American ports, and specifically have prohibited convoying, among other restrictions.

And along with these developments Winston Churchill had delivered an address which denied the need for American troops and which was hailed by the proponents of the bill as "reassuring" and "magnificent". Senator Wheeler attacked it as a ruse to get the United States into the war as it had entered in 1917, and he was promptly taken to task by the Atlanta Constitution for an exceedingly short memory or a deliberate attempt to mislead the younger generation.

On February 10, the last day for the opponents witnesses before the committee, Harry Hopkins boarded a plane in Lisbon, Portugal, for his return from England, and it was revealed in "official quarters" that the Treasury was preparing a list of materials with a value of around \$500

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<sup>37</sup> Akron Beacon Journal, February 9, 1941; New York Times, February 9, 10, 1941.

million to go to Britain as soon as the bill passed.<sup>38</sup>

The program toward responsibility in world affairs was moving slowly forward. The responsibility which the isolationists so completely rejected was on the verge of reality. With the testimony of Wendell L. Willkie about to break over them, and the prospect of the Senate debate before them, they prepared to stop the United States from passing through what they considered the gates of hell.

### III. The Barefoot Boy

The suspense preceding Willkie's appearance was great, and it was prolonged and heightened when the Committee met on the morning of February 11. The Senate Caucus Room where the hearings were held was built to accommodate 500 persons. Time magazine estimated 1,200 were crowded into the room and committee employees estimated 1,800. The crowds outside were even larger and finally got beyond the control of the Capitol police. Thirty additional men were rushed to the scene.<sup>39</sup>

Before this crowd the committee members carefully played out their preliminaries. A statement filed by William Green for the AFL was read into the record. Then James E. Conant took the stand to defend the bill. In clear

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<sup>38</sup>New York Times, February 10, 11, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, February 11, 1941; Washington Post, February 12, 1941.

<sup>39</sup>Time, February 24, 1941, p. 16; New York Times, February 12, 1941.



terms he summed up two of the many arguments and objections to the bill. Speaking first on the charge of dictatorship he concluded: "Whether we lose civil liberties does not depend on the grant of necessary powers in an emergency to the President. It depends upon the general spirit and sense of values of the people and their Representatives in Congress." Secondly, he dealt with the question of speed, and what the bill could accomplish. He pointed out that steps not otherwise possible might be taken and that those steps might be critical in the final outcome of the war.<sup>40</sup>

Conant was followed on the stand by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York. LaGuardia, in his preliminary to the main attraction, again summed up the need for the bill to strengthen the defense of the United States, and emphasized the fact that it would be cheap defense, if we thereby helped Britain defeat the Axis.<sup>41</sup>

Finally the climax of the hearings was reached. Wendell Willkie, the 1940 Republican nominee for the presidency, just returned from England, and sarcastically dubbed the "barefoot boy" after the testimony of Dr. Morrison, took the stand. But he, unintentionally prolonged the suspense for yet another half-hour, as he had forgotten his statement and it took a half-hour to procure it and furnish mimeographed copies to the Senators. With his freshly trimmed hair drooping over one eye, and his voice as throaty and hoarse as ever,

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<sup>40</sup>Senate hearings, III, 831-833, 835-837.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., III, 859.

he hunched over the witness table and read his statement. With calm defiance he quickly laid the idea of isolation. "The trouble with the idea that we can withdraw within ourselves is that it is too simple," he told them. "It has no regard for the way the world is actually built." He pointed out that aid to England must be effective aid, and that ineffective aid would be just as likely to cause war as an effective policy. Then he went on to point out the hazard that England faced. The greatest of her hazards, he felt, was shipping losses. Her losses, according to Willkie, were amounting to about three times her rate of construction.

When he reached the bill itself he urged compromise in the interests of national unity, reminding the majority that they had the votes to pass the bill, but telling them that unity was more important. He proposed his own limitations on the legislation - limitations as to the time the bill would run, the ability of the Congress to terminate it by concurrent resolution, and as to the countries to which it was to be extended. But Willkie had other proposals as well. He proposed, with electrifying clarity, that the United States should provide five to ten destroyers a month to the British in addition to patrol bombers, and merchant ships, without any legal ruses.<sup>42</sup>

His proposals apparently put some of the Senators temporarily off their feet, for when Chairman George asked

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<sup>42</sup>Time, February 24, 1941, p. 16; New York Times, February 12, 1941; Senate Hearings, III, 874-875.

for questions Hiram Johnson was reduced to shaking his head sadly and saying, "No questions." Senator Vandenberg, however, asked Willkie if he thought the bill was designed to take the country into war to save Great Britain. Willkie reminded him that there was only one body that could declare war, and that was the United States Congress. Senator Clark of Missouri, described as a man with a genius for public rudeness, took over the questioning. He raised the issue of convoys and Willkie replied to him that convoys hadn't been regarded as a British desire on his recent tour.

But then Clark trapped himself, as he forgot temporarily that he wasn't on the floor of the Senate, and roared at Willkie, "Mr. President."

Willkie laughed, Clark flushed, and the crowd applauded as Willkie replied to him, "Senator, you merely speak of what should have been."

Clark immediately recovered and turned to the topic of Willkie's endorsement of Roosevelt's policies, and attempted to compare it to a Willkie campaign statement.

"As to the statement about the President," Willkie reminded him, "in the course of the campaign I made a great many statements about him. He was my opponent you know."

Clark retorted, "You would not have said anything about your opponent you did not think was true, would you?"

"Oh, no," Willkie replied, "but occasionally in moments of oratory in campaigns we all expand a little bit."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Time, February 24, 1941, pp. 16-17; Senate Hearings, III, 878, 892-893.

When he finally finished his testimony the crowd surged around him, making it almost impossible for him to leave. He was widely congratulated, and hailed by most of the newspapers across the country. The New York Times saluted his stand on unity, while the Washington Post called him "Unanswerable Willkie" and supported his idea of giving five to ten destroyers a month to Britain. The Atlanta Constitution said that he "revealed himself as a greater American, even, than at any time in the past. He presented a remarkable example to those of his own party who have allowed partisanship and jealousy of the President to obscure the greater principles of loyalty to their country in an hour of dire peril." The Los Angeles Times, also supporting the ten destroyers a month stand, joined in praise of Willkie. The opposition, to a large degree was somewhat half-hearted. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch criticised him for omitting a no-convoy limitation from his suggestions, and the Akron Beacon Journal was more sad than belligerent in its treatment. Only a few, like the Chicago Tribune, were willing to attack him in terms of "The Barefoot Boy As A Barefaced Fraud."<sup>44</sup>

His statement was considered to be a substantial help to the bill, and it was thought that when the bill finally reached the amendment stage in the Senate many of his

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<sup>44</sup>Mary Earhart Dillon, Wendell Willkie 1892-1944 (New York, 1952), p. 243; New York Times, February 12, 1941; Washington Post, February 12, 13, 14, 15, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, February 13, 1941; Los Angeles Times, February 12, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 12, 1941, Akron Beacon Journal, February 12, 1941; Chicago Daily Tribune, February 13, 1941.

suggestions would be incorporated. In the meantime his stand had apparently encouraged some other Republicans to take a more statesmanlike view, and Thomas E. Dewey, speaking at a Lincoln Day dinner on the day following the hearings switched to advocating the passage of the bill with unity reservations. The same day Willkie issued another unity appeal to the Republicans. The only real dissonant note came from Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox who put a stop to Willkie's destroyer suggestion by opposing "any further depletion of the United States Fleet."<sup>45</sup>

The committee went immediately into executive consideration of the bill, and on February 12, had defeated the first attempt at amendment by a vote of 13 to 10. This was considered the best that the opposition could muster, and the observers were right as the committee reported the bill to the Senate on February 14 by a favorable vote of 15 to 8. The vote, despite Willkie's plea, was strictly partisan with 14 Democrats and one Republican voting in favor of the bill, while the opposition consisted of five Republicans, two Democrats, and LaFollette of Wisconsin who was officially a Progressive. Senator Barkley, the majority leader, optimistically predicted passage within ten days with no more than 25 votes against the bill in the Senate.<sup>46</sup>

The administration seemed to be moving rapidly in that

<sup>45</sup>David Lawrence, Diary of A Washington Correspondent (New York, 1942), p. 105; New York Times, February 13, 1941.

<sup>46</sup>New York Times, February 13, 14, 1941.

direction, as a vote on the same day made the bill the pending business of the Senate and insured the beginning of debate on the next Monday. They also seemed to have the increasing support of the country behind them as the Gallup poll released on February 14 showed the percentage support for the bill up to 58 per cent, an increase of 4 per cent over the figures released for February 9, and at the same time the percentage of those definitely opposed to the bill decreased from 22 to 21 per cent. On a sectional basis only the East Central States failed to give an absolute majority in favor of the bill, and they still provided a margin of 39 per cent in favor of the bill to 35 per cent opposed.<sup>47</sup>

But future danger was still clearly evident as the Chicago Tribune blasted Dewey for supporting the bill, and Capitol police broke up a demonstration of women outside the Senate chamber. Led by Mrs. Mynnie Fischer of Milwaukee, they were there to find out "why this man Sol Bloom and his henchmen are being permitted to run the country." At the same time the British Embassy was the scene of activity by the Women's Neutrality League and Paul Revere's Sentinels. A two faced effigy representing President Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie was hanged from the embassy wall. Among the placards carried by these women was one reading:

We lease-lend and give to you,  
F.D.R. and Willkie too;  
You can have them but not us  
For in God we place our trust.

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., February 12, 14, 15, 1941.

We'll fight, defend, and die if need,  
To save our Republic from bankers' greed.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>New York Times, February 14, 1941; Chicago Daily Tribune, February 15, 1941.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TOGA OF DIGNITY

#### I. Time Is The Point

On February 13 the Majority Report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee became available. Released after the favorable vote on the measure it emphasized the idea that the bill was designed as a "practical safeguard aimed at keeping us out of war". As well as giving an analysis of the provisions of the law, the majority reported that it had considered amending the bill to name the countries to be aided, but decided that such a course would be "unwise." The growing tension and Nazi pressure in the Balkans was thought to be the reason for the decision not to name nations. It was hoped they would resist the Nazi moves.<sup>1</sup>

The Minority Report was not ready until five days later, but in the interim the opponents of the bill managed to keep busy. On the day the committee reported the bill Senator Wheeler charged that radio commentators had been one-sided in discussing the bill. The next day seventeen Senators opposed to the bill met in Hiram Johnson's office

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, February 14, 16, 1941.



and agreed to try to amend the bill to prohibit transfer of any part of the navy to Britain, and to bar convoying by American warships. Meanwhile, a two day conference, to be addressed by Norman Thomas and Senator Wheeler was being organized to include the National Council for Prevention of War, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Keep America Out of War Congress, the War Resisters League, and the Youth Committee Against War. John T. Flynn, speaking for the America First Committee, charged President Roosevelt with stirring up fear and hatred, and he was supported by the newsletter of the German-American National Alliance. Paul A. F. Warnholtz, the editor of the newsletter, attacked those who "shout loudest for war" by saying: "They are usually old men, sterile biologically, and sterile even of all dreams and memories of life, love and youth, and would deny the right of youth to live. Their senile bodies, their cold, calculating brains, frequently find compensation for their lost youth in hatred and false ambitions for glory and gold . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, at a February 15 luncheon, proponents of the bill made plans for the debate and decided that only proponents of the bill would be recognized on Monday, February 17, when debate opened, and that opponents of the measure would be recognized the following day. On Sunday Harry Hopkins arrived back from England, and issued a warning that was

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<sup>2</sup>New York Times, February 14, 15, 16, 1941; Time, February 24, 1941, p. 18.

clearly designed to speed passage of the bill. Immediately after Hopkins' return President Roosevelt looking forward to passage of the bill, began to set up administrative machinery.<sup>3</sup>

Senator Walter George of Georgia, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, had been picked to lead off the debate. He was ill on Monday, February 17, and when Majority Leader Alben W. Barkley rose to take his place he was accorded the attention of a crowd surpassed only a few times in Senate history. Most of the Senators were in their places, and while the galleries were only partly filled the doorkeepers were holding the crowds back at some of the doors.

In opening Barkley appealed for calm consideration of the bill, and then proceeded to paint a picture of what German victory could mean. He reviewed the neutrality legislation and the reasons for its passage, and then undertook an analysis of the bill in terms of what laws would be affected under the notwithstanding clause of lend-lease. The Johnson Act, he told them, would not be affected, and neither would the carry provisions of the Neutrality Act. The cash provisions of the same act, however, would be suspended. Likewise, port restrictions under the Neutrality Act would be lifted, the financial transactions provisions suspended, and the limitations on servicing warships lifted. Also, affected under the provision would be a 1917 law

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<sup>3</sup>New York Times, February 16, 17, 18, 1941.

prohibiting the building of warships for belligerents, the 24 hour provisions for warship repair in the Hague Convention, the military secrets statute, and some other statutes regarding the purchase of military supplies from other countries.

Then he went on to point out what the law did not do, with the purpose of showing the dictatorship charges to be groundless. He said:

This measure does not surrender the right of Congress to declare war. It not only preserves that constitutional right, which cannot be abrogated, but it requires the President to come to Congress for the appropriations necessary to administer it, and also the authority to make contracts for future execution.

This measure does not confer upon him the right to convoy ships across the ocean.

It does not confer upon him the right to send American troops to Europe.

It does not confer upon him the power to seize foreign ships in the ports of the United States.

It does not confer upon him the power to impose a censorship, or to restrict the freedom of speech or of the press or of worship or of assembly. These rights have been abolished in the dictator nations, but they have not been restricted in any respect in the United States, and will not be under the terms of this measure.

This measure confers upon the President no power to seize property or to conscript labor, or to nullify the laws enacted for the protection of labor in the United States.

It gives him power to do the things set out in the measure. He may possess other powers given him in the Constitution or in other laws in conflict with this; but this measure does no more nor less than what it says.<sup>4</sup>

After Barkley had concluded his speech, he and Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio reached an impasse in an exchange

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<sup>4</sup>New York Times, February 18, 1941; Congressional Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1033-1039 (February 17, 1941).

over whether Barkley was in favor of war. But it was only a short time until Warren Austin, Republican of Vermont, took the floor to give a more detailed speech in favor of the bill than had Barkley. "Time is the point," he told the listening Senators. "The time is brief for us. We must get to work as quickly as we can." He was extensively questioned by Senators Bennett Clark of Missouri and Wheeler of Montana, as well as other opponents of the measure, and the high point of his presentation came in an exchange with little Senator Homer Bone of Washington. When Austin asserted in the heat of the interchange that "There are much worse things than grim, bloody war," Bone challenged him. Said he: "If the Senator thinks there are worse things than grim, bloody war, I have nothing to say. I do not know of any worse hell than war. If the Senator knows of anything worse than war, I should like to have him expose it to me now."

Mr. Austin. I will. I say that a world enslaved to Hitler is worse than war, and worse than death. A country whose boys will not go out to fight to save Christianity in the world, and to save the principle of freedom from ruthless destruction by a fiend - well, we do not find such boys in America.

When it becomes necessary for us to fight, if it ever becomes necessary for us to fight, we will fight.<sup>5</sup>

The galleries immediately broke into an uproar with an undertone of boos being overcome by applause, and the galleries were warned for the first of many times in that long debate to refrain from signs of approval or disapproval.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1039-1051 (February 17, 1941); Time, March 3, 1941, p. 16; New York Times, February 18, 1941.

<sup>6</sup>New York Times, February 18, 1941.

After a brief address by Senator Thomas of Utah, Claude Pepper of Florida took the floor as the proponents third major speaker. The galleries fell into a hush as Pepper neared the end of his speech and declared:

Mr. President, I venture to lay down the statement that not the American Congress, but the American people will not let England fall, and whether we like it or not, let England totter and they will drive us into action under the lash of their demands. Call it war or do not call it war - lay it down as a premise, America will not let England fall to Hitler. If the action now proposed will not save England, we will save it anyway. Watch American opinion, and see if what I say is not true.<sup>7</sup>

The newspaper advocates of the bill were during this period entering an even more active campaign to support the bill and speed its passage. In the week before the debate began the Emporia Gazette attacked the idea of isolation, while the Atlanta Constitution opined that convoys would eventually be necessary so the people might just as well prepare for them now. In later days they also attacked Wheeler and pointed out the wisdom of stopping Hitler in Europe. The Cleveland Plain Dealer, meanwhile, was centering its attack on the two Republican Senators from Ohio, and chiefly berating Senator Taft for his loan idea, saying: "With stubborn determination Taft continues to argue that all England needs from this country is a loan. For reasons of his own he ignores the fact that it is not money England needs now but guns, ships, and planes." On the day after the debate opened both the Cleveland and Atlanta papers warned

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<sup>7</sup>New York Times, February 18, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1052-1058 (February 17, 1941).

that opponents who delayed would be aiding Hitler. The New York Times continued its campaign for unity, and on the morning of the opening of debate optimistically declared that the "swift march of events abroad has helped to make clear why such a measure as this must be enacted" and they anticipated speedy action and wide agreement.<sup>8</sup>

There was a substantial body of newspaper sentiment which did not agree with these views. The Chicago Tribune, on the day debate opened declared that the British did not need financial aid, and the following day warned that the United States was "entering the twilight of free government." The St. Louis Post-Dispatch continued to campaign for a no-convoy limitation and the Los Angeles Times complained about the Roosevelt habit of "keeping the public in the dark" and named that trait as one of the objections to giving him increased powers. In the world of the columnists Mark Sullivan managed to produce still another new argument against the bill - socialism. Before the debate opened he explained it in this way:

That in Britain a small number of leaders of the British Labor Party entertain the expectation that Britain is to be made a country with a socialist economy. In some cases the expectation may be more than an expectation; it may be a planned intention.

That in the United States, a small number of persons associated with the leadership of the New Deal have a corresponding expectation or intention about this country.

That between the two groups there is understanding.

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<sup>8</sup> Emporia Weekly Gazette, February 13, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, February 14, 15, 17, 18, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 14, 16, 17, 18, 1941; New York Times, February 14, 17, 1941.

That the idea is to bring about a program of socialist economy, similar in form, in the two countries. That the lend-lease bill, if enacted, as well as the relations generally between the two countries would be used to facilitate the process.<sup>9</sup>

With the advent of the opponents' first chance at official debate on the measure, the Minority Report of the Foreign Relations Committee was released. This report attacked the hearings themselves, labeling Reinhold Niebuhr as "one immaterial witness," and Wendell Willkie as "a one-man circus intended to influence our citizens." The bill itself was characterized as "a pure grant of power to the President . . ." But Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri saved many Senators the trouble of reading the report when he discussed the bill in detail in his opening speech for the opposition. In brief he denounced and opposed the bill for seven reasons. The number 1776 he explained was a desecration. Secondly, the title was misleading because the bill was really designed to denude the defense of the United States. In rapid order he also mentioned that the bill allowed the President to procure goods as he saw fit, gave him autocratic powers over defense, and was an abdication by Congress. He also claimed the bill was a violation of obligations with other American states, and he denounced it as staking the safety of the country on an English victory and so bringing

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<sup>9</sup>Chicago Daily Tribune, February 17, 18, 1941; Los Angeles Times, February 16, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 14, 1941; Washington Post, February 15, 1941.

it to the "very brink of war."<sup>10</sup>

Before a crowd that was so large that Capitol police took special precautions, Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan, the most statesmanlike of all the isolationists, followed him on the floor. Outside the chamber the visitors were marshalled on the second floor of the capitol in a line extending from the Senate to the old Supreme Court room. Only a single staircase was used to permit them up to the gallery level and that was open only when seats were assured. Inside, Vandenberg was calling the bill "a potential and needless threat to the peace and security of the United States," and asserting that through it the President would control the world's war strategy. But Vandenberg, recalling changes in neutrality, also said:

I repeat that I moved forward in step with the new program - as I shall move with this when the issue is decided by democratic process. I do not believe in domestic divisions when we face the world.<sup>11</sup>

Never again were the opponents of the bill to reach such a level, as Vandenberg was immediately followed by Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, for the first of his four speeches against the bill. Nye, compared to the seven objections voiced by Clark, managed to marshall a full seventeen counts against the bill. First, he charged the bill gave the President power to make indiscriminate military alliances. Then he launched into the list of give aways,

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<sup>10</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1097-1101 (February 18, 1941); New York Times, February 19, 1941.

<sup>11</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1101-1108 (February 18, 1941); New York Times, February 19, 1941.



naming the navy, the army's equipment, the air force, and military secrets as well as strategic plans. He further objected to the bill because it would open the harbors of the United States to belligerent warships, give the President power to seize foreign vessels and also to order convoys. It would, he charged, deprive labor of protection, allow the President to fix the terms for all give aways, take whatever he desired in return, and to assume the costs of a foreign government's war. He further pointed out that under the bill the United States might be saddled with the total cost of the war, or that the President might buy the British navy. Finally he characterized the notwithstanding clause as "anti-democratic" and "anti-American" and warned that the bill would allow the President to govern by proclamation.<sup>12</sup>

When Nye concluded the opponents' first day on the floor even some of the less enthusiastic newspapers were found in the proponents camp. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch dissented from Senator Clark's idea that the bill had to be defeated in toto rather than amended. The Los Angeles Times immediately discovered that "Delay is probably the most dangerous of all policies, and it is only delay that is being accomplished by this debate." Meanwhile the New York Times, a paper not to be included in the unenthusiastic category, decided there was only one choice. "There are no shadings in this issue," it wrote. "One is either for Hitler with his whole heart or against him with his whole heart. Can any

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<sup>12</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1109-1121 (February 18, 1941).

true American hesitate in the decision?" For the administration there was no hesitation, and in fact Jesse Jones almost made it appear too eager. While President Roosevelt was appointing W. Averell Harriman to a post as special defense liaison officer in London, Jones was appearing before the House Currency and Banking Committee and telling it that the United States was "in the war, or at least nearly in the war" and is "preparing for it." The remarks were stricken from the record, but the damage was done.<sup>13</sup>

Then, on the third day of the debate one of its most dramatic moments occurred. After Tom Connally of Texas had led off for the proponents, Josiah Bailey of North Carolina took the floor. Josiah Bailey had opposed the administration and the New Deal. He had been a strong opponent of Congressional delegations of power. He had opposed American involvement and supported strong neutrality laws. Now he favored lend-lease. The other Senators drew their chairs into a close circle around him as he stated that he was unwilling to take a chance on the fall of Britain. "I am unwilling to refuse credit to Great Britain. I am unwilling to refuse to put weapons in her hands."

But he was reminded by the relentless Senator Wheeler of a speech he had made on October 10, 1939, when he said, in part, if the United States should get into the war "I should think we were the greatest pack of fools history has

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<sup>13</sup>New York Times, February 19, 1941; Los Angeles Times, February 19, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 19, 1941.

ever recorded." Now he replied to Wheeler in measured reason:

I am glad my friend asked me that question. My mind has changed about this situation and against all the wishful thinking of which I was capable. It has utterly changed, and the gravest facts have wrought that change. When the war first broke out I hoped and prayed to God that it would not be our war. When the war first broke out I was devoted to the Neutrality Act. I know now that I am advocating its repeal in part. I am now advocating intervention now; and I wish to say to the distinguished Senator, as Paul said in his famous trial:

'I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.'

Mr. Wheeler. Mr. President, if I understand the Senator correctly, he actually is advocating that we go to war?

Mr. Bailey. I am not advocating that we go to war; I am advocating intervention. But do not misunderstand me, I am advocating intervention with all its implications. I am not hedging. All my life I have looked a thing in the face and argued it as it is.<sup>14</sup>

Later that day the administration made an unsuccessful attempt to begin amending the bill, but after the opponents objected all amendment attempts were abandoned until the close of regular debate. On the following day "Roarin' Bob" Reynolds, Bailey's colleague from North Carolina, led off the debate with a speech against the bill, claiming that it signified the dependence of the United States on the British Empire, and saying, "I believe that we should look after America first." His two and a half hour effort was followed by a speech by Homer Bone. When it was clear that Bone's speech was the last to be made that day, Senator Barkley let it be known that he was not pleased with the dilatory procedure

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<sup>14</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1152-1164 (February 19, 1941); Time, March 3, 1941, p. 16; New York Times, February 20, 1941.

of the opponents. After some discussion Senator Taft announced a tentative schedule of speakers against the bill.<sup>15</sup>

On Friday, February 21, the opposition was able to attract almost as much attention to one of its speakers as Josiah Bailey had attracted for the administration two days before. William Bulow of South Dakota, a plain-spoken man who seldom addressed the Senate took the floor. He spoke in a soft, conversational tone and again the Senators drew their chairs around him so as not to miss any of his words. He began:

Let me preface my remarks with the statement that I have no illusions that anything which I might say would in any way affect the final action on the pending bill. The only reason I beg the indulgence of Senators at all is that I want the permanent record of our labors here to show to future generations the battle that some of us made to keep the United States out of another European War.<sup>16</sup>

As he developed his thesis he asked for England's war aims, and compared the trading of ships to trading mules in South Dakota, and concluded therefrom that he was not "in favor, and I believe that most of my people are not in favor, of giving a blank check to the President not only to finance a war in and for this country, but also to finance wars in and for other countries."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1167-1220 (February 19, 20, 1941); Time, March 3, 1941, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup>New York Times, February 22, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1251-1252 (February 21, 1941).

<sup>17</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1252-1259 (February 21, 1941).

While these debates were taking place on the floor of the Senate, Senators Wheeler and Nye traveled to New York to address a rally of 3,500 persons on February 20. The rally, held at the Mecca Temple, was called by the America First Committee and the Keep America Out of War Congress. The Senators asserted that the bill could still be defeated. On the same day General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, told the Senate Military Affairs Committee that the bill would speed up aid to England by coordinating production for Britain and the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Washington's birthday witnessed the conclusion of the first week of debate in the Senate without any end clearly in sight. No amendment to the bill had even been acted upon. That day also witnessed three major opposition speeches. The first was by Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada, who was known to the press as "Old Bleeding Heart" and who made one of the most emotionally inspired addresses of the debate, saying his country was about to reach the end of its rosary. He was followed on the floor by Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas, and finally by Robert A. Taft of Ohio who entered a loan substitute for lend-lease and treated the topic in generally matter-of-fact economic terms. He did, however, come up with the only analogy which even came close to equaling that of Roosevelt's "length of garden hose." Said Taft:

There is some merit in taking a promise to repay in kind instead of in money, and I have provided for such considerations in my substitute; but lending

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<sup>18</sup>New York Times, February 21, 1941.

war equipment is much like lending chewing gum.  
We certainly do not want the same gum back.<sup>19</sup>

Then with the close of the debate Senator Barkley announced his intention to have the Senate meet an hour early when debate was resumed the next week. Senator Wheeler and then Senator Clark attacked this move, calling it "pressure tactics" and in veiled and not-so-veiled terms threatened to filibuster. Wheeler, who expressed his attitude first, told Barkley:

But if Members of the Senate are to be forced and driven into making speeches at times when they cannot be entirely prepared, I say to the Senator in all sincerity that we shall be forced to resort to making speeches which perhaps may not be entirely to the merits of the bill.<sup>20</sup>

When Barkley showed signs of persisting Bennett Clark was even more insistant than Wheeler. He said:

I think I may say, in all fairness, that, while no opponent of the pending bill, so far as I know, has ever suggested or desired to be put in the attitude of a filibuster before the American people, nothing will be gained by meeting at 11 o'clock, because, if necessary, the reading of the Journal in full will occupy the time between 11 and 12 o'clock.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile Wheeler was also replying to a charge leveled by Dr. Frank Kingdon and Herbert Bayard Swope that the New York rally addressed by he and Senator Nye two days before was "un-American." Wheeler called it "a deliberate lie." But lie or not Wheeler and his colleagues seemed to be facing

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<sup>19</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1267-1285 (February 22, 1941); Time, March 3, 1941, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup>New York Times, February 23, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1285-1287 (February 22, 1941).

<sup>21</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1286 (February 22, 1941)

sure defeat for their cause as a poll of the Senate indicated 52 votes certain for the administration.<sup>22</sup>

## II. Not Quite A Filibuster

When the Senate met again on Monday, February 24, it was at the regular time, and when Senators Clark of Idaho, La Follette of Wisconsin, and John Danaher of Connecticut had provided the day's oratory, Barkley announced that there would be no early meetings of the body. On Tuesday, February 25, Senators Shipstead, Murray, Barbour, and Aiken held the floor until Gerald P. Nye took over, and in one of the nearest approaches to a filibuster kept the floor until adjournment while reading long passages from a British book, Propaganda In The Next War, ostensibly to indicate that the United States was being taken in by Britain. Meanwhile the administration indicated an expectation to begin amendment of the bill by Wednesday, and Senator Wheeler announced that if the bill passed he would lead opposition Senators in stumping the country to prevent an American entry into the war. All during this period Colonel McCormack's Chicago Tribune had continued a series of blistering daily attacks, while other papers joined in from time to time. The Akron Beacon Journal praised Senator Bulow's speech against the bill, and continued to campaign against anything tending toward war. On the opposite side the Cleveland Plain Dealer praised Senator Bailey of North Carolina, and attacked Senator Taft, while the Atlanta

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<sup>22</sup>New York Times, February 23, 1941.

Constitution centered its comments on the dictatorship arguments.<sup>23</sup>

But despite administration intentions to begin amendment and the New York Times opinion that the Senate was nearing a vote there was little real indication that this was the case. Nevertheless, there was no particular resentment against the slow movement of the bill, largely because as the Times explained: "If the debate in the Senate on the lease-lend bill has seemed at times to move slowly, let us remember how important it is, from the standpoint of national unity, for the whole country to feel certain that the opponents of this measure have had their full day in court, that every argument which can possibly be made against the bill has received a fair hearing, and that no attempt has been made to shut off debate upon a vital issue."<sup>24</sup>

It had become known, in addition, that Allen Ellender of Louisiana expected to introduce an amendment to prohibit the sending of troops beyond the limits of the Western Hemisphere. After a meeting between Roosevelt and the administration leaders in the Senate, it was decided that the administration would stand firm against any amendments of that nature. On the following day the isolationists held a meeting at which they agreed not to filibuster, and to be

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<sup>23</sup>New York Times, February 24, 25, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1294-1370 (February 24, 25, 1941); Chicago Daily Tribune, February 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, February 24, 25, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 24, 26, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, February 26, 1941.

<sup>24</sup>New York Times, February 27, 1941.



ready to begin amending the bill by the next Monday. But during this time the debate was proceeding on its leisurely way with the opponents holding the floor for the bulk of the time.

Then, on the last day of February, as Bulgaria was about to become the seventh signatory of the Three-Power Pact and the way was cleared for the movement of German troops to the Greek border, Senator Wheeler rose in the Senate to make his address against the bill. He compared it to the German enabling act of 1933 and raised again the question of who authored the bill, while also attacking the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. Unable to complete his speech in one day, he continued on the floor on Saturday, March 1, and as he spoke the German Army and Air Force was beginning an occupation of Bulgaria's strategic bases.<sup>25</sup>

On this same Saturday Mrs. Elizabeth Jane Dilling, already on trial for disorderly conduct for a demonstration against the bill, led her "Mothers' Crusade Against Bill 1776" to the office of Senator Carter Glass of Virginia where they staged a noisy sit-down strike in the corridor. Mrs. Dilling, author of The Red Network, called Glass "an overaged destroyer of American youth." After she was arrested again for this demonstration Glass issued a statement calling the affair a "noisy disorder of which any self-respecting fishwife would be ashamed." He invited the F. B. I. to investigate the group

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<sup>25</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1468-1494, 1508-1535, 1583-1609 (February 27, 28, March 1, 1941); New York Times, February 26, 27, 28, March 1, 2, 1941.

with the tart suggestion that it would be "pertinent to inquire into whether they are mothers, - for the sake of the race I devoutly hope not."<sup>26</sup>

It was only a short time until the incident reached the Senate floor, as Scott Lucas of Illinois followed Wheeler's concluding remarks on Saturday with a defense of the bill. In speaking of what the bill would and would not do Lucas happened to touch on the right of petition as guaranteed under the Constitution. Bennett Clark of Missouri interrupted him to observe:

The right of petition will not continue if the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Glass) has his way and has the F. B. I. investigate everyone who comes to his office and tries to petition him.

Lucas reminded Clark that what Glass did would be unlikely to affect the Constitution in any manner, and Clark replied:

Let me say to the Senator that I have received many persons in my office who did not like the course I was pursuing in the Senate. I have received them all with respect though I have not been influenced by their exercise of the right of petition.

Mr. Lucas. But the Senator did not get hold of Mrs. Dilling. (Laughter)

Mr. Clark of Missouri. The Senator seems to speak from bitter experience. (Laughter)

Mr. Lucas. I speak from experience, Mr. President. I can appreciate what the Senator from Virginia had to experience when that lady - shall I say - came along and presented her views.

Clark then related the story of John Quincy Adams receiving a petition calling for his own removal from the

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<sup>26</sup>New York Times, March 2, 1941; Time, March 10, 1941, p. 14.

House of Representatives on the grounds of insanity, but Lucas closed the exchange by remarking to him:

If the Senator wishes to deal with insanity petitions, I suggest that he take the matter up with Mrs. Dilling. (Laughter)<sup>27</sup>

In some quarters, however, the affair was not a laughing matter, as the Chicago Tribune, which had previously defended Mrs. Dilling's activities, attacked Glass for his quip about the motherhood of her group. But outside of Chicago, where Mrs. Dilling made her home, other factors were attracting the attention of the press. More than ever before, the passage of Bulgaria into the Axis camp underlined the danger to Britain and especially to Greece, and by indirection to the United States as well. It did so strongly enough that the Cleveland Plain Dealer reminded its readers that "Every senator whose actions retard the passage of this bill beyond a reasonable time, which we believe has now elapsed, becomes whether he realizes it or not, one of Hitler's helpers."<sup>28</sup>

With the second week of Senate debate concluded the administration had consumed 13 hours and 58 minutes. The opponents, led by Gerald P. Nye who had in two speeches talked 9 hours and 40 minutes by himself, had consumed 39 hours and 42 minutes, and the end was not yet. Impatience, however, was growing, and Senator Barkley finally got the Senate to begin meeting an hour earlier.

The earlier meeting hour, however, did little to

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<sup>27</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1609-1613 (March 1, 1941).

<sup>28</sup>Chicago Daily Tribune, March 3, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 1, 1941.

improve debate on the bill and the Senators ground through the same arguments on Monday and Tuesday, including a third speech by Senator Nye. Finally, on Wednesday, March 5, the amendments were taken up.<sup>29</sup>

The first amendment to be acted upon was one to strengthen the amendment put into the House version of the bill by Everett Dirksen. It was quickly agreed to, and so was another improvement of the time limitation. Senator George procured the inclusion of a separability clause meaning that the invalidity of one section of the bill would not affect any of the other sections. Another George amendment to set the value of articles to be transferred was approved as was the Byrnes amendment, originally offered first, which was a limitation on the amount which could be transferred. After a final committee amendment was approved, Allen Ellender offered his amendment to prohibit the use of United States land or naval forces beyond the limits of the Western Hemisphere. A rather lengthy debate got under way on his amendment and continued into the session of March 6. Finally, Senator Joseph O'Mahoney of Wyoming, offered a substitute for the Ellender amendment.

But in the meantime the administration had been working with Ellender, and got him to accept an administration substitute that nothing in the bill could be construed to change existing

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<sup>29</sup>New York Times, March 2, 4, 1941; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1618-1655, 1708-1735, 1790-1797 (March 3, 4, 5, 1941).

law about the use of the Army and Navy. Ellender modified his original amendment by introducing this version on the floor. O'Mahoney and Bennett Clark both attacked the administration version as meaningless, and with a Clark perfecting amendment being offered to the O'Mahoney substitute the Senate adjourned in somewhat of a parliamentary tangle.<sup>30</sup>

The tangle quickly resolved itself on March 7, and the O'Mahoney substitute was defeated on a roll call vote of 28 to 63. Then a long series of other substitutes to the Ellender amendment were dealt with in fairly short order. The first of these, offered by Hiram Johnson of California, received more consideration than many of the others, but was defeated on another roll call by 35 to 56. In rapid succession a Taft substitute was defeated 38 to 51, a George Norris substitute by 39 to 52, and a Francis Maloney effort by 30 to 60. Then the Ellender amendment itself was brought to a vote and approved 65 to 24.

Senator Reynolds of North Carolina then offered an amendment to specifically prohibit any aid to Russia. This was defeated 35 to 56. A short time later he offered another amendment to make certain that no Communists, Nazis, or Fascists were employed under the terms of the bill. This was also defeated by 29 to 53. Finally, Reynolds proposed a section to deport Harry Bridges, and had it defeated on a voice vote.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1797-1825, 1866-1901 (March 5, 6, 1941); Time, March 17, 1941, p. 20; New York Times, March 5, 6, 7, 1941.

<sup>31</sup> Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1948-1991 (March 7, 1941).

The opponents moved to within nine votes of the administration when Arthur Vandenberg proposed the amendment to require a specific statement from the Army or Navy that the material transferred was not vital to American defense, which had been voted down 13 to 10 in the committee consideration of the bill. Their 36 to 45 defeat, however, was due largely to a decrease in administration voters rather than to any gain in their own cause, and the administration had little difficulty in defeating the rest of the amendments proposed that day.

When the Senate opened the third Saturday of its consideration on March 8, the final vote was in sight. An amendment offered by David Walsh of Massachusetts was pending and after it had been defeated Senator Barkley offered and had approved a face-saving amendment making sure that agricultural products were included under the terms of the act. Another amendment offered by James D. Davis of Pennsylvania and modified at the suggestion of Senator George was approved. It would assure that private companies would be permitted to test, inspect, and repair as provided by the bill.

Then another series of amendments, culminating in Senator Taft's \$2 billion loan substitute were offered and rejected. After Taft's attempt had been defeated 29 to 62, Gerald P. Nye took the floor for the fourth time. In the face of cries of "Vote! Vote!" from his Senatorial colleagues, his remarks were rather brief and he contented himself with inserting lengthy printed materials into the record.

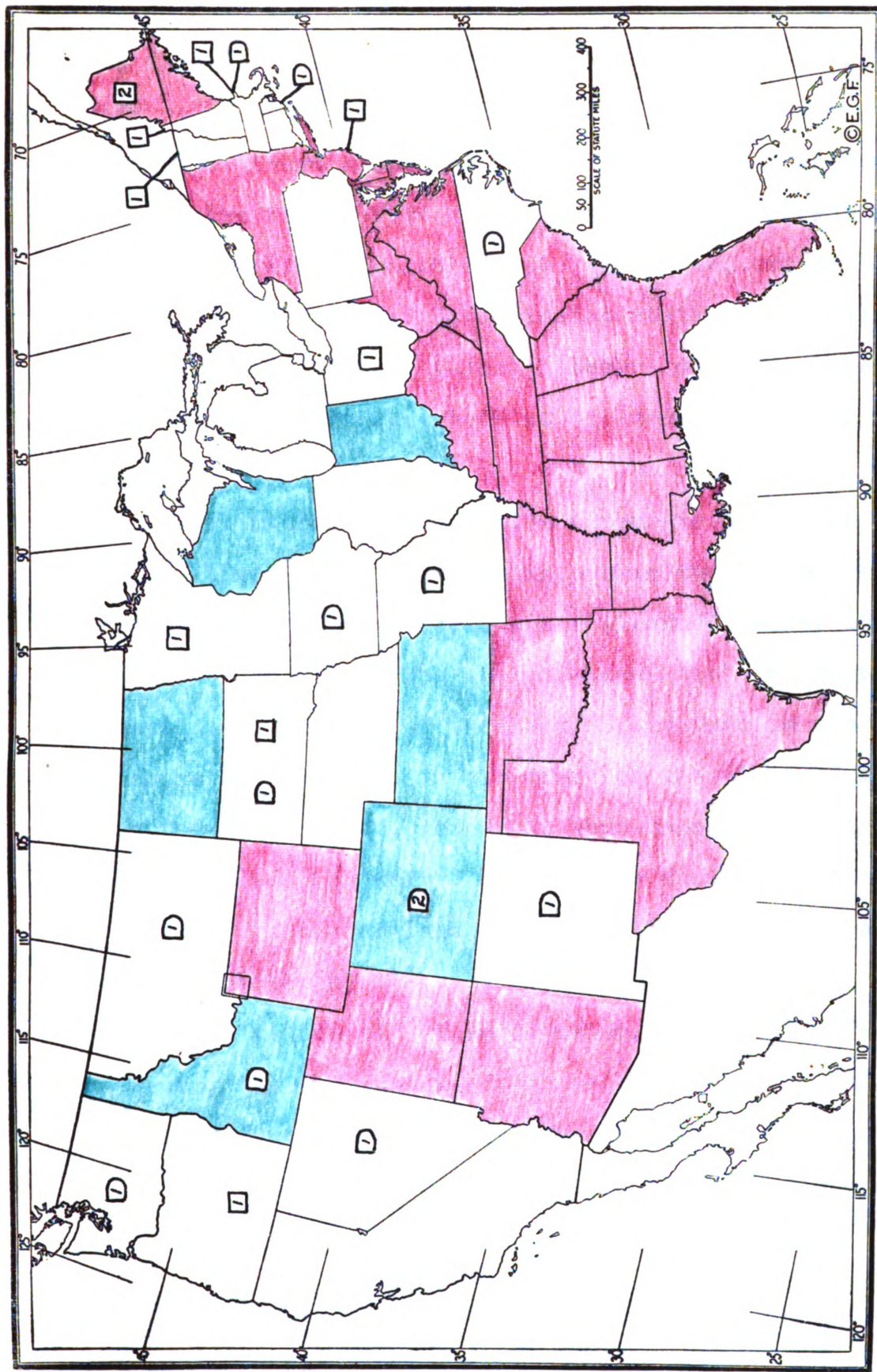
As soon as Nye yielded the floor Senator George called for the yeas and nays on the measure itself. Charles McNary of Oregon, the minority leader, requested a quorum call and after the Senators were in the chamber Bennett Clark offered still another amendment touching on the laws to be affected by the notwithstanding clause. In an effort to save trouble George asked unanimous consent for the consideration of Clark's amendment. The Senate defeated Clark's attempt and then the roll was taken. Lend-lease passed 60 to 31.<sup>32</sup>

The vote itself was along the same type of partisan division which had marked the House vote. The Democrats provided enough votes to pass the measure as 49 voted in favor of it. They were joined by 10 Republicans and George Norris of Nebraska who was officially an Independent. In opposition there were 13 Democrats, 17 Republicans, and Robert LaFollette, Jr. of Wisconsin who was officially a Progressive. A total of 21 states cast unanimous ballots in favor of the bill. The Senators from another 21 states split, and only six states were unanimously opposed to the bill. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, leaving Indiana out of its calculations, observed that this division meant 26 states reflected doubt about the bill or openly opposed it. It could as easily have meant that 42 states reflected a fair degree of approval for the bill.

The findings of Ralph Smuckler in his study on isolation do not apply nearly so well to the Senate vote as

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1991-2003, 2034-2097 (March 7, 8, 1941).





they did to the House. The six most isolationist states in his study of the Senate were North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Ohio, Idaho, and Nevada. Only North Dakota, Idaho, and Kansas were to be found among the six states voting unanimously against the bill. Wisconsin, Indiana, and Colorado were the other three states which did so. Of these, two are listed among the first twelve isolationist states by Smuckler. Only Wisconsin is missing. Maine, however, which was eleventh in the Smuckler study cast both of its Senate votes in favor of the bill.<sup>33</sup>

From some of the bill's opponents a measure of agreement was later forthcoming. When the Senate met once more on Monday, March 10, Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin called for unity, saying of lend-lease that "we must all accept it as the law of the land." And despite the observations which he had recorded in his diary on the night of March 8 when the bill passed, Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan also had some words for unity. Vandenberg doubted that lend-lease was simply to aid England and privately recorded that if America cracked up the time of the lend-lease vote could be pointed to as the time when it began. "I had the feeling," he wrote, "as the result of the ballot was announced that I was witnessing the suicide of the Republic." On that Monday following passage of the bill, he declared that the debate

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<sup>33</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 2097 (March 8, 1941); New York Times, March 9, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 11, 1941; Ralph H. Smuckler, "The Region of Isolationism", The American Political Science Review, June, 1953, p. 392.

had been, not on aid to England, but on the means of aid, and that 90 out of 95 Senate members had been united in really voting for aid.<sup>34</sup>

The newspapers, during the final week of the debate, by and large followed the courses they had long since mapped for themselves. Early in the week there was wide spread complaint about a filibuster, but when the bill finally passed most of the papers managed to give it at least grudging approval, and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch was able to state: "From beginning to end, democratic usages were strictly observed." A few papers had continued their outright opposition with the Akron Beacon Journal praising the delay early in the week, and the Chicago Tribune, on the day of passage, accusing the authors of the bill of a "malignant genius for slippery language." Other factors than papers noted a slightly different trend, as the Gallup poll for March 8 showed a 7 to 1 percentage margin gain for the opponents of the bill. Nevertheless, the proponents still polled 56 per cent and the opponents only 27 per cent. This gave a slight character of unreality to The Christian Century editorial prepared during the last week of debate, and which appeared the day following final action on the bill. Said the Century:

If the popular reaction which began to register in Washington last week continues much longer, and particularly if it shows signs of increasing in

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<sup>34</sup>New York Times, March 11, 1941; The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg, ed. Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr. (Boston, 1952), pp. 9-10.

strength, it may produce an outcome far different than could have been prophesied a week ago.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Washington Post, March 3, 4, 5, 8, 1941; Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 3, 5, 9, 1941; Atlanta Constitution, March 5, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 10, 1941; Akron Beacon Journal, March 4, 1941; Chicago Daily Tribune, March 8, 1941; New York Times, March 5, 9, 15, 1941; Los Angeles Times, March 9, 1941; The Christian Century, March 12, 1941, p. 347.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TOWARD RESPONSIBILITY

Senate passage of lend-lease, however, did not completely end consideration of the message. Due to the amendments made there was considerable difference between the House and Senate versions of the bill. The course of action to be followed by the administration was tentatively settled on Sunday, the day after Senate approval, when Sol Bloom and Sam Rayburn conferred, and decided to seek approval of the Senate version rather than appoint a compromise committee. This course of action was strengthened on Monday, March 10, when Roosevelt indicated to the Congressional leaders that he had no objections to the Senate version. By unanimous consent the House voted to limit debate on the Senate amendments to two hours.

The actual debate did not even take that long when Bloom presented a resolution to adopt the Senate amendments. Bloom and McCormack spoke briefly for the resolution, and then Hamilton Fish explained that the vote to be taken was not actually on the lend-lease bill, but only on the Senate amendments, indicating that a vote in favor of Bloom's resolution could not be interpreted as a vote in favor of the bill. The other remarks were quickly concluded and the

House approved the resolution by 317 to 71. Now only the President's signature was required to make lend-lease law.<sup>1</sup>

That signature was not long delayed as President Roosevelt signed the bill at 3:50 p.m. on March 11. A few minutes later he approved a list of war materials to be immediately transferred to Great Britain and Greece. Significantly enough the British Admiralty announced the same day that its shipping losses for the week ended March 2 were the third highest for any week of the war. And, at the same time, a group of 15 Senators met in the office of Senator Hiram Johnson of California and agreed to undertake a speaking campaign to "keep the country out of a foreign war."<sup>2</sup>

Their attitude, however, got scant support from the public in the final analysis. Only the Chicago Tribune which adopted the platform "Save Our Republic" on March 12, remained in strong opposition. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch noted that attention should be paid to the Senators who were going to speak, but the common opinion was at least somewhat similar to that expressed by the New York Times which editorialized:

March 11, 1941, ought to be remembered in our history as the day when the United States ended the great retreat which began with the Senate rejection of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. Our effort to find security in isolation has failed. By the final passage of the lease-lend bill we confess its failure.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, March 9, 10, 11, 1941; Congressional Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 2166-2178 (March 11, 1941).

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, March 12, 1941.

<sup>3</sup>Chicago Daily Tribune, March 12, 1941; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 12, 1941; New York Times, March 12, 1941.

The Los Angeles Times in substantial agreement with this sentiment hailed the bill in the terms used by Winston Churchill in Britain, while the Washington Post, saluting Willkie's endorsement of the bill, used his words that: "We must lay the moral, intellectual and spiritual foundations for the kind of world we want our children to inherit."<sup>4</sup>

The New York Times attitude was even more closely reflected in some of the newspaper columns. Ernest Lindley, particularly, struck the note of the Versailles Treaty, but did observe that the lend-lease passage did not mean a return to the path outlined by Wilson. "It may mean, instead," he wrote, "an era in which the United States determines the main pattern of the world by holding the high cards of naval and air power." Walter Lippmann also reflected that the end of isolation had finally arrived, and later, that any longer delay on the decision of the United States would have made the risks "immensely greater." William Allen White, writing to the Emporia Gazette from Tuscon, Arizona, could not help making a parting observation on the Republicans. "The Republican record in Congress is about the record," he wrote, "that Hitler would have made if he had been a Republican leader."<sup>5</sup>

On the whole the consideration of the bill presented almost the kind of division reflected in the final opinions

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<sup>4</sup>Los Angeles Times, March 13, 1941; Washington Post, March 12, 1941.

<sup>5</sup>Washington Post, February 27, March 12, 13, 1941; Emporia Weekly Gazette, March 20, 1941.

from the public media. The opponents of the bill, as revealed in the hearings and debates, and giving all of them credit for sincerity, fell generally into two groups. These could be roughly broken down into those who were afraid that the bill would lead to war, and those who were afraid of a potential dictatorship in the United States. These views, however, were also liberally reinforced by the idea that the United States itself should remain aloof from the world. These attitudes meant that the opponents did not by any means confine their discussions of the bill to the bill itself, or to what it was designed to do, but attributed to the administration all sorts of terror stories and false crises supposedly designed to help pass the bill. Seemingly, they never realized that very real crises were facing Britain and Greece.

Instead, the opponents launched their attack on dictatorship on the strength of charges which they were never able to closely define in any terms except those of helping foreign nations. Such help, of course, was diametrically opposed to an isolationist view-point, even when in itself it would not endanger the United States. The real defect of the debates, and of the hearings as well, was that the opponents were never able to bring themselves to believe the administration. Roosevelt, of course, had made a reputation for hiding his designs, but in this case they were completely clear. The opponents, while perhaps they can not be completely at fault for looking deeper than the administration

statements, however cannot be praised either for over-looking and disregarding clear statements on the authorship of the bill, or of being victims of their own wishful thinking in regard to conveying power or the nature of the bill.

But despite the fact that their isolationist attitude toward world affairs, and particularly toward American history in such details as the Monroe Doctrine, gave the opponents an appearance of being generally more poorly informed and educated, they did make some observations which later turned out to be amazingly correct. Charles Beard, in his testimony before the Senate committee, provided one of the clearest examples of this when he stated that the bill would mean the extension of United States responsibility all over the world. Others dealt with the same idea in varying details, and on the other side of the coin men like Reinhold Niebuhr, also in the Senate hearings, felt that the United States had an obligation and a duty to the world, both in terms of its heritage and its power. If anything does so, this in itself, indicates the essentially moral division that took place on the bill. Lend-lease recognized the responsibility of the United States and placed the country actively in world affairs. The opponents still longed for the time before the United States had become, by virtue of its population and resources, a world power. They still advocated a passive policy toward the world, failing to realize that power itself carried responsibility.

This failure, in the end, had a deleterious effect on



the debate, because the opponents were not willing to directly oppose aid to Britain, and so unintentionally beclouded the issue. Their reluctance also notably delayed the passage of the bill. Men like Senator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, who alone spent twelve hours discussing the bill, and the other opposition Senators in general, who consumed an additional 32 hours, should share a degree of responsibility for the conditions which their delay may have produced. It is, of course, impossible to determine whether or not an earlier recognition of the responsibilities of the United States, and an earlier passage of the bill would have changed some aspects of the war. It is, however, clear that when the bill was introduced the British and Greeks were making strong progress toward the elimination of Italy from the war. While the debate was going on the Balkans fell to Hitler and through them he was able to place increasing pressure upon the Greeks and upon the British in Africa. On April 6, less than a month after lend-lease became law, German units crossed the Bulgarian border and invaded Greece. In less than a month Greece was eliminated despite a valiant defense. It can never be clear whether a better supply of equipment, planes, and motorized units would have made a successful defense possible. We do, however, have the testimony of Cordell Hull that lend-lease was too late to help Greece. Wrote Hull in his Memoirs:

We made war supplies and medicines available for shipment to Greece and declared Greece eligible for Lend-Lease aid as soon as enabling legislation should be passed. The Germans,

however, coming to the help of the humiliated Italians, overran Greece before our Lend-Lease help could get there.<sup>6</sup>

Assuming that Greece could have been saved, it is not out of line to point out that a continuous Greek front would have given the allies a second front in Eastern Europe, and so might have kept Hitler from attacking Russia. Although such a course of action would have placed a larger burden upon Great Britain and the United States, it might possibly also have stopped the spread of Communism into Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, if not all of Eastern Europe.

But in the press of momentous world events the vision of men into the future is necessarily limited, and the men in Congress responsible in part for the safety of the United States in 1941 had a responsibility to look carefully at the bill which they were asked to approve. Those who favored an active role for the United States found the bill acceptable as a means by which the country could move toward its proper world position, aid the allies, and at the same time strengthen itself against the possibility of a future attack. Those who favored a passive role did not see this, and looked at the bill more closely.

One of the first things they looked at was the all important Section 3 (a), part 2, which stated that the President may "sell, transfer, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of, to any such government any defense

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<sup>6</sup>Tom Connally, My Name Is Tom Connally (New York, 1954), p. 244; Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, 1948), I, 886.

article." Legally there was little difference between the terms, "sell, transfer, exchange, lease", and "lend," and the initial attack of the opposition centered upon "or otherwise dispose of." It was "transfer", however, which held the most danger for the opponents of the bill, for in the entire bill it was the only word which could be interpreted to include convoying. Technically "transfer" included "convey" and "convey" could mean both sending American shipping into war zones and convoying foreign shipping in such zones with American warships. Strangely enough no question was raised about this term until February 10 when Senator Vandenberg questioned Merwin K. Hart, a New York businessman, on its meaning at the Senate hearings. Subsequently it was raised in the Senate when the bill was being amended, and later the bill was amended to remove this danger.<sup>7</sup>

The question as to whether the bill itself allowed or authorized convoys was a very live one, and more true debate, and more strong attempts at amendment centered on that than on anything else. In retrospect it would seem plain that the President, as Commander-in-Chief had it clearly within his power to order convoying by American naval vessels at any time. This was not clear, however, to the opponents who were at least partly guilty of wishful thinking in believing they

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<sup>7</sup>United States Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on S. 275, A Bill Further To Promote The Defense of The United States, And For Other Purposes, 77 Cong. 1 Sess., II, 768; Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1891 (March 6, 1941).

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could prohibit such action by keeping an endorsement of it out of the lend-lease bill. Charles A. Beard was still guilty of a degree of the same kind of thinking when he wrote President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War seven years later. Beard considered the Ellender amendment along with the other limitations a specific declaration that "conferred on the President no power whatever to use the armed forces for combatant purposes, that in executing the law he could not order the armed forces to commit acts of war." He concluded, "Indeed, it is doubtful whether Congress would have passed the bill if provisions against convoying and committing 'combatant', or fighting, acts had not been written clearly in the bill." In actuality no such provisions were written into the bill for the Ellender amendment was specious, declaring in fact that all the laws concerning the use of the Army and Navy were the same as they were before except for the new provisions written into lend-lease.<sup>8</sup>

It would be grossly unfair to leave the impression, however, that the Ellender amendment was accepted as genuine by the Senators on the floor when it was approved. After Ellender had introduced the administration modification on March 6, it was attacked as meaningless by both Senator Joseph O'Mahoney and Senator Bennett Champ Clark. They were not deceived.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Charles A. Beard, President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War 1941: A Study in Appearances and Realities (New Haven, 1948), pp. 32-33.

<sup>9</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 1884-1885 (March 6, 1941).

The effect of the lend-lease bill on the American Neutrality Act and on international law in general was also raised by the opponents. It was generally admitted that some sections of the Neutrality Act would be suspended, and this was accepted by those who voted for the bill. The international law issue was never so clear. Charles Beard, this time more accurately reflecting the sentiment of the opponents, wrote that munitions and materials could not be supplied to a belligerent without committing an act of war, and that lend-lease, therefore, authorized an act of war. The opinion of Quincy Wright, writing in The American Journal of International Law in 1941, is probably more sound. According to Wright the bill did not add to or subtract from the powers of the President, and while it drew away from neutrality, it was just an authorization of "abandonment of impartiality in the interest of American defense," and was a move "toward responsibility for world order." The proponents, of course, would have been willing to accept Wright's analysis of the bill.<sup>10</sup>

While isolationist sentiment did show some increase during the summer of 1941, no big out-cry or sentiment against lend-lease developed, and the proponents seemed to be on sound ground. Initially \$7 billion was appropriated under the act, and almost all of that amount had been expended by the time President Roosevelt made his second report to Congress in

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<sup>10</sup>Beard, President Roosevelt, pp. 15-16; Quincy Wright, "The Lend-Lease Bill and International Law," The American Journal of International Law, April, 1941, pp. 305, 313.

September 1941. By the time the first expiration of the law rolled around in March 1943, the United States itself was at war, and that probably helped to account for the easy extension of the law by 407 to 6 in the House and 82 to 0 in the Senate. All in all, the lend-lease policy seemed to be a success. It paved the way for future policies like the Marshall Plan and Point Four, and in 1941 it was particularly a success in that it indicated for the people of the United States a step toward responsibility in the world, and an international coming of age for America.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Cong. Record, 77 Cong., 1 Sess., 7402 (September 15, 1941), 78 Cong., 1 Sess., 1815, 1853 (March 10, 11, 1943).

## APPENDIX

Following is the lend-lease bill as passed by the Senate on March 8, 1941, and approved by the House of Representatives on March 11, 1941. The House amendments are incorporated into the body of the bill. The Senate amendments appear in capital letters.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as "An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States."

SEC. 2. As used in this Act -

(a) The term "defense article" means -

- (1) Any weapon, munition, aircraft, vessel, or boat;
- (2) Any machinery, facility, tool, material, or supply necessary for the manufacture, production, processing, repair, servicing, or operation of any article described in this subsection;
- (3) Any component material or part of or equipment for any article described in this subsection;
- (4) Any AGRICULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL OR other commodity or article for defense.

Such term "defense article" includes any article described in this subsection: Manufactured or procured



pursuant to section 3, or to which the United States or any foreign government has or hereafter acquires title, possession, or control.

(b) The term "defense information" means any plan, specification, design prototype, or information pertaining to any defense article.

SEC. 3. (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, the President may, from time to time, when he deems it in the interest of national defense, authorize the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, or the head of any other department or agency of the Government -

(1) To manufacture in arsenals, factories, and shipyards under their jurisdiction, or otherwise procure, TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH FUNDS ARE MADE AVAILABLE THEREFOR OR CONTRACTS ARE AUTHORIZED FROM TIME TO TIME BY THE CONGRESS, OR BOTH, any defense article for the government of any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States.

(2) To sell, transfer TITLE TO, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of, to any such government any defense article, but no defense article not manufactured or procured under paragraph (1) shall in any way be disposed of under this paragraph, except after consultation with the Chief of Staff of the Army or the Chief of Naval Operations of the Navy, or both. The value of defense articles disposed of in any way under authority of this paragraph, and procured from funds heretofore appropriated, shall not exceed \$1,300,000,000.

THE VALUE OF SUCH DEFENSE ARTICLES SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY CONCERNED OR SUCH OTHER DEPARTMENT, AGENCY, OR OFFICER AS SHALL BE DESIGNATED IN THE MANNER PROVIDED IN THE RULES AND REGULATIONS ISSUED HEREUNDER. DEFENSE ARTICLES PROCURED FROM FUNDS HEREAFTER APPROPRIATED TO ANY DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT, OTHER THAN FROM FUNDS AUTHORIZED TO BE APPROPRIATED UNDER THIS ACT, SHALL NOT BE DISPOSED OF IN ANY WAY UNDER AUTHORITY OF THIS PARAGRAPH EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT HEREAFTER AUTHORIZED BY THE CONGRESS IN THE ACTS APPROPRIATING SUCH FUNDS OR OTHERWISE.

(3) To test, inspect, prove, repair, outfit, recondition, or otherwise place in good working order, TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH FUNDS ARE MADE AVAILABLE THEREFOR, OR CONTRACTS AUTHORIZED FROM TIME TO TIME BY THE CONGRESS, OR BOTH, any defense article for any such government, OR TO PROCURE ANY OR ALL SUCH SERVICES BY PRIVATE CONTRACT.

(4) To communicate to any such government any defense information, pertaining to any defense article furnished to such government under paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(5) To release for export any defense article DISPOSED OF IN ANY WAY UNDER THIS SUBSECTION to any such government.

(b) The terms and conditions upon which any such foreign government receives any aid authorized under subsection (a) shall be those which the President deems satisfactory, and the benefit to the United States may be payment or repayment in kind or property, or any other direct or indirect benefit which the President deems satisfactory.

(c) AFTER JUNE 30, 1943, OR AFTER THE PASSAGE OF A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION BY THE TWO HOUSES BEFORE JUNE 30, 1943, WHICH DECLARES THAT THE POWERS CONFERRED BY OR PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (a) ARE NO LONGER NECESSARY TO PROMOTE THE DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES, NEITHER THE PRESIDENT NOR THE HEAD OF ANY DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY SHALL EXERCISE ANY OF THE POWERS CONFERRED BY OR PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (a); EXCEPT THAT UNTIL JULY 1, 1946, ANY OF SUCH POWERS MAY BE EXERCISED TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT A CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT WITH SUCH A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT MADE BEFORE JULY 1, 1943, OR BEFORE THE PASSAGE OF SUCH CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, WHICHEVER IS THE EARLIER.

(d) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of convoying vessels by naval vessels of the United States.

(e) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or to permit the authorization of the entry of any American vessel into a combat area in violation of section 3 of the Neutrality Act of 1939.

SEC. 4. All contracts or agreements made for the disposition of any defense article or defense information pursuant to section 3 shall contain a clause by which the foreign government undertakes that it will not, without the consent of the President, transfer title to or possession of such defense article or defense information by gift, sale, or otherwise, or permit its use by anyone not an officer, employee, or agent of such foreign government.

SEC. 5. (a) The Secretary of War, the Secretary of

the Navy, or the head of any other department or agency of the Government involved shall, when any such defense article or defense information is exported, immediately inform the department or agency designated by the President to administer section 6 of the Act of July 2, 1940 (54 Stat. 714), of the quantities, character, value, terms of disposition, and destination of the article and information so exported.

(b) The President from time to time, but not less frequently than once every ninety days, shall transmit to the Congress a report of operations under this Act except such information as he deems incompatible with the public interest to disclose. Reports provided for under this subsection shall be transmitted to the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House of Representatives, as the case may be, if the Senate or the House of Representatives, as the case may be, is not in session.

SEC. 6. (a) There is hereby authorized to be appropriated from time to time, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such amounts as may be necessary to carry out the provisions and accomplish the purposes of this Act.

(b) All money and all property which is converted into money received under section 3 from any government shall, with the approval of the Director of the Budget, revert to the respective appropriation or appropriations out of which funds were expended with respect to the defense article or defense information for which such consideration is received, and shall be available for expenditure for the purpose for which such expended funds were appropriated by law, during the fiscal year in which such funds are received and the ensuing fiscal

year; BUT IN NO EVENT SHALL ANY FUNDS SO RECEIVED BE AVAILABLE FOR EXPENDITURE AFTER JUNE 30, 1946.

SEC. 7. The Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, and the head of the department or agency shall in all contracts or agreements for the disposition of any defense article or defense information fully protect the rights of all citizens of the United States who have patent rights in and to any such article or information which is hereby authorized to be disposed of and the payments collected for royalties on such patents shall be paid to the owners and holders of such patents.

SEC. 8. The Secretaries of War and of the Navy are hereby authorized to purchase or otherwise acquire arms, ammunition, and implements of war produced within the jurisdiction of any country to which section 3 is applicable, whenever the President deems such purchase or acquisition to be necessary in the interests of the defense of the United States.

SEC. 9. The President may, from time to time, promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary and proper to carry out any of the provisions of this Act; and he may exercise any power or authority conferred on him by this Act through such department, agency, or officer as he shall direct.

SEC. 10. NOTHING IN THIS ACT SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO CHANGE EXISTING LAW RELATING TO THE USE OF THE LAND AND NAVAL FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES, EXCEPT INSOFAR AS SUCH USE RELATES TO THE MANUFACTURE, PROCUREMENT AND REPAIR OF DEFENSE ARTICLES,

THE COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AND OTHER NONCOMBATANT  
PURPOSES ENUMERATED IN THIS ACT.

SEC. 11. IF ANY PROVISION OF THIS ACT OR THE  
APPLICATION OF SUCH PROVISION TO ANY CIRCUMSTANCE SHALL BE  
HELD INVALID, THE VALIDITY OF THE REMAINDER OF THE ACT AND  
APPLICABILITY OF SUCH PROVISION TO OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL  
NOT BE AFFECTED THEREBY.

Passed the House of Representatives February 3, 1941.

Attest:

South Trimble,

Clerk

By H. Newlin Megill

Passed the Senate with amendments March 8 (legislative day,  
February 13), 1941.

Attest:

Edwin A. Halsey,

Secretary

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

The principle primary sources for this study have been the official government records for the period of the consideration of the lend-lease bill. Most important from the standpoint of revealing the view-points of the individual Congressmen and for a degree of continuity and detail in the arguments advanced against the bill, and in its defense, is The Congressional Record, 77 Congress, 1 Session, from January through the passage of the bill in March, 1941. The arguments in detail, and the best analyses of the bill are to be found in the hearings before the House and Senate committees. The House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings on H. R. 1776, A Bill Further To Promote The Defense of the United States And For Other Purposes, provides some testimony and material not otherwise available. The Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on S. 275, A Bill Further To Promote The Defense of the United States And For Other Purposes, in three parts, is more valuable for the administration testimony, except for Cordell Hull who appeared in executive session before that committee. The greater number of witnesses called by the Senate Committee, and the addition of Wendell Willkie as an administration witness add special value to these hearings. A final government publication, Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy 1931-1941, compiled

by the Department of State in 1943 is valuable as the official view of the period in question.

The second valuable category of primary sources was the newspapers selected for the study. Inasmuch as public opinion, and non-governmental activities played a large part in the enactment of the bill, and in the atmosphere surrounding its enactment, they are extremely important. The papers used were selected on a multiple basis. A balance was attempted between papers in favor of the measure, and those either directly opposed or at most only lukewarm in their support. In order to provide some sampling of opinion across the entire country a geographic balance was also attempted. These criteria were then necessarily subjected to the stringencies of the library facilities. Of the papers finally selected those which were not available locally were borrowed on microfilm or consulted elsewhere.

Nine newspapers were read through the period January 1, 1941 to March 15, 1941, with some scattered issues before and after these dates. The most important of the papers used was the New York Times (Michigan State University Library) which was valuable not only for its editorial comment, but also for the detail which it provided, and as the chief source of continuity for the story of enactment. Of great aid in the continuity, especially for the first month of the bill's consideration, as well as being important for its editorial comment, was the Cleveland Plain Dealer (Cleveland Public Library, and Kent State University Library). Due to its location this paper was available to the author longer than



any of the other papers except the New York Times. Both of these papers favored the bill. The Akron Beacon Journal (Kent State University Library) was selected despite its physical propinquity to Cleveland, largely because it was the only major Ohio newspaper which opposed the bill, and with the exception of the Chicago Daily Tribune was the only available paper in direct opposition to the bill. The Beacon Journal was the first paper under the control of John S. Knight, who in 1937 took over the Miami, Florida, Herald, and in 1940 the Detroit Free Press. The Chicago Daily Tribune (Michigan State Library) was the most consistent and vocal of the available papers to oppose the bill. Located in the heart of the isolationist sentiment in the United States, it was particularly useful for its editorial attitude. The Washington Post (University of Michigan Library) was selected to represent both the opinion of the Capital and of the eastern seaboard. Generally liberal, it was consistently in support of the bill. The other paper consistent in supporting lend-lease was the Atlanta Constitution (University of Georgia Library). It was selected to represent the South which was always at least 70 per cent in favor of the bill, and the Constitution accurately reflected this. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin) was selected for its more nearly central geographic position. Never able to become extremely enthusiastic over the bill, it strongly supported all attempts at amendment. Most of the west itself, was passed over in order to get a paper from another metropolitan area. The Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Public Library) represented

not only the West coast, but also a Republican newspaper. To a large extent the Times was alive to the dangers of 1941, but was on many occasions fatalistic about United States policy, and as a result never came into a position of support for the bill, save with amendments. The final paper consulted was the Emporia Weekly Gazette (Michigan State University Library) which was chiefly valuable for the interventionist attitude of William Allen White in an area that was largely isolationist.

Some other current periodicals also were valuable for the attitudes which they reflected on the issue at the time it was being debated. The editorials of The Christian Century and of Commonweal both represented respected journals of opinion which opposed the passage of lend-lease on the grounds both of war danger and of dictatorship. Vital Speeches was particularly useful for such addresses as Burton K. Wheeler's "America's Present Emergency," in the issue of January 15, 1941, and Marquess of Lothian's "Britain and America," in the issue of January 1, 1941. William T. Stone, "Will Neutrality Keep U. S. Out of War?" in Foreign Policy Reports, October 1, 1939, offered a contemporary view on that issue for the chapter on neutrality legislation. One of the more valuable journals which supported the lend-lease legislation was The Nation. The editorials of this magazine were useful as was I. F. Stone, "A Time For Candor," in the issue of January 25, 1941. Time magazine was also consulted for the period of the bill's consideration, and was somewhat helpful for continuity on the bill. It was more important, however, for providing the color

surrounding the hearings and debates, and providing thumbnail descriptions of the individuals concerned.

Providing a final and indispensable source of primary materials were the published letters, documents, diaries, and memoirs for the period of the bill's enactment. The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, ed. Samuel I. Roseman, (New York, 1941) provided in volume VIII valuable material on Roosevelt's attitude toward neutrality, and in volume IX material on the genesis of the lend-lease idea. F.D.R. His Personal Letters 1928-1945, ed. Elliott Roosevelt, (New York, 1950), was a valuable supplement throwing additional light on Roosevelt's own attitude during this period. The Selected Letters of William Allen White 1899-1943, ed. Walter Johnson, New York, 1947, was useful in establishing White's role in the battles to get the neutrality legislation repealed or amended, and also helped to determine White's general position on isolation and intervention. Herbert Hoover's Addresses Upon The American Road 1940-1941, (New York, 1941), established the former president's attitude on lend-lease soon after the measure was introduced in January, 1941. Of much more value were The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg, (Boston, 1952), edited by Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., with the collaboration of Joe Alex Morris. The Senator was apparently not made to appear more liberal than he actually was at the time of the lend-lease debate, and the excerpts from March, 1941, show clearly the sincere concern of Vandenberg over the course of the United States. Cordell Hull,

The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, (New York, 1948), were particularly valuable for the attitude of the Secretary of State during the time of the controversies over neutrality legislation, and the formulation of lend-lease. His sections on the debate and passage itself are scanty and not of particular value.

Another view inside the Roosevelt cabinet is provided by the third volume of The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, (New York, 1954), but Ickes' connection with lend-lease was slight, and the value is more in the information on neutrality, and on the general attitude than on the bill itself. House and Senate views of the legislative battle itself are respectively provided by Sol Bloom, The Autobiography of Sol Bloom, (New York, 1948), and Tom Connally, My Name Is Tom Connally, (New York, 1954). Bloom, who was the chairman of the House committee, probably exaggerated his role to some extent, and there also might be some doubt as to the sentiment he actually held at the time toward allowing a fair hearing to the opponents, but his view is nonetheless valuable. Connally's work, as told to Alfred Steinberg, is possibly less valuable, for although Connally was one of the administration managers of the bill in the Senate, his treatment did not give the appearance of historical soundness. Alben W. Barkley's work, That Reminds Me, (New York, 1954), provided no information on the bill, but did give some characterizations of men involved in the debate. David Lawrence's Diary of A Washington Correspondent, (New York, 1942), provides some interesting additional contemporary comments

on the bill and its enactment. Of exceptional value on the genesis of the bill and its preparation for Congress was The Morgenthau Diaries as published in Colliers. Of direct pertinence, and indispensable for a study of the bill or its **enactment**, was Part IV, "The Story Behind Lend-Lease" in the issue of October 18, 1947.

The treatment of the secondary materials will be more cursory. Most of the common biographies of Franklin D. Roosevelt, either dealing with him directly, or with his relationship with others, were consulted for general background on lend-lease and the period preceding its enactment. These sources range from Robert E. Sherwood's Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History, (New York, 1950), to John T. Flynn's The Roosevelt Myth (New York, 1956).

For administration policies during the period leading up to the United States entry into the war, several books deserve mention. Charles A. Beard's two works, American Foreign Policy in the Making 1932-1940: A Study in Responsibilities, (New Haven, 1946), and President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War 1941: A Study in Appearances and Realities, (New Haven, 1948), were particularly of value for the strong case they make for the idea that the United States was purposely and unnecessarily taken into the war. The latter of these works deals with the lend-lease bill itself for several pages, making the case that it was one of the steps toward war. Although heavily documented the section on the bill does not do an adequate job of summarizing even the

arguments considered essential by Beard. Charles Callan Tansill argues much the same thing, and more convincingly, in his Back Door To War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy 1933-1941, (Chicago, 1952). For the opposite side of the coin the two books by William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, were especially valuable. The first of these was The Challenge to Isolation 1937-1940, (New York, 1952), and the second was The Undeclared War 1940-1941, (New York, 1953). The second was used particularly for its treatment of the genesis of the bill. Basil Rauch, in his Roosevelt, From Munich to Pearl Harbor, (New York, 1950), gave a usable summary of the lend-lease origin and the debate, and Forrest Davis and Ernest K. Lindley in How War Came: An American White Paper; From The Fall of France to Pearl Harbor, (New York, 1942), also provided some information.

Material specifically dealing with the American neutrality legislation and used for that chapter came mainly from three sources. These were, in order of importance, Edwin Borchard and William Potter Lage, Neutrality for the United States, (New Haven, 1940), Donald F. Drummond, The Passing of American Neutrality 1937-1941, (Ann Arbor, 1955), and Harold Bartlett Whiteman, Jr., Neutrality, 1941, (New Haven, 1941).

Two other secondary works deserving specific mention deal with entirely different phases of the topic. Wayne S. Cole, America First: The Battle Against Intervention 1940-1941, (Madison, 1953), is valuable for the details it gives of the

struggles of that organization to defeat the lend-lease bill. The other work, Lend-Lease: Weapon For Victory, (New York, 1944), by Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., is the only work written exclusively on lend-lease. This work is valuable for the extensive background which it provides for the genesis of the bill, and for a study of the operations of the lend-lease law it would be indispensable, but it passes over the debate and enactment of the bill in general terms giving no more information than any of the general histories of the period.

Some articles from journals after the period of the bills consideration were also consulted. Vernon Van Dyke and Edward Lane Davis, "Senator Taft and American Security" in the May, 1952, issue of The Journal of Politics was valuable only for that Senators general attitude toward foreign affairs, and his reaction to Roosevelt's "arsenal of democracy." Ralph H. Smuckler's article "The Region of Isolationism" was used in analysing the votes on lend-lease along generally sectional lines, and is useful for that purpose. It appeared in The American Political Science Review, June, 1953. The third article appeared in The American Journal of International Law, April, 1941, which might be close enough to the enactment itself to be considered a primary source. This article was "The Lend-Lease Bill and International Law" by Quincy Wright, and was useful in providing a legal opinion to weigh against that presented by Charles Beard in his arguments.

THE ENACTMENT OF LEND-LEASE

By

Richard Laughlin McBane

An Abstract of

A THESIS

Submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences  
Michigan State University of Agriculture and  
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the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

1958



The United States in the late months of 1940, and the early months of 1941, reached a point where it had to make a critical decision. This decision was whether the United States would remain isolationist and let Britain fall when her dollar resources, and thus her ability to buy munitions ran out, or whether it would take a position of world responsibility by aiding the allies while staying out of the war itself. The issue turned upon the enactment of the lend-lease bill, and this thesis is the story of that enactment.

To the largest possible degree original sources have been utilized. The hearings of both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee on H. R. 1776, A Bill Further to Promote the Defense of the United States, and for Other Purposes, have been used along with the lengthy debates in the Congressional Record. Nine newspapers were selected to study the pressures on the legislators and the atmosphere surrounding the enactment. Whenever available private letters, diaries, and memoirs, along with public documents were consulted.

The late months of 1940, particularly December, brought home increasingly to the Roosevelt administration, the need of the British for aid for which they could not pay. That this aid would be in the national interest of the United

States was hardly questioned by the administration, but it faced the problem of surmounting the neutrality legislation of the 1930's and the vocal isolationist elements in the government.

After a brief background of the events of December 1940, and the problems of the neutrality legislation, the formulation of the lend-lease bill by the Roosevelt administration is related. Its initial reception was stormy, and in this stormy atmosphere the House Hearings were opened under Sol Bloom, chairman of the House Committee. These hearings brought out the opinions of some of the leading Americans of that critical period. Cordell Hull, Henry Stimson, Frank Knox, and Henry Morgenthau, Jr. all appeared for the administration. Star witnesses for the opponents were Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, and Joseph Kennedy, retiring Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

When the House committee reported the bill, the House of Representatives debated it for a week, chiefly on the points of presidential power and war danger which were the strongest opposition charges. Before they approved the bill on an almost entirely partisan and sectional division, the Senate Committee, chaired by Walter George, had taken up the bill. Much of the testimony it heard was the same, and many of the witnesses were the same, but on the last day of public hearings the administration was able to present Wendell Willkie, just returned from England, in support of the bill. The opponents again depended heavily upon Colonel Lindbergh, but

they also got aid from such prominent Americans as historian Charles A. Beard, Colonel McCormick of the Chicago Tribune, General Robert Wood of the America First Committee, and Alfred M. Landon.

When the bill was reported to the Senate the debate was long and generally repetitious. The opponents, who held the floor most of the time, were led by Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri, and Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, the latter two Democrats. Nye was particularly evident in the debate, but Wheeler was the real leader of the opponents from the beginning when he engaged in extremely sharp exchanges with President Roosevelt.

The public reaction, in the meantime fluctuated, but stayed safely on the side of the administration throughout. Few newspapers consistently opposed the bill, and most were content with the amendments to the bill. Gallup polls showed the public approval at its height immediately after the House vote, but while the opposition increased in the final week of debate, it had only reached 27 per cent by the time the Senate approved the bill by 60 to 31.

This approval, although too late to be of aid to the Greeks, did effectively aid Great Britain, and while some historians have contended that the passage of the lend-lease bill was one of the steps which eventually led the United States into World War II, there is nothing to indicate that the administration was not completely frank and honest in its belief that lend-lease was not a war bill. Certainly, the

passage of lend-lease moved the United States into a position of world responsibility commensurate with its national power, and paved the way for post-war aid programs.

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