

The Rise of the United States' Airfield Empire in Latin America, North Africa, the Middle East and Southern Asia (1927-1945)

How America's Political Leaders Achieved Mastery over the Global Commons and created the "American Century"

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June 1, 2012

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD degree in History
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Abstract

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2012

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Since the Second World War, the United States has mastered the global commons (the airspace and the sea lanes) with an empire of bases that encircled the earth. These U.S. military bases have not only supported military operations, but were also the foundations for American hegemony. U.S. military bases were key tools of economic domination and globalization, since their purpose was to insure that American corporations enjoyed privileged access to the world's markets, raw materials and cheap labor. This dissertation seeks to explain the origins of the United States' base empire, with the main focus being on its overseas aerial infrastructure. By the 1920s, Washington policymakers navigated through the currents of anti-imperialism and pacifism to create an empire that consisted of military bases, but also commercial airfields that could be converted to military use. The Franklin Roosevelt administration expanded the scope of the aerial component of this base empire by contracting Pan Am to construct airfields in the Pacific and modernize airfields in Latin America (and build new ones), Africa, the Middle East. Pan Am's airfields officially served a commercial purpose, but they were also built with a view to being adapted for military purposes in case of hostilities with the Axis powers. As the war drew to a close, the Franklin Roosevelt administration sought to perpetuate its "new world order" by retaining military airfields (extending eastwards from the Philippines to the Azores) that made up the United States' regional defense perimeter and commercial airfields which lay outside that perimeter, with a view to converting the latter to military use in case of an emergency. The

commercial airfields provided discreet military cover for vital U.S. national security interests, such as the oilfields in the Middle East and to foreign markets in Southern Asia and the Far East. This global base empire continues to exist to this day.

Acknowledgements

As a PhD. candidate, I have been very fortunate to have been able to work at the University of Ottawa with Professor Eda Kranakis, my thesis supervisor. Professor Kranakis has aided me in my research not only by suggesting several sources for me to consult, but also by encouraging me to think in terms of big ideas and their potential to structure my thesis in a meaningful way. There are also several other professors who, though not directly connected with this project, have contributed to it indirectly. Professor Brian L. Villa, for example, has been one of the main inspirations for my research. His advice to me to look at the past from different angles and to never shy away from considering controversial interpretations has contributed to some of the most important insights in my research. I also want to thank Professors Schumacher and Florez-Malagon for encouraging me to examine more closely 19th century American imperialism and cultural imperialism, thereby leading me to change my perspective on U.S. foreign policy in the first half of the 20th century. I want to thank the archivists at the Franklin D. Franklin Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, New York; the National Archives and Records Administration (especially senior archivist Mr. Holland); and the Pan American Airways Archives at the University of Miami for their invaluable support. There are also several institutions that have made this PhD. thesis possible. I also wish to thank the Department of History and the Faculty of Graduate and Post Graduate Studies and the Pan Am Historical Foundation for their financial support.

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Introduction

U.S. commercial and military airfields seem to the less discerning eye to be cogs in a worldwide network of air transport, but they are far more important than that. These airfields also figured prominently in the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's postwar plans for achieving American global hegemony. At the December 12, 1942 meeting of the Division of Special Research¹, Norman Davis, who headed up the Security Subcommittee for the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy (which advised the President on postwar planning), told his colleagues that the "American commercial aviation network" supporting the United Nations war effort "was of such vital importance to this country from the point of view of security that we must certainly maintain the ground we have now occupied in that field." The basis for this reasoning was that commercial airfields could be converted to military use, since they have many of the facilities needed by military aircraft. Senator Warren Austin agreed with Davis' assessment, observing that "in many places we must hold to what we have pioneered." Those commercial airfields were in Latin America, the Atlantic, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific.² Given perceived airpower's importance to global security, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's intention to retain these airfields spoke volumes of its global aspirations.³

U.S. airfields were also part of another big picture: empire. Empires did not become obsolete in the 20th century; they were reinvented almost exclusively on the basis of extraterritoriality. At a time when anti-colonial movements were tearing down colonial empires and rendering formal imperial rule impossible, extraterritoriality was the only way for great

¹ The Division for Special Research was part of the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy which advised the President on postwar planning.

² P Minutes 37, December 12, 1942, NARA 2, RG 59 Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55

³ Interdepartmental Subcommittee on International Aviation, June 12, 1943, Ibid., Box 43

powers, like the United States, to control foreign nations in defense of their national security interests without overtly violating the principle of national sovereignty. The most common form of extraterritoriality was the embassy which operated under a distinct legal regime from the host nation. But extraterritoriality also took on the form of military bases. The American empire had multiple identities; the territorial (consisting of the continental United States, Alaska, the Pacific islands, and some Caribbean islands) and informal empires (where imperialist relationships were ambiguous and even contested) being the most commonly known. However, the United States' most extensive empire by 2010, which has only recently garnered attention, has been its extraterritorial one of 1000 military bases – airfields, naval bases, army bases, marine bases, communication facilities, maintenance facilities, ammunition depots, radars, etc. – in 150 countries along with an additional 300 secret military bases in Israel, Kuwait, the Philippines, Diego Garcia (an island in the Indian Ocean), Kosovo, and other countries.⁴

What specific role were U.S. airfields meant to serve? Their most obvious function was to provide military airplanes with facilities – for landing, repairs, refueling, and taking off – so they could project their airpower over vast distances. The projection of airpower was not only useful in strategic bombing operations, but also in supplying air cover to ground forces and their supply chains. The ground forces enjoying air supremacy received military equipment and supplies in a more timely fashion, since their supply chains were protected, and engaged more freely in military operations without being harassed from the air. By contrast, the side that lost control over the airspace was starved for supplies (since its supply chains were vulnerable to air

⁴ David Vine, *Island of Shame: the Secret History of the U.S. military base on Diego Garcia* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton UP, 2009), 42; Maria Hohn and Seungsook Moon, “Empire at the Crossroads?,” In *over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War II to the Present* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2010), 397; *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts*, ed. Catherine Lutz (New York: New York UP, 2009), 1; Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire* (New York: Verso, 2004), 1-3.

strikes) and incapable of conducting military operations on its own terms.⁵ While airpower advocates exaggerated the importance of military aviation (claiming that airplanes alone could win wars), airpower was still an invaluable auxiliary in modern warfare.⁶

But airfields also had less obvious uses. Air bases, such as the commercial airfield in Dhahran (Saudi Arabia), underscored the United States' interest in certain parts of the world and in particular their foreign markets and natural resources.⁷ The reason for the preoccupation with markets and resources was largely due to the changing definition of U.S. national security. At the dawn of the 20th century, U.S. national security encompassed national survival and regional hegemony over the Caribbean and the Pacific. By the early 1940s, U.S. national security was equated with American global hegemony and all of its military and economic collaterals. Postwar planners were concerned that the United States was consuming raw materials at such a rapid rate that "our position in the future will be perilous."⁸ Moreover, certain raw materials such as rubber and tin were located as far away as Southeast Asia, which meant that the United States could be cut off from foreign sources of supply and suffer economic dislocation. Consequently the Franklin Roosevelt administration believed that insuring the United States' privileged access to the world's natural resources was of paramount importance to its security.⁹ Another related concern was preventing raw materials from falling into the hands of a potential enemy, which

⁵ Walter Boyne, *The Influence of Airpower upon History* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 2003), 232; Barry Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security* 28, No. 1 (Summer 2003): 8-9.

⁶ "Airpower as the Policeman of Peace," April 3, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76.

⁷ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1992), 80; Joseph Gerson, "The Sun Never Sets," *The Sun Never Sets: Confronting the Network of Foreign U.S. Military Bases*, eds. Joseph Gerson and Bruce Birchard (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1991), 13-14.

⁸ P-Minutes 54, May 1, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55.

⁹ Thomas Robertson, "'This is the American Earth': American Empire, the Cold War, and American Environmentalism," *Diplomatic History* 32, No. 1 (September 2008): 561-584

could lead to “the development of power which was out of balance.” Sometimes the United States was interested in another nation’s raw materials not for its own use, but to deny them to another country which may challenge the international order in the future. U.S. airfields, within that context, controlled foreign supplies of raw materials around the world and determined which nations had access to them.¹⁰

Airfields also served prominently in the strategic buffers that were being planned for the postwar era. The expansion of the airplane’s flying range (which was likely to continue expanding owing to technological innovation) meant that military and civilian planners in the U.S. government had to think about controlling whole oceans as well as the entire Western Hemisphere to ensure that an enemy’s airpower never reached the United States. The Pacific, for example, was to be covered with U.S. military bases to ensure that a potential adversary in Asia was kept at a safe distance. The Franklin Roosevelt administration was even willing to violate the Atlantic Charter by annexing Japan’s mandated islands to obtain potential sites for the construction of U.S. military and commercial airfields.¹¹

The Franklin Roosevelt administration’s decision to retain airfields around the world for military purposes paved the way for many strategic relationships with foreign governments. U.S. economic and military assistance to foreign governments was tacit rent for maintaining military bases abroad, which illustrates how the retention of airfields led the United States to undertake other commitments abroad.¹² The existence of U.S. military bases also drew the United States

¹⁰ PIO-157 Preliminary S-106 Preliminary, December 21, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76; Division of Political Studies P Minutes 48, July 23, 1943, Ibid.

¹¹ S-119 Preliminary, Provision of Bases for Common Use, May 6, 1944; PIO-157 Preliminary S-106 Preliminary, December 21, 1943, Ibid., Box 76; Melvyn Leffler, “The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-48,” *The American Historical Review* 89, No. 2 (April 1984): 349-50.

¹² *The Bases of Empire*, ed. Catherine Lutz, 4.

into expensive wars, like the Vietnam War, since presidential administrations preferred to safeguard the global base empire at all costs than to retreat. The latter course, though probably sensible, was widely considered by mainstream American political culture as a sign of weakness that would embolden the United States' enemies.¹³ Not surprisingly, in order to support these military commitments, the U.S. government increased military spending at the expense of economic innovation at home. For the years' 1955-70, the U.S. government's defense spending was between 7-10% of GNP. In the 1970s, the level of defense spending declined to 6-7% of GNP, but then rose to the 7-8% level during Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981-89).¹⁴

The purpose of this dissertation is to explain how the aerial component of the United States' base empire came into existence. There is already a growing literature on the United States' base empire as an existing phenomenon, but very little on its origins. Similarly there exists a voluminous literature on the United States' meteoric rise (which sheds light on how the base empire emerged as a mainstay of American hegemony), but what is lacking in that literature is any mention of a government plan for achieving American hegemony. This dissertation depicts the growth of the United States' base empire – which experienced its greatest expansion under the Franklin Roosevelt administration (1933-45) – as a carefully planned process motivated largely by the geopolitical ambitions and cultural biases of Washington policymakers. Moreover, this deliberative process exploited international crises, if and when they occurred, to

¹³ Joseph Gerson, "The Sun Never Sets," *The Sun Never Sets*, 6; Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 32-33.

¹⁴ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), xxvi, 539; Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1990), 11.

expand the reach of U.S. imperialism until it nearly encompassed the world. Lastly the plan for American global hegemony was a conscious imperialist enterprise.¹⁵

As such, this dissertation is a revisionist piece that challenges readers to think about the rise of United States and the role of individuals in facilitating that rise in a new and daring way. The success of the U.S. government and private enterprise in expanding commercial aerial networks demonstrates an overlooked, but vitally important, truth: regardless of the external pressures and public opinion (though these factors remained influential), Washington policymakers were still able to transform the United States into a military colossus with a worldwide network of bases for deploying military power globally. Norman Davis once observed that “[national] security meant our ability to control our own destiny.”¹⁶ Most presidential administrations (but especially the Franklin Roosevelt administration) succeeded in determining their nation’s destiny by applying the principle of extraterritoriality globally and in particular by aiding the expansion of U.S. air routes throughout the world.

Structure of Thesis

Over six chapters, this dissertation will demonstrate that Washington policymakers embarked upon an imperialist project to transform the United States into a regional and later on a global empire; and that aerial infrastructure (both military and commercial) figured prominently in the realization of this ambitious project.

The first chapter advances a twin thesis about U.S. foreign policy and transportation infrastructure. The first half of the chapter argues that Washington policymakers consciously

¹⁵ Patrick Hearden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois UP, 1987), 244-45.

¹⁶ Division of Political Studies, P Minutes 48, July 23, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76

pursued an imperialist path in American foreign affairs right up to the mid-1940s and possibly beyond that point. The advent of Wilsonian idealism, rather than being a departure from the past, reinforced the imperialism inherent in U.S. foreign policy. Wilsonian idealism, the brainchild of President Woodrow Wilson (1913-21), advanced a vision of a “new world order” built upon the bedrock of American principles such as an open world economy (brought about by the reduction of trade barriers on a global scale), national self-determination, international cooperation within the framework of a League of Nations, and liberty. The important point that needs to be emphasized here was that racism influenced the timetable for the implementation of certain Wilsonian principles, such as national self-determination and liberty. President Wilson and his fellow Wilsonians were willing to go ahead with the creation of the League of Nations and an open world economy right away, but only “civilized” white societies would benefit from national self-determination and democracy in the near term. Darker-skinned peoples would have to wait much longer before receiving those same political rights. Admittedly Washington policymakers prided themselves, at least in public, for being anti-imperialist since they had a plan for preparing the subject races for self-government. Yet this was a dubious boast since one of the main aims of imperialism, at least in theory, was to civilize darker-skinned peoples in preparation for the day when they would become free and democratic. The only difference between Wilsonian idealism and European imperialism was that the Wilsonians took the civilizing portion of imperialism more seriously than their European counterparts. Other than this distinction (which may not even exist), the Wilsonians of the early 20th century were very imperialistic since they adhered to their generation’s logic that world peace would only come once political control over the world was wrestled from the hands of the “barbarians” (a broad term denoting Native Americans, Blacks, Latin Americans, and other darker-skinned peoples).

The second half of the first chapter explores the role of commercial airfields in the realization of the U.S. government's imperialist project. The civilian and military authorities comprising the U.S. government fully embraced airpower as the most promising instrument of war in the early part of the 1920s. During most of the 1920s, the U.S. government contributed to military aviation's survival by promoting commercial aviation. The idea behind the scheme of promoting commercial aviation to help military aviation was that many of the collaterals for commercial aviation – airfields, pilots, and an aircraft industry that invests in the production of new and better aircraft – could be adapted to military use in the event of a national emergency. Then in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the U.S. government helped Pan Am develop multinational air routes right up to South America, with the understanding that they would be converted to military use (subject to agreement with the Latin American governments) in the event that U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere were jeopardized in any way. In other words, Pan Am airfields served a legitimate commercial purpose, but they were also secretly part of the U.S. government's strategic defense in depth strategy for the entire Western Hemisphere.

The second chapter advances three big arguments. The first of these was that the Franklin Roosevelt administration's differences with the Axis powers in the 1930s were not over perceived fears that the latter would invade the Western Hemisphere over the near to medium term. U.S. military and economic intelligence reports established that Germany, Japan, and Italy lacked the economic resources and the logistical support mechanisms to launch a successful trans-oceanic invasion. These findings, moreover, were reflected in the private statements of Franklin Roosevelt and many of his key advisors. The source of U.S.-Axis friction rather was the Axis powers' pursuit of regional hegemony in Europe and the Far East which clashed with the Franklin Roosevelt administration's Wilsonian quest for a "new world order" and its collaterals.

These collaterals included, among other things, an open world economy for American enterprise to gain access to. The third argument advanced in this chapter is that the Franklin Roosevelt administration embarked upon three tracks to bring about this “new world order”: economic warfare planning, diplomacy to align Latin America with the United States, the development of the trans-Pacific air route, and reforms and renewed investment in American airpower.

The third chapter then explains how the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s economic warfare strategy was translated into reality in the guise of Western Hemisphere Defense. In 1938-40, the Franklin Roosevelt administration militarized the Pan Am Airways System (which consisted of air routes traversing the Caribbean, Central America and most of South America) to provide American air patrols with supporting infrastructure so that they could enforce economic sanctions against the Axis powers. Now World Wars are won by those nations who have access to raw materials. Europe (with the exception of the Soviet Union) was resource poor whereas Latin America had raw materials in abundance. Therefore, the Franklin Roosevelt administration employed tactical aircraft and warships (operating from nearby military bases) to seal off the markets and sources of raw materials in the Western Hemisphere from Axis commercial penetration.¹⁷ By mid-1941, the U.S. economic blockade was so successful that Vichy French Admiral Francois Darlan admitted that the United States had won the war against Germany by virtue of controlling the Atlantic Ocean with its airpower. What Darlan’s statement proves was that the Franklin Roosevelt administration, in spite of a non-interventionist public opinion inside

¹⁷ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History Department of the Army, 1960), 5-10; Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American foreign policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 202.

the United States, still succeeded in making an effective contribution to the Allied war effort without bringing American armed forces into battle.¹⁸

However, Chapter four contends that beginning in late 1940 Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors wanted to go much further than reducing the Axis powers by means of a global economic blockade. Several factors contributed to this decision. Germany's victories over the Low Countries and France in May-June 1940 augured for a much longer war than Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors had expected. Moreover, the economic blockade was undoubtedly effective, but it was also taking too long to force the Axis powers to capitulate.¹⁹ The Franklin Roosevelt administration, therefore, began a proactive war preparation strategy that involved establishing the strategic prerequisites for deploying air, naval and ground forces into the combat zones under the cover of American airpower. Starting in late October 1940, the Franklin Roosevelt administration developed secret plans for establishing a U.S. air base in Dakar (Senegal), Morocco or Algeria, even though they were Vichy French colonies. The long term aim of such aviation diplomatic efforts was to pave the way for the U.S. military occupation of Northwest Africa and use it as a springboard for liberating Europe. In May 1941, Franklin Roosevelt, the Treasury Department and the State Department also tried to send U.S. marines into the Azores, since this island archipelago could be used as a steppingstone for taking over Morocco.²⁰ None of these secret plans came to fruition, but the Franklin Roosevelt

¹⁸ Leahy to Hull, 4 June 1941, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS): *Diplomatic Papers*, 1941, 2: 185.

¹⁹ John Crider, "Government Plan to Bar War is Told," *NYT*, 18 December 1939, 1; "War Materials Bill Passes Both Houses," *NYT*, 6 June 1939, 2; "Signs War Stocks Act," *NYT*, 9 June 1939, 10; Percy Bidwell, "Our Economic Warfare," *Foreign Affairs* 20, No.3 (April 1942): 430; Mark Mazower, *Hitler's empire: how the Nazis ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 260-261.

²⁰ Diary entry, November 9, 1940, *The Adolf Berle Diary, 1937-1971* [microfilm], Reel 2, 1014; Satterthwaite (RA) to Bonsal (RA), 18 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, Box

administration did succeed in using Pan Am to modernize and operate a string of British airfields extending from Takoradi, Gold Coast (Ghana) to Kartoum, the Sudan, which comprised the Takoradi air route.²¹

The importance of these U.S. military airfields only became clear months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, when U.S. armed forces were first deployed in the Mediterranean theatre. With the superior airpower aiding them, the Anglo-American forces defeated Germany and Italy in the Mediterranean theatre relatively quickly and occupied all of North Africa and the southern third of Italy in the space of less than one year (October 1942-September 1943).²² Chapter five will explore how militarized Pan Am airfields were part of the battlefield since, without these bases, the Allies could not conduct effective military operations in the Mediterranean theatre. Pan Am and the Army were able in relatively short period of time to transform the Pan Am airway system (designed to accommodate only 100 airplanes in the 1930s) into a modern system of global communications capable of sending thousands of military aircraft per year to North Africa during the period 1942-45.²³ In revamping the Pan Am airway system, the war planners, Pan Am and the Army had to consider several variables connected to air safety. Tactical aircraft, with a flying range of less than 1000 miles, often needed to land at one of the Caribbean airfields en route to South America in order to refuel. Strategic bombers had a substantially greater flying range (the B-17 bomber could fly 2200 miles), but still needed access to landing fields in South America because their heavy cargo would not allow them to

4048; Assistant Chief of Staff, WPD, Memorandum, February 1941, NARA 2, RG 165, Entry 282, file 4422-14, Box 265.

²¹ Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II* (PhD diss., New York University, 1973), 68.

²² Walter Boyne, *The Influence of Airpower upon History*, 232.

²³ R.E.G. Davies, *Airlines of the United States since 1914* (London, Putnam 1972), 220; "Parnamirim field -- Natal," File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 105.

carry more fuel. Finally adverse weather, such as tropical storms in South America and sandstorms in Central Africa, necessitated the construction of weather stations and communications facilities (to collect data on the weather and communicate it to the pilot) as well as additional landing facilities (for emergency landings).²⁴

The sixth chapter advances the argument that the Franklin Roosevelt administration, in the reasonable expectation of winning the war, embarked upon a global hegemonic project to transform the United States into a world empire and construct a peaceful and progressive world order that safeguarded the United States States' global national security interests (which included not only the national boundaries, but also American access to foreign markets, raw materials, and cheap labor around the world). Moreover, postwar airfield planning played an important role in this global hegemonic project. The military planners selected postwar airfields in the Far East, the Pacific, the Western Hemisphere, and the Atlantic that ensured the United States' physical security and kept potential adversaries at a safe distance. The State Department's civil planners were responsible for selecting postwar commercial airfields in North Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Asia, with a view to converting them into military use in the event that U.S. national security interests were ever threatened in those three regions. As a result of this postwar planning, the Franklin Roosevelt administration prepared the ground a worldwide extraterritorial empire – or what Chalmers Johnson calls an “empire of basis – that survives to this day.”²⁵ This

²⁴File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 2, Folder 2, 19; File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 44; Rondall R. Rice, *The Politics of Air Power: From Confrontation to Cooperation in Army Aviation Civil-Military Relations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 141-42.

²⁵ Neil Smith, *American empire: Franklin Roosevelt's geographer and the prelude to globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 318-19, 349, 352.

chapter then concludes with an exploration into the American extraterritorial empire's great failures as well as its role in exacerbating tensions with the Soviet Union.²⁶

Historiographies

This dissertation's focus may be on airfields as a tool in American expansion and imperial rule, but it is only the latest in long series of studies that have attempted to explain the achievement of American global hegemony during the first half of the 20th century. Scholars have tried to come to grips with the factors leading to the growth of U.S. military and economic power by looking at empire, Pan American Airways (in some cases), and the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy. The purpose of this section is to survey the literature of these three main areas and ascertain what has been achieved and what has yet to be accomplished. That way this dissertation can establish its contribution to the existing historiography.

American imperialism has continued to be a highly contested topic ever since this field of study was created. Most Americans do not want to acknowledge that the United States is an empire or they are only prepared to accept grudgingly that their nation was an empire for a relatively brief period in the early 20th century.²⁷ Ernest May²⁸, Dana Munro,²⁹ Rubin Weston,³⁰

²⁶ Eduard Mark, "Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947: The Origins of a Cold War Crisis," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 59, No. 1 (Autumn 1975): 52; Brian VanDeMark, *Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the escalation of the Vietnam War* (New York; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), 220; Michael Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: the United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia UP, 1983), 307-08.

²⁷ As Louis Perez explains, American imperialism (when defined as "territorial expansion") "has been understood as a series of isolated "events," attributed usually to the idiosyncratic behavior of well-intended if often misguided presidential administrations, but neither inherent in nor intrinsic to the character of U.S. relations with Latin America. Moreover it was undone by Woodrow Wilson's more enlightened foreign policy and the Good Neighbor Policy." See Louis Perez, "Dependency," *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 164.

Michael Mann,³¹ and Frank Ninkovich³² have reflected this popular view with monographs that describe the United States as an imperial power in the 1890s and early 1900s, but add that American imperialism went into decline during the Woodrow Wilson presidency (1913-1921). Their contention is premised upon two assumptions. The first is that imperialism is defined as territorial expansion and colonization. Secondly these historians believe that the United States stopped annexing and colonizing territory after Wilson assumed the presidency in 1913.

The problem with the above interpretation, however, is that American territorial expansion may have ceased, but that did not mean Washington policymakers stopped treating U.S.-occupied territories (like Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and others) as colonies. This oversight has convinced many historians that a broader definition for American imperialism is needed that takes into account informal imperial rule as well as economic and cultural power.

As early as the 1950s, historians were already arguing that imperialism meant much more than territorial aggrandizement and colonization. Legal scholar Carl Schmidt (1950) defined American imperialism as “the authoritative political ordering of space” outside the boundaries of the “imperial center” for the purpose of forming a “Nomos” or sphere of influence. According to this definition, empires could be “territorial” or “non-territorial,” but they shared the ambition of

²⁸ Ernest May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961), 269-70.

²⁹ Dana Munro, *The United States and the Caribbean republics, 1921-1933*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1974.

³⁰ Rubin Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism: the Influence of Racial Assumptions on American Foreign Policy, 1893-1946* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 262-63.

³¹ Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire*. London: Verso, 2003.

³² Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 214.

extending the tentacles of their political power to other countries.³³ Jurgen Osterhammel (1997) concluded that “Imperialism” is “in some respects a more comprehensive concept” than colonialism since it “presupposes the will and ability of an imperial center to define as imperial its own national interests and enforce them worldwide...”³⁴ Elizabeth Mancke (1999) has also broadened the definition imperialism to include control over “ocean space.”³⁵ George Steinmetz (2005) has argued that imperial powers were different from colonial powers in that:

... They subsequently recede into the background, leaving behind a military base, a new constitution, loyal local leaders, advisors, ambassadors and political operatives. They typically show little interest in micromanaging local conditions and ostensibly respect the autonomy of the peripheral state, intervening militarily or with other means only when conditions are perceived threatening to their political or economic interests.³⁶

Hal Friedman (2007), however, probably came up with best definition for imperialism, when he claimed that imperialism was “an unequal political relationship in which a great power attempts to acquire control over a less powerful nation, region, or people in order to satisfy some perceived interest. The control does not necessarily have to be direct or even territorial in nature.”³⁷

However, imperialism’s redefinition went beyond thinking about expansion and space in new and exciting ways. Revisionist historians Walter LaFeber (1963)³⁸, Thomas J. McCormick

³³ Carl Schmidt, *The Nomos of the Earth*. New York: Telos Press, 1950.

³⁴ Jurgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publications, 1997), 21-22.

³⁵ Elizabeth Mancke, “Early Modern Expansion and the Politicization of Oceanic Space,” *Geographic Review* 89, No. 2 (April 1999): 225-36.

³⁶ George Steinmetz, “Return to Empire: The New U.S. Imperialism in Comparative Historical Perspective,” *Sociology Theory* 23, Issue 4 (December 2005): 349.

³⁷ Hal Friedman, *Governing the American Lake: the US defense and administration of the Pacific, 1945-1947* (East Lansing, MI: Michian UP, 2007), xxvii.

³⁸ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1963.

(1967)³⁹, William Appleman Williams (1970)⁴⁰, Gabriel Kolko⁴¹, Harry Magdoff (1969, 2003)⁴², Emily Rosenberg (1982)⁴³, Neil Smith (2003)⁴⁴, and Amy Spellacy⁴⁵ have argued that American imperialism can be best understood in economic terms. For these revisionists, the United States was an economic empire with a core (i.e. the American continent) and sea lanes fortified with military bases. U.S. political and economic elites, moreover, were far more interested in accessing foreign markets and sources of raw materials than in acquiring colonies.

The revisionist historians made an invaluable contribution to the study of American imperialism, but their work was not beyond challenge. Realist historians argued that the United States conducted very little trade with Latin America and Asia in the early 20th century. They also discovered that U.S. overseas investments were relatively small compared to the amount of American capital invested inside the United States. American imperial expansion, the realists concluded, undoubtedly took place, but this phenomenon was not being driven by economic factors. Richard Challener argued that the defence-minded Navy Department played an

³⁹ Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America's Quest for informal empire*. Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1967.

⁴⁰ William Appleman Williams, *The roots of the modern American empire; a study of the growth and shaping of social consciousness in a marketplace society*. New York: Vintage Books, 1970; William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. New York: Dell Pub Co, 1962.

⁴¹ Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: the World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

⁴² Harry Magdoff, *The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969; Harry Magdoff, *Imperialism without Colonies* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2003), 35-65, 91-113.

⁴³ Emily Rosenberg, "The Invisible Protectorate: The United States, Liberia, and the Evolution of Neo-Colonialism, 1909-40," *Diplomatic History* 9, Issue 3 (1985): 191-214; Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American economic and cultural expansion, 1890-1945*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

⁴⁴ Neil Smith, *American empire: Franklin Roosevelt's geographer and the prelude to globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

⁴⁵ Amy Spellacy, "Mapping the Metaphor of the Good Neighbor: Geography, Globalism, and Pan Americanism during the 1940s," *American Studies* 47, No. 2 (Summer 2006): 53.

important role in influencing U.S. imperial policy, especially as it related to the acquisition of strategic outposts for naval bases.⁴⁶ Stanley Lebergott argued that the U.S. government transformed the Caribbean Sea into an “American Lake” to enhance its physical security.⁴⁷ Hans Schmidt has contended that strategic considerations triggered the U.S. military intervention into Haiti, often seen as an example of imperialism.⁴⁸ Lastly Nancy Mitchell posited that the Woodrow Wilson administration (1913-21) had an exaggerated view of the dangers that German imperialism posed to the Caribbean, suggesting that U.S. military interventions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic were responses to these exaggerated fears.⁴⁹

Although the realist historians appeared to have discredited the revisionists, the debate over whether American expansion was driven primarily by economic or strategic factors is far from over. The United States may have had relatively few economic interests overseas in the early 20th century, but that did not exclude the possibility of certain corporate groups influencing the direction of U.S. foreign policy to serve their own ends.⁵⁰ Moreover, Patrick Hearden (1987) has argued persuasively that U.S. political and economic elites in the 19th and early 20th centuries were deeply concerned about American businesses overproducing for the domestic market and therefore had a powerful incentive to engage in overseas expansion and gain access to foreign markets.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Richard Challener, *Admirals, Generals and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1973), 81-110.

⁴⁷ Stanley Lebergott, “The Returns of U.S. Imperialism, 1890-1929,” *The Journal of Economic History* 40, No. 2 (June 1980): 229-252.

⁴⁸ Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995.

⁴⁹ Nancy Mitchell, *The Danger of Dreams: German and American Imperialism in Latin America*. Chapel Hill, 1999.

⁵⁰ Paul K. MacDonald, “Those who forget historiography are doomed to republish it,” *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 56.

⁵¹ Patrick Hearden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, x, 5-6.

The debate between the revisionists and realists has not only been over the reasons for American expansion, but also over the character of the American empire and how it operated at home and abroad. Recently the historiography on U.S. imperialism has taken a “cultural turn.” A growing number of historians claim that U.S. imperial rule was undergirded largely by cultural power, not just by military and economic might. Moreover, these historians have broadened their definition of cultural power in order to develop new approaches for understanding the fluid and multi-layered nature of U.S. imperialism.⁵² In the process, the cultural historians have created a new field of study: “cultural imperialism” which Jessica Gienow-Hecht defines as one nation imposing its culture, ideology, goods and way of life on another nation.⁵³

Culture has traditionally been defined as subjective values, beliefs and norms.⁵⁴ Accounts that show how racism, Social Darwinism, and American exceptionalism shape imperialist projects of state and non-state actors employ this definition. Walter La Feber’s *The New Empire*, for example, advances an economic interpretation of American imperialism, but contains an entire section on Jackson Turner’s thesis on the last frontier, Social Darwinism, Mahanism, and other ideologies that have influenced American imperialists.⁵⁵ Rubin Weston’s *Racism in U.S. Imperialism* shows how assumptions about race shaped the United States’ imperialist ideology and particularly its “mission” to “civilize” the colonized. Rubin also underscores the agency of

⁵² Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth Century Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 1, 8.

⁵³ Jessica Gienow-Hecht, “Cultural Transfer,” *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, eds. Michael Hogan and Thomas Paterson (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge UP, 2004), 258.

⁵⁴ Julian Go, *American Culture and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during U.S. Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 4.

⁵⁵ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 62-101. See also Michael Adas, “From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon,” *The American Historical Review* 106 (2001): 1694. Adas discusses the contradictions inherent in American exceptionalism which proclaims the United States to be an exceptional nation incapable of emulation while, at the same time, the United States is proclaimed as a political and economic model for other nations to follow.

the “other” (Native Americans, Chinese, Japanese, and African-Americans) in hardening the racist assumes underpinning U.S. imperialism.⁵⁶ Michael Hunt broke new ground with his examination of how ideology (which encompasses racial assumptions, Social Darwinism, and American exceptionalism) shaped American imperialism and U.S. foreign policy.⁵⁷ Ronald Lee stressed how contemporary understandings of the U.S. constitution influenced Washington policymakers to develop strategies for proving that their wars, such as the Mexican-American War (1849), were constitutional.⁵⁸ Frank Schumacher has looked to past American history and American efforts to copy other empires to uncover the cultural origins of U.S. imperialism. The Northwest Ordinance (1787) and the administration of Louisiana Territory (1803) exemplified the American civilizing mission in the sense that their purpose was to prepare the inhabitants of these territories for eventual statehood. However, imperial-minded American statesmen such as John Hay and Elihu Root also copied from other empires (like the British and Dutch empires) when designing colonial systems for American colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific. In short, American imperialism was the product of a fusion of European colonial expertise and the United States’ own imperialist past.⁵⁹ The American imperialist project was not simply the outcome of the metropole transmitting its values to the periphery, but also involved the agency of the “other” in collaborating with the colonizers and embracing their beliefs about civilization and modernity. Thus Ada Ferrer showed that many Cubans, in the aftermath of the War of 1898, embraced civility, order, and reconciliation in order to convince the United States (which had

⁵⁶ Rubin Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism*, 259.

⁵⁷ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.

⁵⁸ Ronald Lee, “Justifying Empire: Pericles, Polk and Dilemma of Democratic Leadership,” *Polity* 34, No. 4 (Summer 2002): 514-15.

⁵⁹ Frank Schumacher, “The American Way of Empire: National Tradition and Transatlantic Adaptation in American Search for Imperial Identity, 1898-1910,” *GHI Bulletin* No. 31 (Fall 2002): 35-50.

troops in Cuba until 1902) that they were ready for self-government. By convincing the Americans that they were civilized, the Cubans hoped to persuade the United States to withdraw its marines so Cuba would become fully independent.⁶⁰

Cultural historians have also come to view culture as a tool wielded by imperialists to achieve certain objectives. Reynaldo Ileto, Warwick Anderson, and Vincente Rafael contended that state technologies (like the census) and benign projects (like sanitation and colonial medicine) were important cultural tools utilized by American colonial rulers to redefine local practices and push aside local narratives that challenged American authority.⁶¹ Eric Roorda posited that American airplanes overawed the Dominican people in a way that tended to reinforce and legitimize U.S. imperial rule over the Dominican Republic.⁶² Finally, Matthew Jacobson views racial and gendered hierarchies and class snobbery inside the United States as manifestations of cultural power; and claims that these forms of cultural power were replicated in the United States' Caribbean and Pacific possessions in the early part of the 20th century. What makes Jacobson's monograph all the more important, however, is that he shows how the periphery impacted the hierarchies and attendant class snobbery in the metropole. As a result of rapid industrialization and mass migration in the late 19th century and early 20th century, Caucasian Americans came into contact with immigrants from Asia and Southern and Central Europe. These encounters hardened the existing prejudices which were then exported back to the American colonies. In this way the hierarchies of race and class established in the colonies were

⁶⁰ Ada Ferrer, "Cuba, 1898: Rethinking Race, Nation, and Empire," *Radical History Review*, No. 73 (1999): 22-46.

⁶¹ Julian Go, *American Culture and the Politics of Meaning*, 6.

⁶² Eric Paul Roorda, "The Cult of the Airplane among U.S. military men and Dominicans during the U.S. occupation and the Trujillo Regime," In *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, ed. Gilbert Joseph, Catherine LeGrand, and Richardo Salvatore (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1998), 269-310.

the product of interactions between the metropole and periphery which tended to multiply as a result of rapid economic change and mass migration.⁶³

Finally cultural discourse also highlights the hitherto overlooked dimensions of American imperialism and the complex relationship between metropole (the United States) and periphery (the affected state) via the imperialist relationship. The basic contention of this school of thought is that cultural discourses have multiple meanings which go beyond their explicit meaning and that understanding these multiple meanings is crucial for comprehending the multi-layered, contested nature of empire. Cultural historians, who specialize in discourse, search for these meanings in signs, cultural schemas, and meaning-making and in doing so arrive at important insights about the role of cultural power in American imperialism, about how colonial subjects receive empire, and how the imperialists (as well as the metropole) are themselves changed by their experiences in the periphery.⁶⁴ Paul Kramer has explained the role of racist language in rationalizing the Philippine-American War (1899-1902) to the American people. American politicians (including Theodore Roosevelt) acknowledged that the atrocities committed against the Filipinos were lamentable, but added that such colonial violence was understandable given that U.S. officers and soldiers were dealing with “savages.” Implicit in this discourse on race were a number of assumptions, including the belief that “civilized people” fight conventional wars while savages engage in guerilla warfare.⁶⁵ In addition to rationalizing colonial violence, cultural discourses also played a significant role in maintaining loyalties within subordinate societies. Julian Go observed that American colonial rulers devoted significant resources to

⁶³ Matthew Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: the United States encounters foreign peoples at home and abroad, 1876-1917*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2000.

⁶⁴ Julian Go, *American Culture and the Politics of Meaning*, 4.

⁶⁵ Paul Kramer, “Race-making and Colonial Violence in the U.S. Empire: the Philippine-American War as Race War,” *Diplomatic History* 30, No. 2 (April 2006): 169-172.

ceremonies and state rituals and issued proclamations on civilization development all for the purpose of legitimizing and perpetuating American colonial rule. Colonial regimes also employed discourses “to control, manage, and sometimes transform local meaning systems and colonize the consciousness and colonial practices of subordinate groups both to secure their compliance and to legitimate the imperialist enterprise.”⁶⁶ Moreover, discourses about the “other” also influenced the practice of medicine and immigration laws, which in turn impacted the American empire’s periphery. Alexander Stern observed in his article, “Buildings, Boundaries, and Blood,” that the “other” was frequently seen as the source of diseases like tuberculosis and small pox. This assumption, moreover, was employed to justify laws excluding Mexican immigrants as well as imposing a quota system on the Caribbean peoples.⁶⁷

Yet if cultural discourses are an integral component of U.S. imperialism, does that mean that American tourists interacting with their Mexican hosts in the 1920s were “agents of imperialism”? Do American products, which carry discursive meanings (such as U.S. technological superiority), colonize the consciousness of consumers overseas? Some cultural historians have answered these questions in the affirmative and thereby elevated the importance of non-state actors as agents of cultural imperialism. Dennis Merrill, for instance, has argued controversially that U.S. tourists were “agents of empire” who encountered and negotiated variants of racial hierarchies with their hosts. Moreover, U.S. tourists projected their own “soft power” (which Merrill defines as “the ability to make others want what you want”) which contributed to the survival of the U.S. hemisphere empire.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Julian Go, *American Culture and the Politics of Meaning*, 5.

⁶⁷ Alexander Stern, “Buildings, Boundaries, and Blood: Medicalization and Nation-building on the U.S.-Mexican Border, 1910-1930,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79 (February 1999): 77-78, 80.

⁶⁸ Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise*, xiii, 10-12.

Merrill's novel thesis had important implications for how empire has been viewed. Traditional models of empire emphasize subordination of the "other" (the colonized) to the metropole. But Merrill advances a different model that emphasizes the agency of the "other" in negotiating monetary tips, etiquette, language, class, gender and others things. As a result, the American empire under Merrill's model becomes a more nuanced system of inequality, resistance, and negotiation.⁶⁹ The reason why Merrill's thesis is controversial is because of the centrality of the tourist in his work. The U.S. tourist who visited Mexico in the 1920s may not be different from the Mexican tourist who visited the United States; which raises the larger question of whether Mexico can alter the balance of power with the United States by sending its tourists north of the Rio Grande? Another criticism of Merrill's work is that U.S. tourist power may be conflated and confused with U.S. economic power which was responsible for financing the construction of tourist infrastructures inside Mexico. In the view of this dissertation's author, making the U.S. tourist an "agent of empire" may be going too far, with the result that special care must be given when determining what role cultural power played in the American empire. Furthermore, Merrill's work challenges historians to come up with a better definition for cultural imperialism so that imperialism can be differentiated from cultural influence.⁷⁰

As noted previously, some cultural historians have attached importance to the discursive meanings of American products sold overseas. Ariel Dorfman, Armand Mattelhart, and Louis Perez have argued that "Donald Duck was an agent of imperialism." The basis for this interesting argument is that "systems of domination are often transmitted and replicated in the most innocent forms," such as film. The films about Donald Duck, broadcast to a Latin American audience,

⁶⁹ Ibid., 1, 7, 9.

⁷⁰ Review, H-Diplo Roundtable Review XI, no. 26 (18 May 2010): 4.

communicated the virtues of capitalism and the dangers of communism.⁷¹ Mona Domosh similarly sees deep cultural meanings (like American technological superiority and the idea of material progress) being communicated in the products that the United States exports overseas.⁷² Finally the deeper meanings of American products were not intended just for the inhabitants who lived on the periphery. As Laura Wexler explains, photographs taken of Native Americans and Filipino reflect how Caucasian Americans wished to see the inhabitants of their empire, namely as happy colonial subjects in the process of being civilized and domesticated.⁷³ Amy Kaplan also uses cultural discourses to show how international struggles on the periphery shaped American identity inside the United States. Du Bois' poem, "The Anarchy of Empire," for example, dealt with colonial violence meted out against the inhabitants of U.S. territories and in so doing broke down boundaries and connected peoples subject to racial exploitation around the world.⁷⁴

Over the past two decades, a growing number of cultural historians have argued that assumptions about gender (defined as socially-determined symbols, norms, and identities) also shaped American imperialism. Kristin Hoganson, for example, contended that the 1890s depression, by throwing so many men out of work, challenged man's traditional role as the bread winner for his family. Consequently many unemployed men enlisted in the War of 1898 and the

⁷¹ Louis Perez, "Dependency," In *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 162. See also Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelhart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, trans. David Kunzle. New York: 1975; Amy Spellacy, "Mapping the Metaphor of the Good Neighbor," 40.

⁷² Mona Domosh, "Selling Civilization: Toward a Cultural Analysis of America's Economic Empire in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 29, No. 4 (December 2004): 453-67.

⁷³ Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

⁷⁴ Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2002), 1, 12.

U.S.-Philippines War (1899-1902) to regain their lost manhood.⁷⁵ Other important gender historians include Rosalyn Terborg-Penn who deals with the suffragist movement's role in the American empire⁷⁶ and Kelvin A. Santiago-Valles who focuses on "how European-North-American women both reinforced and disturbed these same hegemonic notions of 'bringing order out of chaos,' and of 'blood-brotherhood' during the turn of the century."⁷⁷

The significance of the above works is in demonstrating that U.S. imperial domination was not simply accomplished through coercive means, but also through consensus.

Unfortunately, some historians have taken the consensus aspect of American imperialism too far by using it to reinforce American exceptionalism. Geir Lundstadt has argued that the United States was an "empire by invitation," which suggested that American imperialism was a force for good (since most nations asked to become part of the American empire).⁷⁸ G. John Ikenberry also depicted the modern American empire as a voluntary association: "If empires are coercive systems of domination, the American-centered world order is not an empire. If empires are inclusive systems of order organized around a dominant state – and its laws, economy, military and political institutions – then the United States has indeed constructed a world democratic-

⁷⁵ Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1998.

⁷⁶ Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "Enfranchising Women of Color: Woman Suffragists as Agents of Imperialism," *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Gender and Race*, eds. Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri (Bloomington, 1998), 41-56.

⁷⁷ Kelvin A. Santiago-Valles "'Higher Womanhood' Among the 'Lower Race': Julia McNair Henry in Puerto Rico and the 'Burdens of 1898'" *Radical History Review* 73 (Winter 1999): 48. See also Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 4.

⁷⁸ Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: from "empire" by invitation to transatlantic drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1.

capitalist empire.”⁷⁹ Of course, any honest reading of the literature and archival sources on American imperialism reveals that the American empire did not come into existence because countries around the world were lining up to join it.

Another body of work on the American empire relates to networks. Hardt and Negri (2000) have argued that the United States ushered in a worldwide postmodern empire by extending the U.S. constitution’s “network power” globally. This thesis consists of two arguments. The first was that the U.S. constitutional project (synonymous with the American Republic) derived its legitimacy from the “immanence of power” which was based upon the productive synergies of the multitude. The multitude’s productive synergies were so great, in fact, that American political leaders came under enormous pressure to supply it with new markets and sources of raw materials. In the 19th century, American presidencies subjugated the American continent and forced Native Americans off of their land in order to satisfy the multitude’s needs and stave off social unrest. By the early 20th century, however, the constitutional project was in trouble because the final frontier had been reached. The second argument was that President Woodrow Wilson devised a solution for the problem of the “final frontier,” which was to extend the U.S. constitution’s “network power” globally via international institutions. Eventually Wilson’s solution was implemented, with the result that the United States ushered in a globally-based postmodern empire. Hardt and Negri define empire in a different way from most historians. While most people associate empire with imperialism, Hardt and Negri claim the empire is separate from imperialism in that the former “is a decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its

⁷⁹ G. John Ikenberry, “American Power and the Empire of Capitalist Democracy,” *Review of International Studies* 27 (2001): 191-212.

open, expanding frontiers. It manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command.”⁸⁰

Since Hardt and Negri’s important work, other historians have emphasized the significance of “networks” in keeping the American empire together. Neil Smith (2003) has argued that the State Department wanted to create an American empire with a de-territorialized geography via the establishment of international institutions, like the United Nations, the World Bank and the IMF.⁸¹ Other scholars, by contrast, have stressed the importance of more tangible forms of “network power,” such as networks of military bases. Chalmers Johnson (2004) was the first to describe the United States as an “empire of bases” with 725 military bases in 130 countries.⁸² Since then, anthropologist Catherine Lutz (2009)⁸³ and political scientist David Vine (2009)⁸⁴ have used the label “empire of bases” to describe the United States and its global network of military bases. Ruth Oldenziel (2009), by contrast, has used the term “networked empire” to describe the United States’ elaborate network of coaling stations, airfields, and other nodes.⁸⁵ Maria Hohn and Seungsook Moon called the United States the “largest military empire” in world history owing to its network of military bases in 150 countries.⁸⁶ Yet regardless of which label is used, these scholars are essentially in agreement that the locations of U.S. military

⁸⁰ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), xii, 162, 165-67, 172, 174-76.

⁸¹ Neil Smith, *American empire: Franklin Roosevelt's geographer and the prelude to globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

⁸² Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 1-3. Since Chalmers Johnson’s wrote “Sorrows of Empire,” the United States’ empire of bases has expanded to 1000 military bases in 150 countries.

⁸³ *The Bases of Empire*, ed. Catherine Lutz, 6.

⁸⁴ David Vine, *Island of Shame*, 42-46.

⁸⁵ Ruth Oldenziel, “Islands: The United States as a Networked Empire,” *Entangled Geographies: Empire and Technopolitics in the Global Cold War*, ed. Gabrielle Hecht (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2011), 13-42.

⁸⁶ Maria Hohn and Seungsook Moon (eds.), *Over There*, 397-98.

bases and “how they are being used is essential for understanding the United States’ relationship with the rest of the world, the role of coercion in it, and its political economic complexion.”⁸⁷

What these multiple historiographies on American imperialism show is that the United States does not fit into any preferred definition of empire, but has several imperial identities. The United States subjugated the American continent, purchased Alaska, amassed island colonies in the Caribbean and Pacific, and extended its exterritorial empire of military bases around the globe to enhance its physical security in a world of rapid communications, interconnected markets, and long range aircraft and warships.⁸⁸ Yet Washington policymakers also constructed an empire to insure that the United States had greater access to foreign markets and sources of raw materials. In fact, the economic collaterals of the United States’ future prosperity and military power were conveniently incorporated under the umbrella of “national security” by the 1940s. So the realist and revisionist historiographies are both correct.

Furthermore, cultural power fueled American imperial expansion and breathed new life into the American empire. As cultural historians have shown time and again, the American empire cannot be divorced from the multiple ideologies and assumptions about race and gender that underpinned it. Moreover, historians have to closely observe the metropole’s cultural makeup to uncover insights that may explain what happened on the periphery and vice versa. For example, the “civilizing mission” was first applied to African-Americans, Latin Americans, and other racial minorities inside the United States before being exported to the periphery. Mass migration and industrialization multiplied the number of contacts between the colonizer and the

⁸⁷ *The Bases of Empire*, ed. Catherine Lutz, 6.

⁸⁸ Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: the United States since the 1930’s* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995), 30.

colonized “other” (Asian and Latin American immigrants, Native Americans, etc.), which led to a hardening of existing prejudices which were then exported overseas.

So given the multiple identities of American imperialism, why does this dissertation’s focus on aerial infrastructure in particular? There are several reasons for this choice in subject. So much of American imperialism is intangible. Among these ambiguities is the extent to which the United States actually dominates the other economies of other nations and whether these relationships can be considered imperialistic or simply examples of ordinary economic relations. Cultural imperialism is also very difficult to measure, because the discursive meanings of U.S. products may not colonize the consciousness of many consumers, non-state actors may not succeed in transmitting their social norms to the inhabitants of the United States’ territorial and extraterritorial empire, and colonial ideologies may not be so neatly translated into practice in a diverse periphery. In this imperial world of innumerable intangibles, airfields have been one of the few tangible manifestations of American imperialism in action. Airfields underscore the United States’ deep interest in controlling various parts of the world for strategic, economic and ideological purposes. Moreover, the strategic locations of airfields and the increasing flying ranges of military aircraft indicate the scope of potential American intrusion into foreign airspace and its underlying terrain. Aerial infrastructure also shows that American global dominance cannot simply be measured in terms of colonial administrations, the transmission of American culture, unequal economic relations, and the like, but also in the capacity to access global spaces. Of course, the agency of the “other” in the American imperialist enterprise should not be discounted. The “other” plays an important role in determining the success or failure of the United States’ attempts to remake the world in its own image, even in cases where U.S. military power has been preponderant. Yet the United States’ capacity to control airspace around the

world also forces the “other” to play the role of the underdog and has so far insured that U.S. imperialist dominance continues to survive innumerable challenges.

As noted already, the American empire had a corporate dimension. **American airline Pan Am** pioneered many of the overseas air routes that became a crucial part of the military foundations for the global American empire after 1945.⁸⁹ Stephen Randall (1972),⁹⁰ Wesley Newton (1978),⁹¹ and Erik Benson (2004)⁹² have done original work on the U.S. government’s close ties with Pan Am during its first years as a company. The U.S. government provided airmail subsidies and diplomatic assistance to help Pan Am become a sprawling multinational with tentacles in most of Latin America. In return, Pan Am agreed to turn over its air facilities to the U.S. armed forces in case of hostilities.

Ronald Jackson (1979) has discovered that Pan Am and the Franklin Roosevelt administration had an arrangement, identical to the one above, in relation to the trans-Pacific air route (constructed in 1934-38). Concerned about Japanese expansion in East Asia, the Navy Department in March 1935 granted Pan Am air rights to several U.S. islands in the Pacific, with the understanding that Pan Am’s commercial airfields would be turned over to the U.S. Air Force in case of hostilities. Through this arrangement, the Franklin Roosevelt administration

⁸⁹ “Aviation Corporation of the Americas, Holding Company of the ‘Pan American’ System and Aviation in Latin America,” March 1931, Collection 341 (1), Box 25, Folder 9; Peck to Thach, February 1, 1932, Accession II, Collection 341, Box 231, Folder 18, PAA Archives, University of Miami; Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy: the Influence of Air Power on the Franklin Roosevelt Administration, 1933-1941* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1991), 87.

⁹⁰ Stephen Randall, “Colombia, the United States and Interamerican Aviation Rivalry, 1927-1940,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 14, No. 3 (August 1972): 297-324.

⁹¹ Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky: US Aviation Diplomacy and Latin America, 1919-1931*. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1978.

⁹² Erik Benson, “The Chosen Instrument? Reconsidering the Early Relationship between Pan American Airways and the U.S. government,” *Essays in Economic & Business History* 22 (2004): 97-110.

extended the scope of latent American airpower to the Philippines in spite of the pacifist climate prevailing in the United States.⁹³

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Pan Am's collaboration with the U.S. government became far more extensive. Deborah Ray (1973) has explained how the Franklin Roosevelt administration contracted Pan Am to revamp the Takoradi route and ferry military aircraft along it to the British forces in Egypt.⁹⁴ Two decades later, Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson (1998)⁹⁵ gave more extensive treatment to the same topic.

In addition to the specialized monographs mentioned above, Frank McCann (1969)⁹⁶, R.E.G. Davies (1972)⁹⁷, Robert Daley (1980)⁹⁸, Marylin Bender & Selig Altschul (1982),⁹⁹ Stanford Kauffman (1995)¹⁰⁰ and James Trautman (2007)¹⁰¹ have written general histories on Pan Am's origins, expansion, its construction of the trans-Pacific air route, and its role during the Second World War in revamping airfields in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East for

⁹³ Ronald Jackson, *China Clipper* (New York: Everest House, 1979), xiii-5.

⁹⁴ Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route: Franklin Roosevelt's Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere," *The Journal of American History* 62, no. 2 (September 1975): 355-56.

⁹⁵ Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa: Across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am*. MacLean, VA: Paladwr Press, 1998.

⁹⁶ Frank McCann, "Aviation Diplomacy: the United States and Brazil, 1939-1941," *Inter-American Economic Affairs*, XXI (Spring 1968): 35-50.

⁹⁷ R.E.G. Davies, *Airlines of the United States since 1914*. London: Putnam 1972.

⁹⁸ Robert Daley, *An American Saga: Juan Trippe and his Pan Am Empire*. New York: Random House, 1980.

⁹⁹ Marylin Bender and Selig Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument: Pan Am, Juan Trippe: The Rise and Fall of an American Entrepreneur*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

¹⁰⁰ Stanford Kauffman, *Pan Am Pioneer: A Manager's Memoir* (Lubbock: Texas Tech UP, 1995), 79-93.

¹⁰¹ James Trautman, *Pan American Clippers: the golden age of flying boats*. Erin, ON: Boston Mills Press, 2007.

military purposes. Yet these scholarly works only cover well-trodden ground, sometimes in a very entertaining way, instead of providing new insights.¹⁰²

This dissertation will contribute to the existing scholarship on Pan Am in the following ways. To start with, this thesis is probably the first monograph to depict Pan Am as an empire builder who contributed in a significant way to American imperial expansion. As noted previously, the U.S. government contracted Pan Am to construct the United States' underground extraterritorial empire – Pan Am airfields that could potentially become military airfields if U.S. interests were threatened. In addition, Pan Am was responsible for modernizing airfields that later became part of the United States' surface extraterritorial empire. Pan Am, to put the matter succinctly, was a lot more than the epitome of pioneering vision and genius; its air routes and their potential military applications also shed greater light on the United States' invisible military empire that did as much to project American power and influence as its visible one.

Pan Am's history also sheds light on important aspects of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy that have hitherto received little attention from historians. Conventional wisdom holds that the Franklin Roosevelt administration was quickly running out of foreign policy options in late 1940 and 1941. Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors pushed Lend Lease through Congress (March 1941), sent U.S. warships deeper into the Atlantic,

¹⁰² There are other monographs which praise Pan Am, but are short on substance, and therefore deserve little attention here. These include Matthew Josephson, *Empire of the Air: Juan Trippe and the Struggle for World Airways*. New York, Arno., 1943; Robert Levering, *The Clipper Heritage*. SI: Inter-Collegiate Press for the Air Line Pilots Association of Pan American Airways, 1984; Barry Taylor, *Pan American's Ocean Clippers*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Aero, 1991; Barnaby Conrad, *Pan Am: An Aviation Legend*. Emeryville, CA: Woodford Press, 1999; Roy Allen, *The Pan Am Clipper: The History of Pan American's flying boats 1931 to 1946*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2000; M.D. Klaas, *Last of the Flying Clippers: the Boeing B-314 Story*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishers, 1997; and R.E.G. Davies, *Pan Am: An Airline and its Aircraft*. Twickenham, England: Hamlyn, 1987 are serious scholarly works, but are highly parochial and only of interest to aircraft technology buffs.

contracted Pan Am to construct the Takoradi air route to ferry war materiel to Egypt, and imposed the remaining economic and financial sanctions on Japan, but could attempt little else.¹⁰³ Yet the Franklin Roosevelt administration's shrewd use of Pan Am tells a very different story. Starting in October 1940, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors worked with Pan to gain control over airfields in the Vichy French colonies of Dakar, Morocco and Algeria with the intention of using them as a springboard for liberating Europe.¹⁰⁴

A third field of study, connected to the United States' meteoric rise as the world power, was the **Franklin Roosevelt administration's (1933-45) foreign policy**. Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) and his advisors transformed the United States into a global empire over the course of an unprecedented four terms in office. As with all U.S. diplomatic history, the historiography on Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy is divided into at least eight theoretic paradigms which include Franklin Roosevelt as the key policymaker, public opinion, Western Hemisphere Defense, bureaucratic politics, world systems analysis, postwar planning, corporatism, and ideology.

Traditional accounts on the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy emphasize the centrality of the President in making his own foreign policy. One school of thought asserts that Franklin Roosevelt at the very least attempted to pursue an international course in American foreign affairs. Willard Range (1959) considers Franklin Roosevelt an internationalist who had to work with isolationists out of political expediency.¹⁰⁵ Wayne Cole (1983) takes a very similar

¹⁰³ Wayne Cole, *America First: The Battle Against Intervention* (New York: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953), 196-99; Stephen Ambrose and Douglas Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), i-v, 1-7.

¹⁰⁴ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1994), 20; NARA 2, RG 59 (State Department), file 851.796/145-148, Box 4048.

¹⁰⁵ Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1959), xi.

view, claiming that Franklin Roosevelt consistently fought for internationalist measures – like making the United States a member of the World Court – but was often thwarted by an isolationist political climate. Edward Bennett (1990), who sees isolationist public opinion as less of a constraining influence, contends that Franklin Roosevelt was able to push some internationalist measures through during his second term, such as rebuilding the U.S. armed forces in the late 1930s to counterbalance Germany and Japan’s rearmament.¹⁰⁶ Lastly Robert Dallek advances an interpretation of Franklin Roosevelt that was very similar to Wayne Cole’s, arguing that the President wanted to pursue an internationalist course in U.S. foreign affairs, but was prevented from doing so by a pacifist and isolationist political climate at home.¹⁰⁷

Whereas many historians believe that Franklin Roosevelt tried to pursue an internationalist path in world affairs, others see him as an isolationist committed to neutrality almost at all costs. Robert Divine (1961)¹⁰⁸ and Arnold Offner (1969)¹⁰⁹ contend that Franklin Roosevelt determined upon an isolationist foreign policy path, consisting of passive responses to international crises, until the Japanese air strikes against Pearl Harbor made that policy infeasible. William Neuman (1975) characterized Franklin Roosevelt as a reluctant belligerent with no clear plan for how to defeat the Axis powers.¹¹⁰ David Haglund (1984) largely agreed with Divine, Offner, and Neuman, stressing the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s passivity in the face of perceived Axis threats to the Western Hemisphere: “This uncertainty over Latin

¹⁰⁶ Edward Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory: American-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1990), xxi-xxii.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Divine, *The Reluctant Belligerent: American Entry into World War II* (New York: Wiley, 1965), 13.

¹⁰⁹ Arnold A. Offner, *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969.

¹¹⁰ William Neuman, “Franklin Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy Decisions, 1940-1945,” *Modern Age* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1975): 276.

America began to be experienced, mildly at first, by American policymakers in late 1936; by 1938 the uncertainty had turned to dread; by May and June 1940 the dread had become paranoia.”¹¹¹ Frederick Marks III (1988) considered Franklin Roosevelt a closet appeaser who failed to consider the wider domestic and international environment when formulating his foreign policy. He added, “[Not once] along the torturous path leader to Pearl Harbor did FDR demonstrate a capacity to coordinate military and political factors in the interest of shaping a coherent and consistent foreign policy.”¹¹² Finally Ambrose and Brinkley (2010) claim that Franklin Roosevelt and Hull were not prepared to do much to stop Axis aggression until external pressures (like Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor) forced these two men to orchestrate the United States’ rise to globalism.¹¹³

More recently, historians have begun to see U.S. foreign policy as the product of an interaction between the Franklin Roosevelt administration and **public opinion**. Richard Steele (1974) posited that the Franklin Roosevelt administration was sensitive to public opinion and created and maintained channels to monitor it.¹¹⁴ Jeff Frieden (1988) has argued that internationalist segments of domestic opinion also influenced the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s foreign policy. The Great Depression had discredited those domestic pressure groups who sought the protection of higher tariff walls, with the result that global-minded banks and other big businesses influenced the Franklin Roosevelt administration to pass the Reciprocal Trade Act (1934) and develop postwar plans in the 1940s to prepare the ground for the U.S.-led

¹¹¹ David Haglund, *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 34.

¹¹² Frederick Marks III, *Wind over sand: the diplomacy of Franklin Roosevelt* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 61.

¹¹³ Stephen Ambrose and Douglas Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), i-v, 1-7.

¹¹⁴ Richard Steele, “The Pulse of the People: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Gauging of American Public Opinion,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 9, No. 4 (October 1974): 195-216.

post-World War II international political economy.¹¹⁵ Page and Shapiro (1992) have argued that Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors recognized the importance of transforming public opinion or camouflaging foreign policy initiatives to comport with public opinion in order to advance their foreign policy agenda.¹¹⁶ Barbara Farnham (1997) has contended that the Franklin Roosevelt administration set out to transform the “domestic constraint” on its foreign policy in order to arm the democracies for war with Germany.¹¹⁷ Manfred Landecker, on the other hand, has argued that the Franklin Roosevelt administration avoided substantive foreign policy measures until after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, fearing they would lead to severe political repercussions.¹¹⁸ Charles Douglas (2000) showed how the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s use of the FBI and non-state actors to monitor public opinion allowed it to avoid Congressional scrutiny during the crucial war years.¹¹⁹ David Reynolds (2001) goes even further than Douglas by arguing that the Franklin Roosevelt administration tried to manipulate and even deceive the American people into supporting a more robust U.S. role in opposition to the Axis powers.¹²⁰ Lastly J. Simon Rofe (2007) concluded that the Franklin Roosevelt administration was

¹¹⁵ Jeff Friedman, “Sectoral Conflict and Foreign Economic Policy, 1914-1940,” *International Organization* 42, no. 1 (Winter 1988), 59-90.

¹¹⁶ Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans’ Policy* (The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 192.

¹¹⁷ Barbara Farnham, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis: a Study of Political Decision-making*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997.

¹¹⁸ Friedel also agreed with Landecker’s interpretation, pointing out that interventionists often despaired over Franklin Roosevelt’s caution in the face of public opinion. See Frank Friedel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous with Destiny*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1990.

¹¹⁹ Douglas Charles, “Informing FDR: FBI Political Surveillance and the Isolationist-Interventionist Foreign Policy Debate, 1939-1945,” *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2000), 211-232.

¹²⁰ David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Franklin Roosevelt's America and the Origins of the Second World War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 150.

influenced by the perceived and actual impact of public opinion when developing its foreign policy.¹²¹

Page and Shapiro (1992), Farnham (1997), Landecker and Rofo (2007) stress in their arguments that the Franklin Roosevelt administration had room to maneuver even within the constraints set by public opinion. But other historians have contended that public opinion tied the hands of the Franklin Roosevelt administration completely when it came to foreign policy. Wayne Cole (1953) believes that isolationist public opinion was the main reason why the Franklin Roosevelt administration ran out of foreign policy options for dealing with the Axis powers after March 1941 (when Lend Lease passed Congress).¹²² Doris Kearns Goodwin¹²³ and Robert Shogan¹²⁴ (both 1995) contended that Franklin Roosevelt was afraid to ask too much of the American people, lest they oppose him on foreign policy. James Lindsay (1994) posited that Congressional activism, invigorated by strong non-interventionist sentiment, placed severe limits upon the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy and he uses the failed World Court bill (1935)¹²⁵, the Ludlow Amendment (1937)¹²⁶, and the exceptionally bitter two-month debate over Lend-Lease (1941) to prove his thesis.¹²⁷ Similarly Stephen Bunch (2003) believed that domestic politics forced Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy to consider only

¹²¹ J. Simon Rofo, *Franklin Roosevelt's Foreign Policy and the Welles Mission* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 6.

¹²² Wayne Cole, *America First*, 197-99.

¹²³ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1995), 57.

¹²⁴ Robert Shogan, *Hard bargain: how FDR twisted Churchill's arm, evaded the law, and changed the role of the American presidency* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 267.

¹²⁵ The Franklin Roosevelt administration wanted Congress to pass legislation allowing for the United States to join the World Court, but this effort was frustrated.

¹²⁶ The Ludlow Amendment called for a national referendum (as opposed to a vote by Congress) to be held for the purpose of determining whether the United States should declare war.

¹²⁷ James Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1994), 16-18.

limited foreign policy measures against the Axis powers right up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.¹²⁸

The historiography on public opinion not only illuminates the role of political considerations in foreign policymaking, but also raises questions about the foreign policy path that the Franklin Roosevelt administration decided to follow. Did the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy mirror the will of the people? Or was the Franklin Roosevelt administration able to transform the domestic constraint to conduct foreign policy on its own terms? Historians who study the policy of **Western Hemisphere Defense** (under which the United States erected airfields and naval bases all over the Western Hemisphere in 1940-44) are more inclined to see the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy as being largely shaped by the fears of the American people. They believe the Franklin Roosevelt administration formulated Western Hemisphere Defense because it believed that the Axis powers were planning to invade the Western Hemisphere (probably Latin America) over the next few years. Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild (1960)¹²⁹ have written the standard scholarly work on Western Hemisphere Defense advancing this interpretation. J. Lloyd Meacham (1967)¹³⁰, Frank McCann (1973)¹³¹, John Child (1979)¹³², Irwin Gellman (1979)¹³³, Robert Dallek (1979)¹³⁴, David

¹²⁸ Stephen Bunch, "FDR and Limited War in Europe: A Plausible Middle Course?" In Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson (editors), *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 62-63.

¹²⁹ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*. Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History Department of the Army, 1960.

¹³⁰ J. Lloyd Meacham, *The United States and Inter-American Security, 1889-1960* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1967), 113, 122, 136.

¹³¹ Frank McCann, *The Brazilian American Alliance, 1937-1945*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1973.

¹³² John Child, "From 'Color' to 'Rainbow': U.S. Strategic Planning for Latin America, 1919-1945," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 21, No. 2 (May 1979): 233-259.

¹³³ Irwin F. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1979.

¹³⁴ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American foreign policy, 1932-1945*, 175.

Haglund (1984)¹³⁵, John Major (1985)¹³⁶, Warren Kimball (1991)¹³⁷, Galen Perras (1998)¹³⁸, Max Paul Friedman (2000),¹³⁹ Stephen Schwab (2002),¹⁴⁰ and David Esposito (2003)¹⁴¹ have since expanded upon this field of study, but otherwise have left unchallenged the central premise that the Franklin Roosevelt administration feared an Axis invasion.

Franklin Roosevelt and his inner circle were not solely responsible for developing policies, such as Western Hemisphere Defense, which is why historians have been paying more attention to **bureaucratic politics** to better understand how and why certain foreign policies were followed. Michael Schaller (1976), for instance, has argued that, “second-level officials and even private individuals acted through unofficial channels to become moving forces behind key [foreign policy] decisions.”¹⁴² Laurence Shoup, William Minter (1977)¹⁴³, Inderjeet Parmar (2004)¹⁴⁴, and Ismael Hossein-Zadeh (2006)¹⁴⁵ also perceive the centrality of private institutions,

¹³⁵ David Haglund, *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought, 1936-1940*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984.

¹³⁶ John Major, “FDR and Panama,” *Historical Journal* 28, no. 2 (June 1985): 357-77.

¹³⁷ Warren Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1991), 113.

¹³⁸ Galen Perras, *Franklin Roosevelt and the origins of the Canadian-American security alliance, 1933-1945: necessary, but not necessary enough*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1998.

¹³⁹ Max P. Friedman, “Specter of a Nazi Threat: United States-Colombian Relations, 1939-1945,” *The Americas* 56, No. 4 (April 2000): 563-589.

¹⁴⁰ Stephen Schwab, “The Role of the Mexican Expeditionary Air Force in World War II: Late, Limited, but Symbolically Significant,” *The Journal of Military History* 66, no. 4 (October 2002): 1115-1140.

¹⁴¹ David Esposito, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Strategic Vulnerability,” In *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World*, eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 45-58.

¹⁴² Michael Schaller, “American Air Strategy in China, 1939-1941: The Origins of Clandestine Air Warfare,” *American Quarterly* 28, No. 1 (Spring 1976): 4.

¹⁴³ Laurence Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and United States Foreign Policy*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1997.

¹⁴⁴ Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

particularly the Council on Foreign Relations, in the development of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's wartime and postwar policies. Mark Lowenthal (1981), by contrast, sees only dysfunction in U.S. foreign policymaking during the 1930s and early 1940s. He believes that Franklin Roosevelt failed to define his foreign policy aims to his subordinates, with the result that bureaucrats and military officials had to take the initiative to develop foreign policies on their own. These policies, however, had to be abandoned under the "pressure of events," which demanded the formulation of new policies. If Lowenthal's thesis is correct, then foreign policy apparatus under the Franklin Roosevelt administration was even more decentralized than has generally been understood.¹⁴⁶ Other historians have not been as bold in their interpretation of U.S. foreign policymaking as Lowenthal. Michael Sherry (1975)¹⁴⁷, Thomas Parrish (1989)¹⁴⁸, Jeffrey Underwood (1991)¹⁴⁹, Harold Gullan (1998)¹⁵⁰, Rondall Rice (2004)¹⁵¹, and Elliott Converse (2005)¹⁵² acknowledge Franklin Roosevelt's leadership role in foreign policy making, but they also believe that more attention ought to be paid to Army, Air Corps, and Navy leaders

¹⁴⁵ Ismael Hossein-Zadeh, *The Political Economy of U.S. Militarism*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

¹⁴⁶ Mark Lowenthal, "Franklin Roosevelt and the Coming of the War: The Search for United States Policy 1937-42," *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, No. 3 (1981): 413, 417.

¹⁴⁷ Michael Sherry, "Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941-1945" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1975), 68, 242; Michael Sherry, *The Rise of American Airpower: The Creation of Armageddon*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1987; Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*, 30, 85, 87.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Parrish, *Franklin Roosevelt and Marshall: Partners in Politics and War* (New York: W. Morrow, 1989), 514-15.

¹⁴⁹ Jeffrey Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy: the Influence of Airpower on the Franklin Roosevelt Administration, 1933-1941*. College Station: Texas A&M UP, 1991.

¹⁵⁰ Harold Gullan, "Expectations of Infamy: Franklin Roosevelt and Marshall Prepare for War, 1938-41," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 28, No. 3 (Summer 1998): 510-522.

¹⁵¹ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Airpower: from confrontation to cooperation in army aviation civil-military relations*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

¹⁵² Elliott Converse, *Circling the Earth: United States Plans for a Postwar Overseas Military Base System, 1942-48* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, August 2005), 11.

(such as Chief of Staff George Marshall, the military postwar planners, etc.) who exerted an important influence in shaping the administration's wartime and postwar policies in the 1930s and 1940s.

John Andrew Miller (1971)¹⁵³, Phillip Baram (1978)¹⁵⁴, Alan Dobson (1985)¹⁵⁵, Nathan Godfried (1987)¹⁵⁶, Irwin Gellman (1995)¹⁵⁷, Neil Smith (2003)¹⁵⁸, Dominic Tierney (2004)¹⁵⁹, and Christopher O'Sullivan (2008)¹⁶⁰, on the other hand, have focused on the State Department as the most important maker of foreign policy in the Franklin Roosevelt administration. Their work has not only presented foreign policymaking from a different angle (normally the point of view of State Department bureaucrats), but has led to important discoveries that continue to change the way the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy strategies are interpreted. John Andrew Miller, for example, has shown that retaining military air bases in the guise of commercial airfields was part of the State Department's plan for maintaining a global aerial network for deploying American airpower after the war ended. Neil Smith's biography of Isaiah Bowman, who headed the Territorial subcommittee for the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy, has uncovered new insights about the administration's postwar intentions, which

¹⁵³ John Andrew Miller, "Air Diplomacy: The Chicago Civil Aviation Conference of 1944 in Anglo-American Wartime Relations and Post-War Planning" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1971), 84.

¹⁵⁴ Phillip Baram, *The Department of State and the Middle East, 1919-1945*. Philadelphia, PN: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978.

¹⁵⁵ Alan Dobson, "The Other Air Battle: The American Pursuit of Post-War Civil Aviation Rights," *The Historical Journal* 28, No. 2 (June 1985): 429-39.

¹⁵⁶ Nathan Godfried, "Economic Development and Regionalism: United States Foreign Relations in the Middle East, 1942-45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22, No. 3 (July 1987): 481.

¹⁵⁷ Irwin Gellman, *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Sumner Welles*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

¹⁵⁸ Neil Smith, *American empire*, xii, 318-319.

¹⁵⁹ Dominic Tierney, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Covert Aid to the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, No. 3 (July 2004): 299-313.

¹⁶⁰ Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*. New York: Columbia UP, 2008.

include acquiring “American Lebensraum” around the world for large and small U.S. businesses to exploit. Dominic Tierney, on the other hand, has uncovered a conspiracy (which occurred in early 1938) involving Franklin Roosevelt and low-level State Department functionaries to ship military aircraft to the Spanish Loyalists in violation of the Neutrality Act of 1937. Finally Christopher O’Sullivan has shown that the State Department – and particularly Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles – planned to erect an American-led World Order after the war and had develop postwar plans encompassing virtually every conceivable part of the world.¹⁶¹

Aside from illuminating the roles of shady bureaucrats and overlooked military advisors, the field of bureaucratic politics also uncovered new insights about the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s policy that are pertinent to **World Systems Theory**. Proponents of World Systems Theory concern themselves with how the world is organized along political, economic and cultural lines, how international economic and political units work, and which nation or nations are chiefly responsible for organizing and running the global order.

This type of analysis is particularly relevant to the historiography on the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s postwar planning, whose rationale after all was to organize and establish U.S. leadership over a “new world order.” Laurence Shoup and William Minter (1997) believe that the State Department was planning to transform the United States into a global empire and open up the world economy to American trade. Patrick Hearden (1987)¹⁶², Thomas

¹⁶¹ For further reading see Irvine Anderson, *The Standard Vacuum Oil Company and the United States East Asian Policy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975); Jonathan Utley, *Going to War with Japan, 1937-1941*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1985; Charles McFetridge, “Foreign Policy and Military Strategy: the Civil-Military Equation,” *Military Review* 66, no. 4 (April 1986): 22-30; Theodore Wilson, *The First Summit: Franklin Roosevelt and Churchill at Placentia Bay, 1941*, rev. ed. Laurence: University Press of Kansas, 1991.

¹⁶² Patrick Hearden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler: America’s Entry into World War II*. Dekalb, IL, 1987.

McCormick (1994)¹⁶³, Neil Smith (2003)¹⁶⁴, and Ismael Hossein-Zadeh (2006)¹⁶⁵ also detect global economic aspirations in the Franklin Roosevelt administration's postwar plans.

While revisionist historians believe that the Franklin Roosevelt administration wanted to erect a world order conduct to the expansion of American enterprise, others believe that conditions of national security underpinned the global pretension of the postwar planners. Michael Sherry has argued that military and civilian planners in the Franklin Roosevelt administration wanted to organize a new global order that addressed the United States' security vulnerabilities in a world of rapid communication, interconnected markets, and technological change (airpower, for example, had become more destructive and could be projected over far greater distances than in the past, necessitating a new defense strategy based on strategic defense in depth).¹⁶⁶ Christopher O'Sullivan has argued that Under Secretary Welles and his State Department colleague wanted to an "American-led World Order," buttressed by U.S. military and economic power, to insure global security.¹⁶⁷ Melvyn Leffler, who founded the school of national security analysis, contends that Franklin Roosevelt and Truman administrations were convinced that the United States' national security could only be protected with a U.S. preponderance of power imposed on a worldwide scale.¹⁶⁸

As the literature on World Systems Theory indicates, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's geopolitical ambitions were vast. Yet the vision of a "new world order" was

¹⁶³ Thomas McCormick, "World Systems," In *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge UP, 1991), 149-161.

¹⁶⁴ Neil Smith, *American empire*, xii, 318-319.

¹⁶⁵ Ismael Hossein-Zadeh, *The Political Economy of U.S. Militarism*, 46.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*, 85, 87.

¹⁶⁷ Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, postwar planning, and the quest for a new world order, 1937-1943*, xii-xvii.

¹⁶⁸ Melvyn Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-48," 346-81.

never as coherent in practice as it was in theory. The terms of this new global order had to be negotiated with other countries and especially the Soviet Union, with the result that the Franklin Roosevelt administration did not accomplish everything that it set out to achieve. Historians who study **summit diplomacy** – especially the Tehran (1943) and Yalta (1945) Conferences – have shown how messy translating a coherent postwar vision into practice can be.

Revisionist historians Athan Theoharis and Diane Clemens believe that Franklin Roosevelt pursued a conciliatory diplomatic strategy toward the Soviet Union and Britain to insure world peace after the war; but the Truman administration reversed this strategy and thereby caused the Cold War. In February 1945, Franklin Roosevelt negotiated the Yalta agreements which required the Soviet Union to preside over free elections in Soviet occupied-Eastern Europe in theory, but not in practice. This agreement served the twin objective of appeasing the American people while assuring the Soviet Union a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe for its own security. The Truman administration, however, deliberately reinterpreted the Yalta agreements to try to force the Soviet Union to allow free elections in Eastern Europe and forfeit its sphere of influence. The Soviets, however, refused to give up its sphere of influence and the outcome was the outbreak of U.S.-Soviet Cold War tensions.¹⁶⁹

Post-revisionist historian John L. Gaddis, on the other hand, blames the Soviet leadership's aggressive foreign policy and penchant for secrecy for causing the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union were searching for security in their own manner, but their pursuit of security generated so much friction and so many misunderstandings (Gaddis believes that the Soviet Union was responsible for most of these misunderstandings) that the outbreak of

¹⁶⁹ Diane Clemens, *Yalta* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1970), 268-69, 289-91; Athan Theoharis, "Franklin Roosevelt and Truman on Yalta: The Origins of the Cold War," *Political Science Quarterly* 87, No. 2 (June 1972), 210-241.

Cold War tensions became virtually inevitable. Washington policymakers perceived Soviet actions in the worst possible light and they took prudent, but tough, foreign policy measures to counter what they perceive to be the Soviet threat to world peace.¹⁷⁰

In contrast to the revisionists and post-revisionists, realist historians claim that the Franklin Roosevelt administration's geopolitical aims were not as sweeping as a "new world order" amenable to the United States, but amounted to something far more practical: a balance of power with the Soviet Union and Britain. As long as the great powers (the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France) cooperated with each other in sustaining this balance of power, then the peaceful international order had every chance of success. But the realists claim that the Soviet Union's leadership acted erratically by resuming its ideological competition with the West and by attempting to export its influence to Western Europe via Communist parties. As a result, the international order was seized by Cold War tensions.¹⁷¹

Most recently two schools of thought have emerged with markedly different views on what transpired at the Tehran and Yalta Conferences. The "New history" historians – Robert Nisbet¹⁷², Edward Bennett¹⁷³ and Amos Perlmutter¹⁷⁴ – claim that Franklin Roosevelt tried to

¹⁷⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 353-55; Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, *The Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3; For other post-revisionist interpretations, see Barry Rubin, *The Great Powers in the Middle East, 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War* (London: Cass; Totowa, N.J.: Biblio Distribution Centre, 1980), 231, 235, 236; Martin McCauley, *The Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Longman, 1983), 86-87.

¹⁷¹ Russell Buhite, *Decisions at Yalta: an appraisal of summit diplomacy* (Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, 1986), xii, 129-36.

¹⁷² Robert Nisbet, *Franklin Roosevelt and Stalin: The Failed Courtship* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway; New York, NY: Kampmann, 1988), 12-14, 109.

¹⁷³ Edward Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory: American Soviet Relations, 1943-1945* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1990), 183-85, 187.

¹⁷⁴ Amos Perlmutter, *FDR & Stalin: A Not So Grand Alliance, 1943-1945* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), xiv, 149, 215-216.

appease the Soviet Union in order to achieve a lasting peace. This appeasement strategy backfired, leading to the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe and half a century of Cold War.¹⁷⁵

The consensus historians, on the other hand, have tried to arrive at a more balanced assessment of the Yalta Conference. They acknowledge that the Franklin Roosevelt administration did not accomplish all its postwar aims at Yalta, but added that its achievements were significant given that its weak negotiating position. Sergei Plokhy claims that the Franklin Roosevelt administration could not do much for Eastern Europe which, by February 1945, was mostly occupied by Soviet troops. Under these circumstances, Franklin Roosevelt did relatively well by persuading Stalin (for example) to support his United Nations proposal and declaring war on Japan. If U.S.-Soviet relations deteriorated in the postwar era, this was only because the ideological chasm between the United States and the Soviet Union was too great to bridge.¹⁷⁶

Melvyn Leffler, father of the National Security School, also advanced a more balanced interpretation of what went wrong at the Yalta Conference. He believes that Franklin Roosevelt negotiated the Yalta agreements with the Soviet Union in good faith, but that he failed to explain their substance to Vice President Harry Truman and his other advisors. The breakdown in communications led to several misunderstandings. For example, Franklin Roosevelt had an

¹⁷⁵ The “New History” historians, in many respects, are rehashing the arguments of the traditional historians of the 1940s who see Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors as naïve blunderers in their dealings with the Soviet Union. They believe that this naïve blunderings resulted in a massive and unnecessary expansion of Soviet power. See William Bullitt, “How We Won the War and Lost the Peace,” *Life* 25 (August 30, 1948): 82-97; William H. Chamberlain, *America’s Second Crusade*. Chicago, 1950; John Deane, *The Strange Alliance: The Story of Our Efforts at Wartime Cooperation with Russia*. New York, 1947; Hanson Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War*. New York, 1949; and Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*. New York, 1952. For other “New History” historians, see Keith Eubank, *Summit at Teheran*. New York: W Morrow, 1985; Keith Sainsbury, *The Turning Point: Franklin Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, and Chiang Kai-Shek, 1943: The Moscow, Cairo, and Teheran Conferences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

¹⁷⁶ Sergei Plokhy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 391-95, 398, 400.

understanding with Soviet dictator Josef Stalin that the elections in Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe would not be free in practice, even though the Yalta agreements stated otherwise; but he failed to explain this understanding to his advisors. Consequently Truman honestly believed that the Soviets were honor-bound to allow free elections in Eastern Europe in accordance with the Yalta agreements and he told the Soviets as much. The Stalin regime, not surprisingly, refused to give in to American diplomatic pressure and the outcome was the escalation of Cold War tensions.¹⁷⁷

Whereas many historians searched for the origins of the Cold War in the summit diplomacy taking place at the Tehran and Yalta Conference, others see the overseas expansion of American enterprise as the main cause. Historians, who detect the influence of American capital in U.S. foreign policy decisions, have founded a new school of thought known as corporatism. The corporatism school underscores the importance of private organizations in articulating economic needs and changing the mentality of Washington policymakers.¹⁷⁸

Revisionist historians William Appleman Williams, Walter LaFeber, Gabriel Kolko, Gar Alperowitz, Barton Bernstein, Lloyd Gardner, Thomas Peterson, and Eduard Mark believe that American capital's aggressive pursuit of foreign markets, raw materials, and outlets for investment changed U.S. foreign policy in a fundamental way (particularly in the 1940s). American corporations believed that only the U.S. government could protect their foreign assets by establishing U.S. military bases overseas coupled with a generous outpouring of foreign aid. Washington policymakers, owing to their bias in favor of American big business, were all too happy to assist these American corporations. Consequently the United States expanded its power

¹⁷⁷ Melvyn Leffler, "Adherence to Agreements: Yalta and the Experiences of the Early Cold War," *International Security* 11, No. 1 (Summer 1986): 100-110, 115-20.

¹⁷⁸ Michael Hogan, "Corporatism," *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 198.

and influence in those areas where American corporations held vital interests. Furthermore, the expansion of American political power and influence created friction with the Soviet Union and the indigenous left, which resulted in the globalization of Cold War tensions.¹⁷⁹

This revisionist interpretation of corporatism was not beyond challenge. Historians Aaron David Miller (1980), Michael Stoff (1980), Irvin Anderson (1981), David Painter (1986), and Stephen Randall (2005), for instance, have posited that it was strategic considerations, not a predisposition to help American business, which shaped the development of the U.S. government's foreign petroleum policy. Washington policymakers were concerned about possible oil shortages that could hamper the United States' ability to wage total war (the outbreak of another World War in the future was seen as a possibility). These apprehensions convinced the Franklin Roosevelt administration and its successors to develop a new foreign petroleum policy that sought to maximize Middle Eastern oil production for American, European and Asian markets while conserving oil reserves in the Western Hemisphere. The idea was that if the United States needed to wage a war on the scale of the Second World War, then it could exploit the untapped oil reserves of the Western Hemisphere.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1968; Eduard Mark, "Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947," 51-63; Martin McCauley, *The Origins of the Cold War*, 11; Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1990*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991. Emily Rosenberg also believes that the Franklin Roosevelt administration wanted to usher in a new global order conducive to the worldwide expansion of American enterprise, but she did not take the position that American corporate expansion globalized Cold War tensions. See Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

¹⁸⁰ Aaron David Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939-1949*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980; Michael B. Stoff, *Oil, War and American Security: The Search for a National Policy on Foreign Oil, 1941-1947*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980; Irvine H. Anderson, *Aramco, the United States and Saudi Arabia: A Study of the Dynamics of Foreign Oil Policy, 1933-1950*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981; David Painter, *Oil and the American Century: The Political Economy of*

Corporatism not only sheds light on the relations between non-state actors and the U.S. government, but it also relates to the much broader issue of ideology's role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. Michael Hunt defines **ideology** as “an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular splice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality.” Moreover, “ideology cannot be understood apart from cultural context, relationships of power, and the creation, transmission, and interpretation of meaning.”¹⁸¹

One of the earliest schools of diplomatic history dealing with U.S. foreign policy ideology argues that inappropriate moralism (i.e. “devotion to virtue without the power or will to sustain it”) and legalism (“the application of domestic concepts of peacekeeping, adjudication, and contractual relations to an international sphere for which they are unsuited”) shaped the United States' foreign relations with the rest of the world. George Kennan argued that American foreign policymakers were too idealist and failed to take in account the realities of power and in particular the limits of what the United States could accomplish with its power. Kennan seems to suggest, in making this argument, that if the U.S. government focused on protecting its national security interests rather than on attaining moralistic aims (like promoting democracy), then the United States would remain a strong military and economic power over the long term.¹⁸² Robert McNamara also advanced a version of Kennan's thesis in his book, *In Retrospect*, to explain the Lyndon B. Johnson administration's failures during the Vietnam War.¹⁸³

U.S. Foreign Oil Policy, 1941-1954. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1986; Stephen Randall, *United States Foreign Oil Policy Since World War I: For Profits and Security*. Montreal & Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's UP, 2005.

¹⁸¹ Michael Hunt, “Ideology,” *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 222.

¹⁸² Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 5.

¹⁸³ Robert McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 321-322.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Kennan thesis encountered a backlash from two directions largely because of its unrealistic treatment of Washington policymakers as innocent, naïve bunglers of foreign policy who know nothing about geopolitics or the world around them. The realist historians in particular took sharp exception to the Kennan thesis and contended that ideology had no role in U.S. foreign policy. Washington policymakers, in their view, were instead astute practitioners of geopolitics concerned with preserving the balance of power.¹⁸⁴

The revisionist historians also objected to the Kennan thesis but, unlike the realists, they carried out a more thorough-going analysis of U.S. foreign policy ideology and discovered that it had a powerful economic dimension. William Appleman Williams' *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) argued that Washington policymakers pursued an imperialist foreign policy between the 1890s and 1950s that projected the United States' ideological and economic power overseas via an extensive network of military bases. For Williams, the rationale for extending the United States' informal empire in this manner was two-fold. To begin with, the United States wanted to export liberty abroad, even though the implementation of principles like national self-determination and democracy was negated in practice by racism. The second aim, embodied in the Open Door Policy, was to pry open foreign markets for American enterprise. In the 19th and 20th centuries, American businesses were overproducing for the domestic market and therefore they needed access to foreign markets to profitably dispose of their surplus production. The Open Door's purpose was to insure that American businesses had greater access to foreign markets and foreign sources of raw materials so that they could compete globally.¹⁸⁵ Walter La Feber's *The New Empire* built upon Williams' work by exploring the 19th century economic

¹⁸⁴ Richard Pipes and Andrew Ezergailis, "Communications," *American Historical Review* 75 (December 1970): 2158-59.

¹⁸⁵ William Appleman Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. New York: Dell Pub Co, 1962.

origins of the United States' imperialist foreign policy and in particular its Open Door policy. He also included a thorough going discussion on Social Darwinism and Mahanism as important ideological influences on U.S. foreign policy.¹⁸⁶

Since the advent of the revisionist historians, the historiography on U.S. foreign policy ideology has become more complex. Michael Hunt (1987) explores the culture of racism in 19th and early 20th century America and how it “carried over into American foreign policy.”¹⁸⁷ Frank Ninkovich (1999) views Franklin Roosevelt's Wilsonian foreign policy as emerge from “the need to develop new rules for navigating through a turbulent and unpredictable modern international environment.” With the Axis power threatening to imperil the existing global order, the Franklin Roosevelt administration gave U.S. foreign policy a distinctly Wilsonian cast by 1939.¹⁸⁸ Anne Pierce (2003) has argued that Washington policymakers took seriously their mission to export the ideals of democracy, liberty, and justice abroad as well as to end imperialism, even though they often fell short of achieving these lofty aims.¹⁸⁹

The literature on the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy, then, is vast, but ultimately it can be simplified to three main variables: (1) the individuals who are involved in the foreign policymaking process and the extent to which they influence this process; (2) the intentions of these state and non-state actors and how these intentions shape foreign policy; and (3) the role of domestic opinion both as an influence and perhaps even a constraint upon U.S. foreign policymaking.

¹⁸⁶ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1963.

¹⁸⁷ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 51-52.

¹⁸⁸ Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. foreign policy since 1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 10, 12.

¹⁸⁹ Anne Pierce, *Woodrow Wilson and Harry Truman: Mission and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), vii-xii.

Concerning the first variable, a variety of state and non-state actors were involved in U.S. foreign policymaking in the 1930s and 1940s. But which ones were more influential? The approach that says that the President shaped foreign policy in collaboration with his cabinet secretaries is certainly applicable to the 1930s and early 1940s. Yet Franklin Roosevelt sometimes worked with lower-level bureaucrats and even non-state actors in certain areas of foreign policy, indicating that there is much to be said for the “bureaucratic politics” and “corporatism” approaches to foreign policymaking as well. Bureaucracies sometimes took the initiative in developing policies on their own and this is certainly true for postwar planning where the Security Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy was responsible for quashing the international air force proposal and taking a leadership role in recommending the retention of U.S. airfields after the war in the guise of commercial air routes. The idea behind the recommendation was to convert the commercial airfields back to military use in a national emergency (the definition of which was up to the discretion of the executive branch). In short, the President, the cabinet secretaries, bureaucrats, and non-state actors all played highly influential roles in the policymaking process, depending up which foreign policies were being crafted.

The second variable “intent” is the hardest one to figure out, simply because state and non-state actors are not always open about their motivations for pursuing one foreign policy course as opposed to another. Little wonder historians have portrayed the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s foreign policy as Wilsonian, isolationist, Wilsonian but forced to be isolationist, or isolationist but forced to be Wilsonian. Furthermore, this question becomes even more complicated when variables such as ideology and hard-headed pragmatism are mentioned in connection with the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s foreign policy. Was the Franklin

Roosevelt administration more idealistic than pragmatic or more pragmatic than idealist? Did race or even gender have anything to do with the way U.S. foreign policy developed?

This dissertation ultimately sees the Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policy as more ideologically-driven than pragmatic. During the Franklin Roosevelt epoch (1933-45), U.S. foreign policy was primarily Wilsonian, embodying the substance (but not most of the language) of early 20th century American imperialism. This substance included the Open Door ideology, racism, the civilizing mission, the world peace ideology, and the evangelism about remaking the world in the American image all of which were part of a grandiose Wilsonian project to build a "new world order." Moreover, the imperialist factor in the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy vision may not have even been inadvertent. The Franklin Roosevelt administration continued to expand the American extraterritorial empire, made up of military bases and commercial airfields (which could be converted to military use), in the 1930s and particularly the 1940s. In the early 1940s, some high ranking Washington policymakers, like Assistant Secretary Adolf Berle, spoke privately about creating an American empire. Lastly, the internationalist trusteeships for the colonial areas and even the strategic partnerships with pro-western authoritarian regimes were premised on the imperialist logic that non-white societies were unprepared for self-government and needed to be forcibly civilized. This belief incidentally influenced geopolitical thought on national security, since Welles, Bowman and others believed that most of the world would erupt into chaos if non-whites received self-government and democracy too soon.

Admittedly, the Washington policymakers were pragmatic in the sense that they believed that American "hard power" (i.e. military and economic coercion) was crucial to achieving and then preserving the "new world order" they wanted. For the most part they certainly were not so

naïve as to think that international institutions could solve the world's problems, since these institutions merely provided the United States with opportunities to globalize its power. But the opportunities meant nothing unless they were exploited in full. With that said, the U.S. foreign policy aims themselves were influenced more by ideology and racism as well as overconfidence about what the United States could accomplish with its preponderant power than realism.

As for domestic opinion, it did influence how foreign policymakers chose to justify their foreign policies to the American public. The term "national security" was far more aesthetically pleasing than empire, but they essentially meant the same thing since the United States could hardly protect its global national security interests without establishing some kind of military presence around the world. Yet other than changing foreign policy's outward appearance, domestic opinion ultimately did not prevent the Franklin Roosevelt administration from doing what it wanted in foreign affairs, though there were a few exceptions. At best domestic opinion merely delayed the achievement of certain foreign policy aims, like erecting a new world order.

Since domestic opinion was not as much of a constraint on foreign policy as hitherto believed, this dissertation can and shall talk in terms of grand strategic visions largely unaffected by democratic pressures; and in particular of the achievement of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's grand strategic vision for the world, which included the "new world order" and the construction of an empire worldwide in scope.

Chapter 1 How Airfields and Airpower Shaped the American Empire

Modern transportation infrastructure and new modes of transport – such as trains and railways, steamships and naval bases and airplanes and airfields – played a crucial role in the realization of the American imperialist project. These infrastructures unveiled regional and later global vistas to the United States’ empire-builders. They made the world seem smaller (by making distance progressively less of an obstacle) and therefore easier to achieve mastery over. Naval bases and airfields in particular helped the United States to manage, exploit and defend the vast terrain (which was global by the 1940s) and shape its political, cultural, and economic life in anticipated and incalculable ways. These infrastructures were indispensable tools of empire.¹

By the early 20th century, Washington policymakers had arrived at the main tenets of their imperialist foreign policy, which drew its inspiration partly from other European colonial empires and partly from the United States’ imperialist past (especially in relation to the conquest of the North American continent west of the thirteen colonies, which most historians regard as empire-building). This imperialist foreign policy, which lasted until the late 1940s and possibly beyond that point, was based on these core principles: (1) the United States was destined to replace Britain as master organizer and arbiter of a peaceful world order; (2) trade barriers must be lowered worldwide and on a reciprocal basis to allow for the United States to sell its surplus production overseas; and (3) the colonized can be tamed, civilized and prepared for self-

¹ Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky*, 43; Gordon Pirie, *Air Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 1. Senator William Seward told the Senate on December 21, 1858, “I believe that if there had been a Pacific railroad, there would have been none of those recent disturbances and alarms in Utah... there would have been none of those expensive and distracting incursions of the Indian tribes on our infant settlements in Oregon and Washington.” See “The Pacific Railroad,” *NYT*, 1858, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F70C1FFF35551B7493C5AB1789D95F4C8584F9>

government given the right imperialist policies.² In short, the United States' imperialist foreign policy coupled idealism with pragmatism in equal measure.

Most historians would disagree with the above assessment and argue that President Woodrow Wilson had interwoven his own anti-imperialist ideology, Wilsonian idealism, into the fabric of U.S. foreign policy. The decision to transform U.S. foreign policy in this way was said to be made in response to an epiphany that imperialism caused the First World War and that world peace was only possible once colonial empires were relegated to the dust bin of history.³ This interpretation, however, is problematic on two counts. To begin with, Britain, France, Holland, Belgium and other owners of colonies did not conclude that imperialist systems were the root cause of the First World War, which begs the question of why the American experience with this cataclysmic event was so different. Were Americans so exceptional that they could step back from their imperialist worldview and see that imperialist systems were more likely to cause wars than prevent them? Furthermore, if Americans did come to that conclusion, why did they keep their territorial empire intact and continued their military interventions in Haiti, the

² The civilizing mission aimed to prepare the United States' colonial subjects for eventual self-government, a process which could take a few decades or well over a century. While this process was underway, U.S. colonial administration administered top-down reforms which included instituting non-corrupt and fiscally prudent governments; implementing public works programs to build roads, sanitation systems, schools, hospitals, and other useful infrastructures; and transmitting western values to the colonial subjects. Promoting democracy, however, was not on the agenda for the foreseeable future, since Washington policymakers assumed that people with darker skin were not immediately prepared for self-government. See Joseph Smith, *The United States and Latin America: A History of American Diplomacy, 1776-2000* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 67.

³ Thomas Knock, *To End all Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992. John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 9; Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 214; John Judis, *The Folly of Empire: What George W. Bush could learn from Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson* (Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 2006), 76.

Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Nicaragua?⁴ The second problem was that Wilsonian idealism derived many of its tenets from imperialists like Presidents William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Taft, Secretary of State John Hay, Senator Albert Beveridge, and others.

The Wilsonians had no intention of ending imperialism.⁵ Since Britain was almost a spent force as a global power, the Woodrow Wilson and later the Franklin Roosevelt administrations wanted the United States to organize and lead a “new world order” to save western civilization from self-destructive conflicts, like the First World War. In a sense, the Wilsonian vision of a “new world order” was reactionary since the rationale for saving western imperialist powers in spite of themselves was so they could continue to govern and civilize the colonized. Yet the “new world order” vision was also a break from the past. Through the League of Nations, the United States (in the Wilsonian vision) not only served as arbiter of the imperialist powers in the interests of global security, but also exported its Wilsonian principles globally.⁶

The Wilsonian vision of a “new world order” was also shaped by assumptions about race. White people were believed to stand atop the racial hierarchy, because they were civilized

⁴ Thomas Kane, *Theoretical roots of US foreign policy: Machiavelli and American unilateralism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 76.

⁵ Thomas Kane wrote, “Wilson’s aspirations were lofty. His attempt to transform America’s process of stumbling towards war into a process of marching towards a better world was surely admirable. Nevertheless, one must note that he adopted a more pious version of Franklin Roosevelt’s grand strategy of imperialism.” Ibid., 80.

⁶ Lloyd Ambrosius, “Woodrow Wilson, Alliances, and the League of Nations,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 5, No. 2 (April 2006): 140; “General Smuts,” *NYT*, 22 December 1929, p. E4. These Wilsonian principles varied greatly depending upon which part of the world they were directed. In the colonial areas, the Woodrow Wilson administration had no intention of promoting national self-determination and democracy. But President Wilson and his advisors were interested in lowering trade barriers in the colonial areas, in the hope that these measures would spur greater economic development that would translate into higher living standards for the colonized. In Europe, by contrast, the Woodrow Wilson administration was a sincere champion of national self-determination and democracy as well as lower trade barriers. See “23 Peace Points Advanced by Wilson,” *NYT*, 6 October 1918, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F6091EFF3A5F1B7A93C4A9178BD95F4C8185F9>

enough to manage their own political and economic affairs and assume responsibility for the colonized. Darker-skinned peoples, by contrast, were viewed as savages who were not ready for self-government. Based on that logic, the spread of white civilization via imperialist expansion resulted in world peace and greater liberty while conversely darker-skinned peoples could plunge huge parts of the world into chaos if they were allowed to govern themselves.⁷

In light of these views, the First World War was seen as a disaster for western civilization and the world. The western imperialist powers had been able to rule most of earth primarily by keeping peace amongst themselves. This war, however, ended that peace and created the possibility that the western imperialist powers would not be strong enough to hold onto their colonies and continue their civilizing mission. The permanent erosion of western civilization's hegemonic position in the world and decolonization (both potential byproducts of the war) were nightmare scenarios that the Woodrow Wilson administration wanted to avoid. After all, the conventional wisdom, as expressed by Theodore Roosevelt on December 21, 1899, was that "wars between civilized communities are very dreadful" because only "the power of the mighty civilized races... [and] their expansion are gradually bringing peace into the red wastes where the barbarian peoples of the world hold sway."⁸ In 1915, former Senator Albert Beveridge expressed fears about the worldwide consequences of disunity amongst the civilized nations:

Does anyone doubt, therefore, that if the white races were to disarm, Oriental domination would follow? What nation is akin to all other Occidental nations? Is it not the United States? The slogan of world peace, the guarantee of the preservation of the civilization of Shakespeare and Goethe, Moliere

⁷Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 51-53, 58-59; Manela Erez, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anti-Colonialism* (Oxford, New York: Oxford UP, 2007), 4-5; "No Filipino State for 30 Years – Taft," *NYT*, 3 January 1915, p. 15.

⁸ Franklin Roosevelt, "Expansion and Peace," *The Independent* 51 (December 21, 1899): 3401–5.

and Dante is this: 'Get together, men of the Occident. If we remain separate, we may be in danger. If we combine, we are secure.'⁹

On April 2, 1917, President Wilson justified his decision to declare war on the Central Powers by stating, "It is a fearful thing to lead this great and peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance." In other words, the United States entered the war precisely because "civilization" seemed to be "in the balance."¹⁰

By preserving western civilization, President Wilson hoped to accomplish two aims. The first was to insure the long-term survival of the United States' expanding strategic and economic interests. The other aim, not unrelated to the first, was to export Wilsonian principles of reciprocity (a gateway to free trade) and liberty globally in order to advance U.S. interests and civilize the subject races, raise their living standards, and prepare them for self-government.¹¹

The aim of this chapter is first to establish the imperialist context for airfields and then explain how this infrastructure came into existence. The first three parts show that Washington policymakers consistently pursued an imperialist path in U.S. foreign affairs that was largely unaltered by the advent of Wilsonian idealism. The fourth part demonstrates how anti-war public opinion inhibited American territorial expansion and eventually forced the U.S. government to rely more on extraterritorial means to extend the United States' imperial reach to other nations. This argument does not diminish the territorial component of American imperialism; but suggests that more attention needs to be paid to the origins of extraterritorial forms of imperial control since the United States' extraterritorial empire is far more extensive today than its

⁹ "Beveridge Fears Orient: Wants United States to Prepare to Save Western Civilization," *NYT*, 28 May 1915

¹⁰ "Woodrow Wilson: Request for Declaration of War, April 2, 1917, The Woodrow Wilson Library and Museum, <http://wwl2.dataformat.com/Document.aspx?doc=29623>

¹¹ "General Smuts," *NYT*, 22 December 1929, p. E4.

territorial one. Finally parts five to eight show how the aerial component of the American empire came into being. The fifth part explains why government departments, after initial misgivings about the use of war planes (which was still an experimental technology), eventually embraced aviation, which resulted in the integration of airpower and airfields into national defense. The sixth argues that in spite of Congressional opposition to military spending, the executive strengthened air defenses at the continental level by promoting military aviation in the guise of commercial enterprise. The seventh explains the role of the German-Colombian airline Scadta and its proposal to establish an air route to Florida in influencing the executive branch to contract Pan American Airways (or Pan Am) to construct air defenses to the Caribbean-Central America region in the guise of a commercial air service. The eighth explores how the U.S. government helped Pan Am expand its air routes to the northern half of South America.

Before proceeding with the rest of the chapter, a word on definitions is in order. Ideologically, American imperialists (of the “progressive” variety) and Wilsonians share virtually the same views. However, this chapter uses the term, “American imperialists,” for U.S. foreign policymakers before 1914 and, “Wilsonian,” to designate those imperialists who called themselves Wilsonians during the First World War and the interwar period.

The United States and the World Order

The Wilsonian quest for a “new world order” can best be understood in light of how imperial-minded Washington policymakers imagined their nation’s role in world history. To begin with, American imperialists initially did not entertain any ambitions to organize and lead a “new world order” and with good reason. Britain, the leading world power, had ably performed the world order-keeping role by keeping the oceans safe for merchant ships, contributing to a

century of peace in Europe (only short-lived localized wars broke out in Europe between 1814 and 1914), and protecting the United States from external threats with its enormous navy.¹²

So how did American imperialists imagine their nation's role in the world? They viewed the world of the late 19th and early 20th century as one where imperialist powers worked together to maintain world peace by civilizing the colonized. Within that context, the United States' role was to civilize the "savages" in its own backyard and thereby contribute in a small way to the peace of the world. As President William McKinley told the Citizen's Banquet in Chicago in October 1898, "[The War of 1898] awoke the nation to self-consciousness and to a consciousness of its mission in the world... [T]he Republic is to stand for liberty and self-government everywhere within the zone of its influence."¹³

Implicit in the United States' self-appointed imperialist role was the belief that darker-skinned people, being incapable of self-government, were a potential threat to world peace and therefore had to be subjected to the civilizing influences of colonial rule.¹⁴ As Captain Alfred Mahan wrote in 1897, "There is no inalienable right in any community to control the use of a region when it does so to the detriment of the world at large, of its neighbors in particular, or even at times of its own subjects."¹⁵ In early February 1900, Postmaster General Smith said in a similar vein, "American influence and strength are in the Orient to play their part in its future

¹² James Jones to Leo Pasvolsky, January 19, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Entry 558, Records of Leo Pasvolsky, Box 4.

¹³ Fabian Hilfrich, *Debating American exceptionalism: empire and democracy in the wake of the Spanish-American War* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 79.

¹⁴ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 51-53, 58-59; Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning*, 1-3; "Beveridge on Free Trade," March 30, 1900, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FB0F13FA385D12738DDDA90B94DB405B808CF1D3>; "No Filipino State for 30 Years – Taft," *NYT*, 3 January 1915, p. 15.

¹⁵ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power: Present and Future* (New York: Freeport, 1970), 167.

commerce and civilization.”¹⁶ Referring to Presidents McKinley (1897-1901) and Theodore Roosevelt’s (1901-09) colonial policies, William Taft declared on January 29, 1908:

Our action in assuming our part of the responsibility of the world people for the development of the world has added to our influence the world around and has made our voice influential in all international councils. So great has been this growth that the immediate successor of William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt has been able to accomplish more in the preservation of the peace of the world than any President that ever administered or any monarch that ever reigned.¹⁷

Of course, Taft’s last statement was an exaggeration. During the War of 1898, the U.S. Navy had only netted four Spanish colonies: Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Cuba. Five years later, the U.S. Navy helped “liberate” Panama from Colombian rule and seize the Panama Canal. These achievements enhanced the United States’ physical security and proximity to foreign markets. But the prevailing wisdom of the early 20th century was that colonial rule contributed to world peace, which meant that the nation with the biggest empire contributed the most to global security. By that standard, the United States had done very little to make the earth a more peaceful place since it controlled only a small fraction of all the colonies.¹⁸ Furthermore, although Secretary of State John Hay claimed that “the world’s peace rests with China,” his government only lent a small armed force to the international police force that put down the Boxer rebellion in Peking (1900) which presumably threatened peace in the Far East. Other than

¹⁶ “Bankers of Manhattan at the Banquet Table,” 7 February 1900, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10A17FD3F5911738DDDAE0894DA405B808CF1D3>

¹⁷ “McKinley Brought World Peace,” *NYT*, 30 January 1908, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F30713F83C5A17738DDDA90B94D9405B888CF1D3>

¹⁸ Joseph Smith, *The United States and Latin America*, 59, 62-63, 67.

through international cooperation, the United States lacked the means to deploy military power and maintain order in China.¹⁹

As long as Britain appeared to successfully carry out its world order-keeping role, Washington policymakers were content for the United States to play a lesser role in world affairs. However, the First World War transformed American perceptions about Britain's military might. During that conflict, tens of millions were being killed on the battlefield and the only thing that the British could do was get bogged down in the trenches. In response to Britain's perceived weakness, the Woodrow Wilson administration developed a globalist foreign policy ideology, known as Wilsonian idealism, and assumed the role of master organizer and leader of a "new world order" to "save western civilization from self-destruction through war."²⁰

On the surface, the Woodrow Wilson administration's vision of a "new world order" and its embrace of the world-encompassing Wilsonian ideology seemed to be unprecedented developments in American diplomatic history, prompting many historians to depict the First World War as a watershed moment for U.S. foreign policy. Yet the Wilsonians did not intend to reverse the imperialist policies of previous U.S. governments. Instead they sought to promote on a global scale those ideas which the American imperialists (like Theodore Roosevelt) themselves had developed. President Wilson's League of Nations idea, for instance, was not new. On May 5, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt told the Nobel Prize committee in Oslo, "It would be a master stroke if those great powers honestly bent on peace would form a League of Peace, not only to keep

¹⁹ Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 204-05; Arthur Dudden, "The American Pacific: Where the West was also Won," *Studies in the Economic History of the Pacific Rim*, eds. Sally Miller, A.J.H. Latham, and Dennis Flynn (New York: Routledge, 1998), 98.

²⁰ Lloyd Ambrosius, "Woodrow Wilson, Alliances, and the League of Nations," 140; "General Smuts," *NYT*, 22 December 1929, p. E4.

peace among themselves, but to prevent, by force if necessary, its being broken by others.”²¹ In other words, American imperialists had long wanted a League that regulated the international relations among the great and small powers to achieve a lasting peace.

The Wilsonian principle of world disarmament, which was pursued consistently in the interwar period, was also not an original idea.²² Four years before the First World War, Theodore Roosevelt expressed his own concerns about unhealthy levels of militarism around the world and their threat to global security, and concluded, “Something should be done as soon as possible to check the growth of armaments, especially naval armaments, by international agreement.”²³

Similarly the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s tentative plan to establish an international police force (consisting of American, Britain, Soviet, and Chinese air forces) to deter aggression and maintain peace²⁴ was a version of an idea originated by Theodore Roosevelt. On May 5, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt proposed the “establishment of some form of international police power” that was “willing to prevent violence between nations.”²⁵

Even President Wilson’s promise to bring an end to all wars was not a novelty. The U.S. government held “peace” jubilees at the start of the 20th century to celebrate the War of 1898’s

²¹ “Franklin Roosevelt wants League of Peace,” *NYT*, 6 May 1910,

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F30716F73F5F12738DDDAF0894DD405B808DF1D3>

²² “23 Peace Points Advanced by Wilson,” *NYT*, 6 October 1918, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F6091EFF3A5F1B7A93C4A9178B D95F4C8185F9>; Kathleen Burk, “The Lineaments of Foreign Policy: The United States and a ‘New World Order,’ 1919-39,” *Journal of American Studies* 26, No. 3 (December 1992): 377-391.

²³ “Franklin Roosevelt wants League of Peace,” *NYT*, 6 May 1910,

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F30716F73F5F12738DDDAF0894DD405B808DF1D3>

²⁴ John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 30.

²⁵ “Franklin Roosevelt wants League of Peace,” *NYT*, 6 May 1910,

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F30716F73F5F12738DDDAF0894DD405B808DF1D3>

contribution to moving the world closer to eternal peace. On October 17, 1898, Methodist Minister J.P. Brushingham stated, “We have had a war to end war – maybe forever.”²⁶

The only thing arguably new about Wilsonian idealism was that Wilsonians, by the 1940s, wanted the United States to become the master organizer and leader of the “new world order.”²⁷ General George Strong, for example, acknowledged that his government sought a “world settlement after this war which will enable us to impose our own terms, amounting perhaps to a Pax Americana.”²⁸ Isaiah Bowman, who chaired of the Territorial Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on Foreign Postwar Policy, observed that, “[The United States] must accept world responsibility.... The measure of our victory will be the measure of our domination after the victory.”²⁹ Yet even the geopolitical ambition to shape and lead the “new world order” was not entirely novel. On January 19, 1900, Senator Albert Beveridge declared that, “[God] has made us the master organizers of the world to establish [order] where chaos reigns.”³⁰ A month later, he said, “The American people could be masters of the world.”³¹

In summation, the Wilsonian vision of a “new world order” was a product of the past. What changed was that Washington policymakers went beyond making pious statements on the League, world disarmament, and an international police force, and actually tried to implement some of these ideas.

²⁶ Fabian Hilfrich, *Debating American Exceptionalism*, 88.

²⁷ Lloyd Ambrosius, “Woodrow Wilson, Alliances, and the League of Nations,” 140.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁹ Laurence Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust*, 163.

³⁰ Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 2.

³¹ “Banks of Manhattan at the Banquet Table,” *NYT*, 7 February 1900, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10A17FD3F5911738DDDAE0894DA405B808CF1D3>

The Quest for Foreign Markets

Another dimension of American imperialism, which continued to define U.S. foreign policy in the 20th century, was the quest for foreign markets. One of the primary reasons why the United States acquired colonies and constructed naval stations in the Caribbean and the Pacific was to keep foreign markets open for American commerce. Admittedly realist historians have argued that the United States had few overseas economic interests worth fighting for. The United States' trade with Latin America and Asia during the 19th and early 20th centuries was a small fraction of its domestic trade and U.S. overseas investments were just as negligible. The Panama Canal was arguably an important economic asset, but its economic value was offset by the United States' willingness to allow merchant ships of all nations to use this major artery. The United States, it appeared, only sought an empire to enhance its physical security.³²

Certainly the strategic rationale for an American empire cannot be discounted, but it was also the perceived importance of foreign markets to the United States' present and future economic well-being, rather than their actual value, that led to American territorial expansion. After the American Civil War, the United States experienced a tremendous burst of industrial and agricultural productivity, but soon fell victim to its own success. The main problem was that American factories and farms were overproducing for the domestic market, which created a glut along with low business profits and low wages. Moreover, the perceived severity of this problem was magnified by the depressions of the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s.³³ In spite of these challenges, the United States surpassed Britain in GDP in the early 1890s and in GDP per capita in 1913. The United States was also poised to surpass Europe's GDP in the mid-1920s, but the First

³² Paul K. MacDonald, "Those who forget historiography are doomed to republish it," 57.

³³ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 37; Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 17-19.

World War and the devastation it caused moved the date of that milestone forward to 1919.³⁴ Yet by the late 19th century, U.S. political and business elites arrived at the conclusion that the United States' economic security was dependent upon American businesses expanding their market share overseas in order to sell their surplus production.

Latin America and Asia, as mentioned before, conducted little trade with the United States and took in negligible amounts of U.S. investment.³⁵ Yet U.S. political and business elites viewed these foreign markets in terms of their potentialities rather than their present value to the American economy. In 1881, the Boston *Sunday Herald* labeled South America “the great market for our surplus manufactures... [which] lies at our door neglected.” The New York Chamber of Commerce criticized Britain for dominating the South American trade, implying that the United States' economic difficulties would be resolved once South America started buying more U.S. goods. In the late 1880s, wheat growers and millers requested the U.S. government's aid in securing markets in Latin America so that they would not have to depend upon Britain's saturated market.³⁶

American political leaders also participated in the ongoing dialogue about the urgent need for greater market share abroad. On February 7, 1900, Postmaster General Charles Smith told an audience of Manhattan bankers:

The requirements of our industrial position compel us to enter upon commercial expansion. We are the greatest producers and the greatest consumers in the world, yet, unparalleled as is our consuming

³⁴ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 244. Iain Haddow, “When UK GDP last outstripped the US,” *BBC News*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7174996.stm.

³⁵ Asia, for instance, absorbed only 5% of U.S. exports between 1850 and 1890. See Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 45.

³⁶ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 21.

ability, our wonderful and unrivaled producing capacity has outstripped and outrun even our amazing power of absorption. If we had not found more outlets, what should have become of our surplus?³⁷

Smith also said in the same speech, “We made our greatest commercial opportunity in the greatest new potential market of the world when we secured the open door in China.”³⁸ Later on October 18 of the same year, Senator Beveridge delivered a very similar speech:

We ought not to stop this [nation’s] productiveness. And yet if this productiveness continues, as it will, what will become of the young men of today when they shall reach middle life and old age, unless we secure markets not only for what we produce today, but for what we will be producing ten years from now, fifty years from now, one hundred years from now.³⁹

In the first half of the 20th century, the dilemma about how to sell the nation’s surplus production did not disappear, but continued to dogged U.S. business and political leaders up to the 1940s.⁴⁰

The perceived importance of foreign markets resulted in three major developments in U.S. foreign policy. The first of these was the acquisition of island colonies (as well as Alaska and the Isthmus of Panama) for the purpose of establishing naval outposts. As Postmaster General Charles Smith succinctly put it, “commerce means a navy and outposts and defense.”⁴¹ Thus, the United States annexed Baker Island (1857), Howland Island (1857), Kingman Reef (1858), Jarvis (1858), Johnston Island (1858), Midway Islands (1867), Alaska (1867), Samoa (1889), the Aleutians (1889), Hawaii (1898), Palmyra (1898), Guam (1898), the Philippines

³⁷ “Bankers of Manhattan at the Banquet Table,” *NYT*, 7 February 1900, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10A17FD3F5911738DDDAE0894DA405B808CF1D3>

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “Senator Beveridge Speaks to Young Men,” *NYT*, 18 October 1900, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Patrick Hearnden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, x, 5-6.

⁴¹ “Bankers of Manhattan at the Banquet Table,” *NYT*, 7 February 1900, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10A17FD3F5911738DDDAE0894DA405B808CF1D3>

(1898), Wake Island (1899) and Pribilof Island (1910) in the Pacific⁴²; and Puerto Rico (1898), the Guantanamo naval base in Cuba (1898), the Panama Canal (1903), and the Danish West Indies (1916) in the Caribbean-Central America region. In addition, U.S. military interventions were carried out in Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua in the first two decades of the 20th century. As a result of these imperialist endeavors, the United States enhanced its physical security and obtained stepping stones to the purportedly rich markets of the Far East.⁴³

Another development was the formulation of new trade policies – such as the Open Door policy (first enunciated in September 6, 1899) and the Reciprocal Trade program (which started in June 1934) – for the purpose of importing cheaper raw materials (so that American factories could reduce their input costs and become more competitive globally) and insuring that U.S. exports competed on an equitable basis with foreign goods for the same foreign markets so that the United States would have easier time trying to sell its surplus production abroad.⁴⁴

The final development was the integration of the globalization ideology into U.S. foreign economic policy. The United States emerged from the First World War as the leading world power and therefore was in a unique position to impose its trade principles on the world.⁴⁵ The United States' ascendancy also encouraged U.S. political and economic elites to think about what American capital could accomplish on a worldwide scale (when aided by U.S. hard and soft power). These changing attitudes, in turn, influenced the policy aims of the Washington policymakers. The Woodrow Wilson administration's 14 points called for among other things

⁴² George Tindall and David Shi, *America: A Narrative History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000), 809.

⁴³ Hans Schmidt, *The United States occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, 5.

⁴⁴ Arthur Dudden, "The American Pacific: Where the West was also Won," 98-99; Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 43-44; Stephan Haggard, "The Institutional Foundations of Hegemony: Explaining the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act of 1934," *International Organization* 42, No. 1 (Winter 1988): 91.

⁴⁵ Patrick Hearden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, x, 6.

“the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.”⁴⁶ Wilson was unable to achieve the goal of lowering the world’s trade barriers within his lifetime, but this economic ambition did survive him. On April 25, 1931, Henry Morgenthau Sr., who served with Wilson at the Paris Conference (1919), told the *New York Times* on April 25, 1931:

I can think of half a dozen or more American business leaders whom I should like to see sitting down at such a conference. They could discuss... the problem of making the world an economic unit. If the present depression has taught us anything, it is that no nation is any longer sufficient to itself alone. Prices and employment are worldwide and interrelated phenomena.⁴⁷

In the early 1940s, the State Department’s postwar planners were actively scheming to transform the world into an economic unit. In March 1940, Under Secretary Welles told Franklin Roosevelt that the United States needed overseas markets after the war to convert its military industries to civilian use and therefore the European colonial areas had to be placed under international control and opened up to American trade.⁴⁸ Isaiah Bowman, who chaired the Territorial Subcommittee for the Advisory Committee of Postwar Foreign Policy, told his colleagues that he wanted the United States to have its own “American Lebensraum,” which he defined as the world’s foreign markets, natural resources, and labor.⁴⁹

In short, the post-Second World War era of globalization did not result solely from the free market’s invisible hand or the efforts of multinationals (though certainly they played a role), but also from a master plan of the U.S. government that was many years in the making. Once the

⁴⁶ “23 Peace Points Advanced by Wilson,” *NYT*, 6 October 1918, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F6091EFF3A5F1B7A93C4A9178BD95F4C8185F9>

⁴⁷ R.L. Duffus, “Morgenthau Sees U.S. as a Pilot-Nation,” *NYT*, 26 April 1931, p. SM4.

⁴⁸ Patrick Hearden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 227.

⁴⁹ Neil Smith, *American empire*, 319-20, 349.

master plan was drawn up, the Franklin Roosevelt administration and its successors negotiated the terms of the U.S.-led global economy with governments around the world.

The Civilizing Mission

The third feature of U.S. imperialism was the mission to civilize the subject races and prepare them for eventual self-government. The survival of the civilizing mission idea into the 1940s and possibly beyond that point was hardly surprising, since most Caucasian Americans held almost unshakeable beliefs about the inferiority of darker-skinned peoples and the need to tame and civilize them. In other words, the civilizing mission projected abroad was a mirror reflection of the domestic civilizing initiatives enacted at home toward the African-Americans, Native Americans, and other racial minorities.

The civilizing mission was significant for the following reasons. To begin with, the existence of civilizing uplift policies provides compelling proof that imperialism was in part a set of attitudes and biases that define the inequitable relationships between people with virtually all the political and economic power and the “other.” Moreover, these unequal relationships could exist in a domestic setting as well as in the colonies. Senator Beveridge recognized this link, when justifying the U.S. military occupation of the Philippines: “You who say the Declaration applies to all men, how dare you deny its application to the American Indian? And if you deny it to the Indian at home, how dare you grant it to the Malay abroad?”⁵⁰ The term “Malay,” incidentally, was a derogatory term for the inhabitants of the Philippines.

⁵⁰ Walter L. Williams, “United States Indian Policy and the Debate over Philippine Annexation: Implications for the Origins of American Imperialism,” *The Journal of American History* 66, No. 4 (March 1980): 819.

Senator Beveridge's tendency to equate imperialism at home with imperialism abroad was not atypical. In 1901, Woodrow Wilson (a professor at the time) employed the same civilizing rhetoric as the imperialists, when he lamented:

A extraordinary and very perilous state of affairs had been created in the South by the sudden and absolute emancipation of the negroes... Here was a vast 'labouring, landless, homeless class,' once slaves, now free; unpracticed in liberty, unschooled in self-control; never sobered by the discipline of self-support, never established in any habit of prudence; excited by a freedom they did not understand; exalted by false hopes; bewildered and without leaders, and yet insolent and aggressive; sick of work, covetous of pleasure – a host of dusk children untimely put out of school... they were a danger to themselves as well as to those whom they had once served...⁵¹

Wilson explained that several laws had to be enacted – vagrancy or the refusal to work at current wages was punishable with re-enslavement in the form of forced labor – to “hold the negroes very watchfully, and, if need were, very sternly, within bounds in the exercise of their unaccustomed freedom.”⁵² In early February 1903, War Secretary Elihu Root explained that the suffrage had to be taken away from African-Americans in many states because “the experiment [to civilize emancipated slaves by granting them liberty, citizenship, and equal rights] has failed.” But Root refused to abandon the civilizing mission because “we cannot throw away the responsibility we undertook for the welfare of this people.”⁵³ On August 20, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt told 1500 African-Americans of the “Negro Business League” that “there is no place

⁵¹ Woodrow Wilson, “The Reconstruction of the Southern States,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 87, Issue 519 (January 1901), 6.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ “Mr. Root says Negro Suffrage has Failed,” *NYT*, 7 February 1903, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F2081EFF3A5412738DDDAE0894DA405B838CF1D3>

on the face of the globe where the negro has progressed as in this country, and that there is no place which is as well suited for his development as the home he now occupies.”⁵⁴

Since the domestic setting was the laboratory for the civilizing mission, U.S. domestic policy in relation to racial minorities was as an important frame of reference for U.S. foreign policymakers. For instance, the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination was not as progressive an idea as appearances suggest. The prevailing view right up to the 1940s was that only white people were entitled to national self-determination, whereas darker-skinned peoples were simply not ready for political independence.⁵⁵ The existence of this view explains why a well known imperialist Captain Alfred Mahan wrote that the principles guiding U.S. territorial expansion have “to be conditioned only by a just and candid regard for the rights and reasonable susceptibilities of other nations.”⁵⁶ President Wilson similarly championed every person’s right to national self-determination in public. Yet when the stateless and colonized peoples formed their own delegations at the Paris Peace Conference (1919) and sent hundreds of petitions to President Wilson asking him to champion their right to national self-determination, only a handful of these petitions got passed the President’s private secretary Gilbert Close. President Wilson only acted on a handful of the few petitions that did reach him.⁵⁷ In addition, President Wilson responded to the Japanese government’s proposal to include a provision for racial equality within the League of Nations character (which had obvious ramifications for the principle of national self-determination) first by being evasive and then by quashing the proposal

⁵⁴ “Franklin Roosevelt Urges Negroes to Work,” *NYT*, 20 August 1910, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10810F8355D16738DDDA90A94D0405B808DF1D3>

⁵⁵ Hal Friedman, *Governing the American Lake*, xxv-xxvi, 117-118.

⁵⁶ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power: Present and Future* (1897) (New York: Freeport, 1970), 49.

⁵⁷ Manela Erez, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 4-5.

altogether.⁵⁸ That President Wilson desired national self-determination for white people and continued colonial rule for the subject races should not come as a surprise, since he wanted the colonial power (under his plan for mandates) to “act not as owner of its colonies, but as trustee for the natives for the interests of the society of nations.”⁵⁹

The civilizing mission was also important for another reason: it established practices of American imperial rule that lasted at least until the late 1940s. The Woodrow Wilson administration’s plan to transform colonies into mandates⁶⁰ and Franklin Roosevelt administration’s proposal to put colonial areas under international trustees⁶¹ were based upon a set of imperialist beliefs that originated in the 19th century. One of these beliefs was that the colonial ruler had to deprive the colonized of their civil liberties and force them to become civilized and prosperous overtime. If the colonized received self-government prematurely, then they would mismanage their political system and economy and the result would be chaos that would, in turn, engulf U.S. strategic and economic interests.⁶² Another belief, which was arguably more benign, was that the colonial ruler should administer the colony in the same way that a trustee manages a “trust” for children. As Senator Beveridge explained on March 30, 1900:

[F]or the present we will hold [Puerto Rico, Cuba, the canal, Hawaii, and the Philippines] as a sacred trust for them, for us, for mankind, and for the world... developing them into gardens, their inhabitants into happy and prosperous peoples; and when... American ideas, American methods, and the American spirit changes the quality of their blood, the method of their minds, the tendency of their

⁵⁸ J. Hart, “Making Democracy Safe for the World,” *Pacific Historical Review* 73, No. 1 (February 2004): 52.

⁵⁹ Lloyd Ambrosius, “Woodrow Wilson, Alliances, and the League of Nations,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 5, No. 2 (April 2006): 140; Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 221.

⁶⁰ Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 220-21.

⁶¹ “International Trusteeship,” 8 December 1942, P-123b and T-169a, NARA 2, RG 59, Lot 60D-224, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-1945, Box 54.

⁶² “No Filipino State for 30 Years – Taft,” *NYT*, 3 January 1915, p. 15.

character and their ideas, ideals, and understanding of government, then our successors in the American Congress may admit or inject them into the blood of our National life...⁶³

These two beliefs about colonial rule explain why U.S. colonial systems tried to promote the education and economic development of the subject races, while curbing their civil liberties.⁶⁴ In Cuba, General Leonard Wood's administration (1900-1902) carried out prison, judicial, and education reforms, road building, harbor clearance, and eradicated yellow fever.⁶⁵ The Theodore Roosevelt administration also persuaded Congress to lower the U.S. duty on Cuban sugar so that "Cuba can live."⁶⁶ Yet the U.S. government also went to great lengths to prevent darker-skinned Cuban men from voting. The electorate law, passed under General Wood's administration, required Cubans to meet one of three criteria in order to vote: the ability to read and write, ownership of property worth \$250 or more, or being a veteran of the insurgent forces in the War of 1898. This law disenfranchised two-thirds of the Cuban male electorate. In addition to the new electoral law, the Leonard Wood administration colluded with some Cuban election officials to destroy the ballots of the political parties they did not want to see coming to power. Yet even after taking these steps, the U.S. government did not trust the Cubans with self-government. Thus, the Theodore Roosevelt administration delivered an ultimatum to Cuba's constituent assembly: insert the Platt Amendment (allowing the U.S. government to send in the

⁶³ "Beveridge of Free Trade," *NYT*, 30 March 1900, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FB0F13FA385D12738DDDA90B94DB405B808CF1D3>

⁶⁴ Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning*, 1-3.

⁶⁵ Allan Millett, *The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1968), 38.

⁶⁶ Stanley Lebergott, "The Returns of U.S. Imperialism, 1890-1929," 236.

military into Cuba if the island nation erupted into chaos) into the Cuban constitution or else the U.S. military will stay in Cuba indefinitely. The Cuban constituent assembly gave in.⁶⁷

This authoritarian “reform from above” approach was not unique to Cuba. Under the Woodrow Wilson administration, U.S. marines intervened in the Dominican Republic and set up a colonial administration that carried out far-reaching reforms, but also suspended Dominican civil rights, enforced strict censorship, and was brutal in suppressing opposition.⁶⁸ President Wilson believed that these restrictions on personal freedom were necessary, because (in referring to the Dominican Republic and Haiti) he declared, “They have African racial traits. That is why they differ completely from all the other republics.”⁶⁹ The U.S. marines also behaved in the same way when intervening in Panama to force the Panamanians to hold “free elections.” In 1918, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Roosevelt noted approvingly that Commander General Richard Blatchford was conducting “a moralistic and (for the Panamanians) humiliating campaign to clean up vice in the terminal cities [of the Panama Canal].”⁷⁰

Franklin Roosevelt’s view on the civilizing mission hardly changed since 1918. The Franklin Roosevelt administration continued U.S. colonial rule over the Philippines until 1946.⁷¹ In the 1940s, the State Department postwar planners developed the international trusteeship

⁶⁷ Lars Schoultz, “Blessings of Liberty: The United States and the Promotion of Democracy of Cuba,” 400-02.

⁶⁸ Eric Roorda, “The Cult of the Airplane,” 276.

⁶⁹ Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism*, 220.

⁷⁰ Frederick B. Pike, *FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press), 130.

⁷¹ Frank Schumacher, “‘Marked Severities’: The Debate over Torture during America’s Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1902,” *American Studies* 51, no. 4 (2006): 492-93.

scheme on the grounds that the colonized were not yet ready for self-government and that their political liberties needed to be taken away for their living standards to rise.⁷²

Public Opinion and Extraterritoriality

The United States, therefore, was an empire undergirded by imperialist assumptions (ranging from the quest for foreign markets to the civilizing mission) and underpinned by island colonies with military outposts. Yet paradoxically American territorial expansion was often inhibited by a robust public opinion that was opposed to war unless the United States came under attack. In this sense, the United States was different from other colonial empires. The French, Belgians, and British were all too happy to see their governments acquire colonies through military force. Yet while most Americans embraced the imperialist rhetoric about civilizing darker-skinned peoples, setting up and administering colonial systems, and gaining access to foreign markets, they were not willing to go to war for these things.

Whether the United States annexed territory or not was decided by fierce political contests that the executive branch did not always win. The Ulysses Grant administration (1869-77), for example, tried to seize Santo Domingo, Haiti, and the Danish West Indies, only to be thwarted by the anti-imperialists in Congress.⁷³ Senator Carl Schurz of Nevada, one of the leaders of this anti-imperial opposition, warned that for the United States to govern the Caribbean islands as provinces, colonies, dependencies or satrapies would lead to the creation of “so many nurseries of rapacity, extortion, plunder, oppression and tyranny which will, with the certainty of fate, demoralize and corrupt our political life beyond any degree yet conceived of,

⁷² P-Minutes 52, April 17, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Lot 60D-224, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-1945, Box 54.

⁷³ Jeanette Nichols, “The United States Congress and Imperialism, 1861-1897,” *The Journal of Economic History* 21, No. 4 (December 1961): 530.

and impart to our Government a military character most destructive of its Republican attributes.” Senator Schurz also exploited the racism of his time, when he observed that admitting the Caribbean’s “tropical peoples” would threaten “the integrity, safety, perpetuity and progressive development of our institutions...”⁷⁴ More than a decade later, the Benjamin Harrison administration was equally unsuccessful in its efforts to obtain “convenient coaling stations” and “other trading privileges” in Chimbote (Peru), Cuba, Puerto Rico, Samana Bay (Dominican Republic), and Mole St. Nicholas (Haiti).⁷⁵

The U.S. political elites who managed to amass colonies were the ones who rationalized conquest. President James Polk (1844-49) successfully presented the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-48) as a conflict that the United States entered into reluctantly after being attacked by Mexico.⁷⁶ The Franklin Pierce administration similarly came up with a clever excuse for steering the Guano Island Act (1856) through Congress, which paved the way for the U.S. occupation of the guano-laden islands of Baker, Howland, Kingman Reef, Jarvis, and Johnson (guano was fossilized bird droppings which, by the standards of the time, served as an excellent fertilizer). The Franklin Pierce administration promised American voters that the islands would be vacated after all of their guano was extracted. After all the guano was gone, however, the islands remained in American hands and any commitment to vacating them was conveniently forgotten about.⁷⁷

As the 19th century drew to a close, the rationalizations for acquiring colonies became more sophisticated. In early February 1900, Postmaster General Charles Emory Smith attributed the conquest of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, and Cuba to “the inescapable overmastering

⁷⁴ Congressional Globe, Appendix, January 11, 1871, Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llcg&fileName=098/llcg098.db&recNum=648>, 26-27, 30.

⁷⁵ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 55, 110.

⁷⁶ Ronald Lee, “Justifying Empire,” 514-31.

⁷⁷ Ruth Oldenziel, “Islands: The United States as a Networked Empire,” 18.

of events,” since “territorial expansion has not been and is not now the object of American ambition.” He continued, “... the future historian, in portraying the magnificent progress of the Republic, will dwell upon the manifest guidance of an overruling hand in the great and pregnant fact that... the unforeseen and mighty events of the Spanish war suddenly lifted the curtain and unveiled the new vista, the wider horizon, and the unexpected and brilliant opportunities.”⁷⁸

Later in early January 1915, Theodore Roosevelt observed in reference to the Philippines: “No great civilized power has ever managed with such wisdom and disinterestedness the affairs of a people committed by the accident of war to its hands.”⁷⁹

Regardless of whether these rationalizations seem convincing or not, they indicate that the constitutionality of wars and even the conquest of territory had to be justified by Washington policymakers during the 19th and early 20th centuries or else the voting American public would not support them. Even when the cleverest rationalizations were developed, however, there was no guarantee of success. Soon after the War of 1898, Secretary of State Hay made the revealing statement that he “did not believe another important treaty would ever pass the Senate” and that “the man who makes the Treaty of Peace with Spain will be lucky if he escapes a lynching.” In fact, President McKinley’s efforts to steer the Treaty through the Senate – and thereby insure the acquisition of Puerto Rico, Guam, and Philippines – only garnered the two-thirds majority required for ratification with only one vote to spare.⁸⁰

By the 1920s, anti-war public opinion, fueled by an overwhelming disgust with the carnage of the First World War, made territorial expansion virtually impossible to justify. Under

⁷⁸ “Bankers of Manhattan at the Banquet Table,” *NYT*, 7 February 1900, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10A17FD3F5911738DDDAE0894DA405B808CF1D3>

⁷⁹ “No Filipino State for 30 Years – Taft,” *NYT*, 3 January 1915, p. 15.

⁸⁰ James Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Baltimore, MD: the Johns Hopkins UP, 1994), 15.

these circumstances, the executive branch employed extraterritorial means (borrowing from Britain's techno-political model of naval stations, but updating it for modern times with airfields) to protect vital interests that lay outside of the American territorial empire.⁸¹ As will become apparent by the end of this chapter, the Herbert Hoover (1929-33) and Franklin Roosevelt administrations (1933-45) used American airline Pan Am to create multinational air networks that could be adapted for military use in an emergency. These Pan Am airfields, located in Latin America and the Pacific, were among the first foundations of the United States' extraterritorial empire.⁸² Yet the full import of the American extraterritorial empire's expansion cannot be appreciated without understanding the U.S. government's motivations for embracing airpower.

The U.S. government's Rationale for Embracing Airpower

Beginning in the 1920s, an important development took place inside the United States that had tremendous implications for the future of American imperialism: the executive branch started to recognize the efficacy of airpower in military operations. The conventional wisdom up to the early 1920s was that only the U.S. Navy and the Army were capable of protecting the American empire and anyone suggesting otherwise was a crackpot. Yet following the First World War, the armed services, the War, Commerce and State Departments and even the President started to awaken to the possibilities of military aviation for national defense and modern warfare. At the same time, they faced the challenge of how to invest in the development of this fantastic technology in a pacifist climate (which resulted from widespread disillusionment with the First World War) that was hostile to government spending on all military branches,

⁸¹ Ruth Oldenziel, "Islands: The United States as a Networked Empire," 15.

⁸² H. Case Willcox, "Air Transportation in Latin America," *Geographical Review* 20, No. 4 (October 1930): 588-89, 602.

including aviation. These departments also faced the dilemma of how to develop military aviation, when the other military branches (ground forces and Navy) demanded a larger share of the austere military budgets passed by Congress. In other words, U.S. aviation policy was shaped by two dynamics. The first dynamic was the tensions between the executive branch, which wanted to spend more on the military, and an isolationist Congress, which believed the government should be spending less. The second dynamic was the inter-service rivalry between the military branches for a greater share of the military appropriations passed by Congress.⁸³

Before the executive branch's strategy for developing military aviation in the 1920s can be discussed, it is important to emphasize that most of the executive branch's thinking on aviation was undergoing a transition. Contrary to what many Air Force historians have claimed, most of the executive branch was not entirely dismissive of aviation in the 1920s, but wanted to see more evidence that this new and largely untried technology could realize its potential.⁸⁴

At the end of the First World War, war planes were made out of wood, fabric and wire, vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire, inept at bombing targets and very expensive to build. Under these circumstances, the War Department prudently decided to study military aviation before deciding whether to invest in it and to what extent. In 1919, General John Pershing appointed General Joseph Dickman to report on military aviation. The Dickman board concluded that the Navy and infantry were the military's backbone, but conceded that its assessment might change if aviation technology made greater strides in the future. At around the same time, War Secretary Norman

⁸³ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, xvii-xviii.

⁸⁴ Rondal Rice's *The Politics of Air Power* posits the thesis that the War and Navy Department was beholden to a "service culture" (that prioritized discipline and obedience) which made them resisted to new technologies, such as the airplane. The War and Navy Departments only tolerated military aviation after the U.S. Air Service (precursor to the U.S. Air Force) resorted to compromise in order to gain more appropriations and autonomy. Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, xix, xvii-xxi, 26, 28-30, 36, 59, 74-75; Ashbrook Lincoln, "The United States and the Rise of the Doctrine of Air Power" *Military Affairs* 15, No. 3 (Autumn 1951): 145-156.

Baker appointed his Assistant Secretary Benedict Cromwell to head the American Aircraft Commission to report on aviation in Italy, France and Britain. Impressed by the aviation technology of those countries, the Commission endorsed a separate department for aeronautics in its July 19, 1919 report. But Baker thought the Commission had “gone too far in suggesting a single centralized air service.”⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the War Department was sufficiently impressed by the findings in these studies to continue investing in research and development (R&D) in aviation technology so that war planes might someday fly higher, faster and longer and hit military targets with greater accuracy.⁸⁶

In 1921, the executive branch’s thinking on military aviation changed dramatically, largely as a result of one factor. Assistant Secretary of the Air Service (forerunner to the U.S. Air Force) Billy Mitchell irritated the admirals and naval experts with his claim that war planes could sink a battleship. The Navy Department decided to call Mitchell’s bluff by holding several aerial bombing tests which proved to the executive branch that military aviation was potentially one of the deadliest weapons.⁸⁷

The most spectacular of these aerial bombing tests happened in June-July 1921 when the Martin bombers of Mitchell’s first Provisional Air Brigade dropped 2000 lb bombs on the captured German dreadnought *Ostfriesland* and, to the astonishment of the admirals, sent the warship to the bottom of the sea.⁸⁸ Admittedly Mitchell achieved this feat partly by cheating. The *Ostfriesland* was anchored in Chesapeake Bay and therefore an easy target for planes and

⁸⁵James Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps: Army Policy toward Aviation, 1919-1941* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air University Press, 1998), 5-7, 9.

⁸⁶James Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps: Army Policy toward Aviation, 1919-1941* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air University Press, 1998), 7; Brock to Foulois, 26 August 1937, NARA 2, RG 342, Entry P26, “Sarah Clark” Correspondence Files, Box 767.

⁸⁷James Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps: Army Policy toward Aviation, 1919-1941* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air University Press, 1998), 15.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 16.

warships alike. Furthermore, the Martin bombers flew at unrealistically low levels to obtain a direct hit on the *Ostfriesland*.⁸⁹ These unrealistic conditions in this latest bombing test were recorded in the Joint Army and Navy Board's Official Report of August 20, 1921. Nevertheless, the Martin bomber clearly sank a battleship, a feat which most naval experts hitherto thought was impossible.⁹⁰

After the lessons of the aerial bombing tests, the Navy Department started equipping the U.S. Navy with aircraft carriers and improved the design of its battleships.⁹¹ The Warren Harding administration (1921-23) added the limitation of aerial armaments to the agenda of the Washington Conference (1921-22), which initially only dealt with limiting the size of navies.⁹² Yet Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, who headed the U.S. delegation at the Washington Conference, was clearly impressed with the technological strides made by military aviation. On January 9, 1922, he told the British, French, Italian and Japanese delegations that, "They knew full well that in aircraft there was probably the most formidable military weapon of the future."⁹³

Unfortunately, the delegations could not reach an agreement on limiting aerial armaments at the Washington Conference and the Geneva Conference (1932) after that.⁹⁴ The reason for this failure was that all the delegations discovered that limiting aerial armaments was not possible

⁸⁹ I.B. Holley, Jr., "Review," *The Journal of Military History* 64, No. 1 (January 2000): 227.

⁹⁰ Ashbrook Lincoln, "The United States and the Rise of the Doctrine of Air Power," *Military Affairs* 15, No. 3 (Autumn 1951): 148-149, 153.

⁹¹ James Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps: Army Policy toward Aviation, 1919-1941* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air University Press, 1998), 17.

⁹² Clifford Albion Tinker, "Aeronautical Diplomacy," *The North American Review* 219, No. 820 (March 1924): 336-339; Ernest Andrade, Jr. "The Cruiser Controversy in Naval Limitations Negotiations, 1922-1936" *Military Affairs* 48, No. 3 (July 1984): 113-120; Kathleen Burk, "The Lineaments of Foreign Policy: The United States and a 'New World Order,' 1919-39," *Journal of American Studies* 26, No. 3 (December 1992): 377-91.

⁹³ "Text of the Conference Discussion on Aircraft," *The New York Times*, January 10, 1922, 3; "Conference Report Text," *The New York Times*, January 28, 1922, 2.

⁹⁴ Michael Sherry, *The Rise of American Airpower*, 33.

without also restraining the growth and development of commercial aviation, which in Hughes' words, amounted to "a ban upon progress."⁹⁵

Commercial Aviation: A Guise for Military Aviation

The loophole that prevented an international agreement on limiting aerial armaments also helped U.S. military aviation survive the pacifist climate. Air force historians have characterized the 1920s as a lost decade for American airpower.⁹⁶ Yet this view overestimates the strength of the popular constraints on U.S. aviation policy and it underestimates the executive branch's ingenuity in circumventing Congress by promoting military aviation in the guise of commercial aviation. The White House, most of the government departments, and the armed services (who, by now, were solidly behind military aviation) recognized that investments in commercial aviation indirectly benefitted the U.S. Air Service and naval aviation. Commercial airfields could be converted to military air bases; American airlines provided employment and training for army

⁹⁵ "Text of the Conference Discussion on Aircraft," *NYT*, 10 January 1922, 3.

⁹⁶ Rondall Rice's *The Politics of Airpower* and Herbert Mason's *The United States Air Force* both paint a gloomy picture of military aviation's development in the 1920s. In Rice's account, the U.S. Air Service was a low-level division in the War Department with no civilian representation at the cabinet level until mid-1926. In July 2, 1926, Congress passed the Air Corps Act, creating the post of Secretary of War for Air, renaming the Air Service the Air Corps, and endorsing a five-year expansion plan for military aviation. Yet the five-year expansion program for the Air Corps only began in 1928 and was cut short by the Great Depression a year later. In Mason's account, army pilots often left the Air Corps for employment in one of the airlines in the United States, lured by high salaries and quick promotion. The main flaw in both accounts was that only the source material for the Air Service/Air Corps was studied and little attention was paid to the growing government investments in commercial aviation, which benefitted military aviation indirectly. See Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 55, 74-75; Herbert Mason, *The United States Air Force: A Turbulent History* (New York: Mason/Charter, 1976), 106.

pilots and created a reservoir of aviation talent for the armed services to draw upon in time of war; and commercial planes could be turned into bombers.⁹⁷

Furthermore, this aviation strategy had several political advantages. To begin with, the aviation strategy did not offend the military branches because none of the appropriations devoted to commercial aviation affected their funding. Instead the Commerce Department footed the bill. Congress and the American people could not complain either, because the Commerce Department's investments in the domestic airways system served the legitimate purpose of promoting commerce.⁹⁸

Thus, in the 1920s, the executive branch gradually persuaded Congress to invest in the development of a commercial airways system in the United States, realizing it could be converted into military use in time of war. As early as January 9, 1922 Secretary of State Hughes conceded to the other delegations at the Washington Conference that:

They also knew, even if they prohibited all aircraft for military purposes and allowed the development of the art to meet the requirements of civil life, that in time of war the bases of that development would be immediately available and within a short time provisions would be made amply for any possible military uses.⁹⁹

In 1925, Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover justified his plan for building commercial airfields to Coolidge on grounds that, "The foundation for military aviation was a strong commercial service with all its collaterals."¹⁰⁰ These collaterals included airfields. Later in 1929, an Annual

⁹⁷ Edward Warner, "Aerial Armament and Disarmament," *Foreign Affairs* 4, No. 4 (July 1926): 628, 631-32; Cabell to Patrick, 12 May 1926, NARA 2, RG 18, CDF 1917-38, Entry 166, Box 11.

⁹⁸ Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency 1920-1933* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), 133-134; Wesley Newton, "Aviation Rivalry in Latin America, 1919-1927," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 7, No. 3 (July 1965): 355.

⁹⁹ "Text of the Conference Discussion on Aircraft," *NYT*, 10 January 1922, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 132.

Report to War Secretary James Goods stated, “The establishment by commercial aviation of airways, airdromes, communications systems and meteorological systems, and the general supply and repair facilities distributed throughout the country, will enable military aviation to be moved with great rapidity to any part of the country...”¹⁰¹

The military rationale for a national airways system, furthermore, was one of the most important factors influencing the Air Service and later the Commerce Department to develop airmail routes throughout the United States. Since the First World War, the U.S. Air Service developed two commercial air routes from New York to Washington D.C. (May 1918)¹⁰² and the “Model Airway” from Bolling Field, Washington D.C. to McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio (1922) before turning them over to the private sector.¹⁰³

However, the greatest expansion of the airways system occurred thanks to the labors of Hoover and his Commerce Department. In late 1925, Hoover convinced the Morrow Board (which studied commercial and military aviation) to insert a recommendation stipulating that the government provide the same services to American airlines (i.e., building airports and awarding airmail contracts) that were given to shipping companies. After Congress passed the Morrow Board’s recommendations on May 20, 1926, Hoover recounted in his memoirs, “We began building airways with radio beacons, lights, emergency landing fields and weather services.” As a result of the Commerce Department’s labors, the United States increased the mileage of its air routes from 3369 (1926) to 25,000 (1929).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ “A Survey of Commercial Aviation in the United States with regard to disarmament and its potentialities in Case of War,” 7 December 1931, Benjamin Delahauf Foulois Papers, Box 19, Library of Congress.

¹⁰² Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky*, 18.

¹⁰³ R.E.G. Davies, *Airlines of the United States since 1914*, 12-13.

¹⁰⁴ Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 133-134.

At the same time, the executive branch coped with austere military budgets by outsourcing the employment and training of Army pilots to the American airlines. The executive's hope was that the American airlines were going to create a reserve of aviation talent that could be exploited in wartime. On September 15, 1919, Captain Laurence Miller explained to Billy Mitchell that the U.S. government should promote civil aviation partly "to find careers for trained military personnel."¹⁰⁵ Later on February 12, 1925, the Manager of the Transportation and Communication Department A.B. Barber argued that Congress should enact "legislation for the permanent establishment of an adequate air mail service between the larger cities of the country" partly because airmail furnishes "a reserve [of pilots] for the national defense."¹⁰⁶

The Scadta Airline: Catalyst for the American "Air Empire"

By the mid-1920s, the U.S. government was already building an extensive airways system in the United States to fortify its airspace. Yet paradoxically the airspace over the Caribbean remained unprotected as late as 1927. The main reason for the delay¹⁰⁷ was the perceived absence of an aerial threat. Airplanes had an average cruising range of 300 miles in 1928, which

¹⁰⁵ Laurence Miller to Mitchell, 15 September 1919, William Mitchell Papers, Box 36, Library of Congress.

¹⁰⁶ A.B. Barber, "Aeronautical Progress," 12 February 1925, William Mitchell Papers, Box 36, Library of Congress; Wesley Newton, "International Aviation Rivalry in Latin America, 1919-1927," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 7, No. 3 (July 1965): 346.

¹⁰⁷ Air Force historians have emphasized President Calvin Coolidge's preference for austere military budgets and his low opinion of airpower and the temporary deterioration of relations between the U.S. Air Service and the other military branches as factors as well. However, neither explanation seems to have had a decisive impact on the fortunes of airpower. Instead of his apparently low opinion of airpower, President Coolidge agreed to a new aviation policy which made Pan American Airways the "chosen instrument" for adding another layer of security in the air for U.S. interests in the Caribbean-Central America region. Moreover, for all inter-service rivalries within presidential administrations, the fact remained that most of the executive branch valued airpower as an important auxiliary in military operations. See Herbert Mason, *The United States Air Force: A Turbulent History*, 74-77; Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, xvii, xxi, 74.

meant that none of the great powers could send bombers across the Atlantic or Pacific.¹⁰⁸ The other possibility was that a foreign airline could establish a profitable air service in the Caribbean-Central America region and become a threat to U.S. interests in 20-30 years, since commercial planes could be turned into bombers.¹⁰⁹ However, most administration officials believed that an airline could not operate at a profit in the Caribbean-Central America region, which meant that such a threat was unlikely to materialize. As Commerce Secretary Hoover explained in 1924, “Foreign companies should be allowed to pioneer services in Central America so that U.S. concerns might benefit from their experience when the foreigners failed.”¹¹⁰

As a result, the executive and Congress decided to sink back into relative isolation and enjoy the “peace dividend” that came after the First World War. The American economy boomed and the U.S. government reduced the national debt from \$25.9 billion (1920) to \$16.2 billion (1930) at the expense of the armed services.¹¹¹

In April 1925, however, the managing director of *Sociedad Colombo-Alemana de Transportes Aereos* (Scadta) Dr. Peter Paul von Bauer visited the United States to obtain government and private funding for an air service from Barranquilla, Colombia to Key West, Florida. The significance of Von Bauer’s visit was two-fold. First, Scadta was founded in Colombia in 1919 by ex-officers of the Austrian and German armies and employed Germans as pilots.¹¹² Secondly the War, Navy, Commerce and State Departments had a preconceived idea

¹⁰⁸ Edward Warner, “Atlantic Airways,” *Foreign Affairs* 16, No. 3 (April 1938): 474-475.

¹⁰⁹ Lassiter to Tebbetts, 5 June 1925, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Box 4, Library of Congress.

¹¹⁰ Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky: US Aviation Diplomacy and Latin America, 1919-1931*, 43-44, 55-57.

¹¹¹ U.S. Treasury Department, http://www.treasurydirect.gov/govt/reports/pd/histdebt/histdebt_histo3.htm; Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, xvii, 74.

¹¹² Melvin Hall and Walter Peck, “Wings for the Trojan Horse,” *Foreign Affairs* 19, No. 2 (January 1941): 363.

(alluded to earlier) that a European airline entrenched in the Caribbean-Central America region would pose a potential threat to U.S. interests in the long run. Von Bauer probably expected the executive branch to regard his proposed air service as a mutually beneficial business proposition, but instead he inadvertently alerted administration officials to the possibility that a European airline could threaten U.S. strategic interests.¹¹³¹¹⁴

What Von Bauer failed to understand until it was too late was that the Coolidge administration did not want a foreign airline to establish itself in the Caribbean-Central America region. Admittedly, most administration officials did not object to Von Bauer's proposed survey of the Barranquilla-Key West air route.¹¹⁵ But they probably expected Scadta's survey flights to be unsuccessful, and thereby discourage Von Bauer from conducting an air service to Key West, Florida. On November 19, 1924, after all, the War, Navy and State Departments learned from Post Office specialists Vincent Burke and Joseph Magee (who surveyed the New Orleans-Panama Canal route) that an air service in the Caribbean and Central America could not possibly operate at a profit.¹¹⁶

The success of Scadta's survey flights, however, persuaded the Coolidge administration to change its aviation policy. The development of new aviation policy for international airspace resulted from two initiatives: the founding of Pan American Airways (Pan Am) and the development of a new government policy to support that airline. To begin with, the main reason

¹¹³ Wesley Newton, "Aviation Rivalry in Latin America, 1919-1927," 351; Arnold to Colonel Margotts, 1 April 1925, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Box 4, Library of Congress.

¹¹⁴ It is important to stress that Scadta was not owned by the German government. Yet Scadta's Austrian and German composition suggested (to Washington policymakers) that the German government might establish ties with this airline and use them for military purposes to the detriment of U.S. interests in the Caribbean.

¹¹⁵ Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky*, 65.

¹¹⁶ Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky*, 43-44, 55-57; Wesley Newton, "International Aviation Rivalry in Latin America, 1919-1927," 353.

why Pan Am was founded in March 1927 was to ensure that the airspace over the Caribbean-Central America region stayed in American hands. Significantly Pan Am was founded by military men more concerned with the military implications of controlling airspace than with profit. Major Henry “Hap” Arnold, who was instrumental in setting up Pan Am and almost became the airline’s president, was head of the Information Division of the U.S. Air Service. Another founder Major Carl Spaatz served in the office of Chief of the U.S. Air Service. John Montgomery (“Monty”), who obtained the first air rights for Pan Am, was an ex-Navy officer and Major Jack Jouett served in the U.S. Air Service as well.¹¹⁷ The military background of Pan Am’s founders was important because it influenced their motivations. Arnold’s primary motive for founding Pan Am, for instance, was to deny the airspace over the Caribbean-Central America region to the German-Colombian airline Scadta.¹¹⁸

Over the next few months, Arnold and his business partners used their political connections and business savvy to transform their paper airline into reality. On June 18, Monty closed “a contract with the Cuban Post Office Department [in May] for the [air] service [between] Havana and Key West” and obtained leases to landing fields in Havana and Key West. Monty also assured Arnold that “we stand in good and strong with the [U.S.] Post Office Department here and think we will be favored as much as possible in the award.” The award, which Monty alluded to, came on July 18 when Pan Am received a government contract to fly

¹¹⁷ Montgomery to Arnold, 18 June 1927, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Box 4, Library of Congress; Montgomery to Arnold, 19 July 1927, Ibid.; Kenneth Gaulin, “The Flying Boats: Pioneering Days to South America,” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 15 (Winter-Spring 1990): 91-92.

¹¹⁸ Henry H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York: Arno Press, 1949), 115-16.

the mail from Key West to Havana. These successes culminated in Pan Am's maiden flight from Dinner Key, Miami to Havana on October 19, 1927.¹¹⁹

At the same time Pan Am was being established, the Coolidge administration formulated a new aviation policy. On August 14, 1927, War Secretary Dwight Davis advised Secretary of State Frank Kellogg, "It would appear to be highly desirable to formulate a national policy in regard to American dominance of aerial commercial and postal activities in Central America, and to determine ways and means by which this policy could be made effective."¹²⁰ On November 23, a meeting to formulate a national policy along the lines indicated by Davis was held. Chaired by Assistant Secretary of State Francis White, the Interdepartmental Aviation Committee recommended that the U.S. government do three things to help Pan Am extend its air routes to South America. The first was to ask Congress for additional appropriations for the Post Office over ten years until Pan Am was well established in Latin America and could cope with a lower subsidy. Next the Committee wanted legislation that allowed the Postmaster General to extend foreign mail contracts to Pan Am. Then the Committee laid out two air routes (based on Scadta's aerial survey) for Pan Am to follow. The first route went along Havana, Yucatan, the Canal Zone and the west coast of South America. The second was from Key West to Venezuela via Trinidad. On November 29, Coolidge approved the Conference's resolutions and instructed Assistant Secretary of Commerce William MacCracken to meet with the Post Office to prepare the

¹¹⁹ Montgomery to Arnold, 18 June 1927, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Box 4, Library of Congress; Montgomery to Arnold, 19 July 1927, *Ibid.*; Kenneth Gaulin, "The Flying Boats," 91-92.

¹²⁰ Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky*, 116.

necessary legislation.¹²¹ Later on March 2, 1928, Congress passed the Foreign Air Mail Act that made the above resolutions law.¹²²

Meanwhile, a reshuffle occurred at Pan Am's New York headquarters in October 1927 that made Juan Trippe president of the airline. The most important thing about this power struggle was that it did not change Pan Am's relationship with the U.S. government. Arnold may have left Pan Am to focus on his career in the U.S. Air Corps. The power struggle drove many of Arnold's partners, like Monty and Richard Bevier, out of the airline.¹²³ Yet the Coolidge administration continued to regard Pan Am as the "chosen instrument" of its new aviation policy. A month after the November 23 meeting, the U.S. government met with Pan Am executives to discuss their company's corporate strategy. Francis White (who chaired the Interdepartmental Aviation Committee), Pan Am Vice President John Hambleton and others at that meeting agreed that Pan Am should extend its air routes to South America and eliminate Scadta.¹²⁴

The Expansion of Pan American Airways (1927-33)

Over the next few years, the Coolidge and Hoover administrations played a pivotal behind the scenes role in extending Pan Am's tentacles to most of Latin America. The resulting Pan American Airways system – with airfields in Central America, Cuba, Jamaica, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Ecuador as of 1932¹²⁵ – was not only a

¹²¹ Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky*, 121; Wesley Newton, "International Aviation Rivalry in Latin America, 1919-1927," 356.

¹²² Stephen Randall, "Colombia, the United States and Interamerican Aviation Rivalry, 1927-1940," 306.

¹²³ Ronald Jackson, *China Clipper*, 49-50.

¹²⁴ Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky*, 134.

¹²⁵ H. Case Willcox, "Air Transportation in Latin America," 588-89, 602.

symbol of American commercial dominance in most of Latin America, but it was also the structural foundations for the United States' extraterritorial empire.

The main reason for Pan Am's remarkable expansion¹²⁶ over such a short time period was government support in the form of airmail subsidies and diplomatic assistance. The U.S. Post Office Department subsidized the creation of the Pan American Airways System to the tune of \$22 million in airmail subsidies between 1928 and 1934, compared to \$15 million supplied by private shareholders over the same time period.¹²⁷

On the diplomatic side, the U.S. government operated on two tracks to help Pan Am establish new air routes and overwhelm the competition. On November 19, 1928, President-elect Hoover toured Latin America to promote the Good Neighbor Policy, a new diplomatic strategic to improve the United States' image among Latin Americans, and to prepare the diplomatic groundwork for the expansion of Pan Am's air routes into South America. As Hoover later explained in his memoirs, "I have already recorded my discussions on aviation with South American officials during my journey to those countries when President-elect. These conversations furnished the foundation for the establishment of Pan American Airways."¹²⁸

In addition to President-elect Hoover's tour, the State Department also played an active role in assisting Pan Am's expansion efforts. In early 1928, the State Department reached an agreement with Enrique Olaya Herrera of the Colombian delegation, embodied in Article 30, to

¹²⁶ One of the reasons, which was important but not decisive, was Pan Am's shrewd business practices. For every air route where Pan Am operated a service, Trippe tied up "municipalities, railroads, steamship lines, hotels, government, anything that will be required to operate a regular and efficient air service" in options and contracts. In other words, Trippe acquired franchises to ensure that no other airline competed with Pan Am for the same international air routes, except at a "fatal disadvantage." See "Pan American Airways," *Fortune* 13, No. 4 (April 1936): 159.

¹²⁷ Trippe to Secretary of Commerce Daniel Roper, 6 March 1934, Collection 341, Box 220, Folder 13, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

¹²⁸ Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 135, 245

bar any non-American airline from operating an air service in the Caribbean-Central America region. As a result, the region north of South America was left to Pan Am. Later in July 1928 Postmaster General Harry New granted an airmail contract to Pan Am to fly from Key West to the Panama Canal.¹²⁹

Then the Coolidge administration helped Pan Am expand into South America. After extending *de jure* recognition to Ecuadorian dictator Isidro Ayora on August 14, 1928, the U.S. government paved the way for Pan Am's expansion into Ecuador. On February 23, 1929, Secretary of State Kellogg and Olaya Herrera signed an agreement allowing Pan Am to fly over the Canal Zone and Colombia. Then on March 2, the Post Office awarded Pan Am an airmail contract to fly between Panama and Chile.¹³⁰

Besieged by Pan Am's expansionist efforts, the Scadta airline replied with sorties of its own that ultimately failed. Scadta's boldest countermove was gaining Panama's permission for a temporary base at Porto Bello for its hydroplanes to survey the Colombo-Panamanian frontier. War Secretary Davis protested to Secretary of State Kellogg, "The establishment of this base at Porto Bello is objectionable and should be prevented." Eventually the State Department prevented an airfield in Porto Bello from being built by negotiating an arrangement with Panama (spring 1929) that established a Joint Aviation Board (with three Americans and three Panamanians) to control the movement of aircraft and all the airfields in Panama.¹³¹

As a result of Pan Am's successes, Scadta hemorrhaged cash and eventually capitulated. In November 1929 Juan Trippe precipitated a showdown with Von Bauer by sending a representative to Bogota to buy out Scadta or acquire an airmail contract from the Colombian

¹²⁹ Stephen Randall, "Colombia, the United States and Interamerican Aviation Rivalry, 1927-1940," 304-06.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 307, 309-10.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 307-08.

government. This marked the beginning of Pan Am's purchase of Scadta's shares until it owned 84% of the Colombia-based airline by 1931.¹³²

Elsewhere the meteoric rise of Pan Am was more straightforward. Trippe and his airline quickly established air routes to Puerto Rico and Mexico.¹³³ In 1931, Pan Am merged with the New York, Rio and Buenos Airways airline (NYRBA), led by Ralph O'Neill, and in the process obtained air routes to Brazil and Argentina.¹³⁴

The New American Empire

The culmination of more than a decade of U.S. aviation policy was that the United States' extraterritorial empire, based upon the British techno-political model of naval stations and later airfields, now had an important commercial dimension extending as far south as Argentina. This type of empire was not unique to the United States, since the British had also constructed commercial airfields in their colonies in order to integrate and better manage their empire.¹³⁵

The establishment of these Pan Am airfields throughout Latin America coincided with the adoption of the Good Neighbor Policy and both served the same purpose – to carry out a “strategic spatial project” aimed at reducing the Western Hemisphere down to the metaphorical scale of the neighborhood so that Latin America in particular would become easier to control. With fast moving communications facilitated by air travel along the Pan American Airways

¹³² Ibid., 313.

¹³³ Kenneth Gaulin, “The Flying Boats,” 93.

¹³⁴ William E. Brown, “Pan Am: Miami's Wings to the World,” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 23 (1998): 146.

¹³⁵ H. Case Willcox, “Air Transportation in Latin America,” 588-89, 602; Gordon Pirie, *Air Empire*, 1.

System, the United States could deploy military power much faster than if it had to rely on ocean-going ships and naval stations alone or no transportation facilities whatsoever.¹³⁶

Moreover, American aircraft were carriers of cultural imperialism. U.S. aircraft defined meaning systems for Dominicans and other Latin American nationalities that encountered them and, in doing so, helped to consolidate U.S. dominance over the Caribbean basin. The Pan American Goodwill flight (1926-27), the Buenos Aires and Bogota Goodwill Flights (1937), and the Brazil Goodwill flight (1939) were meant to convey American hegemony over Latin America, as evidenced by the absence of Latin Americans on these flights.¹³⁷

The expansion of Pan Am's air routes and metaphorically shrinking the size of Latin America to the scale of the "neighborhood" both pointed in the direction of the reinvention of American imperialism based upon the experience that the British were going through with their empire. Britain hoped that new technologies would compensate for the growing deficiencies in its military strength. The U.S. government similarly hoped that a combination of old and new technologies would allowed the United States to access, control, and define the terms of entry into vast open spaces, like the Caribbean, while at the same time downsizing its military establishment to appease anti-imperialist critics at home. This was why the Herbert Hoover and the Franklin Roosevelt administrations abandoned most of the United States' informal colonies while retaining and even expanding upon those crucial infrastructural technologies – naval bases in Guantanamo (Cuba), the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, the Panama Canal, and the Pan Am airfields – that allowed U.S. armed forces to project themselves almost anywhere in Latin America in defense of vital strategic and economic interests. Admittedly the United States did

¹³⁶ Amy Spellacy, "Mapping the Metaphor of the Good Neighbor," 39-42.

¹³⁷ Eric Roorda, "The Cult of the Airplane," 285.

hold onto a fair number of formal colonies in the Pacific and the Caribbean, but the rest of the American empire was changing fast and becoming extraterritorial rather than territorial.¹³⁸

The extent of American imperial dominance can be surmised from Pan Am's corporate archives. One Pan Am report dated March 1931 pointed out that that the U.S. government aided the expansion of the Pan American Airways System in order to provide a faster line of communications for the U.S. Air Corps in a wartime emergency:

The communications established between the United States and the Canal Zone by the three lines operated in between by ACA [Aviation Corporation of the Americas, Pan Am's holding company] would also be of the very greatest use in case of hostilities. I believe that this consideration has been a very important one in the attitude of the administration toward the development of airways to the south and toward ACA in particular.¹³⁹

Moreover, the U.S. Air Corps frequently used Pan Am air routes and acknowledged their utility in national defense to other Pan Am officials. Pan Am executive Lyman Peck explained to Pan Am executive Robert Thach on February 1, 1932, "The Air Services of the United States have repeatedly used the airways of Pan American in this territory. The officers of those services have spoken in the highest praise of the organization and equipment on these airways and as to

¹³⁸ *The Bases of Empire*, ed. Catherine Lutz, 11; Julie Greene, "Spaniards on the Silver Roll: Labour Troubles and Liminality in the Panama Canal Zone, 1904-1914," *International Labour and Working Class History*, No. 66 (Fall 2004): 78. "Aviation Corporation of the Americas, Holding Company of the 'Pan American' System and Aviation in Latin America," March 1931, Accession 1, Collection 341, Box 25, Folder 9, PAA Archives, University of Miami; Benjamin Welles, *Sumner Welles: FDR's Global Strategist* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 193; Joseph Smith, *The United States and Latin America*, 92; George Tindall and David Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 816; Michael Mann, "American Empires: Past and Present," *Canadian Review of Sociology* 45, no. 1 (February 2008): 21.

¹³⁹ "Aviation Corporation of the Americas, Holding Company of the 'Pan American' System and Aviation in Latin America," March 1931, Accession I, Collection 341, Box 25, Folder 9, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

their value to the national defense of this country.”¹⁴⁰ The flights alluded to in Mr. Peck’s letter were only the beginning. On February 6, 1937, the U.S. Air Corps launched the first mass flight of land planes, involving nine B-10 bombers, from Miami to Albrook field in the Panama Canal Zone.¹⁴¹ Later in November 1939, the U.S. Air Corps conducted another survey flight to Brazil in preparation for converting Pan Am airfields in that country for military use as part of Western Hemisphere Defense.¹⁴²

The U.S. government’s proprietary interest in Pan Am’s air routes was also evident in Lieutenant Colonel Robert Olds’s report (December 1939) on the viability of the Pan American Airways System for Western Hemisphere Defense:

The economic and military value of the Panagra-Pan American Airways System to the United States in its broad concept of hemispherical defense cannot be overestimated.... The concentration... of Air Force units from North America into South America will depend solely under existing circumstances upon the full utilization of Pan American facilities.... Whether in the form of a government subsidy or in the form of direct installations on a rental basis, it is mandatory that certain existing facilities of the Pan American System be augmented along the east coast of South America to insure the rapid concentration of American Air Forces in the defense of the critical Natal area.¹⁴³

In summation, the Pan American Airways System constituted the commercial dimension of the American extraterritorial empire and it set a precedent for how the United States surreptitiously extended its military presence to those areas where it had perceived national security interests. The purpose of the next chapter is to explore the origins of the United States’ transition from a regionally-based extraterritorial empire to a global one.

¹⁴⁰ Peck to Thach, 1 February 1932, Accession II, Collection 341, Box 231, Folder 18, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

¹⁴¹ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 87.

¹⁴² Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 250.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 250.

**Chapter 2 Context for the South Atlantic Air Route:
National Security Threats in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Era (1933-45)**

The existing scholarship overall has posited that the Franklin Roosevelt administration labored under a cloud of isolation that prevented any substantial U.S. foreign policy measures from being taken against Japan, Germany, and Italy when they emerged as serious threats to the international order. Moreover, it is held, the Franklin Roosevelt administration only took action in response to a perceived fear (which turned out to be groundless) that the Axis powers were going to invade the Western Hemisphere over the next few years and endanger the sovereignty of the United States. By implication the expansion of U.S. air routes across the world was defensive in intent and the resulting transformation of the United States into a global empire occurred accidentally.¹

This above interpretation seems logical enough; but upon closer examination, it has two major flaws. To begin with, the Franklin Roosevelt administration knew from U.S. intelligence reports that the Axis powers were capable of inflicting considerable damage upon their neighbors, but that they lacked the raw materials to survive a protracted war or launch a credible transatlantic invasion of the Western Hemisphere.² Furthermore, most historians neglect to situate the Franklin Roosevelt administration's view of national security in its wider context. The First World War changed the way Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors thought about national security. They believed that the 20th century's first global conflict proved that the United States' national security interests were global and dependent upon international security. The United

¹ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*; Arnold A. Offner, *American appeasement*; Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge UP), 239; Wayne Cole, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Isolationists, 1932-1945*. Lincoln: Nebraska Press, 1983.

² Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001), 7-8.

States could no longer count on overseas markets (which were becoming increasingly important to its economic security and therefore its national security) to remain open to American commerce in a global order that was susceptible to breaking down. The United States also could not rely on the European powers to ensure world peace through diplomacy. Therefore, Franklin Roosevelt and other Democrats concluded that they had to establish a new world order, in which the United States played a leading role, to keep U.S. national security interests safe.³

The Franklin Roosevelt administration's perspective on national security influenced how it perceived the Axis threat. Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors realized that the Axis powers could not invade the Western Hemisphere at least for the next few years. But they believed that the Axis powers posed an immediate threat to the United States' national security interests overseas. Japan was striving to forge a new order in East Asia while Germany and Italy were building their regional order in Europe. If these Axis powers were successful, they could shut the European and Far Eastern markets to American commerce and investment and undermine the United States' economic security. The Axis threat also had a military dimension. The Franklin Roosevelt administration feared that Germany and Japan could eventually become formidable military powers in the long run if they remained dominant in Europe and Asia. As a result, a

³ Ross Kennedy, "Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and an American Conception of National Security," *Diplomatic History* 25, No. 1 (Winter 2001): 2-3, 8-10. President Wilson declared in several public speeches in 1916-17 that the balance of power system posed a danger to the United States. Specifically the balance of power had a negative impact upon the American economy and American ethnic groups (with ties to the rival nations in Europe), but it also threatened American transatlantic shipping. See also Thomas Knock, *To End all Wars*, viii-ix; *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C.*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 1095; Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order*, 2; G. John Ikenberry, "American Imperial Ambition," *Foreign Affairs* 82, No. 5 (September/October 2002), 46-47; Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 124-125.

multi-polar world would emerge that could potentially draw the United States into protracted and costly wars.⁴

The Franklin Roosevelt administration's plan for a "new world order" was the logical outcome of its perspective on national security. Implicit in the Franklin Roosevelt administration's thinking on national security was the assumption that diplomacy with nations, who were not amenable to U.S. interests, would not succeed. Therefore, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors concluded that only American global primacy could protect U.S. national security interests. Franklin Roosevelt called his plan for achieving American global dominance a "new world order," but other State Department officials like Under Secretary Welles called it an "American-led World Order." As Christopher O' Sullivan observed in his monograph *Welles, postwar planning, and the quest for a new world order, 1937-1943* (2008):

In the autumn of 1939, with the war in Europe only in its first few weeks, Welles already had his mind focused on planning the peace that would one day follow. Soon after the outbreak of war in Europe he endeavored to promote some means of a peaceful resolution of the war without violating the provisions of the various neutrality acts which bound the U.S. He also moved to the forefront of the administration in expressing his belief in the war's potential to bring about a new American-led global order.⁵

Harley Notter, intimately involved in postwar planning, also explained:

[Our postwar foreign policy] preparation spanned the years from the beginning of the Second World War in 1939 until the United Nations Conference on International Organization had convened at San Francisco in 1945... It was an effort, first, to determine, during the emergency of war, sound bases for future United States foreign policy designed to safeguard and advance our vital national interests as a great power. This determination involved searching analysis of our interests in regard to every aspect

⁴ Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1949), 13, 30; Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order*, 2, 82. *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C.*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, 1133, 1138-39, 1145-46, 1229-32; David Esposito, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Strategic Vulnerability," ed. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 55-56.

⁵ Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, postwar planning, and the quest for a new world order, 1937-1943*, 33.

of international relations, in all areas of the world, under the circumstances probable or possible at the end of the war.⁶

The second part of this chapter's argument is that the Franklin Roosevelt administration operated in a political climate where its most effective weapons for restraining the Axis powers and eventually establishing the "new world order" were economic. Throughout the 1930s, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's primary aim was to prepare the ground for an economic blockade against the Axis powers. Between 1935 and 1939, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was almost continuously involved in economic warfare planning⁷ and even devised political strategies for disguising the economic blockade as the "quarantine" and later a "defense measure" to make it palatable to public opinion.⁸

Coupled with economic warfare planning, the Franklin Roosevelt administration invested in airpower and assisted Pan Am in developing the first trans-Pacific air route (with the understanding that its airfields would be converted to military use if war broke out). Airpower is usually remembered for its role in strategic bombing and providing tactical support to ground forces. Yet the achievement of air supremacy, through the combined use of air forces and aerial networks, also furthered the aims of economic warfare. By controlling the airspace over a wide area, the United States could prevent the enemy from trading with other nations. While the United States' economic blockading power, combining airpower with naval power, was not particularly effective against countries that were self-sufficient in raw materials, it was

⁶ Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945*, 1.

⁷ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, 102-03; John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," *Pacific Historical Review* 40, No. 2 (May 1971): 204; White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939; "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr. (1938-1945)*, ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

⁸ Barbara Farnham, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis: a Study of Political Decision-making* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 105-07.

devastating against countries with dynamic economies and raw material shortages – and the Franklin Roosevelt administration knew it. Within this context, the construction of Pan Am airfields across the Pacific (which could be converted to military use) and government investments in American airpower and in the development of the B-17 “flying fortress” with a flying range of 2200 miles both enhanced the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s capacity for waging economic warfare.⁹

The White House’s Perspective on National Security

Most historians have argued that the Franklin Roosevelt administration feared an Axis invasion of the Western Hemisphere in 1939-41. The Franklin Roosevelt administration, so their argument went, lacked access to intelligence reports showing that an Axis transatlantic invasion was suicidal and therefore it tended to overestimate Germany, Italy and Japan’s military capabilities and the security threats they posed to the United States.¹⁰

Yet Franklin Roosevelt and other Washington policymakers did have access to intelligence which showed that the main challenge facing Germany, Italy and Japan related to raw materials and money. Any nation going to war required a constant infusion of money and raw materials to sustain its military power. These resources come from the economy, which must either possess raw materials and domestic capital in abundance or must obtain them through

⁹ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 141-42; Ronald Jackson, xiv-5; Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 97-100, 127; Stephen Bunch, “FDR and Limited War in Europe: A Plausible Middle Course?” In *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World*, eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 62.

¹⁰ David Esposito, for example, argued that, “FDR’s exaggerated estimation of Germany’s force structure, capabilities, and intentions, is understandable given the situation in 1940. American foreign intelligence was, by modern standards, absolutely primitive.” Unfortunately, Esposito in making this statement failed to consider the economic intelligence on Germany which was excellent. See David M. Esposito, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Strategic Vulnerability,” eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 53.

international trade and public borrowing. The intelligence reports flooding the White House and other government departments revealed that the Axis powers did not possess raw materials and capital in abundance and had growing difficulties obtaining them through international trade and borrowing. Germany, Italy and Japan were strong enough to subdue their weaker neighbors, but an invasion of the Western Hemisphere (which vastly expanded the required scale of military operations and the amount of raw materials and money needed for sustaining them) was clearly out of the question at least for the next few years.¹¹

In mid-July 1937, Franklin Roosevelt responded to the resumption of Japanese expansionism in China by directing the Navy Department to study the efficacy of an economic blockade against Japan. On October 15, 1937, Admiral Harry Yarnell, commander of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, reported back to Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral William Leahy on his plan for defeating Japan. Yarnell observed that the United States and its allies controlled 90% of the world's iron, coal and oil reserves and significant percentages of other raw materials. By instituting an aerial-naval blockade with its allies, the United States could achieve a "reasonably early" victory over Japan. Having read Yarnell's report, Franklin Roosevelt told his cabinet that an Anglo-American blockade along the Aleutians-Singapore line would force Japan to capitulate in a year.¹²

In other words, Franklin Roosevelt and of his advisors assumed that they could smash Japan in a year based on their understanding of that country's economic weaknesses, which belies the thesis that they were ever afraid of a Japanese invasion of the Western Hemisphere. In fact, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden recalled from his conversation with the head of the

¹¹ Bear Braumoeller, "The Myth of American Isolationism," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6, issue 4 (October 2010): 13-15; Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, 7-8.

¹² Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 97-100.

U.S. delegation Norman Davis on November 2, 1937 that Franklin Roosevelt was primarily concerned that “the United States might someday have to deal, maybe alone, with a greatly strengthened Japanese power across the Pacific.”¹³

Similarly in 1939, Franklin Roosevelt and his cabinet secretaries received several intelligence reports indicating that Germany had significant military and economic problems of its own. In spring 1939, Commerce Secretary Harry Hopkins commissioned Louis Domeratzky¹⁴ to prepare a report on the German economy. Over the course of his study, Domeratzky discovered that the Germans faced shortages in many raw materials necessary for war, such as copper, iron, and oil. Having acquired the Commerce Department’s report, the *New York Times* drew the following conclusions on March 21:

Germany’s policy of subordinating economic and financial stability to political aggrandizement has in all essentials defeated itself, since the Reich faces democracies in such impoverished condition that there is slight possibility it could survive a protracted war. This is the implication of a study of the Reich’s position made for Secretary of Commerce Hopkins by Louis Domeratzky...¹⁵

Soon after the Commerce Department’s report came out, the Treasury Department released its own study on the economies of the aggressor nations in April 8. According to Assistant Treasury Secretary Harry White, Germany needed to import or find substitutes for “95% of natural petroleum, 75% of copper, 50% of lead, 25% of sulphur, 100% of cotton, 95% of bauxite, 10% of zinc, 100% of rubber, 95% of manganese, 100% of nickel, 100% of chromite, 95% of tungsten, 75% of wool, 70% of phosphates, 100% of tin, 100% of antimony, 100% of mercury, and 100% of mica” in order to sustain its war effort. White also observed, “The situation with

¹³ John McVickar Haight, Jr., “Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan,” 206.

¹⁴ Domeratzky was Chief of Regional Information for the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce.

¹⁵ “Reich Held too Poor for Prolonged War,” March 21, 1939, *NYT*, 8.

respect to Italy is even worse and with Japan equally bad.” Furthermore, these figures were based on Germany, Italy and Japan’s peacetime consumption of raw materials. If war broke out, the raw material requirements for each of these countries would soar and make their war effort very hard to sustain.¹⁶

Later on October 26, the Commerce Department released another report on Germany indicating that the Nazi regime “has the further problem of having to pay for her imports in full by exports, unless she can borrow from another nation, which is not very likely” and “[its current] level of armament expenditures can hardly be sustained under wartime conditions.” The Nazis could only “raise additional taxes” with difficulty, since taxes were already too high. As a result, “the German economic situation now is comparable to the conditions of 1917 rather than those of 1914.”¹⁷

Germany’s economic problems influenced how U.S. policymakers interpreted the German threat to U.S. national security. On September 17, 1938, Franklin Roosevelt expected the war in Europe to be a stalemate along the Franco-German front.¹⁸ Later on March 16, 1939, Berle recorded in a memorandum, “[Franklin Roosevelt] believes that the Germans will go eastward; that they will not make any agreement with Stalin; that, however, the economic and organization stresses and strains of taking on eastern Europe will make the going increasingly hard... He was not particularly bothered by it.”¹⁹ On both occasions (i.e. September 17, 1938 and March 16, 1939), the possibility of Germany quickly defeating its rivals in Europe and successfully invading the Western Hemisphere was not part of the President’s strategic calculus.

¹⁶ White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939, “Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt,” *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

¹⁷ Commerce Department Report, 26 October 1939, Box 303, Harry Hopkins Papers, FDRL.

¹⁸ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 128.

¹⁹ Adolf Berle, Memorandum, 16 March 1939, Box 55, Adolf Berle Papers, FDRL.

The latter conclusion, moreover, is consistent with what other historians have said. Willard Range (1959) wrote:

As late as the time of the Munich Crisis in 1938 [Franklin Roosevelt] felt that Hitler could be brought to his knees by a defensive war and that the most the United States would need to do was furnish supplies. It was not until the fall of France in mid-1940 that Franklin Roosevelt realized to the full the weakness of the Allies and the strength of the aggressors and it may be that total realization was not achieved even by then.²⁰

Professor Steven Casey (2001) reached a similar conclusion about Franklin Roosevelt's assessment on Germany's military and economic strength in the late 1930s: "While [Franklin Roosevelt] recognized that the Nazis were clearly acquiring the power to do some damage beyond their borders, he detected numerous signs below the surface that Hitler's rearmament program was engendering political and economic difficulties," and that it "brought with it the high probability of bankruptcy."²¹ Clearly there was nothing in Franklin Roosevelt's thinking in the late 1930s to suggest he feared that Germany, Italy and Japan were about to invade the Western Hemisphere in the short-term.

Moreover, the President was not alone in voicing doubts about an Axis invasion of the Western Hemisphere. On April 1, 1939, Winston Churchill informed the U.S. ambassador in Brussels Joseph Davies, "That war, if it came, would undoubtedly be characterized by early German successes, but that ultimately the aggressors would be smashed." Three days later Davies forwarded this information to the President.²² General George Strong, who headed the War Plans Division, ruled out a possible German invasion of Liberia on June 17, 1939:

²⁰ Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order*, 19.

²¹ Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade*, 7-8.

²² Davies to Franklin Roosevelt, 5 April 1939, *President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Office Files, 1933-45, Part 2: Diplomatic Correspondence File* [microfilm], Reel 1, 851, 854.

General Strong stated that he could not perceive the possibility of a direct German attack on Liberia because of the problems of transport and supply... He thought that any expeditionary force of Germans that might succeed in landing in Liberia could easily be wiped out by the French or British West African forces.²³

Strong's reasoning is illuminating because of geography. According to Strong, Germany could not invade Liberia because of logistical difficulties. Yet Brazil was farther from Europe than Liberia, which implied (according to Strong's view) that the logistical obstacles to an Axis invasion of Latin America were even greater. Strong's opinion, furthermore, was so influential that he persuaded the State Department that a German invasion of Liberia (and by implication Latin America) was impractical.²⁴

The "New World Order"

U.S.-Axis differences can best be understood in light of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's efforts to build a "new world order" since 1933. Anne O'Hare McCormick, a prominent journalist who later served on the State Department's postwar planning committees, wrote on April 23, 1933, "America is today as clearly at a fork in the road as it was in 1919. We are nearer than we have been to leadership in a new world order..."²⁵ The Franklin Roosevelt administration agreed with this sentiment and seized upon the opportunity to establish a "new world order" that comported with American principles and interests. Reflecting upon the past decade, Secretary of State Cordell Hull wrote to Isaiah Bowman on December 31, 1942:

... the international political and economic program which our government has advocated consistently for nearly a decade offers the only sound basis on which to build in the future a peaceful and

²³ Memorandum of Conversation, 17 June 1939, NARA 2, RG 59, Box 7009.

²⁴ State Department Memorandum, 28 July 1939, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs* 16, ed. Edgar B. Nixon (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1969), 187.

²⁵ Anne O'Hare McCormick, "The Neal Deal in World Affairs," *NYT*, April 23, 1933.

progressive world, and had that program been adopted in time by all countries – especially by our present enemies – we would all have been spared the horrors of war.²⁶

The reason why the “new world order” concept ended up producing so much tumult in U.S.-Axis relations was because Germany and Japan’s geopolitical aspirations, which involved building empires in Europe and the Far East, clashed with the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s vision of a “peaceful and progressive world.” Beyond that, German and Japanese militarism were also regarded by the Franklin Roosevelt administration as a threat to U.S. national security interests (which included American access to the world’s markets, raw materials, and cheap labor), which in the immediate aftermath of the First World War were believed to exist around the world.²⁷ On July 15, 1920, Franklin Roosevelt warned that the United States’ failure to join the League of Nations would eventually lead to another major war in the future:

A Democratic victory means ratification of the treaty and the League of Nations, which, as the world knows, is already constituted. A Republican victory means that the United States, with Russia, Mexico and Turkey, shall remain outside. The election of [Republican presidential candidate Warren] Harding means that in case of future war the United States will enter the war after the conflict has begun. The election of [Democratic presidential candidate James] Cox means that the United States, in participation with the other civilized nations of the world, will, through the League of Nations, solve international difficulties and prevent a recurrence of the holocaust of 1914-1918.²⁸

Franklin Roosevelt also recognized that the American economy was interconnected with the global economy. Therefore, the United States had an economic stake in ensuring that the world economy continued to prosper. Many historians remember Franklin Roosevelt’s public

²⁶ Hull to Bowman, December 31, 1942, NARA 2, RG 59, Entry 558, Records of Leo Pasvolksy, 1938-45, Box 1.

²⁷ Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-45*, 18, 20; Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt’s World Order*, 76.

²⁸ “Franklin Roosevelt on League Issue,” *NYT*, July 15, 1920.

speeches of the early 1940s warning Americans about the perils associated with the United States becoming a “garrison state” shut off the rest of the world.²⁹ Yet as early as August 10, 1920, Franklin Roosevelt delivered a campaign speech on that very theme:

In our world relations we must either shut out eyes, sell out our newly built merchant marine to more far-seeing powers, crush utterly by embargo and harassing legislation our foreign trade, close our ports, and build an impregnable wall of costly armaments and live a hermit nation, dreaming of the past; or we must open our eyes and see that modern civilization has become so complex and the lives of civilized men so interwoven with the lives of other men in other countries as to make it impossible to be in the world and not of it.³⁰

Later on October 27, Franklin Roosevelt told the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce that the American economy would benefit if the United States participated in the League of Nations and helped the rest of the world address its economic and financial problems (which were the result of the First World War):

Of course, if a crash in foreign parts should occur the United States would be seriously affected. If for no other reason than a selfish one, the United States must immediately resume her place at the table with other nations in order that economic and financial difficulties resulting from the war may be straightened out and placed in a safe position. It is, of course, reasonable to add that if a collapse occurs because of the United States not taking part in world affairs, it is not merely Americans who are connected with foreign commerce who will suffer. Every other American will feel the flow indirectly – even those who live in the middle of the country or on the farm.³¹

The Great Depression and Axis belligerency, therefore, did not transform the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s perspective on national security, but instead they confirmed the accuracy of its point of view. Franklin Roosevelt predicted that the United States’ failure to assume greater responsibility for the global economy would mean another great economic crisis from which the American economy could not escape. The outbreak of the Great Depression,

²⁹ Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 124.

³⁰ “Franklin Roosevelt Calls for a Real Peace with the League,” *NYT*, August 10, 1920, 4.

³¹ “Franklin Roosevelt Swings Through Brooklyn,” *NYT*, October 27, 1920.

which was in large part the result of European nations being unable to overcome their economic problems inherited from the First World War, appeared to prove Franklin Roosevelt right.³² Similarly Franklin Roosevelt predicted that the United States' failure to join the League of Nations would mean the outbreak of another major war in the future. By the 1930s, the global order was breaking apart and another global conflict seemed quite likely: Japan acquired colonies in China (1931-34, 1937-41), Italy annexed Ethiopia (1935-36) and Albania (1939) and Germany snatched Austria (1938), Czechoslovakia (1938-39) and Memeland, Lithuania (1939).³³ Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors saw both trends through the lens of their post-First World War experience and they eventually arrived at the conclusion that American primacy on a worldwide scale was the only way to prevent global forces from running amok.

During the 1930s, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's national security philosophy resulted in the first concrete steps to erect a "new world order" in which the United States would play the leading role. The laboratory for this new world order was not yet the world, but Latin America.³⁴ At his inaugural address on March 4, 1933, Franklin Roosevelt enunciated the Good Neighbor Policy and emphasized that it was a model for his world policy:

In the field of world policy, I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the Good Neighbor – the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others – the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in an with a world of neighbors. We now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence on each other...³⁵

³² Derek Aldcroft, *The European Economy 1914-2000* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 57-59, 64-69.

³³ *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C.*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, 1133, 1138-39, 1145-46, 1229-32.

³⁴ J. Hart, "Making Democracy Safe for the World," 58.

³⁵ *The Evolution of Our Latin American Policy*, ed. James Gantenbein (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), 159.

Later in December of the same year, Franklin Roosevelt sent Hull over to the Montevideo Conference to formally renounce military intervention as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. Hull not only renounced military intervention, but he also publicly connected his government's Latin American policy and its efforts to erect a new world order:

I am gratified to say that I have already found much of this spirit among the distinguished leaders with whom I have talked here in Montevideo. They all keenly realize the crisis that has been thrust upon the New World. The Old World looks hopefully in this direction and we must not disappoint that point. Today Europe staggers under the load of bristling armaments, paid for out of treasuries depleted by the clogging of trade channels. Our common ties with them redouble our desire to offer our best in the molding of a new world order.³⁶

Over the course of the 1930s, the Franklin Roosevelt administration reached several agreements with the Latin Americans that embodied the very Wilsonian principles that it wanted to see implemented around the world. Hull and his colleagues in the State Department, for example, believed that trade barriers needed to be lowered globally in order for world trade to recover. To that end, the Franklin Roosevelt administration (upon Hull's urging) steered the Reciprocal Trade Agreement through Congress in June 1934, furnishing the executive branch with the prerogative power to enter into international trade agreements that lowered trade barriers on a reciprocal basis and discourage trade discrimination. After this legislation was passed, the United States negotiated several of these reciprocal trade agreements with the Latin American states in order to help American exporters sell their goods south of the Rio Grande.³⁷

Similarly the Franklin Roosevelt administration's negotiation of military agreements with the Latin American governments exemplified the Wilsonian principle of collective security

³⁶ Ibid., 163.

³⁷ Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order*, 3; Paul Varg, "The Economic Side of the Good Neighbor Policy: The Reciprocal Trade Program and South America," *Pacific Historical Review* 45, no. 1 (February 1976): 47-71.

(which was a very important tenet of the United Nations Charter). At the Buenos Aires Conference (December 1-23, 1936), Franklin Roosevelt and Welles tried to convince their Latin American counterparts to agree to the principle that a threat to American Republic was a threat to all of them. The President and Welles also wanted all of Latin America to sign onto the Consultative Pact which called for consultation in the event of an external threat to the Americas. In the end, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's diplomatic efforts were only partially successful. Franklin Roosevelt and Welles did persuade the Latin Americans to agree that a threat to one American Republic was a threat to all, but they also had to acquiesce to a watered down version of the Consultative Pact that made consultation voluntary, not obligatory.³⁸ Only at the Havana Conference (spring 1940) did the Franklin Roosevelt administration finally reach an agreement on an obligatory Consultative Pact with the other Latin American governments.³⁹

The Good Neighbor Policy and American participation at the Pan American Conferences did more than simply erect a smaller version of the new world order in the Western Hemisphere. They also strengthened U.S.-Latin American military ties and prepared the ground for bilateral agreements that allowed the United States to convert existing commercial airfields to military use as well as to construct additional naval bases and military airfields throughout Latin America (these bilateral agreements are the subject of the next chapter).

Although the most visible efforts to erect a "new order" took place in Latin America, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was also imposing Wilsonian standards on nations elsewhere in the world. The State Department, for example, exerted pressure on the Axis powers by recognizing the Soviet Union on November 16, 1933.⁴⁰ Looking back on the decision to resume

³⁸ Benjamin Welles, *Sumner Welles*, 189.

³⁹ *The Evolution of Our Latin American Policy*, ed. James Gantenbein, 780.

⁴⁰ Robert Browder, "The United States, the Soviet Union and the Comintern, 1933-35," 25.

diplomatic relations with the Soviets, Hull explained to Under Secretary Welles and the postwar planners on January 30, 1943:

[As] signs began to show that the world was approaching a troubled period, we decided to recognize Russia, apparently contrary to the views of every man, woman and child in the nation. The first reason for this action was the fact that there had been long-existing friendly relations between our two peoples going back to the Civil War, and two powerful nations like ourselves and Russia should be on speaking terms at least. The second reason, which was the governing one, was that unless enough of the powerful nations of the world could be induced to collaborate and cooperate and find ways of preserving peace among nations, anything would be liable to happen in due course. So, it was with that general idea of the powerful influence of a nation like Russia in the general equation, as we looked forward into the world situation with Germany and Japan being dangerous with their potentialities of military strength, that we decided to take this action.⁴¹

Another step that the Franklin Roosevelt administration took was to push the Reciprocal Trade Act through Congress on June 4, 1934, which allowed the executive to negotiate trade agreements with other countries that lowered trade barriers on a reciprocal basis.⁴² Through these trade agreements, Secretary of State Cordell Hull hoped to achieve the Wilsonian aims of an open global economy and world peace. If trade barriers fell and living standards rose, Hull declared in early 1936, “discontent will fade and dictators will not have to brandish the sword and appeal to patriotism to stay in power.”⁴³

The Reciprocal Trade Act also had a subtle purpose. On January 31, 1938, the Chief of the Division of West European Affairs Pierrepont Moffat observed, “The development of our trade agreement program will automatically put economic pressure on Germany and in this we have a ready forged weapon in hand to induce Germany to meet general World Trade and

⁴¹ P Minutes 43, January 30, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59 Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55.

⁴² Franklin Roosevelt, Hull and other Wilsonians believed that free flowing trade allowed economies to function properly and that, without freer trade, national frustration and foreign aggression would result. See Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order*, 3.

⁴³ Arthur W. Schatz, “The Anglo-American Trade Agreement and Cordell Hull’s Search for Peace, 1936-1938,” *The Journal of American History* 57 (June 1970): 86, 89.

political sentiment.”⁴⁴ On November 8, 1938, the Franklin Roosevelt administration used this weapon by negotiating a reciprocal trade agreement with Britain, whose anti-discriminatory clauses restricted Germany’s access to raw materials in the British imperial markets.⁴⁵

By the 1930s, there was a major dispute within the State Department over how quickly the vision of the “new world order” should be implemented. Under Secretary Welles (1937-42) and his clique wanted the executive branch to accelerate the transition towards a “new world order,” whereas Hull feared that Welles’ bold strategy was moving too far ahead of isolationist public opinion and risked derailing the transition altogether.⁴⁶ As will become apparent in the next section, Welles and Hull in October 1937-January 1938 came to blows particularly over the issue of whether to impose an economic blockade against Japan over the next few months. Yet even before that dispute, Welles and Hull already had major differences of opinion. Hull was not prepared to openly challenge the right of dictatorships to exist,⁴⁷ but Welles authored an article in September 1937 stating that one of the ways the U.S. government was contributing to “a healthier, happier world” was through “frequent conferences between representatives of governments and free intercourse between their peoples with free exchange of views and ideas.” Obviously “free intercourse between their peoples with free exchange of views and ideas” was not possible when some of those governments were dictatorships that controlled the flow of

⁴⁴ Hans-Jurgen Schroder, “The Ambiguities of Appeasement: Great Britain, the United States and Germany, 1937-9,” In *The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement*, eds. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Lothar Kettenacker (London; Boston: G. Allen & Unwin, 1983), 393.

⁴⁵ Paul N. Hehn, *A Low Dishonest Decade: The Great Powers, Eastern Europe, and the Economic Origins of World War II, 1930-1941* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 206.

⁴⁶ Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 18, 24, 33.

⁴⁷ Arthur W. Schatz, “The Anglo-American Trade Agreement and Cordell Hull’s Search for Peace, 1936-1938,” 89.

information. So as early as September 1937, Welles stated implicitly that his government's policy was to promote universal liberty.⁴⁸

Between 1937 and early 1939, Franklin Roosevelt was inclined to follow Hull's advice to proceed cautiously with the "new world order" program. Yet Welles' bold strategy soon prevailed over Hull's cautious approach largely as a result of two factors. To begin with, Germany took over Austria (1938), Czechoslovakia (1938-39), Memeland, Lithuania (1939) and finally Poland (1939).⁴⁹ These acts of aggression played into the hands of those elements inside the Franklin Roosevelt administration that supported a more belligerent strategy against the Axis powers. The second factor was that Welles' strategy had supporters outside the State Department. Treasury Secretary Morgenthau was generally in agreement with Welles' assessment that a bold strategy to combat the Axis powers was required. On October 17, 1938, Morgenthau argued for U.S. military aid to China to further the struggle for democracy: "By risking little more than the cost of one battleship we can give renewed vitality and effectiveness to the Chinese. We can do more than that. By our action we can further the struggle of democracy against aggression everywhere."⁵⁰

Thus, Franklin Roosevelt and most of his advisors came to support the idea of speeding up the transition to a "new world order." On September 3, 1939, Franklin Roosevelt set up the "Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations" with the instructions that "the influence of America should be consistent in seeking for humanity a final peace which will

⁴⁸ Sumner Welles, "Present Aspects of World Peace," *World Affairs* 100, No. 3 (September, 1937): 166-67.

⁴⁹ *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C.*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, 1133, 1138-39, 1145-46, 1229-32; Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American foreign policy, 1932-1945*, 184.

⁵⁰ Morgenthau to Franklin Roosevelt, 17 October 1938, Box 79, President's Secretary File, FDRL.

eliminate, as far as it is possible to do so, the continued use of force between nations.”⁵¹ As

Hull’s Special Assistant Leo Pasvolsky explained:

To survey the basic principles which should underlie a desirable world order to be evolved after the termination of present hostilities, with primary reference to the best interests of the United States. In light of the principles indicated above and of past experience, to determine policies which should be pursued by the United States in furtherance of the establishment of such a world order, both as a basis of our own action and of our attempts to influence other nations.⁵²

Moreover, this new “world order” was not going to tolerate the aggressor nations. On September 11, 1939, Franklin Roosevelt wrote to U.S. Ambassador to Britain Joseph Kennedy that the American people “would not support any move for peace initiated by this Government that would consolidate or make possible a survival of a regime of force and of aggression.” As a result of taking this position, the Franklin Roosevelt administration ended the possibility of a negotiated peace.⁵³

Plans for Economic Warfare

In the second half of the 1930s, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors were planning to lead the international community in enforcing economic sanctions against any nations that threatened world peace. The significance of this development was two-fold. To begin with, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s economic warfare planning marked a belligerent turn in U.S. foreign policy, since the economic blockade was an act of war. This economic warfare planning was also part of the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s Wilsonian-inspired effort to use U.S. foreign economic policy to fix the League of Nations by making the United States the leader of

⁵¹ Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-45*, 18.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵³ Stanley Hilton, “The Welles Mission in Europe, February-March 1940,” *The Journal of American History* 58, No. 1 (June 1971): 95.

it. In this sense, Franklin Roosevelt was pursuing an ambition held by the late President Woodrow Wilson who in 1917 championed (among other articles) Article XVI of the League of Nations, calling for economic and military sanctions against any aggressor nation.⁵⁴

Eighteen years later, Franklin Roosevelt proposed something very similar to Article XVI in response to Hitler's announcement that Germany would conscript 550,000 soldiers. In April 1935 Franklin Roosevelt suggested to Treasury Secretary Morgenthau that England, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Poland and possibly Russia sign an agreement doing away with armaments, except small arms, and then ask Germany to sign this agreement.⁵⁵ If the Germans refused to sign, Franklin Roosevelt added, the United States and the other signatories "would then establish a two-way blockade around Germany, not permitting anything at all to enter or leave Germany.... We would send an Admiral abroad who would assist in seeing that our ships did not run through this blockade.... If this did not succeed, the chances are we will have a world war." Upon hearing of this proposal, Under Secretary of State Phillips confided to Morgenthau, "It seemed to me that the President, for once, was completely off the straight road."⁵⁶ The rest of the State Department also objected to this proposal, leaving Franklin Roosevelt with little choice but to drop it for the time being.⁵⁷

Yet on April 11, Franklin Roosevelt expressed the hope to Colonel Edward House that an Anglo-French-Italian meeting at Stresa, Italy would give the United States a chance to lead the international community in imposing "a complete blockade of Germany." He added that, "A boycott or sanction could not be recognized by U.S. without Congressional action but a blockade

⁵⁴ Robert Divine, *The Illusion of Neutrality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1968), 2.

⁵⁵ Otto Tolischus, "Germany is Forging a 'Nation in Arms'," *NYT*, October 27, 1935, SM7. Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 73.

⁵⁶ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, 102-03.

⁵⁷ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 73.

would fall under the executive's power after establishment of the fact." The only reason why the economic blockade did not take place was that inaction at Stresa frustrated Franklin Roosevelt's hopes for collective action.⁵⁸

Almost two years following the disappointment at Stresa, the Franklin Roosevelt administration resumed economic warfare planning against Germany and Japan. The administration's most noteworthy success in this arena was to include a "cash and carry" provision in the Neutrality Act of 1937 (passed in May 1937) that gave the President the discretionary authority to determine which belligerents should be targeted with economic sanctions. Specifically, the President had the authority under the "cash and carry" provision to allow certain belligerents to buy goods (that were not armaments) from the United States, provided they were able to pay for these goods in hard currency and transport them on their own ships.⁵⁹

This legislative achievement proved that the Franklin Roosevelt administration had skillfully manipulated public opinion in order to fit economic sanctions (a belligerent legislative item) under the umbrella of the Neutrality Act of 1937. By capitalizing on fears over foreign entanglements, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors started to argue that severing economic ties with certain belligerents would keep the United States neutral. This politically savvy argumentation was a harbinger for what was to come since Franklin Roosevelt later argued in his "Quarantine Speech" (October 5, 1937) that quarantining (a shrewd euphemism for imposing an economic blockade) aggressor nations would ensure that war never spread to the Western Hemisphere. Of course, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisers realized this argument was

⁵⁸ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, 103.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State: Office of the Historian http://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/Neutrality_acts

nonsensical, since economic sanctions were an act of war. Moreover, some Congressmen complained in a minority report on HJR 242 (Neutrality Act of 1937) that the provision in the Act on economic sanctions gave the President a weapon to wield against other countries and usurped Congress' power to make war.⁶⁰

As subsequent events proved, the complaints of this minority of Congressmen over the amended Neutrality Act of 1937 were not unfounded. On April 21, 1937, Franklin Roosevelt proposed to Hull that a study of embargos against Germany be undertaken:

I am especially concerned with the possibility, even though it may not be a probability, that German food supplies will call for even more imports and that the demands for certain other raw materials like copper, steel billets and scrap steel will continue, thus forcing up our price level unduly and perhaps even causing an actual shortage in the supply for domestic consumption. This makes it opportune for us to start an immediate study of the subject of embargoes to be put into effect by Executive Order, by hearings, which seem the simplest way.⁶¹

Later on July 7, 1937, Japan invaded Northern China, prompting Franklin Roosevelt to hold discussions in mid-July with the Navy and State Departments about "drawing an actual line in the Pacific to be maintained by the United States, if the British would agree to cooperate, beyond which Japan would be told she would not be permitted to trade or to expand in the event she persisted in the policy of military conquest of China."⁶²

Yet before the United States could blockade Germany and Japan, the Franklin Roosevelt administration needed political support. Therefore, Franklin Roosevelt used the same argument that his administration had employed previously to justify the inclusion of the cash and carry provision into the Neutrality Act of 1937. Franklin Roosevelt warned listeners in his "Quarantine" speech in Chicago on October 5, 1937 that international crises had broken out in

⁶⁰ Bear Braumoeller, "The Myth of American Isolationism," 359.

⁶¹ Franklin Roosevelt to Hull, 21 April 1937, Box 32, President's Secretary File, FDRL.

⁶² John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 204.

Europe and the Far East and “Let no one imagine that America will escape, that America may expect mercy, that this Western Hemisphere will not be attacked.”⁶³ He then argued that the only way to prevent war from reaching the Western Hemisphere was to “quarantine” (the euphemism for an economic blockade) the aggressors.⁶⁴

Unfortunately for Franklin Roosevelt, the plan to disguise the economic blockade as a “quarantine” to rally popular opinion failed. Isolationist critics condemned the speech as “warmongering and saber-rattling.” Some Congressmen wanted to impeach the President. Franklin Roosevelt avoided impeachment, but he never gave another speech against the Axis powers for more than a year.⁶⁵

Behind the scenes, the Franklin Roosevelt administration merely narrowed its economic blockade plan to Japan. Between October 1937 and February 1938, the Franklin Roosevelt administration pursued two interrelated objectives. The President temporarily endorsed Under Secretary Welles’ proposal (also known as the Welles Plan) on October 6, 1937 to hold an international conference, invite all the nations to it, and call upon the international community to support disarmament, lower trade barriers, and engage in collective action to “quarantine” (or impose an economic blockade against) the “aggressor nations” (i.e. the Axis powers) in order to restore the “world order.”⁶⁶

⁶³ James MacGregor Burns, *Franklin Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York: Harthcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1956), 318; Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt: Champion of Freedom* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 426; Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Franklin Roosevelt* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 165. 165.

⁶⁴ John McVickar Haight, Jr., “Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan,” 204-05.

⁶⁵ Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Franklin Roosevelt*, 164, 167; James MacGregor Burns, *Franklin Roosevelt*, 318.

⁶⁶ John McVickar Haight, Jr., “Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan,” 205-06; Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 23-24.

The significance of the Welles Plan – and the reason why it aroused so much opposition from Secretary of State Hull and other State Department officials – was that it had the potential to transform the United States into something very close to a belligerent over the next few months. As Franklin Roosevelt, Hull and Welles recognized, the Welles Plan (if implemented) would almost certainly have put Japan in a very difficult position. In his Chicago speech (October 5), Franklin Roosevelt implicitly branded Japan an “aggressor” for invading Northern China.⁶⁷ Moreover, the Japanese refused to attend the Nine-power conference at Brussels because they felt they could not attend a gathering based on the Washington Treaty of 1922 (which forbade aggression) “while they were accused of violating its terms.”⁶⁸ Similarly, Japan was unlikely to attend a conference on quarantining aggressors after being accused not so subtly of being one. So in effect, Franklin Roosevelt, Welles and other officials who supported the Welles Plan were gambling on the American people to support an economic blockade against Japan, even though this act of war contradicted the non-interventionist traditions of the United States.⁶⁹

The second objective was to develop a military plan for enforcing the quarantine. Beginning in October 1937, American and British naval planners started developing their strategy for determining which geographical areas the United States and Britain were going to patrol with their naval and air power in order to hamper Japanese trade.⁷⁰

Although economic warfare planning against Japan persisted until February 1938, it was doomed almost from the start by bureaucratic resistance, a lack of British cooperation, and

⁶⁷ Dieckhoff to German Foreign Ministry, December 7, 1937, *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Serie D, Volume 1 (London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1949), 653.

⁶⁸ “The Brussels Conference,” *Bulletin of International News* 14, No. 11 (Nov. 27, 1937): 15-17.

⁶⁹ Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 23-25.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 218.

Congressional opposition. Hull considered the Welles plan political suicide, since it was bound to alarm the great powers and provoke a popular uproar at home. Hull's greatest fear, however, was that if the international conference failed, the Franklin Roosevelt administration would join the international community in imposing economic sanctions on Japan at a time when most Americans were against this course of action. Hull summed up his differences with Welles by stating, "Welles kept pushing the President, while I kept urging him to go slow." Although Franklin Roosevelt sympathized with Welles' strategy for dealing with Japan, he ultimately followed Hull's advice with the result that the international conference was postponed and ultimately never held.⁷¹

On December 12, 1937, the fortunes of the Welles plan were revived when Japanese planes inadvertently bombed the U.S.S. *Panay* into oblivion on the Yangtze River, after mistaking it for a Chinese battleship.⁷² The U.S.S. *Panay* was one of seven U.S. gunboats on the Yangtze Patrol, which the U.S. government created back in 1854 to protect American lives and property in China.⁷³ After the Japanese sank a U.S. gunboat, American public opinion was outraged and Interior Secretary Ickes wrote in his diary that Franklin Roosevelt believed the *Panay* incident created "an opportunity for the democratic governments to reassert themselves in world affairs... The President also thinks that if the civilian population of Japan should learn of such a move on the part of America, there might be a revolution in Japan."⁷⁴ What form the United States' reassertion in world affairs would take was hotly contested within the Franklin

⁷¹ John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 204-05; Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 23-25.

⁷² John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 208, 211.

⁷³ Kemp Tolley, *Yangtze Patrol: the U.S. Navy in China* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1971), 16, 220-21.

⁷⁴ John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 214.

Roosevelt administration. Navy Secretary Claude Swanson wanted the United States to declare war against Japan over this incident.⁷⁵ Hull believed in a more cautious approach, but now was willing to lend his support to the Welles plan provided that Britain cooperated as well. Franklin Roosevelt also felt confident that public opinion was turning so much against Japan that his administration could garner the support needed for imposing economic sanctions.⁷⁶

At last, the Welles plan appeared to have overcome all the political barriers to its implementation. But then British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's refusal to cooperate in the economic blockade and a stormy reception in Congress thwarted the Welles plan completely. Chamberlain was horrified by the Welles plan and by his discovery that Anglo-American naval planning for instituting the "quarantine" was taking place. In January 1938, Chamberlain criticized the Welles Plan to British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden for offering "old principles" that would "most likely be unpalatable to the dictator states" and would undermine his efforts "to bring about world appeasement." Later on the 13th of that same month, Chamberlain informed the Franklin Roosevelt administration that his government could not support the Welles Plan.⁷⁷ Back in the United States, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's "Big Navy" bill (to finance the construction of battleships to enforce the blockade) encountered a storm of opposition in Congress. Owing to these factors, the Franklin Roosevelt administration had to shelve its economic warfare planning against Japan for the time being.⁷⁸

For about half a year, the Franklin Roosevelt administration remained largely silent on the economic blockade issue. Yet as the next chapter will show, Franklin Roosevelt discussed the

⁷⁵ Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 428.

⁷⁶ John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 219.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 221, 225; Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 26.

⁷⁸ John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 224.

economic blockade with his Interior Secretary Harold Ickes on September 17, 1938 amidst rising tensions over the Sudetenland (the Hitler regime wanted to annex the Sudetenland, while Czechoslovakia's Eduard Benes government was determined to hang onto it). Two days later, Franklin Roosevelt suggested to British Ambassador in Washington Ronald Lindsay that the economic sanctions should be called "defense measures" or anything plausible to avoid a popular uproar in Britain or the United States. The revival of economic blockade planning culminated in the policy of Western Hemisphere Defense, under which the aerial and naval infrastructure for enforcing the economic blockade against Germany, Italy and Japan were disguised as defense measures.⁷⁹

Pan Am and Trans-Pacific Route

As early as 1935-38, the Navy Department was helping Pan Am to construct airfields in Honolulu, Midway Island, Wake Island, Guam, Manila and Hong Kong that were later used for enforcing the economic blockade against Japan.⁸⁰ By early 1938, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors intended for this air route, in the event of war, to serve the twin purpose of blockading Japanese trade and enabling the U.S. Air Corps' B-17 strategic bombers, with a 2200 mile flying range, to launch air strikes against Japan from the Philippines (2000 miles from Japan). Since Japan appreciated the potential of Pan Am airfields to do both those things, the trans-Pacific air route became an important source of American leverage in U.S.-Japanese relations.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Barbara Farnham, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis*, 105-07.

⁸⁰ Ronald Jackson, *China Clipper*, xiv-5.

⁸¹ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 83, 145; Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 141-42.

To situate the trans-Pacific air route in its proper context, the deterioration of U.S.-Japanese relations needs to be explained. On September 18, 1931, the Japanese invaded Manchuria. After considering how to respond to this threat to world peace, Secretary of State Stimson advised President Hoover on November 27 to impose an economic blockade against Japan; yet Hoover rejected the idea on the grounds that it “would almost inevitably lead to war” and instead issued the Stimson-Hoover doctrine that denounced territorial exchanges achieved through force, associating this doctrine with the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928), a non-binding agreement outlawing war.⁸²

Later in 1934, the Franklin Roosevelt administration confirmed the anti-Japanese direction of its foreign policy while negotiating with Britain and Japan on limiting naval armaments. In that year, Japan wanted to revise the Washington Treaty to achieve naval parity with the U.S. and British navies. Britain suggested a modest shipbuilding program as a compromise to Japan because it feared Germany more. Franklin Roosevelt, however, demanded all signatories reduce naval tonnage by 20%, a demand which Japan rejected. When the British also refused to cooperate, they met with a sharp Presidential response. In November 1934, Franklin Roosevelt instructed Norman Davis, chairman of the U.S. delegation, to tell British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon,

If Great Britain was even suspected of preferring to play with Japan to playing with us, we shall be compelled, in the interest of American security, to approach public sentiment in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa in a definite effort to make these Dominions understand clearly that their future security is linked with us in the United States.

⁸² Richard Current, “The Stimson Doctrine and the Hoover Doctrine,” *The American Historical Review* 59, No. 3 (April 1954): 514, 521, 533.

Franklin Roosevelt dropped the threat, when Britain disavowed any naval deal with Japan.⁸³ The significance of this episode was that Franklin Roosevelt had coerced Britain into what was in effect an anti-Japanese military alliance with the United States and quietly ended his non-interventionist foreign policy in the process.

But how did Pan Am's trans-Pacific air route fit into the context of escalating U.S.-Japanese tensions? In late 1934, the Franklin Roosevelt administration wanted a trans-Pacific air route capable of unfurling American airpower against Japan in case of hostilities. The distance between the United States and Japan is 6247 miles. Yet the most advanced American military aircraft of the 1930s – the B-17 “flying fortress” – had a flying range of 2200 miles. Moreover, the B-17's maximum flying range decreased by several hundred miles when it carried a heavy load of explosives. Therefore, the Franklin Roosevelt administration realized that the B-17 could only launch air strikes against Japan if it controlled intermediate airfields in the Pacific for refueling and maintenance purposes. Yet in the 1930s, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was barred from constructing such airfields by the Washington Treaty (1923) which prohibited fortifications on the U.S. islands of Midway, Wake Island and Guam.⁸⁴ For all these reasons, Pan Am's interest since 1932 in establishing a commercial air route across the Pacific to Shanghai came as a godsend to the Franklin Roosevelt administration.⁸⁵ By 1934, the Franklin Roosevelt administration and Pan Am discovered they wanted the same thing – airfields in Honolulu,

⁸³ James McGregor Burns, *Franklin Roosevelt*, 250; Galen Perras, *Franklin Roosevelt and the origins of the Canadian-American security alliance, 1933-1945: necessary, but not necessary enough* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 10-11.

⁸⁴ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 62; Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 141-42.

⁸⁵ James Trautman, *Pan American Clippers*, 83; Erik Benson, *Aviator of Fortune: Lowell Yerex and the Anglo-American Commercial Rivalry* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 19.

Midway, Wake Island, Guam and Manila built officially for commercial purposes, but which could be converted to military use.⁸⁶

In 1934-35, the Franklin Roosevelt administration and Pan Am entered into negotiations to construct the first segment of the trans-Pacific route from San Francisco to Manila. On October 3, 1934, Trippe formally applied for air rights across the Pacific, emphasizing to Navy Secretary Claude Swanson that Pan Am would turn its Pacific airfields over to the Navy if war broke out with Japan. Two days later, Acting Chief of Naval operations J.K. Taussig endorsed the plan to use Pan Am to build *de facto* military airfields.⁸⁷ Franklin Roosevelt also got involved in the negotiations. On October 16, the President wrote confidentially to Secretary of State Hull, “Would you please familiarize yourself with the situation relating to these islands and then speak to me in regard to possible negotiation with Great Britain? The development of commercial aviation, as well as Naval operations, makes this whole subject of immediate importance.”⁸⁸ Finally on March 12, 1935, the Navy Department awarded Pan Am permits to construct air facilities on several American islands in the Pacific.⁸⁹

However, Pan Am’s work in building the trans-Pacific air route was not yet done. Pan Am needed a terminus on the Chinese coast partly to make the air service profitable and also to persuade Americans back at home that the air route was built for commercial purposes only. To make a long story short, Trippe exerted tremendous pressure upon Britain to grant Pan Am air rights to Hong Kong (a British colony) by threatening to negotiate an air agreement with the Portuguese to fly to Macao and eclipse Hong Kong’s economic preeminence in the region (Britain’s Imperial Airways lacked planes to operate an air service to Hong Kong and compete

⁸⁶ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 62-63, 83, 145.

⁸⁷ Ronald Jackson, *China Clipper*, 73-74.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

⁸⁹ James Trautman, *Pan American Clippers*, 84.

with Pan Am's air service to Macao). Britain eventually caved in with the result that Pan Am won air rights to Hong Kong⁹⁰ and its trans-Pacific air service was operational by 1938.⁹¹

The inauguration of the trans-Pacific air route was a huge commercial boon to Pan Am, but it was also very important in a military sense. To begin with, the Pan Am commercial service supplied the Navy Department with information about weather conditions and helped develop equipment that the military needed for waging a potential war in the Pacific theatre. On January 5, 1935, the Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark wrote to Navy Secretary Swanson in relation to radio facilities: "... As these facilities and services will be essential at the outbreak of war, they should be established in time of peace. This would insure the training of necessary personnel, the improvement of materiel and the reliability of these services for wartime use."⁹²

Beyond weather and communication facilities that would be needed in wartime, the trans-Pacific air route also brought Japan within range of the B-17 strategic bomber, prompting Japanese naval officials to complain to the United States that their country was being threatened by Pan Am airfields in the Philippines, the Aleutians and Midway.⁹³

Lastly, the Franklin Roosevelt administration saw Pan Am's trans-Pacific air route as a lethal weapon in any economic blockade against Japan. In his economic blockade plan, dated October 15, 1937, Admiral Harry Yarnell explained:

The prosecution of the naval war of [economic] strangulation [of Japan] calls for definite types when expansion of the Fleet takes place. The obvious mission, 'to destroy enemy commerce and retain command of the air along the line of bases' indicates these types. Naval air force, submarines and

⁹⁰ Erick Benson, "Suspicious Allies: Wartime Aviation Developments and the Anglo-American International Airline Rivalry, 1939-45," *History and Technology* 17 (2000): 27.

⁹¹ Ronald Jackson, *China Clipper*, xiv.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 79-80.

⁹³ Ronald Jackson, *China Clipper*, xiv; Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 63, 83.

light forces with cruising endurance and dual purpose batteries should be concentrated upon at the expense of increasing the battle-line.⁹⁴

Yarnell's economic blockade plan not only influenced Navy and Army thinking on the economic blockade, but Franklin Roosevelt also embraced it after being forwarded a copy on November 8, 1937 by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William Leahy.⁹⁵

Rebuilding American Airpower (1933-35)

As the trans-Pacific air route was approaching completion in 1938, the Franklin Roosevelt administration embarked upon the air expansion program to increase aircraft production. The primary aim of the administration's air expansion program was to supply military aircraft to Britain, France and possibly the Soviet Union to deter or (if war broke out) defeat Germany. The secondary objective was to strengthen the air defenses of Western Hemisphere not so much to prepare for a German or Japanese attack, but to establish an aerial patrol for enforcing the economic blockade in case war broke out.⁹⁶

The main reason why the Franklin Roosevelt administration was able to carry out this air expansion program was because of its foresight in rebuilding American airpower back in the early to mid-1930s. The main flaw in the scholarship on the U.S. Air Force has been the mistaken assumption that the Franklin Roosevelt administration did not care about airpower. If

⁹⁴ Yarnell to Leahy, October 15, 1937, from Donald B. Schewe (ed.), *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, Second Series, January 1937-August 1939, Volume 7: October-December 1937* (New York and Toronto: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc., 1969), 188-89.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ As far back as December 1937, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was already thinking of ways to patrol the South American coastline to prevent any commerce between Latin America and revisionist powers, such as Japan, in the event of hostilities. The preoccupation with the economic blockade also explains why the Franklin Roosevelt administration was so concerned about German and Italian economic penetration of Latin America, even though this penetration hardly affected the prospects of American firms doing business south of the Rio Grande. See John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 217.

American airpower's fortunes recovered in the second half of the 1930s, the U.S. Air Force historians claim, this was only because the U.S. Air Corps learned how to become team players with the Army and the world situation had worsened.⁹⁷

Yet while the influence of the U.S. Air Corps and global events in shaping U.S. aviation policy cannot be discounted, the fact remains that the Franklin Roosevelt administration recognized the utility of American airpower since the early 1930s and it worked very hard at rebuilding naval aviation and the U.S. Air Corps before the Second World War started.

Roosevelt himself had a favorable view of military aviation since his time as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Woodrow Wilson administration (1913-21). In June 1919, Franklin Roosevelt argued that naval aviation had an important role to play in "cooperation with the fleet...: bombing enemy's men of war and bases; protection of its own fleet from hostile craft; scouting, reporting movements of enemy over smoke screens in low visibility, and over the horizon; detecting mine fields, torpedoes and submarines; spot-shooting and escort and convoy."⁹⁸

Then after taking power in early 1933, the Franklin Roosevelt administration worked with Congress to develop long-term solutions for military aviation. Naval aviation, for example, was in a dismal state in the early 1930s owing to neglect and underinvestment. But the Franklin Roosevelt administration fixed this problem by implementing a three-year program to equip the Navy with war planes beginning in June 1933.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 98, 100, 114-15, 117, 128, 139.

⁹⁸ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 14.

⁹⁹ Raymond L. Buell, "A U.S. Navy 'Second to None,'" *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 12, no. 38 (1933): 1.

In early 1934, the Air Corps reached the lowest ebb in the wake of the airmail crisis.¹⁰⁰ The Franklin Roosevelt administration responded by creating the Baker Board – with former War Secretary Norman Baker as chair – to make recommendations on how to fix the Air Corps.¹⁰¹ Franklin Roosevelt also appointed the Howell Commission in June 1934 to report on the organizational problems of the Air Corps.¹⁰² These reports furnished the basis for the revival of the United States' Air Arm. Responding to the Baker Board's calls for more funding, Franklin Roosevelt asked Congress on January 7, 1935 to increase the army's budget by more than \$48 million with half going to the Air Corps. Congress agreed to this request with the result that spending on the Air Corps recovered thereafter. In addition, the Franklin Roosevelt administration reorganized the Air Corps to reduce the number of disputes over whether to acquire strategic bombers or tactical air units. On March 1, 1935, the Air Corps was divided into two bodies: the Air Corps, headed by Benjamin Foulois, specialized in strategic bombing; and the GHQ Air Force, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Frank Andrews, controlled the tactical air units.¹⁰³

In 1934-35, Franklin Roosevelt and the Navy Department collaborated with Pan Am to pioneer an air route across the Pacific (discussed in greater detail above) that could be converted

¹⁰⁰ In the early 1930s, Congressional Democrats discovered that the Republicans (while controlling the presidency) rigged the bidding process that awarded contracts and airmail subsidies to airlines. The airlines benefitting most had donated money to the Republican Party. In February 1934, Franklin Roosevelt responded to these revelations by giving the airmail contracts to the Air Corps. The results were disastrous. The Air Corps pilots, lacking training, could not cope with the snowstorms in the winter of 1933-34 and some crashed their planes. See Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 114-15, 139.

¹⁰¹ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 126-28.

¹⁰² James Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps: Army Policy toward Aviation, 1919-1941* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air UP, 1998), 147.

¹⁰³ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 57-60; Air Corps Chief Oskar Westover observed that the fiscal year, July 1935-June 1936, was "notable for the very substantial increase in appropriations for the Air Corps." See James Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps: Army Policy toward Aviation, 1919-1941*, 166.

into military use in the event of war, recognizing that the Pan Am airfields benefitted the Air Corps indirectly.¹⁰⁴

The Air Expansion Program (1938-40)

In other words, the future of the U.S. Air Corps was bright primarily because the executive branch and the armed services believed in the efficacy of American airpower. Consequently when the global order broke down, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors focused on strengthening the Air Arm through the air expansion program. This program was guided by two assumptions. The first was that the next World War was going to begin with a stalemate on the Franco-German frontier and that Allied airpower (reinforced with American planes) would help break the deadlock.¹⁰⁵ Thus, Franklin Roosevelt and his loyalists prioritized aircraft shipments to the Allies over strengthening the air defenses of the Western Hemisphere. At the same time, the Franklin Roosevelt administration realized that airpower was as important as naval power in an economic blockade. Therefore, the administration also sought to expand the U.S. Air Corps in the long run to create a powerful Air arm to patrol the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and make the economic blockade against the Axis powers more effective.¹⁰⁶

The first part of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's air expansion program – exporting military aircraft – dated to early 1938. In March 1938, Franklin Roosevelt conspired with a chosen few in his administration to ship military aircraft to the Spanish Loyalists. At that time,

¹⁰⁴ Ronald Jackson, *China Clipper*, 73-74; Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 13-14, 58.

¹⁰⁵ In September 17, 1938, Franklin Roosevelt confided to Interior Secretary Harold Ickes that he believed that the next world war would have a stalemate along the Franco-German border and that the role of airpower was likely to be decisive. Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 127.

¹⁰⁶ John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 217.

the Fascists were beating the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War because they were receiving military support from Germany and Italy. Realizing that a Fascist victory would extend Axis influence to Spain, Franklin Roosevelt hoped to turn the tide of the civil war by selling military aircraft to the Loyalists – even though this violated the Neutrality Act of 1937.* In July 1938, the State Department learned of the plan to sell military aircraft to Spain and, unaware of Franklin Roosevelt’s involvement, proceeded to quash it.¹⁰⁷

While the conspiracy to sell military aircraft to Spain was ongoing, the Franklin Roosevelt administration also planned to export military aircraft to France.¹⁰⁸ Historians have already covered the secret Franco-American diplomacy over aircraft purchases, but two points about this development need to be stressed. First, the Franklin Roosevelt administration began negotiations with the French government on October 4, 1938, four days after the Munich Pact was signed (September 30). The timing suggests that the Franklin Roosevelt administration and the French authorities had little or no faith in appeasement. On the contrary, the United States and France remained as committed as ever to preparing for war irrespective of the peace agreements that were signed with Germany.¹⁰⁹

In addition, Franklin Roosevelt and his inner circle (including Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau) assumed that Britain and France were going to quickly defeat Germany once they

* The Franklin Roosevelt administration declared that a state of war existed in Spain with the result that, under the Neutrality Act of 1937, American manufacturers could not sell weapons to either side in that conflict. Thus, Franklin Roosevelt and his co-conspirators were breaking the law when they tried to ship armaments to Spain.

¹⁰⁷ Dominic Tierney, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and Covert Aid to the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39,” 299-304.

¹⁰⁸ John McVickar Haight, Jr., “Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan,” 225.

¹⁰⁹ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 130; Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (New York: Konecky & Konecky, 1962), 469-470; Thomas Garrett, “Munich 1938: A Failure to Honour Treaty Obligations,” *Multinational Operations* (April 4-8, 2005): 73-74.

were reinforced with military aircraft from the United States¹¹⁰; and, therefore, they considered aircraft sales to be the most important part of the air expansion program. Although he told his cabinet on November 14, 1938 that the airfields in the Western Hemisphere had to be improved for military use and the U.S. Air Corps enlarged to ward off a possible German-Italian-Japanese invasion across both oceans, Franklin Roosevelt later confided to Chief of Staff George Marshall that he did not believe a word of what he told his cabinet and that his real intention was to supply Britain and France with enough aircraft to deter or defeat Hitler.¹¹¹

Furthermore, Franklin Roosevelt and his inner circle attached so much importance to exporting military aircraft to Britain and France that they were willing to accept significant political risks and arouse the ire of the armed services to facilitate these sales. Until the Second World War, most Americans were against selling U.S. manufactured armaments to foreign nations and any politician who acted contrary to their wishes risked his or her political career.¹¹² Yet when the cover for the Franco-American negotiations over aircraft sales was blown in January 1939, Franklin Roosevelt took the politically risky decision of publicly endorsing aircraft exports on the grounds that Britain and France (the recipients of the aircraft) were America's first line of defense in the Atlantic. Luckily for Franklin Roosevelt, the gamble paid off because fears over U.S. national security trumped the national prejudice against U.S. armament sales.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Bear Braumoeller, "The Myth of American Isolationism," 361-63.

¹¹¹ Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 496.

¹¹² War Secretary Harry Woodring, for example, advised Franklin Roosevelt against claiming responsibility for the program of aircraft sales, since it was likely to put his presidency in "an embarrassing position" politically. See Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American foreign policy, 1932-1945*, 174.

¹¹³ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 138; Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 163-65; Michael Sherry, *The Rise of American Airpower*, 84.

In addition to taking on political risks, Franklin Roosevelt went roughshod over his military advisors. Air Corps Chief Henry “Hap” Arnold felt that the latest aircraft models should be reserved for the Air Corps, not exported overseas. War Secretary Harry Woodring opposed aircraft sales because he believed, as a non-interventionist, that the United States should only strengthen its air defenses.¹¹⁴ Yet instead of listening to his military advisors and slowing down aircraft sales, Franklin Roosevelt silenced these men. First the President appointed Treasury Secretary Morgenthau and other reliable people to manage his program of aircraft sales. In March 1940, Franklin Roosevelt put Morgenthau in charge of procuring all war materiel for export and required the armed services to follow the Treasury Secretary’s lead. As a result of Morgenthau’s growing involvement in military affairs, Arnold and Woodring rebelled against the Treasury Department. When the press caught wind of these bureaucratic disagreements and Congress starting inquiring about what was going on, matters reached a head.¹¹⁵

At this point, Franklin Roosevelt threatened to punish the opposition to the Treasury Department’s aircraft program. “Well if Arnold won’t conform,” the President told Press Secretary Steve Early and military advisor “Pa” Watson in early March 1940, “Maybe we will have to move him out of town.” Early and Watson contacted Arnold and warned him to “play ball” or be exiled to Guam.¹¹⁶ In the evening of March 19, Franklin Roosevelt told his cabinet that anyone who did not “play ball” would face “drastic action.” This warning was directed at Woodring and Arnold who were at the meeting. Franklin Roosevelt then added that he expected

¹¹⁴ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 156, 165, 168; Keith D. McFarland, *Harry H. Woodring: A Political Biography of F.D.R. Controversial Secretary of War* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1975), 224-232.

¹¹⁵ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 137, 150-151.

¹¹⁶ Diary entry dated March 12, 1939, “Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt,” *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

his staff to present a united front before Congress in support of increased aircraft sales to Britain and France. After Franklin Roosevelt made these statements, Arnold towed the President's line, but was excluded from important White House conferences thereafter. Woodring, on the other hand, publicly supported Franklin Roosevelt's policy on military aircraft, but tried secretly to hamper the export of B-17 strategic bombers to Britain. When Franklin Roosevelt discovered what Woodring had done, he fired him and appointed Henry Stimson as War Secretary.¹¹⁷

Unfortunately after going to great lengths to justify aircraft sales politically and suppress dissent, Franklin Roosevelt and his clique were unable to supply enough military aircraft to Britain and France to thwart Germany's blitzkrieg into Western Europe in May-June 1940. The main reason for the anemic aircraft sales to Europe was that the aircraft industry took a long time to develop the capacity necessary to produce military aircraft en masse. As a result, France received only 200 military planes by September 1939.¹¹⁸ While the outbreak of the Second World War and the resulting invocation of the Neutrality Act of 1937 did not help aircraft sales, these events were probably not decisive because the aircraft industry was still not fully mobilized to meet the growing armament demands of "total war." After Congress amended the Neutrality Act in early November to allow for the shipment of armaments to victims of aggression, the United States still only managed to sell 750 planes to Britain and 794 planes to France by February 1940.¹¹⁹

Although the aircraft sales were the most important part of the air expansion program, the Franklin Roosevelt administration also wanted to expand the Air Corps beginning in September 1938, which was meant to complement its other plan to improve Pan Am's airfields in Latin

¹¹⁷ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 151; Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 169-170.

¹¹⁸ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American foreign policy, 1932-1945*, 174-75.

¹¹⁹ Morgenthau to Franklin Roosevelt, 8 May 1940, Box 79, President's Secretary File, FDRL.

America for military purposes (see next chapter).¹²⁰ The main rationale for expanding the Air Corps, at least until 1941, was to contribute to the effectiveness of the economic blockade against the Axis powers by patrolling the sea lanes leading up to the Western Hemisphere. Unfortunately, production bottlenecks and the priority given to aircraft sales program hampered the expansion of the Air Corps to a significant extent. On May 22, 1940, Chief of Staff George Marshall complained to the President that the Army could not part with any of its planes since the Air Corps only had 160 pursuit planes and 52 of the 136 heavy bombers needed for defending the Western Hemisphere. Since then, the situation for the Air Corps improved, but it still had only 3304 combat planes on the eve of Pearl Harbor; 1024 of which were stationed overseas.¹²¹

Concluding Remarks

Over the course of the 1930s, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy underwent profound change; the extent of which has not been fully appreciated in most of the existing literature. The most important change in U.S. foreign policy was ideological. Franklin Roosevelt and other Wilsonians in his administration had experienced the First World War, the United States' failure to join the League of Nations, the breakdown of the League of Nations, and the rise of Nazi Germany, Italy and Japan which all augured poorly for the United States' global national security interests. Based upon these experiences, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors concluded by September 1939 that the United States needed to dominate the global order in order to save it. The Franklin Roosevelt administration wanted to establish a "new world order" that not only promoted Wilsonian ideals globally, but ensured American access to the

¹²⁰ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 151.

¹²¹ James Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps*, 174.

world's markets, raw materials and cheap labor. After the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, Under Secretary Welles saw the resulting war as an invaluable opportunity to translate the "new world order" into reality.¹²²

Influenced by its national security philosophy, the Franklin Roosevelt administration embarked upon an aggressively internationalist foreign policy. Between 1935 and 1939, Franklin Roosevelt, the State Department and the Treasury Department drew up plans for the United States to lead the international community in imposing economic sanctions against the Axis powers. Moreover, economic warfare planning had important ramifications for Pan Am and U.S. aviation policy. The Franklin Roosevelt administration realized that the United States had to control the seas with airpower and naval power, buttressed with airfields and naval bases, to successfully enforce economic sanctions. Thus, the Navy Department collaborated with Pan Am in developing the first trans-Pacific air route, with the understanding that its airfields would be converted to military use in case of hostilities. The Franklin Roosevelt administration presided over the revival of the Army Air Corps, since more military aircraft were needed to patrol the sea lanes for the economic blockade to be effectively enforced. In short, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was quietly preparing for economic hostilities against the Axis powers.

The aim of the next chapter is to show how the Franklin Roosevelt administration erected the aerial infrastructure for the economic blockade (1938-40) and disguised it convincingly as Western Hemisphere Defense in order to avoid a popular uproar.

¹²² Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, xvii.

Chapter 3 Aviation Diplomacy in Latin America (1939-40)

One year and nine months into the Second World War (June 1941), the United States was neutral; Germany occupied significant portions of Europe and North Africa, leaving only Britain and its Commonwealth allies standing; and the Soviet Union had not yet entered the war. But Vichy French Admiral Francois Darlan believed that the United States was winning the war despite being neutral. On June 4, 1941, Darlan told U.S. Ambassador in Paris William Leahy,

It is not for me to advise President Franklin Roosevelt, but the United States is the one winner of this war today. You have air bases. Canada, which used to give you difficulties, is now under your influence, and you have a large merchant marine. Your influence is preponderant and even Germany would have to take heed if you would throw that influence for a compromise peace. If the war goes on – and it may last for years – it will mean only destruction of all concerned... Communism alone will prevail throughout Europe.¹

Darlan's observation revealed a crucial development in the war that has received little attention from historians: the U.S.-led economic blockade – based upon Pan Am, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. merchant marine and the U.S. Navy controlling the Atlantic Ocean – that was wrecking the Nazi-controlled European economy.

Moreover, Darlan and his superior President Henri Petain were not alone in their belief that the war could only be won by controlling the Atlantic. On May 27, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt told listeners, "But if the Axis Powers fail to gain control of the seas, then they are certainly defeated... and the criminal leaders who started this war will suffer inevitable disaster."² At the time the speech was given, U.S. air and naval patrols controlled four-fifths of the Atlantic Ocean, thanks to Franklin Roosevelt's announcement on April 11, 1940 to extend the "Neutrality zone" (the area covered by air and naval patrols) from 1000 miles off the coast of the United States to

¹ Leahy to Hull, 4 June 1941, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1941*, 2: 185.

² Radio Address of the President, May 27, 1941, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/052741.html>

2300 miles. These patrols protected neutral shipping and prevented the Axis powers from engaging in trans-Atlantic commerce.³ Thus, based on Franklin Roosevelt's own criteria, the United States was defeating the European Axis powers without having declared war.

The aim of this chapter is to explain the origins of the aerial infrastructure that (along with the naval infrastructure) contributed to the economic blockade's destructive impact. By contracting Pan Am to improve its Latin American airfields for military use and with Britain's cooperation (in Canada and the North Atlantic), the U.S. government monopolized the airspace over the Atlantic Ocean and stopped most of the trans-Atlantic trade flows that benefitted the Axis powers directly and indirectly. The airfields, contributing to the economic blockade's success, were in Canada and along the North Atlantic; the Caribbean and British Guiana (Pan Am leased these British airfields in August and early September 1939 and revamped them for military purposes in October 1940); and Central America and South America (Pan Am militarized these airfields in accordance with the contract signed with the War Department in November 2, 1940).⁴

The first part of this chapter is devoted to contextualizing the aerial-naval economic blockade. Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors intended to wage a war of economic attrition against the Axis powers in which the U.S. economic blockade was decisive. This decision was influenced by two factors: (1) the Franklin Roosevelt administration's realization that the economic blockade would not only destroy the Axis economies, but would also be politically saleable when disguised as a defensive measure; (2) the Franklin Roosevelt administration's

³ Radio Address of the President, September 11, 1941, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/091141.html>. Stewart Halsey Ross, *How Franklin Roosevelt Failed America in World War II* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2006), 16.

⁴ Chapin, Memorandum, 11 June 1940, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1940*, 5: 137-38. Norweb to Hull, Lima, *Ibid.*, 157. Morgenthau to Welles, February 7, 1940, *Ibid.*, 695. Caffery to Hull, May 24, 1940, *Ibid.*, 42-43. Long to Hull, May 24, 1940, *Ibid.*, 105.

assumption (see the second chapter) that it was dealing with countries with dynamic economies and raw material deficiencies who could cause a lot of damage to their neighbors, but were unable to survive the economic strains of a long war.⁵

Moreover, the Franklin Roosevelt administration did not target Germany and Japan solely because they were committing acts of aggression (though this was obviously a factor), but rather because of their economic weaknesses. The Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy during the Second World War was filled with paradoxes. While waging economic warfare against Germany and Japan, the Franklin Roosevelt administration tried to curry favor with Italy (until April 1940) and the Soviet Union, even though the latter two committed acts of aggression as well. The reasons for this double standard are worth emphasizing. The Soviet Union was potentially the second greatest economic and military power in the world and was also seen as an important counterweight (by the State Department) to the Axis powers. Without the Soviet Union's military support now or in the future, the Axis powers would prove to be very difficult to completely defeat over the short term. Therefore the Franklin Roosevelt administration (and for that matter Britain and France) was reluctant to come to blows with the Soviet Union even over acts of aggression, since this country played such an important role in the scheme for the "new world order."⁶ Italy, on the other hand, was even less prepared for war than Germany and Japan and therefore the Franklin Roosevelt administration considered the Italians as a pawn to drive a wedge between the Rome-Berlin Axis and hasten Germany's defeat.⁷

⁵ For a survey on the literature of the constraints imposed by public opinion upon the Franklin Roosevelt administration's foreign policy, see Manfred Landecker, "FDR's Leadership before World War II: The Concept of Anticipatory Reaction," 26-30.

⁶ P Minutes 43, January 30, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59 Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55.

⁷ Maris Mantenicks, "FDR and the Baltic States," In *franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World*, ed. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 95-101. J. Simon Rofe,

Finally the Franklin Roosevelt administration's realization that Germany and Japan could not overcome the economic strains of a protracted war was the chief reason why it set peace terms, beginning in September 1939, which made a mediated settlement to end the Second World War next to impossible. For example, Franklin Roosevelt would not even consider a peace with Germany that permitted the Nazi party to remain in power. Of course, the Franklin Roosevelt administration could not be blamed for pushing for total victory since it believed that Germany and Japan, if they escaped the war through a compromise peace, would simply rebuild their economies and go to war all over again.⁸

In short, the Franklin Roosevelt administration and to a lesser extent the Allies fully realized that they had the upper hand throughout the Second World War, contrary to appearances, and they believed that the economic blockade was their best trump card to play (at least until mid-1940) until victory was achieved.

The second part of this chapter explains the precedent for the Western Hemisphere Defense plan, which was the military plan of 1937-38 for enforcing the economic blockade against Japan; the strategic planning going into Western Hemisphere Defense; and finally the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Defense. Its main thesis is that Western Hemisphere Defense, far from serving a defense purpose, was meant to provide political cover for the Franklin Roosevelt administration's economic blockade.

Lastly the fourth part discusses the U.S.-led economic blockade's short-term and medium-term impact upon the Axis-dominated European economy.

Franklin Roosevelt's Foreign Policy and the Welles Mission, 9. A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), 219.

⁸ Stanley Hilton, "The Welles Mission in Europe, February-March 1940," 95, 100-101.

Context: The War of Economic Attrition (1939-41)

Since the mid-1930s, Franklin Roosevelt and his inner circle intended for the next World War (if one broke out) to be a war of economic attrition where the economic blockade would prove decisive in crushing German and Japanese military power. Two assumptions in particular influenced the Franklin Roosevelt administration to rely primarily upon economic weapons as a war-fighting tool: namely, the belief in the economic blockade's ability to win wars against economically vulnerable adversaries and the ease with which the economic blockade could be disguised as a defense measure to appease public opinion.

In retrospect, the belief that economic blockades could actually win wars (along with airpower) must seem fantastic. Yet Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors genuinely believed that they had in the economic blockade a weapon that could defeat Germany and Japan relatively quickly. On December 17, 1937, for example, Franklin Roosevelt told his cabinet that an Anglo-American economic blockade would force Japan to capitulate in a year.⁹

Later on April 8, 1939, Assistant Treasury Secretary Harry Dexter White persuaded Franklin Roosevelt and Morgenthau¹⁰ that if an economic blockade, involving Britain, France, the Soviet Union and other smaller European and Latin American countries (after they received military guarantees about their safety) was set up¹¹, then:

The aggressor nations [i.e. Germany, Italy and Japan] would be extremely vulnerable to what would virtually amount to an embargo of vital materials. These countries must import substantial quantities of those materials not only to maintain their military strength but to prevent a sharp deterioration in their economy.¹²

⁹ John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 211.

¹⁰ Diary entry dated April 11, 1939, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr. (1938-1945)*, ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

¹¹ White to Morgenthau, April 8, 1939, *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

Moreover, these assumptions about the economic blockade did not change after the Germans occupied the Low Countries and France in April-June 1940. On August 8, 1940, White concluded in his report on embargoing oil exports to Germany and Japan that:

Your proposal may be stated in the following brief terms: 1. If the United States – alone or together with Great Britain – is willing to spend \$25 to \$35 million a month on an oil conservation program and 2. If the Dutch and the British will either destroy their wells in Dutch East Indies, or embargo oil exports except to British areas, and 3. If Russia could be induced to take over the Roumanian wells and, 4. If England would concentrate and extend her bombing attacks on German oil producing centers, then [Japan's]... military operations would be gravely hampered... Germany would be in a desperate plight to continue fighting... Altogether, a risk of \$25 to \$35 million a month seems like a trifling price to pay for a gamble where the stakes are so high and the chance of winning so good.¹³

In addition to its faith in the economic blockade's efficacy, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's decision to rely upon economic weapons also took public opinion into account. Franklin Roosevelt discovered early on that the economic blockade could easily be disguised as a neutrality or defense measure. In mid-July 1937, Franklin Roosevelt came up with the idea of renaming the economic blockade as the "quarantine" against the Axis powers for enhancing American neutrality. On October 5, Franklin Roosevelt employed this idea in his "Quarantine Speech" when he advocated that the United States and its allies should quarantine the aggressors (Germany, Italy and Japan) to prevent war from spreading to the Western Hemisphere.¹⁴ When that subterfuge did not work, Franklin Roosevelt originated the idea a year later of disguising the economic blockade as a defense measure. On September 19, 1938, the President advised British

¹³ White to Morgenthau, "Reducing the Supply of Oil Available to Aggressor Countries," 8 August 1940, NARA 2, RG 56, Box 3.

¹⁴ James MacGregor Burns, Franklin Roosevelt, 318; Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 426; Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Franklin Roosevelt*, 164-65; John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 204-05.

Ambassador Ronald Lindsay that “any mention of sanctions must be carefully avoided” and “Let them call [the economic sanctions] defensive measures or anything plausible.”¹⁵

In other words, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors realized that they did not have to worry about the political consequences of pushing ahead with the economic blockade that could be justified on national defense grounds (stockpiling raw materials for defense) or as a measure to prevent economic dislocation. In fact, the Franklin Roosevelt administration skillfully employed both justifications in order to rally popular opinion behind economic sanctions.

Context: Paradoxes in the Franklin Roosevelt Administration’s Foreign Policy

Although successful in justifying economic sanctions as a defense measure, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s foreign policy was still constrained by public opinion in the sense that its war strategy – combining the economic blockade with enhancing Allied airpower – was only effective against enemies with highly developed economies (which consumed more raw materials) and raw material shortages, such as Germany and Japan. Thus, the Franklin Roosevelt administration gradually enforced the economic blockade against Germany and Japan, while maintaining friendly economic relations with two other “aggressor nations,” Italy (until April 1940) and the Soviet Union.¹⁶

The Franklin Roosevelt administration realized the Soviet Union shared Germany’s ambition for territorial expansion. On August 24, 1939, Charge d’Affairs in Moscow Charles Bohlen provided the White House with details on a secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact which stated, “Eastern Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Bessarabia were recognized

¹⁵ Barbara Farnham, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis*, 106-107.

¹⁶ Maris Mantenieks, “FDR and the Baltic States,” In *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World* ed. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 95-101; J. Simon Rofo, *Franklin Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy and the Welles Mission*, 9.

as spheres of Soviet vital interest, while Western Poland would fall under German hegemony.”

Yet far from changing its U.S. foreign policy in light of this fact, the Franklin Roosevelt administration kept the protocols secret.¹⁷

In late 1939 and 1940, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s passive policy towards the Soviet Union continued even as the Soviets occupied lands they considered to be within their sphere of vital interest. On September 17, 1939, Soviet forces occupied eastern Poland, but Franklin Roosevelt refused to invoke the Neutrality Act against the Soviet Union.¹⁸ In September and October, the Soviet Union followed up this conquest by imposing mutual assistance pacts on Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which Secretary of State Hull believed amounted to “military domination of these two countries [Latvia and Estonia].” Then in December, the Soviets launched an unprovoked invasion into Finland, a small country which in Franklin Roosevelt’s words was “so infinitesimally small that it could do no conceivable possible damage to the Soviet Union.” As these events unfolded, the Franklin Roosevelt administration waited until December 1939 to take action and even then its response was simply to condemn the Soviet invasion of Finland and impose a non-binding moral embargo.¹⁹ This response, moreover, was only made because the American people were outraged that the Soviets had invaded Finland unprovoked.²⁰

¹⁷ White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939, “Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt,” *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

¹⁸ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, 208.

¹⁹ Maris Manteniekis, “FDR and the Baltic States,” In *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World*, eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 95-96.

²⁰ The moral embargo against the Soviet Union, in fact, was so ineffectual that Soviet purchases from the United States, between November and February 1940, more than doubled over the previous year. See Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, 209.

Then as the Finnish-Soviet war drew to a close, the State Department worked to mend U.S.-Soviet relations. In February 1940, Secretary of State Hull informed Soviet Ambassador in Washington D.C. Konstantin Oumansky, “My government will be glad, whenever the USSR sees fit, to return to a set of policies to develop more fully the relations of peace and mutual profitable cooperation in every practical way.” In July 1940, the Soviets formally annexed the Baltic States after holding rigged referenda, but the Franklin Roosevelt administration decided against doing anything. Baltic diplomats Zadeikis (Lithuania), Bilmanis (Latvia) and Kaiv (Estonia) all sought an audience with the Secretary of State Hull to complain about Soviet strong arm tactics in the Baltic region, only to be turned away by the State Department.²¹

In summary, the Franklin Roosevelt administration set a double standard with concern to Germany and the Soviet Union. Germany committed acts of aggression against four countries in 1938-39 and, as a result, faced another world war and an economic blockade. On top of that, the Franklin Roosevelt administration set peace terms – calling for the Nazis to leave power – that made a negotiated settlement to end the Second World War next to impossible.²² The Soviet Union, on the other hand, committed acts of aggression against six states in 1939-40, but the Franklin Roosevelt administration continued to maintain good relations with the Soviets. Little wonder Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs (State Department’s subdivision) Loy Henderson complained about the hypocrisy in the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s foreign policy to Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle and Advisor on Political Relations James C. Dunn on July 15, 1940:

²¹ Maris Manteniekis, “FDR and the Baltic States,” In *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World*, eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 96-97.

²² Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American foreign policy, 1932-1945*, 207.

Is the Government of the United States to apply certain standards of judgment and conduct to aggression by Germany and Japan which it will not apply to aggression by the Soviet Union? In other words, is the Government of the United States to follow one policy with respect to, say, Czechoslovakia, Denmark and German-occupied Poland and another policy with respect to Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Finland, which before the end of the year is likely to suffer the same fate as the other three Baltic states? Is the United States to continue to refuse to recognize the fruits of aggression regardless of who the aggressor may be, or for reasons of expediency to close its eyes to the fact that certain nations are committing aggression upon their neighbors?²³

This is not to say that Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors were not sincere about their pursuit of world peace. Yet the Franklin Roosevelt administration also recognized the importance of accomplishing this aim within the capabilities of its foreign policy. In other words, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors targeted Germany and Japan not simply because they were committing acts of aggression, but because they knew the economic blockade could destroy them. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was considered the world's second greatest military and economic power and self-sufficient in raw materials. Therefore, the chances of an Anglo-American economic blockade forcing the Soviet Union to capitulate were uncertain at best. An additional factor, which influenced the Franklin Roosevelt administration, was the possibility of the Soviet Union entering the war on the side of the Allies.²⁴

The Franklin Roosevelt administration's double standard did not apply to the Soviet Union alone. Between December 1939 and April 1940, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors also tried to keep Italy neutral for the duration of the war, even though this country committed acts of aggression in the past. On April 8, 1939, the Treasury Department even put Italy alongside Germany and Japan as prime targets for a U.S. economic blockade in the near

²³ Maris Manteniks, "FDR and the Baltic States," In *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World*, eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 97.

²⁴ White to Morgenthau, 31 March 1939, NARA 2, RG 56, Entry 360, Box 2.

future.²⁵ Yet Franklin Roosevelt sent Welles on a tour of Europe in late 1939-early 1940 partly to keep Italy neutral for the duration of the conflict.²⁶

The Franklin Roosevelt administration's diplomatic effort to keep Italy neutral also had another dimension relating to aviation. For military reasons, the U.S. government only established air routes to countries that were allies of the United States. Therefore, when the State Department and Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) started helping American Export Airlines (Amex) establish a New York-Cadiz-Rome air service, these efforts were significant.²⁷ In January 1940, European Manager for Amex F. Lestrade Brown surveyed landing sites in Malaga, Cadiz and Mar Menor as possible Spanish steppingstones on the air route to Italy.²⁸ On February 6, 1940, Assistant Secretary George Messersmith reported to Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace that the State Department instructed the American embassies in Lisbon and Rome to take up with their accredited governments all matters "relating to flying between the United States and Europe."²⁹

Despite the progress made, the air service did not happen because Italy planned to join Germany in the Second World War. On April 5, 1940, Francis de Wolf reported to Chief of International Communications (IN, subdivision of the State Department) Thomas Burke, "As far as the Italian situation is concerned, no further action is apparently possible at this time."³⁰ On April 28, Franklin Roosevelt told Morgenthau, "I want you to take care of Italy... Don't let any

²⁵ White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

²⁶ J. Simon Rofe, *Franklin Roosevelt's Foreign Policy and the Welles Mission*, 9.

²⁷ Weddel to Hull, 15 March 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1022, Box 4040.

²⁸ Robert Scotten to Hull, 29 January, 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/974, Ibid.

²⁹ Messersmith to Wallace, 6 February 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/947, Ibid.

³⁰ Francis deWolf (IN) to Burke, April 5, 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1022, Ibid.

of their money out of this country.”³¹ Franklin Roosevelt’s instincts in this matter were sound because on June 10, 1940, Italy declared war on France.³² Once these events came to pass, an air service to Italy was no longer possible. In October 1941, President Slater of Amex testified to the Civil Aeronautics Board:

I was told very definitely in the case of Spain, Italy and Germany, that there was a question of national policy which was involved, and that it was the desire of the State Department that we should not go to these countries or attempt to go into these countries, because it was their definite wish that we should not become involved with them.³³

The final word on the war of economic attrition was that the Franklin Roosevelt administration had enough confidence in the economic blockade’s destructive power to impose terms for a mediated peace – such as the Nazis leaving power – that Germany would never accept and, in the process, prolong a war that may otherwise have ended in a few months (albeit unsatisfactorily). On September 11, 1939, Franklin Roosevelt explained to U.S. Ambassador to Britain Joseph Kennedy that the American people “would not support any move for peace initiated by this Government that would consolidate or make possible a survival of a regime of force and of aggression.” Later Chamberlain candidly admitted that three of Franklin Roosevelt’s “four freedoms imply the disappearance of the present regime in Germany which could neither allow nor survive freedom of information, freedom of religion and freedom for trade.”³⁴

Having taken this uncompromising position, Franklin Roosevelt repeatedly turned down suggestions for a mediated peace from Berlin and Brussels in the first two weeks of October

³¹ Diary Entry, April 29, 1940, “Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt,” *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

³² Charles F. Delzell, “Pius XII, Italy, and the Outbreak of War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 2, No. 4, (Oct., 1967): 158.

³³ IN, 12 October 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1129, Box 4041.

³⁴ Stanley Hilton, “The Welles Mission in Europe, February-March 1940,” 95.

1939. On October 6, Hitler declared publicly that the Allies and Germany had nothing to gain by the continued fighting and the American press reported extensively on Germany's interest in American mediation to end the war. Yet on October 7, Franklin Roosevelt told his Secretary Marvin McIntyre, "If you believe this morning's papers, you will expect me to be in Berlin talking peace with Hitler next Monday morning. Fortunately you agree with me about what one reads in the papers."³⁵

On October 12, William R. Davis (a U.S. businessman with extensive German contacts) told Franklin Roosevelt that Hermann Goering wanted him to mediate a peace. Davis added that the President "could, if he would, force peace on Europe." In response, Franklin Roosevelt said he would act on an official proposal from Berlin, but that London unfortunately refused to negotiate. In other words, Franklin Roosevelt shoved responsibility onto the British for continuing the war. Davis, however, misinterpreted Franklin Roosevelt's reply and informed Goering that the U.S. government was ready to mediate. Goering then sent a message to Franklin Roosevelt imploring him to support Germany's peace drive. Upon receiving this German peace proposal and learning what Davis had told Goering about the United States being ready to mediate a peace, Franklin Roosevelt was outraged. Suffice to say, nothing came of Goering's peace overtures.³⁶

Later in October, King Leopold III of Belgium declared publicly that Franklin Roosevelt was "the only person in the world" who could prevent the current conflict from hardening into "an irrevocable, bitter, real, long and horrible war." Leopold's statement prompted Franklin Roosevelt to reply that an American effort for peace will only occur if it brought peace. Of

³⁵ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American foreign policy, 1932-1945*, 207. "Wide Accord is Aim," *NYT*, October 6, 1939, 1.

³⁶ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American foreign policy, 1932-1945*, 207.

course, the President's response was disingenuous because there was never any guarantee that negotiations would bring peace.³⁷

Finally in December 1939, Franklin Roosevelt privately complained to Morgenthau that U.S. Ambassador in London Kennedy "always has been an appeaser and always will be an appeaser... If Germany or Italy made a good peace offer tomorrow... Joe would start working on the King and his friend, the Queen, and from there on down to get everybody to accept it... He's just a pain in the neck to me." In other words, Franklin Roosevelt was not even willing to agree to German peace terms that were reasonable.³⁸

In fairness to Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors, though, they wanted to avoid a situation where Germany (having subdued the Poles) negotiated a temporary peace, rebuilt its economic and military power, and went to war again in the near future. In the same month, Franklin Roosevelt confided to William Allen White, "I do not want this country to take part in a patch-up, temporary peace which would blow up in our faces in a year or two. If... Germany and Russia win the war or force a peace favorable to them, the situation of your civilization and mine is indeed in peril."³⁹ In other words, the Franklin Roosevelt administration believed that the only viable road to peace was to trap the Hitler regime in a war of its own making and subject it to the full brunt of the economic blockade.

The Origins of Western Hemisphere Defense

For the economic blockade to succeed, the Franklin Roosevelt administration needed to establish a "Neutrality Belt" of U.S. warships; incorporate Pan Am's transatlantic air services

³⁷ Ibid., 207-208.

³⁸ Ibid., 207.

³⁹ Stanley Hilton, "The Welles Mission in Europe, February-March 1940," 100-101.

into the economic blockade's infrastructure; gain access to the air and naval bases along the eastern and western coastlines of the Western Hemisphere to support its aerial and naval patrols in the Atlantic and Pacific and detain enemy merchant ships; and liquidate German and Italian airlines operating in South America. Within this context, the Pan Am played a very important role, since its commercial airfields could be converted to military use and utilized by the U.S. Air Corps to enforce the blockade and since the airline itself could replace the German and Italian airlines along strategically important air routes in South America.⁴⁰

When erecting the aerial and naval infrastructure for the economic blockade against Germany and Japan, the Franklin Roosevelt administration took the precaution of disguising these economic warfare preparations as Western Hemisphere Defense. Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors realized that the economic blockade was an act of war and therefore its discovery was bound produce a popular backlash from the American people.⁴¹

The policy of Western Hemisphere Defense came into being in late 1938, but its precedent (which affected only the Pacific) was the Franklin Roosevelt administration's economic blockade plan against Japan of 1937-38. It is to be recalled that in July 1937 Franklin Roosevelt proposed an economic blockade against Japan to Under Secretary Welles in reaction to the recent Japanese invasion of China. Later in December 12, Japanese aircraft sank the U.S.S. *Panay* on

⁴⁰ As historian Willard Range explained, "In Franklin Roosevelt's geopolitics, however, control over the seas involved much more than mere naval supremacy. It required also control of the air over the seas ..." See Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order*, 16.

⁴¹ White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

the Yangtze River, after mistaking it for a Chinese warship, thereby providing Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors with one more reason to enforce economic sanctions against Japan.⁴²

Within the context of economic warfare planning, the military planners advanced several schemes for strangling the Japanese economy. Admiral Harry Yarnell's plan (dated October 15, 1937) envisaged the use of airpower and naval power (which by implication operated from airfields and naval bases in the Pacific, Latin America and Western Canada) to sever trade between Japan and the Western Hemisphere.⁴³ On January 13, 1938, Captain Royal E. Ingersoll (Chief of the U.S. Navy's Chief of War Plans) detailed the latest draft of the military plan to strangle the Japanese economy:

The U.S. Navy will be responsible for operations against Japanese trade throughout the West Coast of North and South America, including the Panama Canal and the passage around Cape Horn. The United States Navy will also assume responsibility for the general naval defense of the West Coast of Canada.⁴⁴

These military plans of 1937-38 were similar to the plan for Western Hemisphere Defense in the following respects. To begin with, they envisioned naval bases and airfields along the Pacific seaboard of the Western Hemisphere for the purpose of helping U.S. Air and Naval forces enforce the economic blockade.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the "Neutrality Belt" of U.S. warships (which appeared in September 1939) had its origins in the 1937-38 military plans for the economic blockade. The only difference was that Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors referred to

⁴² John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 204, 208.

⁴³ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 97-100.

⁴⁴ Royal Ingersoll and Russell Willson, "Record of Conversations," January 13, 1938, Records of the War Plans Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Folder "Correspondence Re: British-U.S. Conversations in London, 1938-1939," Classified Archives, Naval History Division, Washington D.C.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

the would-be “Neutrality Belt” as the naval quarantine, but the idea behind it was the same. Like the “Neutrality Belt,” the naval quarantine was justified on the grounds of preventing belligerent Japanese vessels from reaching the Western Hemisphere, when in fact it was meant to sever Japan’s trade with the Western Hemisphere.⁴⁶ Moreover, Franklin Roosevelt associated the quarantine with neutrality when he told press reporters on October 6, 1937 that the quarantine may lead to “stronger neutrality” for the United States.⁴⁷ Lastly, the 1937-38 military plans (like the Western Hemisphere Defense plan) were couched in national defense terms, which was why historian Mark Lowenthal believed that the Franklin Roosevelt administration was strengthening the air and naval defenses against Japan.⁴⁸ In fact, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors were not particularly worried about Japan attacking the United States. On December 17, 1937, the President told his cabinet that the economic blockade could force Japan to capitulate in a year.⁴⁹

The reason for couching the military plans of 1937-38 in national defense terms then was to make these plans palatable to Congress, whose support was crucial if economic sanctions were to be leveled against the Japan or any other nation. Moreover, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s tactic of disguising potentially controversial measures as defensive measures was not restricted to the economic blockade, but also applied to other areas of public policy. As Air Force historian Rondall Rice explained, “The country’s isolationist attitude forced military leaders always to frame their funding and equipment requests in terms of protecting and defending the continent.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ John McVickar Haight, Jr., “Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan,” 204.

⁴⁷ Samuel Rosenman, *Working with Franklin Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Bros., Publishers, 1952), 168.

⁴⁸ Mark Lowenthal, “Franklin Roosevelt and the Coming of the War,” 416-417.

⁴⁹ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 97-100.

⁵⁰ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 140.

Plans for Western Hemisphere Defense

As noted previously, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's initial effort to impose an economic blockade against Japan in 1937-38 foundered owing to American pacifist opinion and Britain's refusal to cooperate. A year later, the economic blockade plan was revived again, but this time it was to be directed against Germany, Italy and Japan and was disguised convincingly as Western Hemisphere Defense.⁵¹

The existing literature has argued for the most part that the policy of Western Hemisphere Defense came into being in reaction to perceived fears of an Axis invasion of the Western Hemisphere. But this interpretation does not account for the context from which this policy emerged. In September 1938, the Hitler regime demanded the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia and the outbreak of war seemed to be a distinct possibility. Yet in his secret conversations with Ickes (September 17) and British Ambassador Lindsay (September 19), Franklin Roosevelt never expressed any fears about Germany mounting a transatlantic invasion of the Western Hemisphere. On September 17, Franklin Roosevelt told Ickes that, if a general war did break out in Europe, he expected Germany and the Western Allies to get bogged down along the Franco-German frontier. Franklin Roosevelt's solution for helping the Western Allies win the war, under those circumstances, was to wage a "defensive war" against Germany based upon the economic blockade and the use of Anglo-French airpower in retaliation against German airstrikes. He added, "The morale of the German people would crack under aerial attacks much sooner than that of the French or the English." In other words, Franklin Roosevelt's war strategy was not

⁵¹ John McVickar Haight, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan," 224-225; Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 127.

based on defending the Western Hemisphere, but on working with Britain and France to crush Germany with the economic blockade and possibly airpower.⁵²

Two days later, Franklin Roosevelt elaborated upon his plan in a secret conversation with British Ambassador Ronald Lindsay. He argued that “any suggestion of sanctions must be carefully avoided” and the western democracies should avoid “declaring war on Germany at all. Let them call [the sanctions] defensive measures or anything plausible. If Germany declared war on us and we refrained from doing so he might yet be able to find that we’re not at war, and that the prohibition of export of arms need not apply to us.” In other words, Franklin Roosevelt was proposing two things. The first was economic sanctions justified on defense grounds to make them palatable to public opinion. Second, Franklin Roosevelt’s strategy of “defensive war” was based on the premise that it was politically easier to supply Britain and France with armaments if they avoided declaring war and only took up arms to protect their borders. This “defensive war” strategy became hugely important later when Britain and France decided not to attack Germany (though they did declare war) during the first seven months of the war, thereby ushering in the “phony war.” The rationale for the “phony war,” from the Allied point of view, was to not be seen as going on the attack and thereby make it politically easier for the Franklin Roosevelt administration to supply armaments to the “victims of aggression.”⁵³

Thus, Franklin Roosevelt had a clear idea of how the United States was going to confront Germany while staying neutral. The aerial and naval infrastructure for enforcing the economic blockade in the Western Hemisphere was going to be called “defensive measures.” Britain and

⁵² Alan Bullock, *Hitler*, 456-57, 459; Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 127; Stephen Bunch, “FDR and Limited War in Europe: A Plausible Middle Course?” in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World* eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 62.

⁵³ Barbara Farnham, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis*, 106-107. Carter Findley and John Rothney, *Twentieth Century World* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006), 224.

France were going to follow the same war strategy as the Franklin Roosevelt administration, but in Europe. Moreover, they were also going to receive military aircraft from the United States to deter future German airstrikes. In this way, the United States and its allies were going to wage war (or more specifically economic warfare) without declaring it, because the Franklin Roosevelt administration was going to pursue “defensive measures” in the Western Hemisphere while Britain and France were going to be America’s first line of defense in the Atlantic. Lastly Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors were convinced that they would eventually implement this “defensive war” strategy regardless of what happened at the Munich Conference. Franklin Roosevelt confided to Lindsay that if the Munich crisis over the Sudetenland did not precipitate another European war, German demands elsewhere in Europe would.⁵⁴

Later on November 14, 1938, Franklin Roosevelt told his cabinet that the Western Hemisphere was in danger of being invaded and required the protection of a network of military airfields extending from the North Pole to the South Pole. Most historians regard this episode as proof that the Franklin Roosevelt administration was erecting air defenses in the Western Hemisphere to prevent an Axis invasion. Yet this interpretation is implausible for these reasons. To begin with, no explanation has been given as to why Franklin Roosevelt apparently changed his mind from believing (in September) that the German forces would get bogged down in eastern France to arguing on November 14 that they would invade the Western Hemisphere. In all likelihood, Franklin Roosevelt had not changed his mind, since no revelations about

⁵⁴ Franklin Roosevelt later explained Western Hemisphere to a few senators in this way in January 31, 1939. Skillfully employing the national defense rationale, Franklin Roosevelt claimed that “American security depended upon the continued independence of Europe’s democracies and neutral states.” If Britain and France were to succumb to a German invasion, then Africa and Latin America will surely follow, leading to the “gradual encirclement of the United States by the removal of the first lines of defense.” Galen Perras, *Franklin Roosevelt and the origins of the Canadian-American security alliance, 1933-1945*, 49; Barbara Farnham, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis*, 107.

Germany's behavior emerged between September and November 1938 to suggest that the latter was capable of sending substantial armed forces across the Atlantic.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Franklin Roosevelt told Chief of Staff George Marshall after the November 14th meeting that he did not believe that the Axis powers could invade the Western Hemisphere, but he could not tell his cabinet that his intention was to sell enough military aircraft to Britain and France to deter or defeat Germany.⁵⁶

In the days leading up to the November 14th meeting, Franklin Roosevelt directed the military planners in the Joint Board (an agency within the War Department) to develop their own plans for Western Hemisphere Defense. Between November 8, 1938 and April 21, 1939, the Joint Planning Committee or JPC (following the Joint Board's instruction) devised a defense strategy for the entire Western Hemisphere on the assumption that "Germany and Italy might be expected to encroach progressively in Latin America, initially through economic penetration, then through political interference that might reduce Latin American government to a subservient or even colonial status, and finally through the establishing of military bases." Judging from the language of the JPC plan, which became the basis for the U.S. strategic planning that followed, the primary goal was to use American naval and airpower to sever all economic connections between the enemy and the Western Hemisphere. Otherwise, according to the JPC plan, there was no way to prevent Germany and Italy from establishing military bases in Latin America.⁵⁷ Of course, the idea of economic penetration resulting in military penetration was (as Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors recognized) implausible, since Germany's trade with Latin America (Germany was Latin America's biggest European trading partner) was shrinking in 1938-39.

⁵⁵ Jeffery Underwood, *The Wings of Democracy*, 127; Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 496.

⁵⁶ Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 496.

⁵⁷ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 5, 7-8.

Therefore, if one assumes the JPC's claims about economic penetration are valid, Germany's capacity to use its economic leverage to bargain for political influence or military bases diminished in the months leading up to the Second World War.⁵⁸

Moreover, this economic warfare objective makes sense considering that the Treasury Department was developing its own plan to deprive the Axis powers of strategic raw materials while the JPC report was being written. On March 31, 1939, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Harry White urged Treasury Secretary Morgenthau and the President to embark on "an aggressive, bold policy" to impose economic sanctions against the "aggressor nations" in collaboration with the Soviet Union and Britain.⁵⁹ On April 8/10, 1939, White and his staff developed a plan for destroying the German, Italian and Japanese economies that called for international agreements with producers of strategic raw materials around the world, including those in the Western Hemisphere like Argentina (cotton, oil, tin, tungsten ore), Brazil (cotton, manganese, rubber), Bolivia (tin, tungsten ore), Canada (copper, nickel, oil), Chile (copper, manganese), Colombia (oil), Cuba (copper, manganese), Mexico (copper, cotton, oil), Peru (copper, cotton, oil), and Venezuela (oil). As the JPC planning indicated, the United States could not enforce the economic warfare provisions in these countries without naval bases and airfields and American naval power and airpower positioned throughout the Western Hemisphere⁶⁰

One could argue, using the JPC's strategic planning as evidence, that the Franklin Roosevelt administration was only garnering Pan American support for the economic blockade for defense purposes. Yet this argument falls flat given that the Franklin Roosevelt

⁵⁸ "Reich Loses Trade in Western World," *NYT*, June 23, 1939, 35.

⁵⁹ White to Morgenthau, 31 March 1939, NARA 2, RG 56, Entry 360, Box 2.

⁶⁰ White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

administration was receiving economic intelligence, beginning in the spring of 1939, indicating that Germany, Italy and Japan lacked the financial and economic resources to wage a successful war on the European continent, to say nothing of the Americas.

Yet if the national defense rationale was dubious, the Franklin Roosevelt administration had compelling political reasons for mentioning it repeatedly in the Western Hemisphere Defense plans, including the one for aeronautical development. At a meeting of the representatives of the State, Navy and War Departments and the Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) on September 15, 1939, Chairman of CAA Harllee Branch said that “national defense might be the only angle from which Congress could be approached with a view to securing an appropriation.” State Department representative Harley Notter, however, disagreed on the grounds “that it would not be necessary to make specific mention of national defense in as much as neutrality and national defense would be uppermost in the minds of members of Congress.” After some discussion, the representatives agreed that “the emphasis should be placed upon national interest rather than national defense.” Samuel Gates of CAA said, “He was now inclined to agree with Captain Molten [Navy] and Mr. Notter that it is the commercial angle rather than the national defense angle which should be stressed.”⁶¹

In short, the armed services and government agencies often concerned themselves with “national defense” when they were searching for a way to convince Congress to award higher appropriations or pass desired legislation (such as the aeronautical development program). This did not mean, however, that many officials inside the Franklin Roosevelt administration did not sincerely believe in the national defense rationale for certain policy measures; but, as has so often been the case with government bureaucracies, they were kept out of the loop as regards the

⁶¹ Plan for Aeronautical Development in the Western Hemisphere, 16 September 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-17, Box 176.

motives for funding strategic bombers, the aeronautical development program, the “Neutrality Belt” and other policy initiatives. At the September 15th meeting on the aeronautical program, Harley Notter stressed “the necessity of maintaining the closest secrecy with respect to what is said in this committee” (he was referring to those discussions that related to the “national defense angle” in particular) which meant he did not want other administration officials to know that national defense was being used for political expediency.⁶²

Implementing Western Hemisphere Defense: Stockpiling Raw Materials, the “Neutrality Belt,” and Pan Am’s Transatlantic Air Routes

In the months leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the Franklin Roosevelt administration started to implement the components of its economic warfare plan. These included stockpiling strategic raw materials, creating the “Neutrality Belt,” converting Pan Am’s transatlantic routes for military use, negotiations with Britain and Latin America over the establishment of U.S. airfields and naval bases in the Western Hemisphere, and the liquidation of German and Italian airlines in South America.

The first part of the economic warfare plan – stockpiling strategic raw materials – was possibly the most brilliant. On April 8, 1939, Assistant Treasury Secretary White argued that the economic blockade was bound to be unpopular and therefore “serious consideration should be given to the accumulation of strategic materials by the United States on other grounds.” These “other grounds” included stockpiling raw materials for “adequate defense” and preventing “our economy from being disorganized” by the outbreak of another World War.⁶³ Soon after White

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939, “Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt,” *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

proffered his advice, Franklin Roosevelt and advisors developed a rationale for stockpiling raw materials and, by implication, denying them to the Axis powers that no one could disagree with. They argued that the growing likelihood of war made it necessary for the United States to pass a War Measures Bill to build up reserves of raw materials necessary for making armaments and enhancing the nation's defense. Since no one could dispute this rationale, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was able to refute potential charges of denying these materials to other nations.⁶⁴

Unfortunately for the Franklin Roosevelt administration, Congress considered the plan to stockpile strategic raw materials to be too expensive and awarded only a fraction of the appropriation requested. Morgenthau's economic blockade plan called for public expenditures of \$100 million per month on raw materials for ten months in order to keep them out of the hands of the Axis powers. Considering the hundreds of billions of dollars the U.S. government ended up spending to defeat the Axis powers, Morgenthau's economic blockade plan for winning the war was relatively cheap. Yet Congress' foresight rarely extended beyond the next mid-term election and, as a result, it was unprepared to authorize expenditures on the scale required by Morgenthau's economic blockade plan.⁶⁵ When Congress passed the War Measures Bill on June 5 and Franklin Roosevelt signed it into law three days later, Morgenthau's economic blockade plan was reduced to a shell. Congress authorized the President to spend \$100 million over four years on strategic raw materials needed for national defense⁶⁶ and only \$10 million was made available in 1939.⁶⁷ If that was not bad enough, the executive was only allowed to purchase tin, manganese, tungsten, chromium, quinine, manila fiber, optical glass and quartz crystal in 1939.

⁶⁴ John Crider, "Government Plan to Bar War is Told," *NYT*, December 18, 1939, 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ "War Materials Bill Passes Both Houses," *NYT*, 6 June 1939, 2; "Signs War Stocks Act," *NYT*, 9 June 1939, 10.

⁶⁷ Percy Bidwell, "Our Economic Warfare," 430.

Other strategic raw materials – such as oil, copper, steel, lead, sulfur, bauxite, zinc, rubber and nickel – were off limits.⁶⁸

The consequences of this watered down bill are debatable, but a few conclusions can safely be drawn. To begin with, the Franklin Roosevelt administration lacked the money (under the War Measures Bill) to incentivize the Soviet Union to sell raw materials to the United States instead of Germany;⁶⁹ and this probably was one factor in Soviet dictator Josef Stalin's decision to negotiate an economic treaty (August 21) and non-aggression pact (August 23) with the Hitler regime.⁷⁰ These two treaties had huge implications for Eastern Europe. To begin with, most Eastern European governments would only collaborate with the United States, Britain and France in depriving Germany of raw materials if they received military guarantees (regarding their sovereignty) from the Soviet Union in return. When the Soviet Union aligned itself with Germany, the Eastern European governments' enthusiasm for participating in an economic blockade faded. Thus, Germany escaped encirclement and survived the early stages of the war.⁷¹

If the War Materials Bill was not a great success, the same cannot be said for the other components of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's economic blockade plan. The "Neutrality Belt" of U.S. warships (Franklin Roosevelt's brain child) was created officially to ensure American neutrality by keeping all belligerent warships 1000 miles away from the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards of the Western Hemisphere. Yet in fact, this purported rationale was disingenuous because there was no way for the U.S. warships to prevent belligerent warships

⁶⁸ Roy Veatch, Memorandum, 8 August 1939, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1939*, 1: 854.

⁶⁹ John Crider, "Government Plan to Bar War is Told," *NYT*, December 18, 1939, 1.

⁷⁰ Edward E. Ericson III, "Karl Schnurre and the Evolution of Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1936-1941," *German Studies Review* 21, No. 2 (May, 1998): 263; Paul N. Hehn, *A Low Dishonest Decade: The Great Powers, Eastern Europe and the Economic Origins of World War II, 1930-1941*, 39.

⁷¹ Bullitt to Hull, 22 August 1939, Box 19, President's Secretary File, 740.00/2106 Sec. 1-7, FDRL.

from entering the waters appurtenant to the Western Hemisphere without engaging them on the open seas, which was likely to lead to war with the belligerents and possibly to the president's impeachment.⁷² Instead, the real motive for the Neutrality Belt was to cut off Axis commerce with the Western Hemisphere. In early September 1939, the U.S. naval patrol was already detaining German merchant ships at American and Latin American ports before the "Neutrality Belt" came into being. The creation of the "Neutrality Belt" simply institutionalized this policy step.⁷³ On October 10, 1940, Navy Secretary Frank Knox informed Admiral J.O. Richardson, commander of the Pacific fleet, that the president wanted the "Neutrality Belt" for the Pacific to prepare to blockade all of Japan's maritime traffic to North and South America.⁷⁴

In addition to the "Neutrality Belt," the Franklin Roosevelt administration also started to use Pan Am's transatlantic air route for military purposes. After years of complex aviation diplomacy (1928-39)⁷⁵, the State Department, Pan Am and the British government finally inaugurated a transatlantic air service on May 20, 1939.⁷⁶ The result of these aviation negotiations was a virtual Anglo-American monopoly over transatlantic air travel, which proved

⁷² Stewart Halsey Ross, *How Franklin Roosevelt Failed America in World War II*, 16.

⁷³ Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and America foreign policy, 1932-1945*, 202.

⁷⁴ Stewart Halsey Ross, *How Franklin Roosevelt Failed America in World War II*, 10.

⁷⁵ For further reading on these complex Anglo-American aviation negotiations and Pan Am's aerial surveys of the trans-Atlantic air route, see James Trautman, *Pan American Clippers*, 84, 90; R.E.G. Davies, *Airlines of the United States*, 246-47; R.E.G. Davies, *Pan Am: An Airline and its Aircraft*, 43; Oliver Lissitzyn, "The Diplomacy of Air Transport," *Foreign Affairs* 19, No. 1 (October 1940): 163, 164, 166-67; Albert Stoffel, "American Bilateral Air Transport Agreements on the Threshold of the Jet Transport Age," *Journal of Air Law and Commerce* 26, No. 2 (1959): 120; Edward Warner, "Atlantic Airways," 476, 481; Richard Smith, "The Intercontinental Airliner and the Essence of Airplane Performance, 1929-1939," *Technology and Culture* 24, No. 3 (July 1983): 435, 440; Marilyn Bender and Selig Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument: Pan Am, Juan Trippe: The Rise and Fall of an American Entrepreneur*, 129; Erik Benson, "Suspicious Allies: Wartime Aviation Developments and the Anglo-American International Airline Rivalry, 1939-45," *History and Technology* 17 (2000): 27-28.

⁷⁶ Oliver Lissitzyn, "The Diplomacy of Air Transport," 164; Erik Benson, "Suspicious Allies," 28.

indispensable to the United States and Britain when the time came to implement the aerial blockade against Germany. In order to show how they enforced the blockade of Germany from the air, the extent of Anglo-American dominance over the Atlantic needs to be explained. With the exception of the Italian airline LATI's Rome-Rio de Janeiro air service via the South Atlantic, Britain and the United States dominated all transatlantic air travel by early 1940.⁷⁷ Germany's Lufthansa used to operate a transatlantic air service to South America in the 1930s, but it depended on the British airfield at Bathurst (the Gambia) for refueling.⁷⁸ When war broke out, the British government imposed an economic blockade against Germany, which resulted in Bathurst closing its doors to Lufthansa and ending the German transatlantic air service.⁷⁹

In theory, Germans and Italians could easily send uncensored mail or travel to the United States on Pan Am clippers as late as the second half of 1940, since the U.S. government was officially not collaborating with the British blockade. Yet in truth, Germany (from January 1940) and Italy (from June 20, 1940) were unable to do either. The main reason was that the provisions of the British aerial blockade – which included censorship of the mail and requiring passengers to carry British visas – were vigorously enforced in all the British colonies.⁸⁰ One of these British colonies, Bermuda, received an unusually large number of clippers in 1940 because the Franklin Roosevelt administration arranged for Pan Am to land on this island. In this way, the

⁷⁷ Acting Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal to Deputy Federal Loan Administrator (RFC) W.L. Clayton, 5 September 1941, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4228, Box 19. The air service only consisted of five planes.

⁷⁸ John Crider, "Nations Vie in Air Trade," *NYT*, July 23, 1939, XX4.

⁷⁹ Lt. Samuel Gates, "Improved Air Schedules Between the United States and South America," 7 September 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-8, Box 176.

⁸⁰ Reference to Memorandum, 19 January 1940, file 811.79640/942, RG 59, Box 4040, *Ibid*; Burke to Welles, 2 August 1940, file 811.79640/1116, RG 59, Box 4041, *Ibid*.

Franklin Roosevelt administration, Pan Am and the British government prevented Germany and Italy from using Pan Am's transatlantic air routes for their own benefit.⁸¹

In the spring of 1940, for example, the Franklin Roosevelt administration utilized Pan Am transatlantic air routes to prevent the Nazi regime from selling American securities that it had seized in Holland and Belgium or from using them as collateral "to obtain very considerable credits." Franklin Roosevelt learned about the seizure of American securities from British Ambassador in Washington Lord Lothian. In mid-May the President called Trippe to his office and asked him to prevent the securities, which "were being sent back to [the United States] for sale here through mail sent on the Clippers," from being sold to the American market or used as collateral for a loan. Trippe's solution was for Pan Am to make unscheduled stops at Bermuda on its third or fourth voyage on the pretext of bad weather.⁸² Franklin Roosevelt explained to Under Secretary Welles on May 29, "In the matter of clippers stopping occasionally at Bermuda on voyages from Europe, the theory seems to be that if the voyage on which the stop is made is not known, securities will not be sent here for German accounts."⁸³

In addition to preventing the sale of securities, the Franklin Roosevelt administration and Pan Am ensured that German and Italian passengers never entered the United States. In the 1930s, commercial air travel was so expensive that the overwhelming majority of the passengers were businessmen.⁸⁴ The most likely reason why German and Italian businessmen wanted to enter the United States was to make money and, therefore, their activities were bound to benefit

⁸¹ Burke to Welles, 2 August 1940, file 811.79640/1116, RG 59, Box 4041, Ibid.

⁸² Welles to Franklin Roosevelt, 24 May 1940, file 811.71240/20A, RG 64, Box 3989, Ibid.

⁸³ FDR to Welles, 29 May 1940, file 811.71240/20 ½, RG 64, Ibid.

⁸⁴ Trautman estimates that 74% of Pan Am passengers were businessmen in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. This figure could not have been much lower in 1940. See James Trautman, *Pan American Clippers*, 76.

their respective governments – especially if they returned to their home countries.⁸⁵ The Germans and Italians onboard Pan Am planes could also be spies for their governments. Therefore, preventing German and Italians from travelling across the Atlantic was crucial for controlling the flow of money and information.⁸⁶

In order to accomplish this aim, Franklin Roosevelt and Trippe arranged for 64% of Pan Am's westbound flights to stop at Bermuda between June 1 and August 13, 1940⁸⁷ on the pretext of bad weather, mechanical failure or to refuel. Given the frequency of Pan Am's landings in Bermuda, every passenger on a westbound flight had to have a British visa in case such a landing was made. Under these circumstances, the German and Italian passengers had a problem because no British embassy was going to issue a visa to either nationality.⁸⁸ Little time passed before Italy and Germany complained about their nationals being unable to fly to the United States. On August 2, 1940, Chief of International Relations (IN, subdivision of the State Department) Burke told Welles:

I think it is safe to assume that the Italian and German Governments consider the prosecution of the visa requirements by Pan American Airways as a device which has this Government's sanction. In addition, I assume that they also interpret the unscheduled stops at Bermuda (outbound and inbound) as a means of aiding the British to control (through seizure) the flow of documents and general correspondence through the mails. In as much as Pan American Airways does not schedule Bermuda on a regular port of call but reserves the right to stop there for unforeseeable 'technical' reasons (weather conditions or engine difficulties), the net effect is that the inclusion of Bermuda in any given trip remains highly speculative. Obviously, this is distasteful to the Italian and German Governments.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Diary Entry, 29 April 1940, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

⁸⁶ Percy Bidwell, "Our Economic Warfare," 425.

⁸⁷ Trippe to Welles, 13 August 1940, Collection 341, Accession II, Box 343, Folder 33, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

⁸⁸ Burke (IN) to Atherton, Reber (Eu), and Welles, 14 August 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1113, Box 4041; 2 November, 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1131, Ibid.

⁸⁹ Burke to Welles, 2 August 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1116, Ibid.

On August 21, the Franklin Roosevelt administration responded to Germany and Italy's complaints by making Bermuda a permanent port of call for shipping and commercial aviation. Thereafter, the United States officially closed its doors to both nationalities.⁹⁰

Implementing Western Hemisphere Defense: U.S.-British Negotiations over the Caribbean and U.S.-Brazilian Negotiations

In addition to setting up the "Neutrality Belt" and utilizing Pan Am's air routes for military purposes, the Franklin Roosevelt administration also started negotiating air agreements with Britain and with Latin American political elites to gain their consent for Pan Am to improve its own airfields and British airfields for military purposes.

The important point about the U.S.-British negotiations was that naval bases and airfields constituted two sides of the same coin, since an economic blockade depended for its success on naval and air forces supported by naval and aerial infrastructure. Therefore, Anglo-American aviation diplomacy regarding the Caribbean, not surprisingly, grew out of secret naval staff talks in 1938-39, which concerned leasing naval bases in the British colonies of Bermuda, St. Lucia and Trinidad. On June 12-14, Admiral William Leahy impressed upon Captain Hampton, British Naval Attaché Captain L.C.A. Curzon Howe and War Plans Division director Admiral R.L. Ghormley that his government wanted to lease British airfields in the Caribbean and that, "As regards the Atlantic, it was the intention of the United States Government to establish air patrols for the protection of neutral shipping in the Caribbean Sea and in the approaches to the Panama Canal, and also in the East Coast of South America."⁹¹

⁹⁰ Welles to Atherton (Eu), 21 August, 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1114, Ibid.

⁹¹ Fitzroy Andre Baptiste, *War, Cooperation and Conflict: the European possessions in the Caribbean, 1939-1945* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 3, 11.

The subsequent negotiations resulted in several leasing agreements. With the help of Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark and the U.S. naval missions, Pan Am leased the British airfields in Trinidad and Bermuda on August 24. On September 4, the Navy Department also obtained aviation bases for “routine training flights” in Bermuda, Trinidad and St. Lucia.⁹² In September 1939, the British reached an agreement with the U.S. government to build an airport in British Guiana in return for Pan Am operating “an infrequent sightseeing service to Kaieteur falls [Potaro-Siparuni region of British Guiana] in the interior.”⁹³ These agreements, moreover, were secret. Even Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, in charge of procuring military aircraft, was oblivious to what was going on until Franklin Roosevelt told him on September 18 that “he is leasing hangar and bases for seaplanes in Bermuda and two other places in the West Indies; that nobody knew this.”⁹⁴

Whereas the leasing of British airfields in the Caribbean was straightforward, the Franklin Roosevelt administration ran into difficulty while trying to reach an agreement with Britain to convert those same airfields to military use. In May 1940, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s proposal to Britain was to exchange vintage World War I destroyers for British airfields in the Caribbean. Prime Minister Winston Churchill was offended by the proposal, since it meant conceding part of the British Empire to the United States.⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid., 11-12.

⁹³ Samuel Gates (IN, CAA), “Improved Air Schedules between the United States and South America,” 7 September 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-8, Box 176.

⁹⁴ Diary Entry, 18 September 1939, “Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt,” *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

⁹⁵ Fitzroy Andre Baptiste, *War, Cooperation and Conflict*, 57-58.

Yet an unexpected turn of events in the Second World War forced the British prime minister to take the deal offered by the Franklin Roosevelt administration. On June 18, 1940, Morgenthau wrote in his diary:

I just spoke to [Franklin Roosevelt's private secretary] Grace Tully and told her I was sending over to the President a most secret document in regard to the British destroyer situation, and I wished she would inform the President that it is my belief that unless we help out the British with some destroyers it is hopeless to expect them to keep going.⁹⁶

More than a month later, Britain seemed to be danger of being invaded by Germany. On July 31, U.S. Ambassador to Britain Joseph Kennedy forwarded the Admiralty's letter to Hull urging the President to send more destroyers, motor boats and flying boats to counter German U-boat and dive bomber attacks.⁹⁷

Under these circumstances, the Churchill ministry felt compelled to reach an agreement. Over the course of intense negotiations, the State Department made the exchange of destroyers for bases palatable to Americans (skeptical about the defense value of selling war materiel overseas) and the British government. To begin with, the Franklin Roosevelt administration argued that the U.S. armed services needed British airfields in British Guiana, Trinidad, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Antigua and the Bahamas to prevent any of them from falling into the hands of the Axis powers and the American people accepted this contention as legitimate. The State Department also satisfied British scruples about compromising the British empire by adding the proviso that Britain had chosen to give away its airfields on Newfoundland and Bermuda freely

⁹⁶ Diary Entry, 18 June 1940, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

⁹⁷ Kennedy to Hull, 31 July 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.34544/1 5/12, Box 3786.

to the United States for no *quid pro quo* at all.⁹⁸ On November 2, 1940, the Destroyers-for-bases deal was signed, the U.S. armed services obtained 99-year leases to airfields in eight British colonies and Pan Am set to work improving these airfields for military use.⁹⁹

While Anglo-American aviation diplomacy was in its early stages, the State Department also sought an air agreement with Brazil. These negotiations with Brazil had two objectives. The first was to gain the Getulio Vargas regime's consent for U.S. military airfields and naval bases in Brazil. The second aim, which also concerned the economic blockade, was to liquidate German and Italian airlines in South America.¹⁰⁰

Historically Brazil had been an American ally and the only Latin American country to follow the United States' example by declaring war on Germany in 1917.¹⁰¹ In the 1930s, however, the U.S.-Brazilian relationship became complicated when Getulio Vargas seized power in a coup d'état (1930) and consolidated his military dictatorship. The Vargas regime's main ambition was to secure the best possible foreign support for its power base, which consisted of the national economic elites (who wanted tariff protection and financial assistance for state-driven industrialization)¹⁰² and the military (whose support, at the time of the Integralist plot to topple against the Vargas regime in 1938, proved invaluable in keeping the Brazilian dictator in

⁹⁸ Fitzroy Andre Baptiste, *War, Cooperation and Conflict*, 58; Butler to Welles, 22 November 1940, NARA 2 RG 59, file 811.34544/346, Box 3786.

⁹⁹ John Knape, "British Foreign Policy in the Caribbean Basin 1938-1945: Oil, Nationalism and Relations with the United States," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 19, No. 2 (Nov., 1987): 280.

¹⁰⁰ Monteiro to Marshall, 8 August 1939, Box 56, Sumner Welles Papers, FDRL; Frank McCann, *The Brazilian American Alliance, 1937-1945*, 215-16, 219-20.

¹⁰¹ Sumner Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1951), 97-98.

¹⁰² Frank D. McCann, Jr. "Brazil, the United States and World War II," *Diplomatic History* 3, Issue 1, (January 1979): 63, 64.

power).¹⁰³ Moreover, the Vargas regime did not care whether foreign support came from Germany or the United States. In fact, the Vargas regime often exploited the U.S.-German rivalry for greater political and economic clout in Brazil in order to obtain concessions from both countries.¹⁰⁴

To make a long story short, the influences of the Brazilian military and the national economy elites upon the Vargas regime – when combined with the State Department’s determination not to pay too high a price for an air agreement with Brazil – prolonged U.S.-Brazilian aviation negotiations.¹⁰⁵ Brazilian dictator Getulio Vargas and his cabinet ministers were spokespersons for the Brazilian military, which was why they approved Major General Goes Monteiro’s memorandum to Chief of Staff George Marshall, dated August 8, 1939, which stated that the Brazilian government’s willingness to allow U.S. naval bases and airfields on the Brazilian bulge depended on “the material cooperation the United States might afford to give Brazil.” The “material cooperation” was weapons. Monteiro also implied that his government was willing to turn to Germany for weapons if U.S. military assistance was not forthcoming.¹⁰⁶ As U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Jefferson Caffery explained to Under Secretary Welles (who led these negotiations) on September 5:

The question of ‘material which Brazil urgently needs for defense’ has been brought up again by General Goes Monteiro with the Embassy. This, he says, has been the subject of letters he has written to General Marshall, but a new factor that of the equipment ordered from Germany has arisen and Brazil’s needs are now greater than those set out in his letter to the Chief of Staff of the United States Army.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Turner Catledges, “Regime of Vargas Depends on Force,” *NYT*, 7 February 1938, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Stanley Hilton, “Brazilian Diplomacy and the Washington-Rio de Janeiro ‘Axis’ during the World War II Era,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 59, No. 2 (May 1979): 208-209.

¹⁰⁵ Caffery to Hull, 7 June 1940, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1940*, 5: 45.

¹⁰⁶ Monteiro to Marshall, 8 August 1939, Box 56, Sumner Welles Papers, FDRL.

¹⁰⁷ Caffery to Welles, 5 September 1939, *Ibid*.

In addition to the military, the Vargas regime was also looking after the interests of the “national economy” elites who stood to benefit from state-directed industrialization. In January 1940, Vargas demanded (through his Brazilian foreign minister Oswaldo Aranha) that the Export-Import Bank finance the construction of Brazil’s first steel mill (which was intended to showcase the dictatorship’s role as a modernizer), after U.S. Steel declined to build one. The Brazilian dictator also implied that his government was ready to turn to Germany for help in this venture unless the Franklin Roosevelt administration agreed to give Brazil a loan with lenient repayment terms.¹⁰⁸

The State Department only succeeded in breaking the deadlock in U.S.-Brazilian aviation diplomacy by giving in to many of the Vargas regime’s demands in late June 1940. On June 22, the Franklin Roosevelt administration passed legislation through Congress that expanded the Import-Export Bank’s borrowing capacity by \$500 million. Thanks to this law, the State Department was able to make commitments that went some way toward meeting Brazil’s military and economic demands.¹⁰⁹

The State Department’s commitments to the Brazilians, in turn, resulted in a breakthrough in U.S.-Brazilian negotiations in the second half of 1940. On July 19, Franklin Roosevelt was able to send over Pan Am president Juan Trippe to Brazil to make the necessary arrangements with the Brazilians to start work on the Pan Am airfields.¹¹⁰ Six days later, Trippe reported back to Welles:

[The] National defense council at Rio last night unanimously approved our airway permit. Although General Monteiro again did not attend meeting for [the] fourth successive time, [I] understand [that

¹⁰⁸ Herbert Feis, Memorandum, 22 January 1940, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1940*, 5: 600.

¹⁰⁹ Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States: A Historical Interpretation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1943), 162.

¹¹⁰ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 252.

the] other members of [the] council cast [their] individual votes placing in [the] record [the] supporting justification of each member's vote. Formal papers [are] now being drawn for submission [to] President Vargas for routine approval and [the] issuance [of the] required decree.¹¹¹

In July and August, the State Department and its Brazilian counterparts made reciprocal concessions to each other to cement the military alliance between their respective countries. On August 2, Secretary of State Hull informed the Vargas regime through Caffery that the United States would send automotive and aviation equipment to Brazil over the next few months.¹¹² On September 24, Caffery informed Hull, "the Brazilian Chief of Staff [Monteiro] gave Colonel Miller yesterday assigned 4-page statement regarding Brazil's willingness to cooperate with the United States in hemispheric defense."¹¹³ A few hours later, Hull wrote to Caffery confirming that the Export-Import Bank had agreed to loan Brazil \$20 million "for the purchase in the United States of materials and equipment for the [steel] mill and for the hiring of engineering and professional talent."¹¹⁴ In late September, the Vargas regime allowed Pan Am to improve its own airways system for military use and had agreed to make those air facilities available to the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard aircraft.¹¹⁵

Two months later, Pan Am reached the pinnacle of its success. On November 2, the War Department awarded Pan Am a confidential contract to modernize the Pan American Airways system. Pan Am was going to build "additional land airports and sea plane bases" and construct the latest "radio, meteorological and lighting facilities, fueling equipment, storage tanks" and other air navigation facilities at the existing airports. In addition to these tasks, Pan Am also had to store aviation gasoline and lubricants at the airfields or at facilities that were in close

¹¹¹ Trippe to Welles, July 25, 1940, Sumner Welles Papers, Box 66, FDRL.

¹¹² Cordell Hull to Caffery, August 2, 1940, Ibid., 50.

¹¹³ Caffery to Cordell Hull, September 24, 1940, Ibid., 51.

¹¹⁴ Cordell Hull to Caffery, September 24, 1940, Ibid., 611.

¹¹⁵ Stimson to Hull, 4 November, 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 810.20 Defense/344, Box C147.

proximity to them. The Import Export Bank was to finance these improvements with a \$12 million loan to the American airline.¹¹⁶

From a business standpoint, this contract was a huge boon for the airline. Pan Am received considerable financing to make improvements to its aerial network that it was going to make anyway.¹¹⁷ In the late 1930s, PAA ordered bigger stratoliners for its fleet and, thus, longer runways and more advanced air facilities were needed to accommodate them. One of these stratoliners was the Boeing 314 which, by the standards of its time, was a huge plane with a maximum weight of 82,500 pounds. More importantly, the Boeing 314 had the distinction of being able to transport 74 passengers at a maximum flying range of 3500 miles (the Martin M-130 (1936), by contrast, could only transport 41 passengers for up to 3200 miles) and, therefore, held the promise of a more profitable future for Pan Am.¹¹⁸ Within this context, the difference the Import-Export Bank loan made was to enable Pan Am to push forward the date of its renovations. Better still, Pan Am was provided with the means to quickly repay the government in the form of increased air services for the military over the next five years.¹¹⁹

The U.S. government also found it advantageous to use Pan Am to improve the Brazilian air bases for military use, since it could then avoid bureaucratic red tape and keep down the costs of airfield development. The eliciting of Pan Am's services was also politically advantageous. Since Pan Am was modernizing airfields for legitimate commercial purposes, the Franklin Roosevelt administration could plausibly deny having anything do with the project. Admittedly

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Pan American Airways was allowed to keep the need airfields in Latin America that were improved with the help of government money.

¹¹⁸ R.E.G. Davies, *Pan Am: An Airline and its Aircraft*, 39, 43.

¹¹⁹ Olds to Gates (CAA), "Report of Subcommittee of Caribbean Airways," 22 May 1940, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-13, Box 176; R.S. Crenshaw to Stark (CNO), "Aviation facilities between San Juan and Natal Area," 20 June 1940, NARA 2, RG 165, File 4113-17, Ibid.

the Franklin Roosevelt administration's plan to keep the project secret was not overly successful. But on the other hand, the Army's hand in this whole affair was largely concealed by the cloak of economic self-interest.¹²⁰

In addition to gaining the Vargas regime's approval for improving the Pan Am airfields for military purposes, the State Department also accomplished another important aim which was to gradually liquidate the German and Italian airlines operating in South America. One of these airlines was the German Sindicato Condor which had ties to Germany's state-owned airline Lufthansa. Founded on December 1, 1927, Condor eventually constructed a fleet of 16 trimotor Junker (J52) planes (capable of carrying 17 passengers) and two four-engine Focke-Wulfs 200s (26 passengers) and flew airmail and passengers along Brazil's 4000 mile coast and its interior and to Buenos Aires, Argentina and Santiago, Chile. Moreover, Condor also established connecting flights with Lloyd Aereo Boliviano and Lufthansa, with the result that passengers could travel to Bolivia and Peru. Collectively, Condor, Lloyd Aero Bolivia and Lufthansa covered 10,000 miles of air routes. A much smaller airline Varig (Brazilian-owned, but operated by Germans), with a fleet of only 7 airplanes, operated along air routes of only 940 miles between Porto Alegre, Pelotas and Rio Grande do Sol (all Brazil). Lastly the Italian airline Lati operated the Rome to Rio de Janeiro air service.¹²¹

These German and Italian airlines were unlikely to pose much of a threat to the Western Hemisphere because their fleets were relatively small and they relied on U.S. and sometimes Brazilian suppliers for their gasoline. In other words, if these airlines ever went to war with the United States in the Western Hemisphere, then the Franklin Roosevelt administration could

¹²⁰ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 251-52.

¹²¹ Melvin Hall and Walter Peck, "Wings for the Trojan Horse," 348-49, 351-54, 363-65, 366-67.

quickly cut off their gasoline supply and use the U.S. Air Corps to easily obliterate every one of their airplanes.¹²²

Instead, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's primary reason for liquidating the German and Italian airlines was economic. Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors knew, for example, that LATI (the only enemy airline with a transatlantic air service) was transporting light strategic goods, such as industrial diamonds, mica, platinum, and quartz, to Europe. In addition, they also knew that LATI pilots were radioing the location of Allied vessels to enemy submarines and raiders in order to assist German and Italian merchant ships to evade the economic blockade and transport their goods to Italy and Germany. Condor was equally as troublesome. As late as mid-1941, Condor flew a crew from Rio to Belem for the German freighter *Norderney* which was loaded with rubber and waiting for a chance to travel across the Atlantic to Germany. Pan Am quickly noticed these Condor's activities, because the latter had an airfield across from the Pan Am airfield at Parnamirim.¹²³ Finally in addition to these concerns, the Franklin Roosevelt administration also received reports indicating that Condor and Lati were radioing the location of supply ships (transporting war material to the Allies) so that German U-boats could sink them.¹²⁴

In order to prevent any leakages in the economic blockade and to keep Allied merchant shipping safe, the Franklin Roosevelt administration implemented a two-prong strategy to liquidate any airlines with a trace of Axis influence. In the second half of 1940, the Franklin Roosevelt administration collaborated with Pan Am first by encouraging that airline to fire its

¹²² Frank McCann, *The Brazilian American Alliance, 1937-1945*, 219-20.

¹²³ Frank McCann, *The Brazilian American Alliance, 1937-1945*, 215-16, 220; Percy Bidwell, "Our Economic Warfare," 432; Reference ADP, Collection 341, Accession 1, Box 18, Folder I, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

¹²⁴ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 247.

German personnel and then by taking over the air routes once operated by Condor and LATI. The State Department, meanwhile, provided Brazil with financial credits and technical assistance for the “degermanization” of certain airlines. The strategy eventually produced results. In August 1941, Vasp dismissed all its German personnel and Varig followed suit. The Condor airline, by contrast, survived into 1942 largely because the Vargas regime was satisfied that it was thoroughly Brazilian and should receive gasoline from Brazilian Army stocks (after the American suppliers stopped supplying Condor with gasoline). The State Department saw matters differently, pointing to Condor’s financial ties with Germany’s state-owned airline Lufthansa. By early 1942, the State Department finally pressured the Vargas regime to sever Condor’s financial ties with Lufthansa for good. Similarly the State Department persuaded the Vargas regime to eliminate Lati’s air service sixteen days after the United States formally entered the war.¹²⁵

In summation, the State Department’s aviation diplomacy with the Vargas regime was ultimately a success. Admittedly, there were some serious U.S.-Brazilian tensions over delays in weapons shipments to the Brazilian military. War Secretary Henry Stimson and other military chiefs felt that since there was “no war in this Hemisphere” then “Latin America ought to be ruled out altogether” when it came to weapons shipments or sending war planes to militarized Pan Am airfields.¹²⁶ The Brazilians, however, held a different view. The Brazilian military was so embittered at not receiving weapons on time that it occasionally retaliated against the United States by holding up the development of military airfields and hampering the ferrying of military

¹²⁵ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 248; Frank McCann, *The Brazilian American Alliance, 1937-1945*, 219-20.

¹²⁶ Frank McCann, “Brazil, the United States and World War II,” *Diplomatic History* 3, Issue 1, (January 1979): 67.

aircraft from Brazil to Africa.¹²⁷ Yet these disputes should not obscure the fact that the Franklin Roosevelt administration essentially got what it wanted from its negotiations with the Vargas regime, which was control over Brazil's airspace and sea lanes for the purpose of strengthening the economic blockade.

Impact of the Economic Blockade

Over the short-term, the economic blockade did not force the Axis powers to capitulate in one or two years. On the contrary, Germany occupied virtually all of Europe and significant portions of North Africa in 1939-41 while Japan continued its expansion into China. The main reason for this short-term failure was that Congress failed to empower the executive branch to spend \$1 billion or more in the 1939-40 fiscal year to keep raw materials out of the hands of the Axis powers.¹²⁸ Congress also lacked the political will to deal with Japan, even though Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors wanted to impose an economic blockade against that Asian power throughout 1937-41.¹²⁹ Finally Germany also escaped the immediate effects of the economic blockade by negotiating the Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union, which kept the eastern front peaceful, and engineering blitzkrieg victories in Western Europe in mid-1940.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ D. McCroach Jr. to Colonel Ridway (forwarded to Welles), Sumner Welles Papers Box 74, FDRL; "Confidential Memo on Brazilian Attitude Relative to U.S. and Axis, November 21, 1941," *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Office Files, Part 5: John F. Carter Papers* [microfilm], Reel 1.

¹²⁸ John Crider, "Government Plan to Bar War is Told," *NYT*, 18 December 1939, 1; "War Materials Bill Passes Both Houses," *NYT*, 6 June 1939, 2; "Signs War Stocks Act," *NYT*, 9 June 1939, 10. Percy Bidwell, "Our Economic Warfare," 430.

¹²⁹ Morgenthau's Diary Entry, June 19, 1939, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr. (1938-1945)*, ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

¹³⁰ Edward E. Ericson III, "Karl Schnurre and the Evolution of Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1936-1941," 263.

Yet if the economic blockade failed over the short-term, its economic impact upon Axis-dominated Europe over the medium-term was devastating. The Axis-dominated European economy was not self-sufficient in raw materials, but instead depended heavily upon networks of international trade (for exporting finished products and importing raw materials) and interconnected financial markets for its prosperity. The Anglo-American economic blockade, however, cut off the Axis-dominated European economy from its overseas trading partners and exposed its acute dependence on foreign supplies of grain, animal feeds, oil and coal.¹³¹

This was not good news for Germany. Germany entered the war with limited stockpiles of strategic raw materials and fought on the slimmest of margins thereafter. The economic blockade forced Germany to plunder strategic raw materials from other European countries in order to fuel its war effort. However, the Nazi plunder policies were not a feasible strategy for supporting Germany's war effort on a sustainable basis because the plundered states were also heavily dependent upon raw material imports from overseas. Thus, at the cost of meeting the raw material demands of the German armament industries, the Nazi plunder policies ended up triggering financial and monetary crises in one Axis-dominated European state after the other. As Mark Mazower explained, "Nowhere in Europe outside the Reich itself did national income rise during the war. In short, the continent's economic performance was disastrous..."¹³²

As a result of the U.S.-led economic blockade, the Hitler regime had no good options for sustaining Germany's war effort. If the Nazis tried to minimize their plunder policies in order to arrest the decline of the Axis-dominated European economy, they simply hastened Germany and Italy's military defeat. On the other hand, the Hitler regime's decision to step up Nazi plunder policies (especially when the war went badly) kept Germany's war effort going in the short-term,

¹³¹ Mark Mazower, *Hitler's empire*, 260.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 260-61.

but at the price of causing financial and monetary crises in those countries that were the economic underpinning of German military power. Regardless of which course of action it took, Germany was bound to lose the war. Moreover, if the Soviet Union and later the United States had not intervened to bring the European war to a speedy conclusion, Germany eventually would have reached the point where (owing to the economic blockade) it lacked the economic resources to continue fighting. In this way, the Anglo-American economic blockade was contributing to the slow, but irrevocable, strangulation of Germany.¹³³

Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors probably did not appreciate the scale of economic destruction that the Axis-dominated European economy suffered at the hands of the U.S.-led economic blockade. Yet the Franklin Roosevelt administration certainly realized by early 1941 that all was not well with Germany and Italy's European empire. Louis Domeratzky, who served in the Commerce Department, wrote in April 1941:

... [I]n order to prevent any misunderstanding as to the industrial resources gained by Germany through her territorial expansion, that valuable as they are, they do not – with the exception of petroleum from Rumania and some copper from Yugoslavia – include important quantities of any of the strategic raw materials that normally figure so prominently in Germany's imports from overseas, such as raw cotton, jute, rubber, nickel, tin, mica, antimony and tungsten. The Germans doubtless have seized a certain quantity of each of these in the countries they have occupied. But, however large or small these quantities may have been, sooner or later Germany will have used them up.¹³⁴

In May 1941, Franklin Roosevelt informed Winston Churchill that, "I am not downcast by more spread of Germany for additional large territories. There is little of the raw materials in all of them put together – not large enough to maintain or compensate for huge occupation forces." Franklin Roosevelt expressed concern about the Middle East's oil falling into German

¹³³ Ibid., 261.

¹³⁴ Louis Domeratzky, "The Industrial Power of the Nazis," *Foreign Affairs* 19, No. 3 (April 1941): 654.

hands, but added, “I assume production there could be practically destroyed by you in the event of necessity.”¹³⁵

In short, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors realized that the economic blockade – supported by U.S. airpower and naval powers – was gradually working. However, they did not want to wait several years for the economic blockade to destroy the Axis-dominated European economy completely and leave behind an enormous economic mess in the postwar era. Therefore, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his close advisors resolved in the second half of 1940 to engineer the United States’ entry into the war.

¹³⁵ Francis Loewenheim et al, *Franklin Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence* (New York: Saturday Review Press/E.P Dutton & Co., Inc., 1975), 139-140. Later on June 6, 1941, Cordell Hull forwarded an intelligence report to Franklin Roosevelt reinforcing his belief in the drain on German resources: “The using up of labor, raw and other materials and equipment in the plants operating at full capacity shows a rising curve. This development necessitates the procurement of full relief, both with respect to the workers and the position as to raw and other materials.” Hull to Franklin Roosevelt, 5 June 1941, *Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Office Files, Part 1: “Safe” and Confidential Files* [microfilm], Reel 2, 827.

**Chapter 4 The Emergence of a Provocative U.S. Foreign Policy:
The Eastern Atlantic and Africa (mid-1940 to December 1941)**

Germany's blitzkrieg successes did not simply cause shock and disbelief in the United States; they were also a catalyst for dramatic changes in U.S. foreign policy.¹ Before mid-1940, Franklin Roosevelt and his hawkish advisors assumed that an economic blockade combined with Anglo-French airpower was enough to bring Germany to her knees after a relatively brief war.² Then the unthinkable happened: The Germans staged a daring takeover of Norway and overwhelmed numerically superior Allied forces in the Low Countries and France in just a few weeks. Having witnessed this impressive display of German military might, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors devised a new foreign policy strategy for bringing the United States into the Second World War.

The Franklin Roosevelt administration pursued this proactive war preparation strategy regardless of its risks. Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors were not fazed by the possibility that some of their foreign policy actions could provoke the Axis powers into attacking the United States, since the resulting incidents could be used to justify declaring war. The first two sections of this chapter contextualize this new foreign policy strategy by discussing the Franklin Roosevelt administration's belligerent foreign policy initiatives in the Pacific and Atlantic. In the Pacific, the Franklin Roosevelt administration gradually imposed economic sanctions against the Japanese economy, even though this act of war was more likely to escalate U.S.-Japanese tensions than reduce them.³ The Franklin Roosevelt administration also conspired with private military entrepreneurs and Chinese Nationalists (starting in November 1940) to develop a

¹ Bear Braumoeller, "The Myth of American Isolationism," 363-64.

² Stephen Bunch, "FDR and Limited War in Europe: A Plausible Middle Course?" In Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World, eds. Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, 181.

³ Roosevelt to Ickes, 23 June 1941, Harold Ickes Papers, Box 265, Library of Congress.

program of secret air warfare, which involved American pilots launching air strikes with strategic bombers and tactical aircraft against the Japanese forces in China and Japan;⁴ and it sent a handful of American cruisers to Japan's coast to provoke confrontations with Japanese warships.⁵

In the Atlantic, the Franklin Roosevelt administration pushed Lend Lease through Congress (March 1941), allowing U.S. merchant ships to transport war materiel across the Atlantic to the edge of the combat zone and requiring the Allies to ship the cargo the rest of the way⁶; arranged for U.S. naval patrols to convoy ships carrying war materiel to Britain (September); and gave U.S. warships the right to fire "on sight" (October).⁷ Crucially Franklin Roosevelt explained to three cabinet secretaries and Winston Churchill that he welcomed the possibility of these measures precipitating a war with Germany.⁸

The next five sections of this chapter show how the Franklin Roosevelt administration's aviation policy fit into its highly proactive war preparation strategy. Between July 1940 and November 1941, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors tried to extend American airpower to the Mediterranean theatre as a prerequisite for conducting U.S. military operations there. Moreover, the Franklin Roosevelt administration pursued this strategy knowing that it was seeking airfields at many of the same locations – French North Africa and the Azores – coveted

⁴ Michael Schaller, "American Air Strategy in China, 1939-1941," 3-19.

⁵ Stewart Halsey Ross, *How Franklin Roosevelt Failed America in World War II*, 11.

⁶ Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 662. Warren Kimball, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, No. 1 (March 2004): 90-92.

⁷ Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 662.

⁸ Harold Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes: The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), entry (April 12, 1941), 466, 470; Diary Entry, May 17, 1941, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr. (1938-1945)*, ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1; Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 114; Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 648, 657-658; Warren Kimball, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II," 83, 94-95.

by Germany. As early as March 21, 1939, U.S. Ambassador in Brussels Joseph Davies explained to Senator Key Pittman, “Hitler is unpredictable. Of course, it is possible that he might turn his outside adventure to the East, and to the Ukraine. He cannot do that, however, unless he has closed his back door with the Mediterranean.”⁹ Later in October 1940, a U.S. Army-Navy memorandum explained why Nazi Germany was so anxious to keep the Mediterranean door shut. The Allies, the memorandum explained, could use North Africa as a base of operations from which to liberate Europe.¹⁰ In seeking airfields in the Azores and Africa, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors may not have been trying to provoke hostilities with Germany. Yet at the same time, the administration’s bold aviation strategy does not comport with the view touted by historians that it was trying to avoid war. On the contrary, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s war preparation strategy greatly increased the risks of a violent confrontation.¹¹

The last two-thirds of this chapter dealing with the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s aviation policy are organized as follows. The third section, “Background to U.S.-Vichy Relations” explains the significance of the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s efforts to acquire airfields in French Africa. The fourth and fifth sections cover the U.S.-German competition for French African airfields between June 1940 and November 1941. The sixth section explains the significance of the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s efforts to establish a military airfield in the Azores. The seventh section discusses the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s collaboration with Pan Am in modernizing and operating the Takoradi route in order to establish a secure line

⁹ Davies to Pittman, 21 March 1939, *Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Office Files, 1933-1945, Part 2: Diplomatic Correspondence File* [microfilm], Reel 1, 848.

¹⁰ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War*, 20.

¹¹ Satterthwaite (RA) to Bonsal (RA), 18 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, RG 59, Box 4048; Assistant Chief of Staff, WPD, memorandum, February 1941, NARA 2, RG 165, Entry 282, file 4422-14, Box 265; Bert Fish to Hull, 22 October 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1247, Box 4041; Frank McCann, *The Brazilian American Alliance, 1937-1945*, 221-222; Deborah Ray, “The Takoradi Route,” 340-58.

of communications to the eastern Mediterranean. Finally this chapter will summarize all of the above arguments in one conclusion.

Growing U.S. Belligerency in the Pacific

In the Pacific theatre, the Franklin Roosevelt administration embarked on three tracks to bring the United States into the war against Japan. The first track was the gradual imposition of an economic blockade against Japan, which culminated in the oil embargo (July 1941).

Surprisingly the thesis that the Franklin Roosevelt administration deliberately imposed the oil blockade on Japan to goad that Asian power into attacking the United States continues to be controversial for most historians. Yet this controversy can be settled through a dispassionate examination of the facts.¹²

Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors appreciated the dangers of imposing an economic blockade against Japan. The President first proposed an economic blockade against Japan in mid-1937 after Japanese forces resumed their expansion into China. Under Secretary Welles' reaction to this proposal was to ask Franklin Roosevelt whether an economic blockade against Japan could result in war. Franklin Roosevelt replied that,

He did not think so. Japan was already so heavily committed to China that her economy was stretched to the breaking point. If her trade were cut off she would bog down long before she could get access to

¹² Charles Tansill, *Back Door to War*. Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1952; *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, ed. Harry Elmer Barnes. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1953; Charles Beard, *American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1946; and *President Franklin Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1948; Basil Rauch, *Franklin Roosevelt from Munich to Pearl Harbor*. New York: Creative Age, 1950; Herbert Feis, *The Road to Pearl Harbor*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1950; William Langer and Everett Gleason, *The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940*. New York: Harper, 1952; and *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941*. New York: Harper, 1953.

the oil and other raw materials in Southeast Asia that she would need [so]... she would not dare risk war at this juncture.¹³

As his response indicates, Franklin Roosevelt recognized that the likelihood of Japan attacking the United States in response to an economic blockade depended upon Japanese military capabilities. In mid-July 1937, Franklin Roosevelt did not believe that Japan had the military capability to go to war with the United States and therefore he did not fear a Japanese attack in response to an economic blockade. However, the President did not rule out the possibility that an economic blockade could force more powerful countries into declaring war. As Franklin Roosevelt confided to his friend, French Senator Baron Amaury de la Grange, in January 1938, “It is possible that Germany and Italy in case of blockade would go to war, but it would not be us who would declare it.”¹⁴

The significance of these beliefs was that at the time the Franklin Roosevelt administration imposed the oil embargo against Japan, the President and his advisors knew that Japanese military capabilities had improved since 1937. Therefore, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors probably expected a Japanese attack against the United States to result from the oil embargo (July 1941).¹⁵

One credible counterargument to the above was that during economic warfare planning in 1939-41 many administration officials followed the logic that the economic blockade would paralyze Japan’s military machine rather than lead to war.¹⁶ The Morgenthau plan of April 8, 1939, which envisaged depriving the Axis powers of every raw material including oil, was

¹³ John McVickar Haight, Jr., “Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Naval Quarantine of Japan,” 204.

¹⁴ Ibid., 222-23.

¹⁵ Franklin Roosevelt to Ickes, 23 June 1941, Harold Ickes Papers, Box 265, Library of Congress; Irvine H. Anderson, “The 1941 De Facto Embargo on Oil to Japan: A Bureaucratic Reflex,” *Pacific Historical Review* 44, No. 2 (May 1972): 201-202.

¹⁶ Herbert Feis, *The Road to Pearl Harbor*, 243.

premised on this logic.¹⁷ Similarly Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Harry White's report, dated August 8, 1940, argued "[Japanese] military capabilities would be gravely hampered" if the United States and Britain invested \$25-\$35 million on an oil conservation program and the Dutch East Indies embargoed oil exports to Japan.¹⁸ Moreover, the Franklin Roosevelt administration implemented each tenet of Harry White's plan. In September 1940, Mexican Finance Minister Manuel Suarez assured the State Department that his government (which nationalized Mexico's oil industry on March 17, 1938) would stop exporting oil to Japan. By January 1941, Mexico cancelled all its oil contracts with the Japanese and, instead, sold its petroleum surplus to the United States. Under Secretary Welles asked U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Josephus Daniels to convey to Suarez the "Department's sincere appreciation of his attitude."¹⁹ The Franklin Roosevelt administration also reached an agreement with the Dutch East Indies to stop oil exports to Japan in late 1940.²⁰

Yet in June 1941, Franklin Roosevelt believed that the Japanese, far from being militarily paralyzed by these economic measures, would invade the Dutch East Indies and regain access to its oil wells if the United States imposed an oil embargo against Japan. On June 23, Franklin Roosevelt wrote to Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, "I have yours of June 23rd recommending the immediate stopping of shipments of oil to Japan. Please let me know if this would continue to be

¹⁷ White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

¹⁸ White to Morgenthau, "Reducing the Supply of Oil Available to Aggressor Countries," 8 August 1940, NARA 2, RG 56, Box 3.

¹⁹ Bryce Wood, *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy* (New York: Columbia UP, 1962), 411-12. David Green, *The Containment of Latin America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 29.

²⁰ Robert Stinnet, *Day of Deceit: The Truth about FDR and Pearl Harbor* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 40-41.

your judgment if this were to tip the delicate scales and cause Japan to decide either to attack Russia or to attack the Dutch East Indies.”²¹

Moreover, Franklin Roosevelt received several warnings that the oil embargo could provoke Japan into attacking the United States. On June 23, Interior Secretary Ickes (obviously eager for a war with Japan) presented the war argument as one of the reasons why the United States should institute an oil embargo against Japan:

There will never be so good a time to stop the shipment of oil to Japan as we now have. Japan is so preoccupied with what is happening in Russia and what may happen in Siberia that she won't venture a hostile move against the Dutch East Indies... There might develop from the embargoing of oil to Japan such a situation that would make it not only possible but easy to get into this war in an effective way. And if we should thus indirectly be brought in, we would avoid the criticism that we had gone in as an ally of communistic Russia.²²

Rear Admiral Turner and his war planners warned the President in July 19, “An embargo would probably result in a fairly early attack by Japan on Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies and possibly would involve the United States in early war in the Pacific.... Recommendation: That trade with Japan not be embargoed at this time.”²³

With that said, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors did not know for certain that an economic blockade would goad Japan into attacking the United States. Therefore, they operated on another track to insure that outcome. Beginning in December 1940 (more than a year before Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor), Franklin Roosevelt, Morgenthau, White House aide Lauchin Currie and Colonel Claire Chennault conspired with the Chinese Nationalist government, the Kuomintang, to use American military aircraft (operating from secret air bases inside China) and

²¹Franklin Roosevelt to Ickes, June 23, 1941, Harold Ickes Papers, Box 265, Library of Congress.

²²Ickes to Franklin Roosevelt, June 23, 1941, Harold Ickes Papers, Box 265, Library of Congress.

²³James Herzog, “Influence of the United States Navy in the Embargo of Oil to Japan, 1940-1941,” *Pacific Historical Review* 35 (1966): 321.

American pilots to bomb Japanese forces inside China and even firebomb Tokyo, Japan. Moreover, this secret air warfare plan was to be implemented while the United States was officially not at war with Japan.²⁴

The conspiracy started on November 30, 1940, when T.V. Soong (who had the power to speak for the Kuomintang) submitted a plan to Treasury Secretary Morgenthau which had been written by Colonel Chennault. The plan was a rough blueprint for strategic bombing premised on the belief that the Chinese could virtually eliminate the Japanese military in China and neutralize Japan's naval striking ability with just 500 planes. The "Special Air Unit" (which was what the air unit was to be called once the planes and the American pilots reached China) was stationed at air bases in China just 650 miles from Tokyo and "could operate independently in attacking Japan proper." Morgenthau was very enthusiastic about this plan. Yet after consulting Franklin Roosevelt on December 8, Morgenthau contacted Soong again and explained that supplying China with anything close to 500 was out of the question, but he hoped the Kuomintang would be interested in "some long range bombers" to "bomb Tokyo and other Japanese cities."²⁵

After Franklin Roosevelt, Secretary of State Hull, War Secretary Stimson, Navy Secretary Knox and Treasury Secretary Morgenthau agreed in principle to supplying the Kuomintang with a secret air force manned by Americans, they and their subordinates got to work devising a plan to send American planes and American pilots to China. A crucial part of this plan involved setting up two private corporations to serve as fronts for shipping American planes and pilots across the Pacific to China. Soong founded China Defense Supplies or CDS which got its funding from Lend Lease. CDS used the Lend Lease funds to set up and finance a subsidiary called Central Aircraft Manufacturing Corporation or CAMCO which was in charge

²⁴ Michael Schaller, "American Air Strategy in China, 1939-1941," 5.

²⁵ Ibid., 8.

of recruiting pilots and crews at military bases across the United States. The pilots had to resign their commissions to join CAMCO or else they would be violating the Neutrality laws. By September 1941, more than 100 pilots signed new contracts with CAMCO. On June 9, the first contingent of American pilots (who joined CAMCO) arrived in China escorted by U.S. warships under orders from Admiral Stark who insisted on their safe arrival. These pilots later became known as the “Flying Tigers” during the Second World War.²⁶

However, the plan to wage air warfare against the Japanese using American planes and American pilots never came to fruition before the Pearl Harbor attack. One reason was bureaucratic resistance. Army Chief of Staff George Marshall did not want to hand over any strategic bombers to China because the Air Corps faced a severe shortage in this type of plane. The Franklin Roosevelt administration, therefore, opted to compensate China with 100 P-40 fighter planes before switching to the May 28, 1941 plan of sending 269 fighters, 66 bombers and 35 transports to China. The War Department’s Joint Board formally endorsed the latter plan on July 12, but added that few bombers would be made available to China before November 1941. Another related problem was production bottlenecks inside the United States, because even in 1941 the aircraft industry was, owing to its limited productive capacity, having trouble meeting the orders coming in from the U.S. Air Corps, Britain, and (after June 22, 1941) the Soviet Union, to say nothing about meeting China’s aircraft needs. Lastly these production bottlenecks were compounded further by shipping bottlenecks. By the time all these obstacles were cleared up in 1942, the United States was already at war with the Axis powers.²⁷

The Franklin Roosevelt administration’s third strategy to bring the United States into the war through the backdoor was probably as dramatic as the second one. In April 1941, Franklin

²⁶ Ibid., 10, 12-13.

²⁷ Ibid., 11, 16-17.

Roosevelt directed Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Harold Stark to send handful of cruisers to the outskirts of Japan, explaining that he would not mind “losing one or two cruisers,” though he “wouldn’t want to chance losing five or six.” In other words, the President believed that the Japanese were probably going to attack his cruisers. Upon hearing of this proposal, the State Department tried to quash it and Admiral Husband Kimmel told Franklin Roosevelt that the cruisers idea was “ill-advised and will result in war if we make this move.” Despite of Kimmel’s warning, Franklin Roosevelt arranged for the U.S. Navy to send out the handful of cruisers on three occasions to Japanese home waters. Perhaps the most provocative incident involved two U.S. cruisers travelling into the strategic Bungo Strait, southeast on Honshu, that separates the home islands of Kyushu and Shikoku (the Japanese equivalent to New York harbor in the vicinity of the statue of liberty).²⁸

The Bungo Strait was significant for being the key operational zone of the Japanese imperial navy. The Franklin Roosevelt administration’s decision to send two cruisers into Bungo Strait, therefore, significantly increased the likelihood of a violent incident off the coast of Japan. In fact, the Japanese fleet heard the sound of propellers in Bungo channel on July 31 and discovered two American cruisers there. Fortunately, the two cruisers managed to escape the Bungo Strait before any confrontation took place.²⁹

Taken together, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s foreign policy measures – the oil embargo, the secret air warfare scheme and the cruisers plan – are clearly inconsistent with the historical claim that the President and his advisors sought to avoid war. As we have seen, the Franklin Roosevelt administration imposed an oil embargo (and completed the economic blockade) against Japan, knowing that it may lead to war. Sending U.S. planes, manned by

²⁸ Stewart Halsey Ross, *How Franklin Roosevelt Failed American in World War II*, 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

American pilots, into combat against Japanese forces in China and to fire bomb Tokyo was also not a measure designed to avoid war. After all, the Japanese government was bound to find out eventually that the military aircraft were being manned by American pilots and to suspect the Franklin Roosevelt administration's involvement in this matter. Finally, the decision to send ships directly into Japanese home waters was openly provocative and was indeed seen by Admiral Kimmel as a sure route to war.

Growing U.S. Belligerency in the Atlantic

While attempting to goad Japan into attacking the United States, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was behaving as provocatively in relation to Germany in the Atlantic. On March 11, 1941, the Franklin Roosevelt administration succeeded in pushing Lend Lease through Congress, thanks in large part to the President's brilliant, but misleading, comparison of lending military equipment to Britain to a man handing over his hose to a neighbor to put out a fire next door. Financed by a \$7 billion appropriation, the Lend Lease bill allowed U.S. merchant ships to transport war materiel to the edge of a combat zone – which happened to be in the area that Germany defined as a “war zone” – and required Britain or any other enemy of the Axis powers to ship the cargo the rest of the way.³⁰ In addition to Lend Lease, the Franklin Roosevelt administration outlined plans on April 10 to have four naval task forces patrol the Atlantic to search for U-boats and broadcast their location to the British³¹; expanded the “Neutrality Belt” to

³⁰ Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 662; Warren Kimball, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II,” 90-92.

³¹ Bear Braumoeller, “The Myth of American Isolationism,” 366.

cover four-fifths of the Atlantic; sanctioned convoys of merchant ships laden with arms (September 17); and more controversially allowed U.S. warships to shoot “on sight” (October).³²

The Franklin Roosevelt administration’s Atlanticist measures were significant in a number of respects. Lend Lease, the plan involving four naval task forces, and the expansion of the Neutrality Belt resulted in more American merchant vessels and U.S. warships infiltrating that area which Germany called a “war zone.” Under these circumstances, military incidents involving German U-boats inevitably occurred. On May 21, a German U-boat sank the *Robin Moor*, an American freighter, in the South Atlantic. On September 4, the German U boat, U-652, fired on the American destroyer USS *Greer*. On October 17, the American destroyer *Kearny* responded to a distress call from a convoy, only to be torpedoed by a German submarine. On October 30, a German U-boat sank the American destroyer *Reuben James*. These incidents inflamed American public opinion and increased the likelihood of war between the United States and Germany.³³

In addition, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s decision to allow convoys (which was an “act of war”) and to issue the shoot “on sight” order had the effect of transforming the United States, in Professor Braumoeller’s words, into “a silent belligerent.”³⁴ Wayne Cole boldly claimed that, “The undeclared naval war between the United States Navy and German submarines had grown to the point where it seemed only a matter of time before it became a full-fledged declared war.”³⁵ William Langer posited, “According to Admiral Stark’s testimony at the Pearl Harbor Inquiry, the President in October issued orders for American ships in the

³² Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 662.

³³ Bear Braumoeller, “The Myth of American Isolationism,” 366.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 366.

³⁵ Wayne Cole, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 424.

Atlantic to fire on any German or Italian forces. This was tantamount to entering the war against the Axis powers of Europe.”³⁶

Yet more importantly, Franklin Roosevelt explained to some of his cabinet secretaries and to Winston Churchill that these Atlanticist measures were necessary for provoking incidents in the Atlantic Ocean which he could then use to justify declaring war on Germany. On April 12, 1941, Interior Secretary Ickes wrote in his diary:

[The President and I] lay anchor off Great Isaac Monday night [March 24]. It was while we were talking at dinner that night that the President made the significant remark that ‘things are coming to a head; Germany will be making a blunder soon.’ There could be no doubt of the President’s scarcely concealed desire that there might be an incident which would justify our declaring a state of war against Germany or at least providing convoys to merchantmen carrying supplies to Great Britain.³⁷

Later on March 30, Franklin Roosevelt again discussed his idea of provoking an “incident” with Ickes. Ickes recalled:

[Franklin Roosevelt] started in at once to ask me how I felt the public would receive a suggestion from him to the belligerents that they confine their hostilities at sea to the waters naturally appurtenant to their own countries. His proposal was that we suggest this to Germany, Italy and England, and coupled with the proposal would be the further suggestion that the United States police the balance of the oceans with the avowed intention of sinking or capturing every ship of any belligerent that it might find out of the restricted zones... I frankly told the President that I believed that such a suggestion coming at this time would have a bad reaction. I told him that the ground had not been prepared and that he would be playing into the hands of his critics who have been saying that his intention all along has been to lead us into war. So far as I am concerned, I am willing that we should make an open declaration of war, but as I have thought it over since, I still think that I gave the President good advice. He agreed with me and said that probably we would have to wait for a German “incident.” I suspect that the Germans will avoid at all possible costs any such incident as the President would like to take advantage of.³⁸

More than a month later, Franklin Roosevelt indicated to Treasury Secretary Morgenthau that he needed a pretext for bringing the United States into the war. On May 17, Morgenthau wrote in

³⁶ William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1965), 162.

³⁷ Harold Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, 466.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 470.

his diary, “When I saw the President at six o’clock this evening, he said, ‘I am waiting to be pushed into this situation.’ He had previously said that he thought something might happen at any time, and I gathered that he wanted to be pushed into the war rather than lead us into it. This is no doubt what he meant.”³⁹ Six days later, Stimson wrote in his diary that “the President shows evidence of waiting for the accidental shot of some irresponsible captain on either side to be the occasion of his going to war.”⁴⁰

Then in September Churchill announced to his cabinet that, “Franklin Roosevelt had said that he would wage war, but not declare it, and that he would become more and more provocative.” “If the Germans did not like it,” Franklin Roosevelt added, “they could attack American forces.” In going over these comments, Churchill was referring to his meeting with Franklin Roosevelt at the Atlantic Conference in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland (August 12). Churchill recalled that Franklin Roosevelt “was obviously determined to” enter the war despite problems with Congress and he insisted “everything was to be done to force an incident.” Churchill alleged in the same meeting that Franklin Roosevelt had “made it clear that he would look for an ‘incident’ which would justify him in opening hostilities.” Historian Warren Kimball dismissed these quotes as Churchill telling his cabinet what they wanted to hear. But in light of Ickes, Morgenthau and Stimson’s diary entries, Churchill appeared to be telling the truth.⁴¹

In addition to these private statements, one of Franklin Roosevelt’s own public statements indicated his belief that the administration’s decision to sanction convoys (September 17) and issue the “shoot on sight” order (October) was probably going to lead to a war with

³⁹ Diary Entry, 17 May 1941, “Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt,” *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

⁴⁰ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 114.

⁴¹ Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 648, 657-658; Warren Kimball, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II,” 83, 94-95.

Germany. Back on January 21, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt went on record opposing convoys on the grounds that, “convoys mean shooting and shooting means war.” When Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors sanctioned convoys and the shoot “on sight” order, they must have then had a clear idea about the potential consequences of these two measures.⁴²

Background to U.S.-Vichy Relations

Within the context of this provocative U.S. foreign policy, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s diplomatic strategy for aviation was very important. In the second half of 1940 and throughout 1941, the Franklin Roosevelt administration attempted repeatedly – sometimes using Pan Am as a “Trojan Horse” – to acquire at least one airfield in French West Africa or Morocco to extend American airpower potential to the Mediterranean.⁴³

These efforts were significant for the following reasons. To begin with, French West Africa was at that time under the control of Delegate-General Maxime Weygand and other Vichy officers who declared their fealty to Germany’s vassal, Vichy France (following France’s armistice with Germany on June 30, 1940). Therefore, Franklin Roosevelt and some of his advisors must have realized that Germany was still a weak European power with limited sway even over Vichy France or else they would never have contemplated acquiring airfields on the territory of a German vassal.⁴⁴

More importantly, the Franklin Roosevelt administration realized that acquiring one or more airfields in Dakar, Morocco or Algeria would enable it to contest the airspace over the

⁴² William Chamberlain, “Franklin Roosevelt Maneuvers America into War,” In *Pearl Harbor, Franklin Roosevelt and the Coming of War*, ed. George M. Waller (Boston: Heath, 1953), 7.

⁴³ Diary entry, November 9, 1940, *The Adolf Berle Diary, 1937-1971* [microfilm], Reel 2, 1014.

⁴⁴ Rene Cassin, “Vichy or Free French?” *Foreign Affairs* 20, No. 1 (October 1941): 105; William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 172; Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Franklin Roosevelt*, 787; Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors*, 67-68, 70.

Mediterranean (which the Germans were determined to control) and potentially turn the tide of the war.⁴⁵ In October 1940, one U.S. Army-Navy memorandum emphasized the Mediterranean's importance to the European theatre. That same memorandum stressed that the Allies could potentially defeat the European Axis powers by occupying North Africa and striking the soft underbelly of Southern Europe, instead of launching a cross-channel invasion in France, where they were likely to encounter formidable German fortifications. One month later, Franklin Roosevelt told the U.S. Charge d'Affairs to Vichy Robert Murphy that he hoped to bring the Vichy French colonial army in Morocco and Algeria back into the war on the Allied side. More astonishing still, Franklin Roosevelt in a private conversation with British Deputy Premier Clement Attlee pointed his finger at Algiers and said, "This is where I would like to have U.S. troops."⁴⁶ What makes these episodes all the more remarkable was that they coincided with the Franklin Roosevelt administration's plan to acquire a Vichy airfield in Dakar, Algeria or

⁴⁵ In January 14, 1941, the President's Special Envoy to North Africa Robert Murphy explained to the State Department, "Should that [Vichy French] Government be captured by the Germans as a result of the occupation of all metropolitan France or otherwise deprived of its present limited authority, French Africa will unquestionably provide the springboard for [the] military rebound which will follow." Pell to Hull, 14 January 1941, in U.S. State Department, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1941*, 2: 207. Winston Churchill exhorted Weygand to rise up against Germany and "declared that the French fleet and the entire African empire would follow Weygand in such a move, which then would bring about the early collapse of Italy, shatter the Axis, and demoralize Germany." Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors*, 77. Furthermore, three prominent American historians are in agreement that the United States, Britain and Germany attached great importance to the Mediterranean. Langer wrote, "The struggle for Africa had thus already begun... The French government have to defend this area or permit the Germans to take over, in the interest of their own protection. If that happened, all hope would vanish that North Africa could ever become a springboard for a British or American attack on Europe and ultimate liberation of France." William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 85-86. Conn and Fairchild wrote, "Besides their quest for bases and colonies, the Germans wanted to gain military control of North Africa in order to prevent the execution of any current or future British or American plans for invading this area and using it as a base of operations against the European continent." Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 77.

⁴⁶ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War*, 20; Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors*, 67-68, 70.

Morocco. In other words, inciting the Vichy French to rebel and sending American troops to Algiers were not hazy objectives. Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors had a specific plan, which involved the use of Pan Am and American airpower, to ensure that the United States established and consolidated a military presence in French West Africa.⁴⁷

Suffice it to say, the Franklin Roosevelt administration probably realized that such a development risked provoking a state of war with Germany. The Nazi regime was desperate to acquire military airfields in Morocco and Algeria, deny them to the United States, and control the Mediterranean's airspace. Like the Franklin Roosevelt administration, the Nazis realized that controlling the Mediterranean was crucial for defending the German empire's southern flank.⁴⁸ Yet more importantly, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was aware of the Nazi regime's fears concerning German security. While the War and Navy Department representatives did not oppose Navy Secretary Frank Knox's suggestion in November 1940 that the United States take Dakar by force⁴⁹, they warned that the U.S. Navy was in no position to protect any U.S. presence in Dakar. In other words, Franklin Roosevelt's military advisors believed that Germany, Italy and possibly the Vichy French were likely to attack a U.S. military foothold in Dakar. Later on November 18, 1940, Livingston Satterthwaite (Political Relations (RA), a State Department subdivision) also explained to Bonsal (RA) that the representatives of the War and Navy Department opposed the administration's plans to establish a Pan Am air service to Dakar on similar grounds:

⁴⁷ Diary entry, November 9, 1940, *The Adolf Berle Diary, 1937-1971* [microfilm], Reel 2, 1014.

⁴⁸ Norman Goda, "The Riddle of the Rock: A Reassessment of German Motives for the Capture of Gibraltar in the Second World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28, No. 28 (April 1993): 302.

⁴⁹ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War*, 20.

At a meeting in the Department in which representatives of War and Navy were present, it was considered that the establishment of an airline terminus or American airline operations to Dakar at this time would be inadvisable because of the inability of our Navy to protect such a base should it become necessary to do so.⁵⁰

In other words, the War and Navy Departments realized that the Axis powers were likely to take military action against a Pan Am airfield or U.S. military installations in Dakar.

Yet before discussing the U.S.-German competition for Mediterranean airspace any further, some words need said about the U.S.-Vichy relationship. One of the major historiographical debates has been over whether the Franklin Roosevelt administration's Vichy policy succeeded or failed. Suffice it to say, these debates have very little relevance because they are based on hindsight. For instance, if the Vichy forces in North Africa welcomed the American and British invaders as liberators on November 8, 1942, then the preceding two and a half years of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's Vichy policy would have been considered a great success. Since the Vichy forces, instead, offered stiff resistance to the Anglo-American invaders, many historians have argued that the Franklin Roosevelt administration's "Vichy gamble" was the "Vichy fumble."⁵¹

Yet this debate overlooks the more important question about whether the Franklin Roosevelt administration saw compelling reasons for pursuing conciliation with Vichy France. The evidence suggests that there were at least three compelling reasons for pursuing this policy. To begin with, the President and his advisors learned from the U.S. embassy in Vichy and U.S. consulates in Algiers and Dakar that Germany's control over French Africa was tenuous. In November 1940, Franklin Roosevelt was sufficiently impressed with these findings that he told

⁵⁰ Satterthwaite (RA) to Bonsal (RA), 18 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, Box 4048.

⁵¹ William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*. Hamden: Archon Books, 1965; Louis Gottschalk, "Our Vichy Fumble," *The Journal of Modern History* 20, No. 1 (March 1948): 47-56.

Charge d’Affairs in Vichy Robert Murphy that, “North Africa was the most likely place where French troops might be brought back into the war against Nazi Germany.” The Franklin Roosevelt administration could also draw comfort from publicly known world events. When Henri Petain assumed power in France and established his capital at Vichy on July 10, 1940 (thereby creating Vichy France), the French African colonies declared their allegiance to the new Petain government. One month later, however, French Africa was in civil war. On August 26, Governor Felix Eboue of the Chad defected to the Free French. The Cameroons and French Equatorial Africa (excepting Gabon) followed suit on August 27 and August 28 respectively.⁵² In October and November, the Free French seized Gabon.⁵³ In other words, Germany and Vichy France were not only unable to control the French African colonies, but they could not prevent many of those colonies from defecting to the Allies. Given the political vacuum in French Africa, the Franklin Roosevelt administration quite understandably did not want to pass up the opportunity to increase its influence and possibly acquire airfields in Dakar, Morocco and Algeria via a conciliatory policy with Vichy France.⁵⁴

In addition to the political vacuum in French Africa, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was encouraged by those elements in the Petain government who were either hostile to Nazism or prepared to throw in their lot with the allies when the opportunity presented itself. American spies, for example, obtained much of their intelligence from anti-Nazi bureaucrats inside the Petain government.⁵⁵ The high-ranking Vichy officers were not as brazen about their support for the Allies, but they indicated to the United States that they would switch sides if they were supported by another great power. In the winter of 1940, Maxime Weygand

⁵² Rene Cassin, “Vichy or Free French?” 105.

⁵³ Gerhard Weinberg, *World at Arms*, 160-161.

⁵⁴ William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 76.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 172

told Franklin Roosevelt's special envoy Robert Murphy, "Where are the divisions coming from? Will the United States provide them?"⁵⁶ Later, on August 1, 1941, Vichy Admiral Francois Darlan told U.S. Ambassador William Leahy, "When you have 3000 tanks, 6000 planes and 500,000 men to bring to Marseilles, let me know. Then we will welcome you and I shall be in a position to have this order carried out."⁵⁷ Later on August 24, 1941, Weygand even asked Murphy whether the United States might become a belligerent in the future: "I am convinced that [Weygand] has long since made up his mind that the American card is the one to play. During the course of our last conversation he inquired again whether there might be a possibility of the United States assuming the role of a belligerent in the war with Germany."⁵⁸

Finally high ranking Vichy officers, such as the one-legged Governor General of French West Africa Pierre Boisson and his superior Maxime Weygand, were offering their African airfields to the State Department and to any American airline wishing to establish an air service to French Africa.⁵⁹ Far from being delusional, the Franklin Roosevelt administration understandably decided to seize upon the strategic opportunities in French West Africa it perceived at that time.

U.S.-German Competition for African Airfields, June 1940-January 1941

In the second half of 1940, the United States and Germany were engaged in a secret competition for airfields in French West Africa with the stakes being as high as control

⁵⁶ Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors*, 74.

⁵⁷ Although not recognized as such at the time, Darlan's comment was eerily similar to Weygand's remark in late 1940 and was probably one of the first signs that he was abandoning his pro-Nazi sympathies in favor of a pro-American position. Leahy to Hull, 4 June 1941, *FRUS: Diplomatic Relations*, 1941, 2: 189.

⁵⁸ Welles to FDR, August 25, 1941, *President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Office Files: Part 1: "Safe" and Confidential Files* [microfilm], Reel 2, 609.

⁵⁹ Paraphrase of Confidential Telegram Received from American Consulate, Dakar, October 20, 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, Box 4048.

over the Mediterranean's airspace and the security of the German empire. Germany led the first major diplomatic effort to capture the airfields in Algeria and Morocco soon after forcing France to surrender on June 22, 1940.⁶⁰

As German diplomatic records make clear, the Hitler regime wanted airfields in Algeria and Morocco in order to deny them to the United States and fortify the German empire against a possible American invasion. On August 30, the German embassy in Washington D.C. concluded that the Franklin Roosevelt administration wanted the Spain and Portugal's Atlantic islands, along with Dakar, to create the prerequisites for an American war effort.⁶¹ Later, on September 10, the German Naval Command observed:

... One can hardly reckon with decisive [American] aid to [Great Britain].... Yet the possibility of... American action looms in the occupation of the Spanish and Portuguese islands... and... of the French colonies of West Africa... [An] American landing would doubtless lead to... permanent establishment... in [this] area. Thus... after the British defeat, the Anglo-Saxon world would maintain strategically important positions while making the desired German establishment there difficult if not impossible.⁶²

Ten days later, Ribbentrop expressed those same concerns to Mussolini and Ciano:

The Fuhrer had [the] request [for bases in the Northwest African region] presented to the Spaniards in order – looking far into the future – to counteract, through a series of naval bases, danger which would arise for the European and African continents – which might be designated as the Eastern Hemisphere – from the Western Hemisphere under the leadership of the United States...⁶³

On October 23, Hitler told the Spanish Interior Minister Ramon Suner that he could not promise French Morocco to Spain in writing because such a commitment would provoke Northwest Africa's defection possibly to the United States. He continued:

⁶⁰ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War*, 20.

⁶¹ Norman Goda, "The Riddle of the Rock," 302.

⁶² Kriegstagebuch der Seekriegsleitung 1939-1945: Teil A, vol. XIII, eds. Werner Rahn and Gerhard Schreiber (Bonn 1988), 3, September, 10, 1940.

⁶³ DGFP, D, XI, no. 79.

The greatest threat existing at the moment was that a part of the colonial empire would... desert France and go over to de Gaulle, England or the United States.... The greatest problem to be solved at the moment consisted in hindering the de Gaulle movement... from... extending itself and thereby establishing... bases for England and America on the African coast.⁶⁴

Yet Germany's weak diplomatic position vis-à-vis French West Africa resulted in the failure of the Hitler regime's first diplomatic efforts to acquire French African airfields. On July 15, 1940, German commander Otto von Stulpnagel (in charge of occupied France) forwarded Hitler's demand for eight airfields in Algeria and Morocco to the Petain government. Petain rejected the demand two days later on the grounds that it went beyond the terms of the armistice. Then Hitler, in spite of his reputation for taking rejection badly, allowed the matter to drop in the belief that an aggressive response would push French West Africa into the arms of his enemies.⁶⁵

Other German efforts in 1940 to obtain airfields in North Africa through diplomacy were equally unsuccessful. In August the Hitler regime began negotiations with the Franco regime in Spain in order to acquire airfields in Spanish Morocco and to persuade the Spanish to enter the Second World War as an ally. Hitler and his advisors were confident that promises of economic aid to rebuild Spain's war torn economy and of territory (i.e. Gibraltar, French Morocco, Oran and part of Central Africa) would be enough to gain the Franco regime's cooperation. They were mistaken. On September 16, 1940, Franco's wily Interior Minister Ramon Serrano Suner said

⁶⁴ Ramon Serrano Sunier, *Memorias: Entre el silencio y la propaganda, la historia como fue* (Barcelona 1987), nos. 221, 222, 235, and pp. 466-7.

⁶⁵ Norman Goda, "Hitler's Demand for Casablanca in 1940: Incident or Policy?" *The International History Review* 16, No. 3 (August 1994): 491, 493, 500, 506-08.

that his government refused to consider German-owned enclaves (such as airfields) on Spanish territory.⁶⁶

Later in October-December, the Hitler regime resumed its aviation diplomacy with Vichy France and Spain. Yet German negotiations with Spain broke down when Interior Minister Suner demanded that the *quid pro quo* for his government's cooperation be in writing. Suner's negotiating position exasperated the Hitler regime which had promised Spain far more *quid pro quo* that it ever intended to deliver upon. On December 7, Franco formally rejected the Hitler regime's requests for Spain to enter the war as a German ally and to allow German airfields in Spanish Morocco.⁶⁷

German-Vichy negotiations also broke down largely as a consequence of the State Department's diplomatic representations. On November 4, Secretary of State Hull told French Ambassador Gaston Henry Haye, "We propose to be on our guard with respect to acts of the Vichy Government, inspired by M. Laval, that are intended to aid, by French connivance, the military activities of Hitler, such as supplying of naval and air bases..." On November 16, Petain responded to these representations with assurances to the First Secretary to the U.S. embassy Freeman Matthews that his government would not concede any bases to Germany.⁶⁸ Later on December 11, Petain pushed Laval out of his cabinet, an event widely interpreted as Vichy's shift away from its pro-Nazi position. Regarding Laval's dismissal as proof that Vichy France

⁶⁶ Norman Goda, "The Riddle of the Rock," 301, 304; Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 76. Spain's economy was in ruins owing to the Spanish Civil War.

⁶⁷ Norman Goda, "Hitler's Demand for Casablanca in 1940," 509; Norman Goda, "The Riddle of the Rock," 305; Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 78-79.

⁶⁸ William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 97, 99, 101.

was an untrustworthy ally, the Hitler regime temporarily abandoned its aviation diplomacy with the Petain government.⁶⁹

While these Nazi diplomatic efforts were going on, the Franklin Roosevelt administration tried to take the Dakar airfield through diplomatic means, while leaving open the possibility of acquiring airfields in Morocco and Algeria. The primary documentation for U.S. aviation diplomacy with Vichy France concerning Dakar is sketchy for the period July-September 1940. The President's Secretary File states that on July 30, 1940 the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) "has been informed by Juan Trippe that 'as a matter of high policy,' the Administration wants the Board to grant a new application by Pan American to fly from N.Y. to Puerto Rico to Dakar, Africa." After receiving Trippe's report, CAB consulted the State, War, and Navy Departments who asked the President to approve Pan Am's air certificate. On the same day, Franklin Roosevelt replied, "Tell them ok."⁷⁰ In September the Franklin Roosevelt administration reopened the consulate in Dakar and Thomas Wasson formally assumed his post as Consul General on the 15th.⁷¹ Then the primary sources are silent for more than a month, though the State Department may have contacted Governor General Boisson about Pan Am's interest in establishing a commercial service to Dakar.

On October 20, 1940, Wasson reported to the State Department that Governor General of French West Africa Pierre Boisson was prepared to welcome a Pan Am service to Dakar.⁷² Boisson's request had the effect of quickly turning the wheels of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's bureaucracy. The State Department expressed interest in "the availability of

⁶⁹ Norman Goda, "Hitler's Demand for Casablanca in 1940," 509.

⁷⁰ James Rowe, 30 July 1940, Box 2875, President's Secretary File, FDRL.

⁷¹ William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 85.

⁷² Paraphrase of Confidential Telegram Received from American Consulate, Dakar, 20 October 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, Box 4048.

Dakar as a terminus for a transatlantic service,” and contacted CAB about examining “the possibilities afforded by the situation.”⁷³ One day later, the State Department also consulted CAB and the Navy Department on the possibility of sending a naval observer over to Dakar “to obtain information bearing on facilities for civil aviation... which would be of interest to the Civil Aeronautics Board.” However, the State Department also decided to temporarily hold off on “sending representatives of the American air transport companies to that city for the purpose of making a survey.”⁷⁴

At this time, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors were not only thinking about acquiring the Dakar airfield, but they also considered transforming Morocco and Algeria into a “neutrality zone” via the “Greenland technique” and establishing airfields and U.S. troops at both locations. On November 9, 1940, Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle wrote in his diary:

I got hold of Welles and told him I thought we ought to be sending someone to North Africa. Welles agreed, but thought that the way to do it was not to start in negotiating at once but to send a really able man to go over the situation and start negotiating on the ground. The Greenland technique might conceivably be applied to Algeria, Morocco and perhaps even Dakar.⁷⁵

The “Greenland technique” involved establishing a Pan Am airfield at a strategic outpost, like Dakar, and converting it to military use later on. In other words, the purpose behind establishing a Pan Am air service to Dakar, Algeria or Morocco was to establish a secret military presence at any one of those locations.⁷⁶ Berle’s facile justification for expanding the scope of the

⁷³ Hull to Wasson, 30 October, 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, Ibid.

⁷⁴ Berle to Harlee Branch, 31 October 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, 811.79680/3, Ibid.

⁷⁵ Diary entry, November 9, 1940, *The Adolf Berle Diary, 1937-1971* [microfilm], Reel 2, 1014.

⁷⁶ The “Greenland technique” was named after the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s shrewd maneuver in the Danish colony of Greenland soon after Germany occupied Denmark in April 9. In order to establish a discreet military presence in Denmark and avoid adverse publicity, the Franklin Roosevelt administration arranged for Pan Am to establish an airfield in Greenland. As Nancy Fogelson explained, “The construction of airfields would allow the Americans to

“Greenland technique” to Northwest Africa was to provide Morocco, Algeria and Dakar with American neutrality protection and, in the process, keep the United States out of the war. But Berle’s justification was deceitful because Germany might tolerate a U.S. airfield in Dakar, but certainly not one in Morocco or Algeria that overlooked the Mediterranean (which was vital to German security). Therefore, the “Greenland technique” was more likely to heighten the risk of a state of war with Germany than to keep the United States out of such a conflict.⁷⁷

Unfortunately for Franklin Roosevelt and other State Department officials who wanted a Pan Am airfield in Dakar, the War and Navy Departments were willing to go no further than to send an Assistant Naval Attaché over to Dakar.⁷⁸ Any plan for Pan Am to establish commercial air operations to Dakar was, as far as the representatives of the War and Navy Departments were concerned, clearly out of the question because the U.S. Navy was not yet prepared to protect a Pan Am airfield in Dakar from attack (probably by Germany).⁷⁹ After the War and Navy Departments arrived at their decision, the proposed air service to Dakar was shelved.⁸⁰

Yet far from being discouraged by the War and Navy Departments’ warnings about defending an airfield in Dakar, Franklin Roosevelt continued his pursuit of the Dakar airfield. The president bypassed Secretary of State Hull and contacted Under Secretary Welles. Together Franklin Roosevelt and Welles hatched a plan for Pan Am to connect with a French airline,

establish a military presence [in Greenland] without many move to take over the country.” See Nancy Fogelson, “Greenland: Strategic Base on a Northern Defence Line,” *The Journal of Military History* 53, No. 1 (January 1989): 61-62. Later in April 9, 1941, the President sent U.S. military forces to occupy the airfield in Greenland. See Herbert W. Briggs, “The Validity of the Greenland Agreement,” *The American Journal of International Law* 35, no. 3 (July 1941): 506-513.

⁷⁷ Warren Kimball, *The Juggler*, 114.

⁷⁸ James Forrestal (Navy Undersecretary) to Hull, 13 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/4, Box 4048.

⁷⁹ Satterthwaite (RA) to Bonsal (RA), 18 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, Ibid.

⁸⁰ Hull to Caffery, 29 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, Ibid.

which serviced Dakar, at the Pan Am airfield in Bolama, Portuguese Guinea. Through this clever subterfuge, Franklin Roosevelt and Welles hoped to gain access to Dakar's air facilities.⁸¹

Franklin Roosevelt and Welles spent the rest of November searching for a French airline to connect with Pan Am. Without explaining the deeper meaning behind his request, Welles wrote to Wasson on November 20, "The Department is interested in ascertaining the present feasible methods of reaching Dakar from points in Europe or Africa. Please telegraph what air, steamer or overland travel services are now functioning and keep Department advised of any changes."⁸² Two days later, Wasson reported to Welles,

Air France maintains semi-weekly air service between Marseilles and Dakar via Algiers, Gao. I am informed Afro-Portuguesa maintains weekly air service between Lisbon and Tangier whence one can proceed by train or automobile to Casablanca. Although no regular steamship service exists between Casablanca and Dakar several passenger-carrying vessels make the trip each week.⁸³

By the end of November, Franklin Roosevelt and Welles decided that Pan Am's westward flight should connect at the Bolama airfield with the *Companie de Chargeurs Reunis* (CR), a French airline servicing Dakar and Monrovia. Welles met with Trippe to discuss connecting with CR and then on November 29 wrote to Franklin Roosevelt, "In accordance with your memorandum of November 29, I have made the necessary arrangements with Juan Trippe. He assured me that

⁸¹ Mr. Burden later proposed a similar plan to Chief Thomas Burke (IN) in relation to the Azores in August 1941. He reasoned that in order to conceal U.S. efforts to build an airport on the Azores, Pan American Airways should arrange for another airline, jointly owned by Brazil and Portugal, to build an airport in the Azores and then the U.S. military could take over that air base later on. Laurence Duggan to Satterthwaite, 10 September 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1247-1/2, Box 4041.

⁸² Welles to Wasson, 20 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 120.34 Transportation/665A, Box C215.

⁸³ Wasson to Welles, 22 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 120.34 Transportation/666, Ibid.

there will be no publicity.”⁸⁴ Franklin Roosevelt’s terse reply was, “S.W. OK, FDR.”⁸⁵ Governor General Pierre Boisson of French West Africa also cooperated with this arrangement, as evidenced by his telling Murphy “that he sincerely hopes that Pan American will establish a Natal-Dakar service. He promised his cooperation if Pan American would consider it.”⁸⁶ A few days later, Pan Am sent proposals to CR in order to make the secret connecting flight at Bolama a reality.⁸⁷

The extraordinary thing was that Pan Am and CR operated their air service to Dakar for more than two months before it was discovered by the Germans. As Gordon Auchineloss explained to James Dunn (IN) in the summer of 1941:

During the months of November and December 1940, Pan American Airways, with the concurrence of authorities in Washington, seemed to feel that it would be advantageous to have the Clipper on its westward trip to the United States from Lisbon make contact at its Bolama (Portuguese Guinea) stop with an airline serving Monrovia (Liberia) and Dakar (Senegal).⁸⁸

In early January 1941, the Pan Am-CR air service was still in operation because on January 17 Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA)’s Assistant Foreign Secretary Howard Van Dyck wrote to the State Department that his organization had mysteriously received correspondence from its missionaries in Dakar:

Since September 1940 all mail matter, whether letters or parcels, surface or air mail, which we have sent out addressed to French West Africa has been eventually returned to us stamped ‘No Service.’ However, we have periodically received letters from French West Africa; the latest of these came via the Dakar-Natal Trans-Atlantic service. The logical conclusion is that mail could

⁸⁴ Welles to Franklin Roosevelt, 29 November 1940, Box 2975, President’s Secretary File, FDRL.

⁸⁵ Sumner Welles, 29 November, 1940, Box 4393, President’s Personal File, FDRL.

⁸⁶ Pell to Hull, 14 January 1941, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1941*, 2: 210.

⁸⁷ Dunn (IN) to Thomas Burke (Chief of IN), 19 July 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/9, Box 4048.

⁸⁸ Gordon Auchineloss to Dunn, summer 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/9, *Ibid*.

be sent back by that same route to French West Africa, but the New York Post Office informs us that they never heard of such a possibility. Will you kindly investigate this matter for us and ascertain whether it may not actually be possible for mail to proceed from New York to French West Africa via the Natal-Dakar Trans-Atlantic service and if so, what would be the letter rate of postage?⁸⁹

The Nazis, however, eventually discovered the secret Pan Am-CR air service and in late January, the Armistice Commission of Wiesbaden (which the Nazis set up after France signed the armistice on June 30) cancelled CR's air service to West Africa for the duration of the winter because it was during this season that Pan Am clippers were flying via West Africa. With CR's air service to Dakar ended, Franklin Roosevelt's plan was foiled.⁹⁰

U.S.-German Competition for African Airfields, February-November 1941

Throughout 1941 the U.S.-German competition for airfields in French Africa continued, but at this juncture a new element started influencing the rivalry. Towards the end of 1940, the Hitler regime resolved to invade the Soviet Union in the spring or summer of 1941 to replenish Germany's raw materials (Soviet raw material exports to Germany were far less than what the Hitler regime hoped for).⁹¹ In January 1941 the State Department learned of Germany's invasion plans; and later on March 6 Franklin Roosevelt told Treasury Secretary Morgenthau "in the strictest confidence that he had gotten the tip-off that the Germans had made up their mind that they were not going to be able to take England and, therefore, they were going after Russia, and that is why the Russians are so nervous."⁹² As a result of the impending German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Hitler regime rushed to seize airfields in North Africa while the Franklin

⁸⁹ Howard Van Dyck to Hull, January 17, 1941, RG 59, file 811.71240/38, Box 3989, Ibid.

⁹⁰ Gordon Auchinloss to Dunn, summer 1941, RG 59, file 811.79680/9, Box 4048, Ibid.

⁹¹ Kennedy to Hull, July 31, 1940, file 811.34544/1 5/12, RG 59, Box 3786, Ibid.

⁹² Diary Entry, March 6, 1941, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt" *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

Roosevelt administration quietly prepared to capture Dakar and waited patiently for the Germans to invade the Soviet Union before availing itself of its next opportunity.⁹³

In its rush to net French and Spanish airfields in Northwestern Africa, the Hitler regime overplayed its hand while negotiating with Spain and Vichy France, but nevertheless came close to an agreement with the latter on May 1941. In mid-January, German foreign minister Ribbentrop told Spanish dictator Franco that unless he declared war in forty-eight hours, the Germans would crush Nationalist Spain. Franco simply ignored the warning and let the deadline pass without incident.⁹⁴ In February, Hitler warned Franco that he would cut off food shipments to Spain unless he declared war. But Franco's response was to turn to the United States to supply Spain with food.⁹⁵

In contrast to the failed German-Spanish negotiations, the Hitler regime almost achieved a breakthrough with Vichy France. On May 11, Vichy Admiral Darlan met Hitler at Berchtesgaden and negotiated a treaty with him four days later. Upon learning of the agreement, Franklin Roosevelt warned Petain not to collaborate with Germany and seized eleven French ships stationed in American ports to show he meant business. Over the next few days, the White House and Vichy exchanged several messages until May 27 when Petain promised not to give up any African bases to the Germans. One day later, though, Darlan publicly announced the signing of the Paris Protocols with Germany. Under this agreement, "German submarines might be based on Dakar from 15 July 1941 onward and... German surface and air forces could be based there at

⁹³ The Franklin Roosevelt administration's abortive to acquire an airfield in Tangier, Morocco occurred in November 1941, at which time the German invasion of the Soviet Union was bogged down by the winter weather and already fairing quite badly.

⁹⁴ Norman Goda, "The Riddle of the Rock," 308.

⁹⁵ William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 126.

some later date as well.”⁹⁶ Germany was also given access to Bizerte and the Syrian airfields. Almost immediately afterwards, the U.S. embassy in Vichy, together with Weygand and Boisson, started pressuring Petain to renounce the Protocols. The result was a compromise on June 6: Germany could use the Syrian airfields, but not the facilities in Bizerte and Dakar.⁹⁷

Although the compromise did not please the Franklin Roosevelt administration, it was the death knell for the Hitler regime’s North African policy. After the Germans invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Germany’s position vis-à-vis French Africa was almost one of impotence. Germany lost most of the military leverage it had to negotiate for airfields in Algeria and Morocco because of its military commitments on the Eastern Front, and had to resort to a passive policy of allowing Vichy officers to govern and protect their own colonies in the hope that this was enough to prevent a possible Allied invasion of Northwest Africa in the future.⁹⁸

In contrast to the Hitler regime’s aggressive aviation diplomacy, the Franklin Roosevelt administration spent much of 1941 quietly planning Dakar’s capture. This planning entailed aerial surveys and war planning. In April 1941, Pan Am (in connivance with the Franklin Roosevelt administration) flew unauthorized flights over Dakar in order to photograph its air and harbor facilities. On April 24, Wasson reported to Secretary of State Hull that:

Governor General states that clipper flew over Dakar without permission April 15. Since anti-aircraft defenses have orders to fire on every un-notified plane approaching Dakar, Governor General requests that in future American planes advise day and hour of passage to avoid possibility of being shot down [sic].⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 111-12.

⁹⁷ William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 156-60.

⁹⁸ By November 1941, the Hitler allowed the Vichy officers “to keep more men and equipment in Africa than was permitted by the armistice,” which indicated a shift to a more laissez-faire policy of allowing the Vichy to protect their own colonies. See I.S.O. Playfair et al, *The Mediterranean and Middle East* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1966), 134-35.

⁹⁹ Wasson to Hull, 24 April 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1195, Box 4041.

This incident took Hull completely unawares, which suggested that the Pan Am flight over Dakar was arranged (probably by Franklin Roosevelt) without the former's knowledge. On April 28, Hull demanded an explanation from Trippe about why Pan Am was flying over Dakar on the 15th.¹⁰⁰ On May 9, Trippe replied quite deviously that the "[Pan Am] aircraft proceeded over Dakar for the purpose of investigating the harbor areas there, as a precaution against the possibility of having to turn back later for an emergency landing in the event the oil pressure" made a landing at Bolama unsafe.¹⁰¹

On April 29, a Pan Am clipper made another unauthorized flight over Dakar with Air Corps Chief Arnold on board. Arnold related in his journal:

Awoke in time to go on deck with the skipper to take a look at Dakar. Approached Dakar at about 25000 feet. Four or five miles away from the city the harbor appeared to be well filled with boats. About 14 merchant ships riding anchor, one of which appeared to be airplane carrier at first, probably uncompleted French battleship. 3 other warships, 2 of which appeared to be submarines, 3 seaplanes in harbor. About 14 2-engine bombers. 2 twin engine pursuit planes. 2 runways, each about 5000 ft. long, at right angles to one another... This is the next to the last regular passenger trip Pan American takes over the Dakar-Lisbon route and in face of that fact, will probably be unable to straighten out the camera situation. It is very doubtful if any pictures will ever be taken of Dakar.¹⁰²

In addition to getting Pan Am to fly over Dakar, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's war planners assessed the feasibility of taking Dakar by force while Under Secretary Welles advanced an even more ambitious plan for applying the Monroe Doctrine to all of West Africa. On May 7, the Navy planners concluded in their report that the United States had to wait until September 1 to assemble enough naval and air forces to capture Dakar. The Navy planners also

¹⁰⁰ Hull to Trippe, 28 April 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1195, Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Trippe to Hull, 9 May 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1203, Ibid.

¹⁰² Diary entry 29 April 1941, Box 2, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Library of Congress.

strongly implied that U.S. armed forces would come under attack after Dakar fell by pointing out, “An effort to hold a base in this area might well constitute an overextension on our part.”¹⁰³

Twelve days later, Under Secretary Welles (who often had hawkish foreign policy stances) suggested to Franklin Roosevelt his plan for extending the Monroe Doctrine to “all of West Africa north of the equator belonging to Britain, France, Spain, Portugal and Liberia as well as the Atlantic islands” on the pretext that these places were part of the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine, proclaimed back in 1823, stated that any European attempts to colonize the Western Hemisphere would be interpreted by the United States as acts of aggression requiring U.S. military intervention. Therefore, what Welles proposed was quite radical. If the Franklin Roosevelt administration won popular approval to designate all of West Africa within the purview of the Monroe Doctrine, the Franklin Roosevelt administration could interpret certain Axis activities in Algeria (for instance) as acts of aggression and send American troops to this location. Concerned about the political risks involved in extending the Monroe Doctrine to West Africa, War Secretary Stimson and Secretary of State Hull vehemently opposed the Welles plan and Franklin Roosevelt (probably realizing the political risks as well) followed their counsel.¹⁰⁴

Ultimately these war plans did not amount to anything largely because the Franklin Roosevelt administration anticipated an “unfavorable French reaction” from Vichy.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the Franklin Roosevelt administration also, by June 1941, negotiated an agreement with the

¹⁰³ “Study of the Occupation of a Base in West Africa,” 7 May 1941, *President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Office Files, Part 1: “Safe” and Confidential Files* [microfilm], Reel 5, 666-67.

¹⁰⁴ Deborah Ray, “The Takoradi Route,” 347. Byron Fairchild and Stetson Conn, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 114. Mark T. Gilderhus, “The Monroe Doctrine: Meanings and Implications,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, No. 1 (March 2006): 8.

¹⁰⁵ William Stanley, “Trans-South Atlantic Air Link in World War II,” *GeoJournal* 33, No. 4 (2004): 460.

British government to have Pan Am modernize and take over the operation of all of the British airfields comprising the Takoradi route and, therefore, the need to take over Dakar was not as pressing as it once was.¹⁰⁶ One of the Takoradi route's airfields at Bathurst, for example, was 110 miles south of Dakar and therefore comparable in strategic importance to the latter.¹⁰⁷

Yet this did not mean that the Franklin Roosevelt administration had lost interest in French Africa. As early as May 1941, the President had expressed an interest in stationing U.S. troops in Tangier, Morocco in addition to the Azores (see "Azores venture").¹⁰⁸ Later in November 1941, the State Department also became very interested in Tangier, when the opportunity for acquiring an airfield at that location presented itself.¹⁰⁹ Franklin Roosevelt and his State Department no doubt reasoned that once the Tangier airfield was improved for military use, the American B-17 strategic bomber could use it to launch air strikes against Italy and possibly even southern Germany, both of which were within its 2200 mile flying range.¹¹⁰ The bigger threat, however, came from the United States using Tangier as a base for countenancing a Vichy French uprising in Northwest Africa. If the Axis powers lost their tenuous hold over Northwest Africa as a result of a Vichy French uprising, the war was essentially over for them.¹¹¹ For example, the Allies could use Morocco and Algeria as a base of operations to take over the rest of North Africa or to invade southern France in coordination with a cross-channel invasion of northern France. Franklin Roosevelt and his cabinet secretaries could not have overlooked these strategic implications, since they themselves claimed publicly that theoretical Axis military

¹⁰⁶ Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, 68.

¹⁰⁷ FDR to Welles, 19 June 1941, *President's Office Files, Part 1: "Safe" and Confidential Files* [microfilm], Reel 5, 680.

¹⁰⁸ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War*, 20.

¹⁰⁹ Hull to Childs, 17 November 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 851.796/146, Box 4048.

¹¹⁰ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power*, 141-42.

¹¹¹ Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors*, 67-68, 70.

bases in South America posed a direct threat to the United States' security. There was no reason why they could not have projected their own official fears about military bases onto Germany in relation to a U.S. airfield in Tangier.¹¹² Moreover, the Franklin Roosevelt administration knew that Germany was trying to acquire naval bases and airfields in Northwest Africa in order to close the back door to the Mediterranean.¹¹³

The other point that needs emphasizing was that the Franklin Roosevelt administration was taking a huge risk in attempting to acquire an airfield in Tangier. A U.S. airfield provocatively placed in Tangier and guarded by U.S. troops may not necessarily come under a German attack, but it was more likely to produce this outcome than to keep the United States out of the war. Moreover, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors were almost certainly aware of these risks. On February 1941, the military planners warned that a U.S. military airfield in the Azores would probably lead to a state of war with the Axis powers, even though this archipelago was much farther from the Mediterranean than Tangier.¹¹⁴ Representatives of the War and Navy Department also predicted that a U.S. airfield in Dakar (also further away from the Mediterranean than Tangier) would probably come under attack by Germany and one military planner Brigadier General L.T. Gerow even advised that 115,000 American soldiers were needed

¹¹² Egys Sangmuah, "Sultan Mohammed ben Youssef's American Strategy and the Diplomacy of North African Liberation, 1943-61," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, No. 1 (Jan., 1992): 130. On September 11, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt scared his audience with fictitious tales of "secret airlanding fields in Colombia, with easy range of the Panama Canal." The President and his advisors, therefore, appreciated how threatening air bases could be to Germany when they were constructed near to the German empire. See Russell D. Buhite and David W. Levy, eds., *FDR's Fireside Chats* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 192.

¹¹³ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War*, 20.

¹¹⁴ Assistant Chief of Staff, WPD, Memorandum, February 1941, NARA 2, RG 165, Entry 282, file 4422-14, Box 265.

to defend it.¹¹⁵ In light of these facts, the idea that Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors were primarily concerned with keeping the United States out of the war seems dubious.

The opportunity for the United States to acquire an airfield in Tangier, as alluded to earlier, came less than one month shy of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941). On November 12, U.S. ambassador in London John Winant reported to Secretary of State Hull that the British government would “be very glad to see the United States officials in North Africa operating a transport system on their own, as I believe the Germans do, and would give all facilities in our power for this.”¹¹⁶ The State Department responded to Winant’s suggestion by formulating its own plan to establish a U.S. airfield in Tangier as a base for a “regular courier service.”¹¹⁷ As Hull explained to U.S. Consul in Algiers Rives Childs, the purpose of the regular courier service was to allow “our officers in that area, including the control officers and the military attaché in Tangier” to fly “between all parts of North Africa.”¹¹⁸

However, the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s gambit to acquire an airfield in Tangier for one plane and over-flight rights to Algeria and Tunisia ultimately failed. “There is,” Childs warned, “no question but that both the Spanish authorities and the Germans will be extremely concerned over any use whatsoever of an American plane in Northwestern Africa.”¹¹⁹ Similarly the President’s Special Envoy Robert Murphy informed the State Department on November 22, 1941 that the French Vichy authorities could not consent to a U.S. airfield in Tangier or over-flight rights to Algeria without permission from the German Armistice Commission which controlled aviation in the French African colonies:

¹¹⁵ L.T. Gerow to Marshall, 27 May 1941, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4224/155, Box 195.

¹¹⁶ Winant to Hull, 12 November 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 851.796/145, Box 4048.

¹¹⁷ Childs to Hull, 21 November 1941, file 851.796/147, Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Hull to Childs, 17 November 1941, file 851.796/146, Ibid

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

The Department of course knows that the Italian and German Armistice Commission under the terms of the Armistice Conventions control all aviation in France and French territories... It is fairly evident that those commissions would never agree to the movement of an American Government plane in this area. Without their consent the French authorities, I am sure, will not dare grant the necessary authorizations. The planes could not circulate without such authorizations. Even in Morocco the French make no changes in commercial aviation schedules without prior approval of the Armistice Commission.¹²⁰

In light of Murphy's telegram, the State Department abandoned the plan to secure the Tangier airfield and over-flight rights in Algeria and Tunisia six days later.¹²¹

The Azores Venture (1941)

Meanwhile, as the U.S. Vichy policy to acquire one or more airfields in French West Africa entered its second year (1941), Franklin Roosevelt and his inner circle also hoped to take over the airfields on the Azorean archipelago. Most historians have argued that the Franklin Roosevelt administration wanted to send troops into the Azores in order to prevent them from falling to Germany and being used as a base for aerial operations against the United States. This thesis was certainly applicable to most administration officials who were unaware that Germany was planning to invade the Soviet Union and therefore incapable of managing another major war with the United States at the same time.¹²² However, it cannot be applied to Franklin Roosevelt, Secretary of State Hull, Treasury Secretary Morgenthau and other foreign policy hawks who

¹²⁰ Robert Murphy to Hull, 22 November 1941, file 851.796/148, Ibid.

¹²¹ Cordell Hull to Childs, 28 November 1941, file 851.796/147, Ibid.

¹²² Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 110-111; Donald Stevens, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Azores Dilemma, 1941," *The Historian* 54, no. 4 (Summer 1992): 641-43; Norman Herz, *Operation Alacrity: The Azores and the War in the Atlantic* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 2-4, 58, 68, 71-72.

knew of Germany's invasion plans by April 1941.¹²³

Instead a more plausible reason for the Franklin Roosevelt administration's interest in the Azores was based on its ambition (alluded to earlier) to establish a strategic stepping stone to Tangier, Morocco. This interpretation explains why Franklin Roosevelt discussed establishing a military presence in Tangier in connection with ongoing discussions about constructing a U.S. military airfield on the Azores.¹²⁴ It also provides a more satisfactory answer for why the Franklin Roosevelt administration's efforts to establish a military airfield in the Azores persisted in the months following the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, when such an airfield was presumably no longer required.¹²⁵

In trying to establish a military airfield in the Azores, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors realized that they were taking on considerable war-related risks. In February 1941, the War Plans Division reported that "neither the use of the Azores nor their denial to the Axis powers is essential to the static defense of the Western Hemisphere" and warned that, "The capture and occupation of the Azores by the United States will probably precipitate a state of war with the Axis powers."¹²⁶

Yet in spite of the War Plans Division's warning, Franklin Roosevelt, Morgenthau and other foreign policy hawks were nevertheless determined to go ahead with the military operation to seize the Azorean archipelago. In his April 11th and 12th diary entries, Arnold (probably on the

¹²³ Diary Entry, 6 March 1941, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

¹²⁴ Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War*, 20.

¹²⁵ Confidential: Notes on Comment made at the Conference on Transatlantic Air Transportation, 12 August 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1244, Box 4041.

¹²⁶ Assistant Chief of Staff, WPD, Memorandum, February 1941, file 4422-14, RG 165, Entry 282, Box 265, *Ibid.*

President's instructions) made detailed observations about the Azores while flying on a Pan Am clipper to England:

Island of Terciera. Skipper flew over it for me. Plenty of sites for airports. Small fields but long level stretches. NE side of island best. 7000 foot runway possible. Island about 45 miles long. Road runs around island with villages and houses almost continuous. Seaport on 3 sides with small airport [sic].¹²⁷

Later on May 22, Franklin Roosevelt held a cabinet meeting to discuss sending troops to occupy the Azores. The Army and Navy immediately objected on the grounds that the Azorean archipelago could not be captured and held without a fight. According to Treasury Secretary Morgenthau's diary entry, the Army and Navy warned about Portuguese, not German, resistance. But Franklin Roosevelt and his cabinet secretaries had no intention of sending a military expedition into the Azores if the Portugal refused to agree to one and they later cancelled the military expedition to the Azores after Portuguese dictator Antonio Salazar complained about U.S. territorial designs on his islands. Therefore, Portuguese resistance was never the issue. What the Army and Navy were probably worried about was the risk of the U.S. military occupation of the Azores precipitating war with Germany at a time when the United States was not prepared to fight one. In fact, the Army and Navy went to great lengths to show that the United States was not militarily prepared, noting that the expeditionary force needed for this operation had to be substantial, probably to withstand resistance from Germany rather than Portugal (whose military power was negligible). Admiral Stark advised the President that it would take "three months" to get the forces ready. Franklin Roosevelt replied, "We've got to be ready in one month."¹²⁸ In the

¹²⁷ Diary entries 11-12 April 1941, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Box 2, Library of Congress.

¹²⁸ War Cabinet Meeting, 22 May 1941, "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

end, Navy Secretary Frank Knox agreed to get the expeditionary force and the transports ready in one month.¹²⁹

The only reason why the U.S. military expedition to occupy the Azores did not go ahead¹³⁰ was because the President's "unlimited national emergency" speech to the American people, which inferred American territorial designs on the Azores, outraged the Salazar regime in Portugal. Without the Salazar regime's permission, the Franklin Roosevelt administration could not send the U.S. military into the Azorean archipelago.¹³¹ As Minister in Lisbon Bert Fish explained to Hull on October 22,

During the months immediately following President Franklin Roosevelt's speech of May 27 when he made certain statements regarding the Portuguese Atlantic possessions I did not press this matter, as sentiment in Portugal, both in the Government and the public, was very strong against us for what they chose to consider our designs on these islands and I thought it wise not to risk a rebuff.¹³²

Most historical accounts of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's Azores gambit end with Portugal's rebuff or with the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 (which was said to have relieved the U.S. government's security concerns in the Atlantic). However, Franklin Roosevelt and the State Department continued their pursuit of air rights in the Azores – using Pan Am as a "Trojan Horse" to win service rights and develop an airfield that could be put to military use – long after Germany invaded the Soviet Union. On August 12, 1941, Latchford and Burke of IN met with Juan Trippe and Pan Am Vice Presidents Harold Bixby and John Cooper to discuss whether Pan Am was prepared "to divert some of the Lisbon services so as to

¹²⁹ Donald Stevens, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Azores Dilemma, 1941," 648.

¹³⁰ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense*, 116-18, 121-22.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 121-22.

¹³² Fish to Hull, 22 October 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1247, Box 4041.

operate from the Azores to Ireland.” The idea was not only to start an air service through the Azores, but also to develop a military airfield there.¹³³

Yet this plan posed two problems. The first was the problem of concealing the U.S. government’s involvement. As Trippe’s special representative in Portugal Richard Long explained to Pan Am Vice President Bixby,

It will probably be obvious to [the Portuguese Government] that the primary purpose of the proposed service is to aid the British in their war effort, and the decision of Dr. Salazar will undoubtedly be predicated on whether or not he can furnish the German Government with a satisfactory explanation of his action in the event he should grant our application.¹³⁴

The other difficulty was the deceit that would be required by Pan Am relative to the construction of an airfield. As Latchford advised Laurence Duggan:

However, as a matter of governmental policy it would seemed to be highly questionable whether at this stage there should be such an undertaking by Pan American Airways if the Portuguese authorities are to be put in a false position as to what the real purpose of the construction [of a Pan Am airfield in the Azores] may be.¹³⁵

In the end, all this planning turned out to be academic because Pan Am decided not to apply for the Azores route.¹³⁶

¹³³ Confidential: Notes on Comment made at the Conference on Transatlantic Air Transportation, 12 August 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1244, Ibid.

¹³⁴ Long to Bixby, “Operating Rights in Portuguese Territories,” 18 August 1941, Collection 341, Box 708, Folder 6, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

¹³⁵ Latchford to Duggan, 13 September 1941, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79640/1247-1/2, Box 4041.

¹³⁶ H.M. Bixby to Richard Long, 16 October 1941, Collection 341, Box 708, Folder 6, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

The Takoradi Air Route

Beyond its attempts to obtain air routes and bases in Northwest Africa, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's recruitment of Pan Am to modernize the Takoradi route (from Takoradi, Ghana to Khartoum, Sudan) and air ferry military aircraft along it was a major step towards supporting its allies' war efforts, and laying the groundwork for its own entry into the war.¹³⁷

Once modernized, the Takoradi route had several uses: (1) The Takoradi route was the fastest available route for air ferrying military aircraft and other military supplies to Khartoum. British forces in Khartoum then transported the aircraft and supplies to Cairo, where they were urgently needed in the desert war against Rommel's Afrika Korps¹³⁸; (2) Once connected to the British air routes in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, the Takoradi route became an important air link to the Soviet Union and China for air ferrying military aircraft and maintaining secure lines of communication¹³⁹; (3) The Takoradi route's western airfields, such as Roberts field in Liberia and Bathurst airfield, provided logistical support to the Anglo-American invasion of Northwest Africa on November 8, 1942, known as "Operation Torch."¹⁴⁰ By the same token the Takoradi route, by supplying Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery's 8th Army with superior airpower, contributed to British victories in Egypt and Libya; (4) Finally, after Pan Am and the

¹³⁷ Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route," 353.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 340-41.

¹³⁹ Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa*, 77, 79-81, 83.

¹⁴⁰ Reference ADP (December 1941), Collection 341, Series 1, Box 18, Folder 1, PAA Archives, University of Miami; Harrison Akingbade, "U.S. Liberian Relations during World War II," *Phylon* 46, No. 1 (first quarter, 1985): 30; Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route," 355-56. The Franklin Roosevelt administration even considered using the Takoradi route to transport military aircraft and military supplies to Delegate General Maxime Weygand and his Vichy French forces on condition that they stage an uprising against Germany. The Franklin Roosevelt administration only abandoned this plan when Maxime Weygand had second thoughts about rebelling against his German overlords. See William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 181-83.

U.S. Air Force took over the operation of the Takoradi route (October 1941) and the Middle Eastern and Southern Asian air routes (November and December 1941), American political influence in the last two regions started to grow.¹⁴¹

In order to modernize the Takoradi route and air ferry military aircraft along it, the Franklin Roosevelt administration had to overcome significant legal obstacles (i.e. the Neutrality Act of 1939) and fix the route's technological deficiencies. The main legal obstacle was a provision in the Neutrality Act of 1939 which declared that the United States could not transport war materiel into a "combat zone" which in the case of the "United Kingdom" was defined as the British Isles and several British colonies, such as West Africa (where the Takoradi airfield was located).¹⁴²

After spending the spring and summer of 1941 searching for ways to unravel these legal restrictions, Franklin Roosevelt's legal advisors found a loophole in the Neutrality Act on ownership. Chief Counsel for Lend Lease administration Oscar Cox argued that Pan Am (which the Franklin Roosevelt administration recruited not only to modernize the Takoradi route, but also to operate air ferries to Khartoum) could operate an air service to Africa if the U.S. government owned the planes. Better still, the Neutrality legislation did not prevent Pan Am from negotiating for airfield rights in belligerent countries. After arriving at these insights, the Franklin Roosevelt administration circumvented the Neutrality Act by purchasing several Boeing 314 planes from Pan Am and leasing them back to the same airline for one dollar each. The Treasury Department similarly bought DC-3 planes from Pan Am and leased them back to the same company for one dollar each. In this way, Pan Am was able to negotiate access to the

¹⁴¹ Harry Magdoff, *Imperialism Without Colonies*, 48, 113.

¹⁴² Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route," 344-45.

British African airfields and fly its own planes (theoretically owned by the U.S. government) into the combat zone without technically breaking any laws.¹⁴³

While the Chief of Lend Lease administration Cox and his legal team were unraveling the legal restrictions, the Franklin Roosevelt administration and Pan Am secretly paved the way for the modernization of the Takoradi route.¹⁴⁴ Historically the Takoradi route was one of the most backward air routes in the British Empire. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the British government kept public spending to a minimum and, as result, invested only in those imperial air routes that were considered to be of military and economic importance. Britain's political leaders could not foresee the Takoradi route becoming important in any respect, because they had not anticipated any enemy seizing control of the Mediterranean region and severing the quickest air route to the Middle East.¹⁴⁵ As a result, the Takoradi route lacked lighting facilities¹⁴⁶, radio beacons¹⁴⁷, adequate runways (the existing runways were too short), pilots and mechanics, not to

¹⁴³ Ibid., 352-53. Later in October and November 1941, Franklin Roosevelt benefitted from the surge in popular demand for a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy response to Nazism (which was not doubt spurred by the President's speeches) by issuing directives allowing the Air Force, in addition to Pan Am, to air ferry military aircraft and other military supplies and broadening the geographic parameters of the transportation of lend lease goods to include Egypt. See Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, 211-12.

¹⁴⁴ Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route," 344.

¹⁴⁵ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 322-23. Pan Am officials, upon surveying the Takoradi route, discovered small scattered airfields that were suited only for small commercial planes flying on intermittent schedules. The airfields comprising the Takoradi route were not ready to handle heavily traffic on a regular basis or larger kinds of military aircraft. Pan Am's objective was to enlarge and improve the existing airfields to create a modern, efficient operation in addition to establishing air facilities to maintain the planes. See Collection 341, Accession I (B), Box 259, Folder 14, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

¹⁴⁶ Arnold to Lovett, 17 June 1941, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Box 202, Library of Congress.

¹⁴⁷ The only radio beacon in West Africa belonged to Pan American Airways at Bolama, Portuguese Guinea. Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, 62-63.

mention airfields large enough to accommodate the latest military aircraft (like the B-24 strategic bomber).¹⁴⁸

When the Axis powers took over the Mediterranean's airspace and invaded Egypt, the British suddenly needed the Takoradi route as the quickest air route available for ferrying military aircraft to Egypt. Yet owing to its backward air facilities, the Takoradi route could not handle an increase in British air traffic. Approximately 20% of planes flying along the Takoradi route crashed in the jungle or the desert. The aircraft that reached Cairo required extensive overhauling before they could be used in military operations. As a result of these problems, Air Marshall Sir Arthur Tedder only had 35 serviceable Hurricane planes to protect all of Egypt as late as April 1941 and was uncertain about whether he could maintain his position.¹⁴⁹

Since January 1941 the Franklin Roosevelt administration tried to make the Takoradi route operated more efficiently.¹⁵⁰ In May and early June 1941, the U.S. Air Corps recruited Lockheed to ferry air transports from Los Angeles to Floyd Bennet Airport in New York and then (after Pan Am trained the Lockheed crew in navigation and to use radio key code) across the Atlantic to Bathurst, the Gambia, where the British ferried the transports the rest of the way to Egypt.¹⁵¹

Yet once Franklin Roosevelt's legal advisors found a way to circumvent the Neutrality Act, Anglo-American cooperation in relation to the Takoradi route became more extensive. U.S. Air Corps Chief Arnold and his staff compiled data on every British and French airfield in Africa

¹⁴⁸ Arnold to Lovett, 17 June 1941, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Box 202, Library of Congress.

¹⁴⁹ Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route: Franklin Roosevelt's Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere," 341-42, 345; Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, vi.

¹⁵⁰ Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route: Franklin Roosevelt's Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere," 346.

¹⁵¹ Arnold to E.H. Beebe, 24 May 1941, Box 202, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Library of Congress; Marylin Bender and Selig Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument*, 348.

and suggested improvements to their runways, lighting and other air facilities.¹⁵² On Franklin Roosevelt's instructions, Pan Am President Juan Trippe went to London to sell Winston Churchill on the idea of Pan Am revamping and operating the Takoradi air route, which he did successfully.¹⁵³ On June 26, Trippe and other Pan Am executives met with Air Corps Chief Arnold and the British Air Commission to hammer out an agreement. Trippe agreed to send an advance crew to Africa promptly to get the service started, to work out the details of the service (including the end point) with British representatives¹⁵⁴, and to create three subsidiaries to operate the trans-African route. The first subsidiary, Pan Am -Africa, was going to modernize and operate ground facilities of each British and French airfield. Pan Am Air Ferries was to fly war planes from the United States (the Air Corps handled flights within the U.S.) to Khartoum. A third subsidiary, called the Pan Am Company, operated a transoceanic service between the United States and West Africa.¹⁵⁵ Since Pan Am was short on pilots, the U.S. government expected the airline to "curtail its Caribbean service and use the equipment and personnel for extension of the service to Takoradi as required."¹⁵⁶ On August 10, Franklin Roosevelt and Churchill discussed the Takoradi route at the Atlantic Conference and agreed that Pan Am would air ferry military aircraft up to Khartoum, at which point the British would transport the military aircraft to Cairo.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Arnold to Lovett, 17 June 1941, Box 202, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Library of Congress; Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, 62.

¹⁵³ Marylin Bender and Selig Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument*, 349-50.

¹⁵⁴ Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, 68.

¹⁵⁵ Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route: Franklin Roosevelt's Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere," 353.

¹⁵⁶ Memorandum to Arnold, 26 June 1941, Box 303, Harry Hopkins Papers, FDRL.

¹⁵⁷ Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa*, 4.

Following on the heels of these negotiations, Pan Am started modernizing the Takoradi route between August and October 1941. For the most part, the Pan Am-Africa engineers relied on tractors, bulldozers, trucks and other technologies to erect modern air facilities and lengthen the runways. But this heavy equipment had to be imported from overseas.¹⁵⁸ Given the delays in transporting heavy equipment into Africa, Pan Am-Africa relied temporarily upon manual labor and animals to do much of the work. For example, 7000 Africans armed with pick axes were employed for prying away loose earth as a first step toward building longer runways.¹⁵⁹ Pan Am-Africa also relied temporarily on camels to transport gasoline and other supplies to the El Fasher airfield in the Sudan.¹⁶⁰ More than a year later, Pan Am presented ATC with a bill for the services of “probably all the camels in North Africa.”¹⁶¹

While Pan Am was negotiating for air rights from the British, Franklin Roosevelt in June 1941 directed Under Secretary Welles to resume negotiations (which originated back in 1940) with the Liberians so that American planes would have “the option of landing at any one of three places in Africa – Bathurst, Freetown or Liberia.”¹⁶² These U.S.-Liberian negotiations produced an agreement on July 1 “to lease to the Government of the United States areas required for the establishment on Liberian territory of two or more air bases...”¹⁶³ Finally in November 1941, the State Department promised and delivered upon Lend-Lease aid to Liberia in return for the

¹⁵⁸ Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, 81-83, 103.

¹⁵⁹ Marilyn Bender and Selig Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument*, 353.

¹⁶⁰ Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, 105.

¹⁶¹ Hugh B. Cave, *Wings Across the World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1945), 62.

¹⁶² Franklin Roosevelt to Welles, 19 June 1941, *President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Office Files, Part 1: "Safe" and Confidential Files* [microfilm], Reel 5, 680.

¹⁶³ Walton to Hull, 7 July 1941, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1941*, 3: 535.

(Liberian) Edwin Barclay government allowing Pan Am to use the airfield (in the process of being constructed) as a steppingstone for air ferrying aircraft to the Middle East.¹⁶⁴

Final Conclusions

Ultimately, the Franklin Roosevelt administration's highly proactive war preparation strategy escalated tensions with the Axis powers to the point where open hostilities were unavoidable. Japan was the first to crack. Deprived of four-fifths of its oil imports by the U.S. oil embargo and with only 18 months of oil reserves left, Japan's leaders decided to make a daring bid for economic self-sufficiency by seizing the oil-rich Dutch East Indies. Yet to carry out this military operation and prevent the United States from potentially severing its sea communications to the Dutch East Indies, Japan had to neutralize the U.S. Pacific Navy stationed at the naval base of Pearl Harbor. On December 7, 1941, Japanese airplanes attacked Pearl Harbor and issued in the "day of infamy" that brought the United States into the war.¹⁶⁵

Following close on the heels of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States on December 11. Many historians have argued that Germany's declaration of war on the United States was irrational, an interpretation that relies largely on the popular view that the Nazis were always in the wrong whereas the Allies were always right. Yet after examining the Franklin Roosevelt administration's highly proactive war preparation strategy in detail, many of Germany's stated reasons for declaring war on the United States turned out to be accurate.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Hull to Walton, 8 November 1941, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1941*, 3: 541-42; Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route: Franklin Roosevelt's Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere," 354.

¹⁶⁵ Irvine H. Anderson, "The 1941 De Facto Embargo on Oil to Japan," 201-202.

¹⁶⁶ Robert Divine, *The Reluctant Belligerent*, 157-58.

The Nazi regime, for example, charged the Franklin Roosevelt administration for “having violated in the most flagrant manner and in ever-increasing measure all rules of neutrality in favor of the adversaries of Germany and having continually been guilty of the most severe provocations toward Germany ever since the outbreak of war.” The Nazis were probably overstating their case against the United States, but not by too much. The Franklin Roosevelt administration did attempt to acquire airfields in Dakar, Morocco, Algeria and the Azores, with the knowledge that any one of these ventures could precipitate a state of war with Germany. Moreover, the Nazis knew about at least one American attempt to acquire the Dakar airfield for military purposes and suspected many more. Finally, Franklin Roosevelt’s private statements show that he welcomed a situation where Germany opened hostilities against the United States and provided his administration with the required pretext to ask Congress for a declaration of war against the Axis powers.¹⁶⁷

The second part of the Nazi regime’s charge – that the Franklin Roosevelt administration violated the rules of neutrality to help the adversaries of Germany – was essentially correct. The framers of the Neutrality Act of 1939, for instance, never envisaged Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors contracting Pan Am to transform the Takoradi route into a military air route for supplying the British with military aircraft. Yet by cleverly exploiting certain loopholes in the Neutrality Act, the Franklin Roosevelt administration and Pan Am brought into existence a U.S. military air route that traversed not only the African continent, but also the Middle East and Southern Asia.¹⁶⁸

The Nazi regime’s other charges were either correct or misleading. The Franklin Roosevelt administration did issue the “shoot on sight order” to U.S. naval and aerial patrols;

¹⁶⁷ “Charges in German Note,” *NYT*, 12 December 1941, 5

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

though it was more questionable whether the patrols actually carried out this order to consistently attack German U-boats (as the Nazis claimed happened). However, the Nazis were correct in charging U.S. naval patrols with detaining German merchant vessels on the high seas. On balance, therefore, there was a link between the Franklin Roosevelt administration's pursuit of a highly proactive war preparation strategy and the Nazi regime's decision on December 11, 1941 to go to war with the United States.¹⁶⁹

The significance of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's high proactive war preparation strategy goes beyond its contribution to the outbreak of open hostilities. The Franklin Roosevelt administration also used aviation policy to establish the aerial infrastructure for deploying U.S. military power once the United States entered the war. While sustaining the British forces in Egypt and the Soviet forces on the Eastern front via the Takoradi route, the Franklin Roosevelt administration also planned to use some of the Pan Am airfields in West Africa to open up a new front in Northwest Africa and eventually establish an American military presence at that location. Then the United States and its Allies could either take over the rest of North Africa and seize control over the entire Mediterranean region or immediately invade southern France.¹⁷⁰

Franklin Roosevelt's shift toward a more belligerent policy and his concrete efforts to prepare the ground work for U.S. entry into the war should not necessarily be considered immoral. If the United States had not fought in the war, only the U.S.-led economic blockade and the Soviet Union could have defeated the Axis powers in Europe. Under those circumstances, the war almost certainly would have dragged on longer, and Europe would have experienced even

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ William Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble*, 181-83; Egya Sangmuah, "Sultan Mohammed ben Youssef's American Strategy and the Diplomacy of North African Liberation, 1943-61," 130.

greater economic hardship (compared to the actual conditions it faced in 1945), and it is very likely that all or much of Europe would have come under communist domination. Furthermore, this assessment does not even take into account the number of Jews, Slavs and other “*untermenschen*” who would have perished in death camps had the Second World War continued. By initiating a shrewd policy of preparing actively for war and following policies that would tend to draw the Axis powers into launching a direct military attack that would in turn justify the United States’ entry into the war, the Franklin Roosevelt administration could be said to have aimed at shortening the war, which in turn saved lives and prevented even greater economic destruction.

Chapter 5 Engineering Work on the South Atlantic Air Route (1939-44)

The architects of Germany and Italy's downfalls were not only the Allied air, naval and ground forces on the battlefield, but the war planners, Pan Am and Army Corps of engineers who modernized the aerial infrastructure that allowed the military forces to operate effectively, far from U.S. soil. As Roosevelt and his military chiefs realized, the ability to move large military forces and their war materiel over vast distances determined the outcome of modern wars. The European Axis powers could not hold North Africa and Italy indefinitely because their ability to transport war materiel by ship and rail was being undercut by Allied airpower supported by aerial networks. The United States, on the other hand, successfully projected its military power owing partly to numerically superior armed forces, but also because it made important investments in revamping Pan Am's aerial infrastructure in the Western Hemisphere and the Atlantic well in advance of entering the war.¹

This chapter's main objective is to explain the Allied victories in North Africa and Italy not in terms of what happened on the battlefield (because this aspect of the war has been covered), but from the standpoint of Pan Am's aerial infrastructure. This aspect has received little attention from Pan Am and Second World War historians alike. To be sure, a growing number of historians have recognized the importance of the home front and merchant shipping in providing material and morale support to the air, naval and ground forces fighting overseas.² Moreover, some Pan Am scholars have regaled their readers with tales of salvage crews sent out to rescue fallen planes and Pan Am doctors successfully containing disease.³ Yet very little has

¹ Deborah Wing Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II* (PhD diss., New York University, 1973), 185.

² Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1995.

³ Hugu B. Cave, *Wings Across the World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1945), 57.

been written on the renovation of Pan Am's aerial infrastructure that enabled the armed forces and Pan Am to funnel thousands of military aircraft and tons of military supplies along the South Atlantic route to the frontlines in North Africa, even though the speed of air transport made a huge difference to the outcome of the war in the Mediterranean theatre.⁴

In order to explain the Allied victories in North Africa and Italy from an aerial infrastructure perspective, this chapter will cover the following themes. The first explains why airpower was so important to military operations in the Mediterranean. Allied airpower wreaked havoc with Axis lines of communications at sea and on land, making it very difficult for Axis forces to assemble enough forces to put up effective resistance, while at the same time protecting Allied lines of communication from attack. Yet the Allies could not have achieved air supremacy so quickly without Pan Am's air routes which air ferried military aircraft to overseas theaters of war. Similarly Pan Am airfields played a highly influential role in determining how fast and how far Allied forces could move up a given front. As a result, winning the war was as much about revamping aerial and naval infrastructure as it was about winning individual battles.⁵

Following the discussion of airpower's role, this chapter will turn to the war planning that produced the "Aeronautical Development" program for renovating Pan Am airfields for military purposes. The main point about this undertaking was that the war planners and Pan Am were, in a sense, entering uncharted territory. To be sure, the development of the airways system – with its landing fields, radio and communication facilities, runways, lighting, etc. – was straightforward enough, because the technologies used (which Latin America and Africa needed)

⁴ S.F. Pryor to George Rihl, 29 December 1943, Collection 341, Accession II, Box 953, Folder 9, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

⁵ *The Army Air Forces in World War II* 2, eds. Wesley Craven and James Cate (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58), 35-36.

already existed in the United States.⁶ What was unprecedented was the scale of the operation. Pan Am, at its peak, operated around one hundred airplanes for the entire Pan Am airways system. What the war planners had in mind was an airways system that processed several hundred and perhaps even a thousand military aircraft each year and that cut travel times. At the same time, the airways system also had to accommodate much bigger airplanes than in the past, which meant more sophisticated air facilities and longer runways.⁷

Next this chapter will explain how Pan Am modernized its airways system quickly enough to cope with dramatic increases in air traffic and bigger aircraft. The reality was that, given the scale of the aeronautical development program and the tight deadlines, Pan Am's modernization of its own airfields and the Takoradi route was an uphill struggle from the start. Pan Am had great difficulty revamping existing airfields and building new ones on time and then operating them successfully, owing to local resistance and a lack of qualified personnel among other factors.⁸

In addition, by late 1942, several wartime developments resulted in huge increases in the air traffic utilizing the South Atlantic route. The Soviet Union needed more military aircraft and war materiel to halt the German summer offensive toward the oilfields in the Caucasus; the British and American forces required military planes and other supplies to complete their occupation of North Africa; and finally the Chinese needed war planes to drive the Japanese forces out of China. Yet the South Atlantic route was the only route available, particularly in

⁶ File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

⁷ R.E.G. Davies, *Airlines of the United States since 1914* (London: Putnam 1972), 220; File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 37.

⁸ D. McCroach Jr. to Colonel Ridway, 8 November 1941, Box 74, Sumner Welles Papers, FDRL; Richmond and Sweetser to Colonel Heard, 20 October 1941, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113/55, Box 178.

winter, for meeting Allied needs. Owing to adverse winter weather, air travel along the North Atlantic route was too hazardous to be considered. Japan's conquest of several U.S. Pacific possessions (the Philippines, Wake Island and Guam), several British Asian colonies and the Dutch East Indies meant that Pan Am could not air ferry aircraft to China along the trans-Pacific route. Under these circumstances, the South Atlantic route experienced heavy air traffic in the spring, summer and autumn and astronomical levels of air traffic in the winter.⁹

In spite of these huge challenges, Pan Am ultimately developed an airways system capable of moving thousands of aircraft each year to the Middle East, the Soviet Union and China. Owing to the complexity of the issues surrounding airfield development, this chapter will focus on problem categories: landing fields, weather forecasting and communications, electricity, personnel, and surrounding infrastructure. But first a brief overview will be provided as to why airpower was so important in wartime.¹⁰

Airpower in Modern Warfare

Upon entering the war, the United States had not yet assembled the military forces necessary for overseas military operations, but it did possess aerial infrastructure (i.e. Pan Am's military air routes) for deploying its military power. Thanks to Pan Am's South Atlantic routes, the United States and Britain were able to quickly deploy their military forces in the Mediterranean theatre and drive the Axis forces out of North Africa and then out of the southern

⁹ Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route: Roosevelt's Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere," *The Journal of American History* 62, No. 2 (September 1975): 355-56.

"Parnamirim field – Natal," File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 105.

¹⁰ File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 37.

third of Italy in less than a year. On December 29, 1943, for example, Pan Am Vice President S.F. Pryor wrote to Pan Am Vice President George Rihl:

No other contract undertaken by the system has had the spectacular and direct results of the Airport Development Program, so far as the conduct of the war is concerned. Consider the recently concluded campaign in Africa and Sicily. I do not think any greater contribution had been made by any group of men than was made by the system to that phase, and particularly in this instance by Panair do Brasil [a Pan Am subsidiary operating in Brazil], in the construction of the most vital and important airports.¹¹

Later in September 18, 1945, War Secretary Henry Stimson wrote to Pan Am President Juan Trippe:

Under [the Airport Development] program, your company brought about the successful completion of the construction of airfields, seaplane and light-than-air bases at fifty (50) different locations in sixteen (16) foreign countries. These fields have been material factors in the success of the military campaigns of our Army...¹²

Similarly Pan Am historians Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson observed,

On 8 November 1942, General Eisenhower led the amphibious landings in French Morocco and Algeria. The PAA-Africa installations already in place were key to the success of the follow-on transport and ferry missions accomplished by the U.S. Army Air Force and air forces of the Allies.¹³

The main reason for these bold claims was that airpower had a decisive impact upon the lines of communication that were indispensable to effective military operations. On the eve of the battle of El Alamein in Egypt (October 23, 1942), the British Eighth Army enjoyed two major strategic advantages over the Axis forces that were related directly to airpower. The first

¹¹ S.F. Pryor to George Rihl, 29 December 1943, Collection 341, Accession II, Box 953, Folder 9, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

¹² Reference ADP, Collection 341, Accession 1, Box 18, Folder No. 1, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

¹³ Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa: Across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am* (MacLean, VA: Paladwr Press, 1998), 134.

advantage was that the British possessed a secure line of communication, known as the Takoradi route, that air ferried 1455 military aircraft to Cairo in the first seven months of 1942. Thanks to these reinforcements, the British achieved air superiority over the Axis forces by August 1942.¹⁴ The second advantage derived from the first. The British used their air superiority to sink enemy supply ships and prevent vital war materiel (such as airplane parts, fuel, etc.) from reaching the Axis forces in Western Egypt. As a result of gaining and exploiting their air superiority, the British in October 1942 enjoyed numerical superiority over the Axis forces in tanks (1114 Allied tanks vs. 600 Axis tanks) and planes (813 military planes in commission vs. 304 Axis planes in commission).¹⁵

In other words secure Allied lines of communication and haphazard Axis lines of communications (which were frequently disrupted by Allied air strikes) determined the outcome of the battle of El Alamein before the British and Axis forces confronted each other on the battlefield. Significantly, Allied airpower had caused so much destruction to the Axis lines of communication and the Axis airfields that the British forces, in preparation for the battle of El Alamein, were able to advance up the field with their equipment and supplies unmolested from the air.¹⁶ Furthermore, General Von Thoma (who led the Axis forces while General Erwin Rommel was recovering from illness in Germany) conceded that, “The immense superiority of the British Eighth Army in all decisive weapons and especially aircraft assured the Allied victory

¹⁴ Deborah Ray, “The Takoradi Route: Roosevelt’s Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere,” *The Journal of American History* 62, No. 2 (September 1975), 355.

¹⁵ *The Army Air Forces in World War II* 2, eds. Wesley Craven and James Cate (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58), 35-36; *The Harper Encyclopaedia of Military History*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 1186-87.

¹⁶ *The Army Air Forces in World War II* 2, eds. Wesley Craven and James Cate (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58), 36.

before the battle [of El Alamein] began.”¹⁷ As history has long since recorded, the Allied forces did indeed win the battle of El Alamein and then took over Libya in the next two months.¹⁸

If airpower and aerial lines of communication had a decisive impact on what happened in Egypt and Libya, they had an equally significant impact on Allied military operations in Northwest Africa (November 8-11, 1942).¹⁹ The Allies, as part of their Operation Torch campaign, made the acquisition of Vichy French airfields in Morocco and Algeria their top priority, realizing that they could not consolidate their military position in Northwest Africa without controlling the airspace overhead.²⁰ Moreover, the Anglo-American expeditionary forces were successful in seizing those Vichy French airfields largely because they already had access to strategic aerial steppingstones in Gibraltar (overlooking the Mediterranean), Bathurst, Freetown, and Robertsfield, Liberia (the latter three belonging to Pan Am). These airfields enabled American and British forces to project their airpower into the Mediterranean and drive the Vichy French forces from their military bases.²¹

Yet while airfields (mostly owned by Pan Am) contributed to the initial success of Operation Torch, they also set limits on how far Anglo-American airspace dominance in Northwest Africa could extend. The main difficulty for the Allies in late 1942, as it related to

¹⁷ Deborah Ray. “Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II,” (PhD diss., New York University, 1973), 173.

¹⁸ *The Harper Encyclopaedia of Military History*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 1187-1188; I.S.O. Playfair et al, *The Mediterranean and Middle East* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1966), 222; *The Army Air Forces in World War II* 2, eds. Wesley Craven and James Cate (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58), 39.

¹⁹ *The Harper Encyclopaedia of Military History*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 1189.

²⁰ I.S.O. Playfair et al, *The Mediterranean and Middle East* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1966), 128.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 129; Harrison Akingbade, “U.S. Liberian Relations during World War II,” *Phylon* 46, No. 1 (first quarter, 1985): 30.

airspace dominance, was two-fold. To begin with, the Axis forces exploited their control over the airspace in the middle of the Mediterranean (supported by Axis airfields in Southern Italy and Sicily) by invading Tunisia in November 9, 1942. Once the Axis forces established themselves in Tunisia, they proved impossible to dislodge over the short-term. The Axis forces had achieved local air superiority over Tunisia thanks to their control over the Vichy France's Tunisian airfields (such as Bizerte and Tunis) and the Italian airfields in Sicily and Southern Italy. With these airfields, the German Luftwaffe was in an excellent position to provide air cover to the Axis lines of communication (the German and Italian supply ships transporting war materiel to the Axis ground forces in Tunisia) and tactical support to the Axis ground forces. By contrast, the Anglo-American ground forces that attempted to invade Tunisia in late November did not enjoy these advantages. When the Anglo-American forces reached Tebourba (Tunisia) in late November, for example, they were 60 miles away from the Souk el Arba airfield, 120 miles from Bone airfield, 140 miles from Youks les Bains airfields, whereas the Axis forces opposing them were 20 miles from the Luftwaffe's Tunis airfield. That meant the Luftwaffe could launch air strikes against the Anglo-American forces in Tunisia very quickly while the Allied Air forces took longer to reach the same front. Worse still for the Anglo-American forces, only Bone was an "all-weather" air base, which meant the other Vichy French airfields were unserviceable for aircraft when massive rainfall occurred in early December.²²

Under these circumstances, the Axis forces aided by the Luftwaffe's local air superiority were able to repel the first Anglo-American invasion of Tunisia and keep that invasion at bay for the next few months. In December 9, 1942, General Eisenhower observed that the Allied air forces were "working at maximum pace," but were unable to "keep down the hostile strafing and

²² I.S.O. Playfair et al, *The Mediterranean and Middle East* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1966), 171, 177-79, 188.

dive bombing that is largely responsible for breaking up all attempted advances by ground forces.”²³ Major Alexander De Seversky similarly observed on October 20, 1943, “American forces [in Tunisia] suffered serious losses and setbacks because they had ventured beyond effective aerial cover.”²⁴ In other words, the Allies failed to take over Tunisia because they did not control the airspace overhead.

The main reasons why the Anglo-American forces eventually defeated the Axis forces in Tunisia was because they established forward airfields nearer to Tunisia,²⁵ received more military aircraft via the South Atlantic route (particularly in the winter time when the North Atlantic route was shut down),²⁶ and exploited their growing aerial superiority by dramatically stepping up air strikes against the enemy. On April 25, 1943, for example, American and British air forces launched an astonishing 1629 sorties against Axis lines of communication in Tunisia (harbors, railways, and roads), vehicles, troops on the move, tanks and guns. Eventually the Allied air strikes were so devastatingly effective that the Luftwaffe was forced to abandon Tunisia in early May and the Axis ground forces were forced to surrender soon afterwards.²⁷

Allied airpower also played a decisive role in the Sicily campaign (July 11-August 17, 1943). Relying upon their overwhelming air superiority over the enemy (3700 Allied aircraft opposing 1600 Axis aircraft),²⁸ American and British air forces destroyed the Axis ports and supply bases that allowed Italy to supply war materiel to the Axis ground forces in Sicily. Furthermore, American and British air forces also worked closely with the ground forces to

²³ Ibid., 182.

²⁴ Alexander De Seversky, “War and Air Power,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1943, 3.

²⁵ Gerhard Weinberg, *World at Arms* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1994), 436.

²⁶ Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa: Across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am* (MacLean, VA : Paladwr Press, 1998), 134.

²⁷ *The Harper Encyclopaedia of Military History*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 1198.

²⁸ Ibid., 1199.

capture key Axis strongholds. On August 6, for example, twelve B-25s destroyed Adrano's three 88 mm guns and, in the process, helped Canadian forces capture that Axis stronghold. By the end of the Sicily campaign, Allied airpower had made such an impression upon the enemy that even German Field Marshal Albert Kesselring concluded that the Allied successes in Sicily and later Italy "must be attributed, in the first place, to the Allied air forces."²⁹

Lastly Allied airpower played a decisive role in helping American and British ground forces avert disaster in Salerno. In late August, General Eisenhower wasted valuable time planning the capture of Rome by airborne assault, only to discover that this operation was impractical owing to the large German military presence in the region. General Eisenhower then reverted back to his previous strategy of directing the British Eighth Army (under Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery's command) to invade Calabria (southern Italy) while another Anglo-American force (under General Mark Clark's command) was to occupy Salerno. The plan was for these two Allied forces to meet at Salerno and liberate about half of Italy.³⁰ On September 3, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's Eighth Army invaded Calabria and General Mark Clark's forces occupied Salerno five days later. Yet because of the time wasted planning the airborne assault on Rome, this Allied military operation almost ended in disaster.³¹

While General Eisenhower planned the Rome assault, Field Marshal Kesselring moved his reinforcements into the Salerno region. Kesselring's plan was to send one German force to Southern Italy to delay Field Marshal Montgomery's advance, while the bulk of his German forces were to ensnare and obliterate General Mark Clark's forces at the Salerno beachhead. By

²⁹ *The Army Air Forces in World War II* 2, eds. Wesley Craven and James Cate (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58), 468.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 519-20.

³¹ *The Harper Encyclopaedia of Military History*, ed. R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 1200.

September 13, Field Marshal Kesselring's offensive against General Mark Clark's forces at Salerno almost succeeded.³²

Yet at this crucial juncture, the intervention of Allied airpower tipped the scales in the Anglo-American forces' favor. To be sure, one could argue that naval power played at the very least an equally important role in repelling Field Marshal Kesselring's German forces.³³ Yet Allied warships were able to participate in the Salerno operation in a meaningful way precisely because they received air cover from the Allied air forces. As Major Alexander De Seversky explained, the land-based aviation provided air cover for the aircraft carriers. As a result of this air cover, the aircraft carriers did not have to use "their entire complement of aircraft to keep from being sunk themselves" and instead could focus on providing air cover to the Allied warships, transports and ground forces at Salerno who were being constantly harassed by the Luftwaffe. In other words, Allied airpower made a huge difference in the Salerno operation and was the chief reason why General Eisenhower's Anglo-American forces were able to consolidate their position in the southern third of the Italian peninsula.³⁴

It would be possible to continue the discussion of Anglo-American operations in the Mediterranean theatre and France and show how airpower was important in each of them. Yet it is clear that after the Salerno operation in mid-September, the Allies had essentially won the war and Germany's downfall was imminent. The Hitler regime's main difficulty was that it lacked the military and economic resources to defend the southern flank in North Africa, maintain the Eastern Front, and guard against a cross-channel invasion from Britain at the same time. Consequently a modest Anglo-American military operation (by comparison with the Soviet

³² Ibid., 1200.

³³ *The Army Air Forces in World War II* 2, eds. Wesley Craven and James Cate (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58), 535.

³⁴ Alexander De Seversky, "War and Air Power," *New York Times*, October 20, 1943, 3.

military operations) in the Mediterranean theatre was enough to send the whole German imperial edifice crashing down. The aim of the rest of this chapter is to explain how Pan Am and Air Transport Command (ATC) were able to air ferry thousands of military aircraft to the combat zones in the Mediterranean theatre to make a huge difference in Allied military operations.

Planning Air Routes

The planning that went into the development of the “aeronautical program” started as early as November 1938, owing largely to three factors. The first was Roosevelt’s belief, dating from September 19, 1938 (if not before), that if the Munich crisis did not precipitate a European war, Hitler’s territorial demands elsewhere in Europe would. Therefore, Roosevelt wanted to develop the aerial infrastructure needed to enforce the economic blockade against Germany once war broke out. However, Roosevelt had to work with other administration officials and Congress to make foreign policy; and the latter two groups (with rare exception) opposed blockading Germany unless there was a visible threat to the United States.³⁵ Roosevelt, therefore, instructed his war planners to prepare to erect air defences on the assumption that Germany, Italy and Japan were going to invade the Western Hemisphere in the near future. By justifying the aeronautical program in this way, Roosevelt had an easier time convincing his administration, Congress and the American people to support it.³⁶

³⁵ Roosevelt’s characterization of economic blockade measures as defense measures was not new. In September 19, 1938, Roosevelt told British ambassador in Washington D.C. Ronald Lindsay to advise his government to characterize its economic blockade against Germany (in the event the Germans started another international crisis or war in Europe) as “defense measures” in order to reassure pacifist public opinion. See Barbara Farnham, *Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis: a Study of Political Decision-making* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 105-07.

³⁶ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept of the Army, 1960), 8-9.

The second factor was the U.S. government's long-term ambition for American airlines to dominate Latin America's airspace. On February 2, 1937, Assistant Secretary of State R. Walton Moore proposed a plan for subsidizing Pan Am's competition against European airlines in order to achieve a monopoly over air travel in South America.³⁷

The third factor, which became relevant after mid-1940, was Germany's surprising blitzkrieg victories in Western Hemisphere, which convinced Roosevelt and his advisors that a swift victory over the Axis powers could not be achieved solely through an economic blockade. At this juncture, the South Atlantic route played an increasingly prominent role in supplying logistical support to Allied armies fighting overseas in addition to serving as a blockading device.³⁸

Yet beginning in 1938, the War Planning Divisions, the U.S. Air Corps and Pan Am focussed primarily on achieving the objectives of "defence" (i.e. the economic blockade) and the Pan Am monopoly. By the end of April 1939, they produced a blueprint for the "for aeronautical development in this Hemisphere" in order to: (1) make "Pan American Airways supreme in South America" and (2) "have available its terminal facilities for use by the Army and Navy if required."³⁹ These two objectives reinforced each other, since the United States could not successfully enforce the economic blockade or utilize the Pan American Airways System for military purposes unless the U.S. armed forces and Pan Am controlled Latin America's airspace,

³⁷ R. Walton Moore to FDR, February 2, 1937, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs* 16, ed. Edgar B. Nixon (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1969), 138-139.

³⁸ Deborah Ray, "The Takoradi Route: Roosevelt's Prewar Venture beyond the Western Hemisphere," *The Journal of American History* 62, no. 2 (September 1975): 346.

³⁹ Lt. Colonel Hume Peabody to Arnold, 13 April 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113, Box 176; "Plan for Aeronautical Development in this Hemisphere by the Countries and Citizens Thereof," 29 April 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-1, Ibid.

which meant that the European airlines (such as Lati, Condor, Vasp and Varig) had to be driven out of business.

In order to implement this program, the war planners proposed increasing the subsidies for Pan Am⁴⁰; improving Pan Am's air facilities to meet the needs of "all types of aircraft which might be engaged in international service"; enhance air travel safety; and recruit Pan Am and home-grown "national feeder airlines" in Latin America to train skilled mechanics, dispatchers, radio operators, meteorologists and other personnel to man these air facilities.⁴¹ In short, the war planners proposed using Pan Am and the other Latin American airlines as a subterfuge for developing a modern, well-manned airways system for the Army and Navy to use in case of war. On August 7, 1939, Roosevelt signed off on this plan.⁴²

In designing a modern airways system, the war planners and Pan Am had to consider landing fields, communications, runways, lighting, repair facilities and fuel storage facilities. As the foundation for the airways system, the landing fields compensated for deficiencies in the flying capabilities of civilian and military aircraft. For example, the B-17 strategic bomber (the American military plane with the greatest flying range in 1939) could theoretically fly 2200 miles and avoid landing on many of the Pan Am airfields in the Caribbean and South America.⁴³ Yet the B-17 could not achieve this flying range while carrying heavy loads of military supplies,

⁴⁰ Subcommittee Report on Aid to Pan American Airways, 21 April 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-1, Box 176.

⁴¹ "Outline of Proposed Plan," 10 April 1939, Ibid.

⁴² Roosevelt to Hull, 7 August 1939, in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs* 10, ed. Donald B. Schewe (New York: Garland), 206.

⁴³ Rondall Rice, *The Politics of Air Power: From Confrontation to Cooperation in Army Aviation Civil-Military Relations* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 141-42.

which had the effect of displacing the amount of space available for fuel⁴⁴ while simultaneously increasing the consumption of fuel per mile. In 1943, for example, the B-17's were so overloaded with war materiel that they could not make the 1869 mile flight from Natal to Dakar (which the Allies captured in late 1942) and therefore had to fly 1438 miles to Ascension (in the mid-Atlantic) to refuel before flying 1580 miles to Dakar.⁴⁵

Considering the impact of heavy cargoes upon the flying ranges of military aircraft and the shorter flying ranges of tactical aircraft, the War Planning Divisions (WPD) subcommittee advised the Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA):

The present limitations of aircraft, both in regard to size and range, establish very definite requirements as to the character and distribution of airport facilities to meet such an emergency. Inasmuch as time would be a vital element in any such movement, these facilities must be established and maintained at the proper locations in time of peace. The importance of this step, from a hemisphere defence standpoint, cannot be overemphasized.⁴⁶

The war planners, International Communications or IN (a subdivision of the State Department) and CAA also appreciated that military and civilian airplanes, carrying heavy loads, were more likely to utilize landing fields for refuelling and maintenance purposes, which would result in bottlenecks along the South Atlantic route. In order to obviate bottlenecks and cut travel times, IN and CAA proposed, on September 7, 1939, the construction of "airports at strategic points."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Huge B. Cave, *Wings Across the World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1945), 55.

⁴⁵ File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 2, Folder 2; File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 19, 44.

⁴⁶ Subcommittee Report on Aid to Pan American Airways, 21 April 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-1, Box 176.

⁴⁷ IN and CAA, "Improved Air Schedules between the United States and South American," 7 September 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-8, Box 176.

In addition to the impact of heavy loads upon flying ranges, the war planners and Pan Am also had to consider weather conditions. The Caribbean, South America and West Africa often experienced tropical storms, which meant that aircraft needed access to nearby landing fields. After surveying the air route to Natal with Commanding General Emmons (GHQ Air Force) in November 1939,⁴⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Robert Olds reported to Brigadier General B.K. Yount (Assistant Chief of the Air Corps) on December 7 that short-range aircraft (which he defined as planes with less than the B-18's 900 mile flying range) could not fly to the Natal region owing to "the great distances between suitable landing fields, the terrain and the prevailing weather" and therefore "a complete airway for day and night flying under heavy rain and low visibility conditions" was essential. Moreover, if pursuits [i.e. fighter aircraft] were sent to South America, then the airfields "should be no more than one hundred miles apart so that the great distance can be covered in a short time under normal visibility conditions and with a reasonable degree of safety."⁴⁹

Later on June 19, 1940, Brigadier General Yount raised similar concerns about weather with Chief of the War Planning Division General George Strong, when he explained that the movement of the Curtiss P-36A Hawk (a tactical aircraft with a maximum flying range of 820 miles⁵⁰) and the O-47A (a reconnaissance aircraft with a flying range of 840 miles⁵¹) would entail "excessive risk to both personnel and equipment over the route contemplated which involves long over-water flights with single-engine equipment and other legs of the movement

⁴⁸ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept of the Army, 1960), 250.

⁴⁹ Olds to Yount, 7 December 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, Box 189.

⁵⁰ *The Encyclopedia of Aircraft*, ed. Robert Jackson (San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2004), s.v. "Curtiss P-36," 151.

⁵¹ National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, Wright-Patterson (near Dayton), Ohio, at <http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=345>.

through weather and over terrain which justify the establishment of additional intermediate facilities.”⁵²

The final word on the importance of landing fields was that the problems of overloaded planes, aircraft with short flying ranges and weather became all the more acute in light of the rapidly growing air traffic – Parnamirim airfield (Natal), for example, processed 2556 arrivals and departures for May 1943 alone – along the South Atlantic route. With air traffic approaching these levels, the need for more landing fields to accommodate landings and send in crews to salvage planes (since increased air traffic resulted in a greater number of airplane crashes) was greater than ever.⁵³

Admittedly the war planners could not have foreseen in 1939-40 the sheer scale of the air traffic that the Pan American Airways system had to cope with a few years later. Yet at the same time, the war planners were expecting an unprecedented amount of air traffic and therefore they tried to plan for bottlenecks and plane crashes, which were almost certainly going to result from higher air traffic. On May 22, 1940, Lieutenant Colonel Olds explained to Samuel Gates of IN, “[M]ass movements of army and navy aircraft must be staggered or ‘leapfrogged’ into refuelling stops in order to obviate resultant congestion. Such emergency conditions are an additional reason for the establishment of airport facilities at frequent intervals.”⁵⁴ On June 19, 1940, Brigadier General Yount informed General Strong that consideration should be given to the “crash expectancies justifiable to meet project.”⁵⁵ These observations eventually went beyond the

⁵² Yount to Strong, 19 June 1940, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-17, Box 176.

⁵³ “Parnamirim field -- Natal,” file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 105.

⁵⁴ Olds to Samuel Gates (IN), “Report of Sub-Committee of Caribbean Airways,” 22 May 1940, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-13, Box 176.

⁵⁵ Yount to General Strong, 19 June 1940, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-17, Box 176.

war planning stage and set the State Department's agenda on obtaining leases to airfields and gaining the consent of foreign governments to build more airfields.⁵⁶

If landing fields were an essential part of the airways system, radio technology was no less important. Planning air routes often involved anticipating changes in weather. Therefore radio stations were needed to communicate weather reports to the pilots flying the planes. New radio technology was also required to position the aircraft as they approached the landing strip and help them make safe landings under cover of fog or darkness. Pan Am had radio facilities in all its airports, but they were not as good as those in the United States.⁵⁷ Therefore, IN and CAA wanted to install "loop radio ranges of the older type, such as are now being replaced on the domestic airways" at Pan Am's airfields to ensure safe night flying under difficult weather conditions in the western coast. IN and CAA also believed that "tropical rain storms along the Guiana Coast and in the Amazon valley and fog conditions of the La Plata River Delta" meant that "there is no portion of the route which does not need some radio range facilities" capable of "voice communication" or to telegraph reports to allow pilots to land in low visibility conditions.⁵⁸

At the same time that the State Department and war planners planned to install better radio technology, they were also thinking about the runways. The runways on Pan Am airfields were suitable for aircraft like the Sikorsky S-42 (introduced in 1937) which weighed 38,000

⁵⁶ Deborah Ray, "Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II" (PhD diss., New York University, 1973), 44-45.

⁵⁷ "Weather," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 30.

⁵⁸ IN and CAA, "Improved Air Schedules between the United States and South America," 7 September 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-8, Box 176; Olds to BK Yount, 7 December 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4173, Box 189.

pounds and had a flying range of 1200 nautical miles.⁵⁹ However, the runways were not built to handle much larger and heavier planes coming down the pipeline over the next few years. As a rule, planes required a wider wingspan to hold more fuel in order to fly greater distances. Therefore, when the U.S. Air Corps personnel called upon the aircraft industry to develop strategic bombers that could fly greater distances, they were in effect asking for significantly larger planes.⁶⁰ At the same time, Pan Am was also planning to acquire significantly larger civilian aircraft, like the B-314 with a maximum flying range of 3500 miles and weight of 825000 pounds.⁶¹

These larger aircraft required much longer runways. More than that, the runways had to be built on stable ground and have the ballast to withstand the weight of larger aircraft. For these reasons, IN and CAA in September 7, 1939 called for improvements in “runway length, foundation and resurfacing” for the airfields in Trinidad, Maracaibo, Paramaribo, Ciudad Bolivar, Calo, Guayaquil, Lima, Arica, Santiago, Amapa, Belem and several other Brazilian cities. They continued, “the Boeings will require two runways – one 4500 feet and the other of 3700 to 4000 feet – at all terminal points (scheduled stops), and one runway of at least 3700 feet in the prevailing wind direction at all points designed as alternates.”⁶² These concerns were reiterated in Lieutenant Colonel Robert Olds’ report on the Brazil flight in which he pointed to

⁵⁹ R.E.G. Davies, *Pan Am: An Airline and its Aircraft* (London: Hamilyn Publishing Group, 1987), 37.

⁶⁰ James Tate, *The Army and Its Air Corps: Army Policy toward Aviation, 1919-1941* (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air University Press, 1998), 163-65.

⁶¹ R.E.G. Davies, *Pan Am: An Airline and its Aircraft* (London: Hamilyn Publishing Group, 1987), 37, 43.

⁶² IN and CAA, “Improved Air Schedules between the United States and South American,” 7 September 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-8, Box 176.

the need for “soil stabilization” and longer hard surfaced runways to withstand “shock loads” of 150,000 pounds or more per square foot.⁶³

Lastly the State Department and war planners wanted lighting to be installed in Pan Am’s airfields and improvements made to repair and fuel storage facilities. Lighting was required for making night landings safe. As the IN and the CAA explained in September 7, 1939, “Boundary and obstruction lights, floodlights and airport beacons will have to be installed at all landing fields and seaplane landing areas which will or may be used by aircraft at night.”⁶⁴ Repair facilities needed to become more extensive in order to service the growing air traffic and the larger planes.⁶⁵ Finally, since large planes in greater numbers were going to use the South Atlantic route, consideration had to be given to expanding the underground and surface fuel storage tanks at each of the airfields.⁶⁶

Modernizing and Operating the South Atlantic Route

Although planned long in advance, the modernization and operation of the South Atlantic route was a difficult uphill struggle from the start owing to the sheer scale of the enterprise. Ideally Pan Am and the Army Corps of Engineers probably hoped to finish airfield construction before they started processing military and civilian aircraft along the route. Yet in reality, Pan Am and the Army Corps of Engineers often had to continue airfield construction and operate the

⁶³ Olds to Samuel Gates (IN), “Report of Sub-Committee of Caribbean Airways,” 22 May 1940, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-13, Box 176.

⁶⁴ IN and CAA, “Improved Air Schedules between the United States and South American,” 7 September, 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113-8, Box 176.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ William Stanley, “Air Transport in Liberia,” *Journal of Transport History* 21 (2000): 197; Olds to Yount, 7 December 1939, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4173, Box 189.

airways system simultaneously. Remarkably they eventually pulled it all off, though not without making significant mistakes (some avoidable and others unavoidable) along the way.⁶⁷

In spite of the carefully laid plans for aeronautical development, the development and operation of the airways faced two types of challenges. The first type was immediate in nature and included both the difficulties in working with Latin American authorities and the lack of qualified personnel.⁶⁸ The second type only appeared a few years later when the level of air traffic reached astronomical levels that neither Pan Am or the war planners had foreseen.⁶⁹ Pan Am and the Army Corps of Engineers improvised strategies to meet both types of challenges, though this was done with great difficulty.

One of the main obstacles delaying the creation of a modern airways system for Pan Am and the U.S. armed forces was Pan Am's lengthy negotiations with Latin American governments to obtain permits for landing fields.⁷⁰ Only in June 1941 (more than seven months after the War Department awarded Pan Am the contract to start work on the airfields) was Cauby of Pan Am able to report to the State Department that "from now on the work [on the airfields] can be considerably intensified and accelerated." Cauby predicted the completion of construction work

⁶⁷ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept of the Army, 1960), 258; "Parnamirim field -- Natal," File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 2, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 105.

⁶⁸ D. McCroach Jr. to Colonel Ridway, 8 November 1941, Box 74, Sumner Welles Papers, FDRL; Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept of the Army, 1960), 254-55.

⁶⁹ "Parnamirim field -- Natal," File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

⁷⁰ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept of the Army, 1960), 254.

on Natal (where the vitally important Parnamirim airfield was being built) and Para before the year ended, whereas the other airfields were only going to be finished in June 1942.⁷¹

Yet Pan Am was unable to meet these deadlines owing partly to Brazilian resistance. The Vargas regime was bitter about not receiving the weaponry that the State Department had promised the Brazilian military and it retaliated by holding up construction supplies at the ports.⁷² On November 7, 1941, Lieutenant Colonel Lee Dillon (Deputy Contracting Officer of the Pan American contract) reported to Chief of Engineers D. McCoach Jr. (who then forwarded the information to the War Planning Division) that, “construction of the Pan American air bases in Brazil is being held up by the dilatory tactics of Brazilian officials.” The customs officials were reported to have held up grading equipment destined for Fortaleza and Bahia and paving equipment destined for Recife and Maceio for one week to one month. In Camocim, Pan Am could not even obtain a permit to build an airfield.⁷³

The other reason for the delay was that Pan Am, in rushing to build the airfields, failed (in many cases) to hire qualified engineers to direct the construction work. The examples of Fortaleza, Recife and Parnamirim (Natal) provide a good illustration of the consequences of hiring inept engineers. The rationale for developing a triumvirate of airfields at Fortaleza, Recife and Parnamirim (all in Northeastern Brazil) was to divvy up the enormous air traffic that needed to land in Northeastern Brazil for refueling and maintenance. By the end of 1941, Northeastern Brazil was strategically important as a “springboard” for tactical aircraft, strategic bombers and civilian planes flying across the Atlantic and the African continent to the Middle East (after Pan Am began revamping the Takoradi route from Takoradi, Ghana to Khartoum, Sudan). As a

⁷¹ Welles to Marshall, 17 June 1941, Box 74, Sumner Welles Papers, FDRL.

⁷² Welles to Marshall, 3 December 1941, Ibid.

⁷³ D. McCroach Jr. to Colonel Ridway, 8 November 1941, Box 74, Sumner Welles Papers, FDRL.

result, military and civilian airplanes were heavily concentrated in Northeastern Brazil and landing fields needed to be developed in Fortaleza and Recife to absorb the excess air traffic that could not be handled by the Parnamirim airfield in Natal.⁷⁴

Unfortunately for the Roosevelt administration and Pan Am, the Fortaleza airfield was never finished because Pan Am's management and engineers selected the wrong construction site. On July 31, 1941, Special Assistant to Pan Am President G.B. Grosvenor instructed Deputy Contracting Officer Lieutenant Colonel Dillon to start work on the Picy landing field at Fortaleza as opposed to another field nearby. This decision was taken out of expediency since Grosvenor realized it would take six weeks longer to complete the leveling and grading of the landing field near Picy.⁷⁵ Two years later, the Army Corps of Engineers (who supervised Pan Am's construction work) cancelled construction at the Picy airfield upon discovering that the proposed landing field was not big enough for larger civilian and military aircraft and that the rugged terrain prevented its runways from being significantly elongated. In January 21, 1943, Brigadier General R.L. Walsh reported to Colonel H.R. Harris,

The present runway is limited as it is not on level ground... I am convinced that it would not be advisable to further improve this airport. If... it is decided to put in extensive installations there, we should abandon the present site, select some other site farther east of Fortaleza and start all over again.⁷⁶

Walsh emphasized Picy's deficiencies to Harris one day later by pointing out that "A field at Fortaleza should have the same general characteristics as the one in Natal" with a 7000 foot

⁷⁴ "Diffuse vs. Centralization," File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 39.

⁷⁵ Grosvenor to Dillon, 31 July 1941, NARA 2, RG 77, file MD 600.1 (Fortaleza), Box 100.

⁷⁶ Walsh to Harris, 21 January 1943, NARA 2, RG 77, file MD 600.1 (Fortaleza) 5a, Ibid.

runway “to permit overloaded airplanes to remain near the ground until they gain sufficient speed.” Therefore, “a new location should be selected and surveyed.”⁷⁷

In light of Walsh’s reports, the Army Corps cancelled the expansion of the runway on September 16 and announced the abandonment of Picy on November 2.⁷⁸ By November 15, all work on the Picy field ceased.⁷⁹

While the disaster at Picy field was probably without equal, a lack of qualified engineers also slowed down construction at Recife and Parnamirim (Natal) landing fields. While inspecting Recife in October 16-17, 1941, Major Arthur Richmond and Captain L.W. Sweetser Jr. discovered that the runway had been built on 15 inches of sand resting on a marshy and unstable sub-base, which should have been drained. Mr. Wohn, who worked on the site, called the runway “a floating rubber mat.” Suffice it to say, this “floating rubber mat” was “inadequate for use by heavy [bombers] or transport airplanes,” such as the B-314 or the B-17 and B-24 planes.⁸⁰

A few days later, inspectors Richmond and Sweetser also discovered that a lack of competent personnel was hindering construction at the Parnamirim airfield. The inspectors learned that Mr. McDonald, who headed the construction team from his Belem office, had shown “indecision and [a] lack of efficiency – grades have been changed, specifications altered or never drawn up, and little attention paid to requests for information from actual construction men at the job.” The construction superintendant E.J. Corregan, by contrast, proved to be even more inept, spending one hour on the job each day and the rest of his time getting drunk. Chief Accountant

⁷⁷ Walsh to Harris, 22 January 1943, NARA 2, RG 77, file SAD 686.1, Ibid.

⁷⁸ Lt. Colonel J.M. Wild to Office of the Chief of Engineers, 16 September, 1943, NARA 2, RG 77, file CE 686.61, Ibid.

⁷⁹ Lt. Colonel N.W. Haner to District Airport Engineer, 2 November 1943, NARA 2, RG 77, file SADBE, Ibid.

⁸⁰ Richmond and Sweetser to Colonel Heard, 20 October 1941, NARA 2, RG 165, file 4113/55, Box 178.

Forman Scotch and Hermilio Toscano (head of the Departamento Aeronautico Civil), meanwhile, were siphoning off money from “contracts for handling materials.”⁸¹

The widespread graft and inefficiency perpetrated at Parnimirim landing field resulted not only in considerable financial waste, but also in shoddy workmanship. Richmond and Sweetser discovered that “actual runway construction, grading, etc. was only started on October 15th,” seven months after the personnel and equipment had arrived at the site. Mr. Adams told the inspectors that the proposed “six inch mix” did not provide enough ballast for the runways. The problem, as in Recife, was that the proposed runway was being built on an unstable sub-base of sand. Therefore, if only a six or eight inch layer of ballast was used, the runways “would quickly disintegrate under B-17 and B-24 operation.” Adams’ proposed solution to this problem was to build a 46 inch deep rock base with stone that was available locally, even if it delayed the completion of the new runways.⁸²

Despite these obstacles, Pan Am made significant strides towards constructing a modern airways system. On September 19, 1941, the War Department complained that Pan Am had not finished more than 40% of the construction work at any given airfield, but it also acknowledged that many of the Pan Am airfields were serviceable.⁸³ Moreover, Pan Am had installed fueling systems in Belem, Sao Luiz, Fortaleza, Natal, Maceio and Camocim fields and electrical generator units in Amapa, Paramaribo, Belem, Fortaleza, Sao Luiz, Natal and Maceio by mid-

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept of the Army, 1960), 254-55.

1942, which meant that these airfields were now ready to process a growing amount of air traffic.⁸⁴

If construction work in Latin America was slow, Pan Am made far greater progress modernizing the Takoradi route. Considering that construction work in Africa started in August 1941, it is not surprising that Pan Am was not able to modernize the Takoradi route quickly enough to prevent several planes from crashing either in the jungle or the desert in the period up to early 1942. By mid-1942, however, Pan Am finally succeeded in installing modern night lighting, fuel tanks, high speed fueling system, direction-finding systems and radio stations, generator supplied electricity, repair shops and maintenance shops at all of the African airfields, with the result that losses along the Takoradi route were significantly reduced.⁸⁵ On September 30, 1942, U.S. Vice Consul in Accra Stratton Anderson reported to Hull, "It should be said that an effective and highly credible job of moving planes, men and materials to the Middle East was being carried on, and the construction of new airfield facilities are being pushed at an impressive pace."⁸⁶

Furthermore, Pan Am and the Army Corps of Engineers eventually corrected the human problems (i.e. the lack of qualified personnel) that were holding up airfield development. At Parnamirim airfield, Mr. McDonald (who directed the construction team from his Belem office) was replaced with the far more able Mr. Hadley and the corrupt Chief Accountant Forman Scotch was fired. Thereafter, the situation at Parnamirim improved dramatically, with local laborers working day and night to complete the runways, aprons, operations buildings and living

⁸⁴ Andrew Lewis to Frank Powers, 2 June 1942, Collection 341, Accession II, Box 361, Folder 1, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

⁸⁵ Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II* (PhD diss., New York University, 1973), 105-06, 166.

⁸⁶ Stratton Anderson to Hull, 30 September 1942, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/217, Box 4048.

quarters. In February 1942, the first runway was finished. By early 1943, Parnimirim was by far the best Pan Am airfield, hosting electrical installations, flood lights, beacon towers, obstruction lights and contact lights (to aid night landing) and two 6000 foot runways⁸⁷ (to permit even the latest B-24 strategic bomber with a flying range of 2000 miles to land).⁸⁸

Just as Pan Am and the Army Corps of Engineers overcame the problems of Brazilian resistance and a lack of qualified engineers, they suddenly faced staggering increases in air traffic in 1943-44 -- which resulted from the growing military needs of the Allies and the shutting down of the North Atlantic (during the winter) and trans-Pacific routes (as a result of the Japanese southward offensive). The war planners and Pan Am failed to predict the sheer scale of air traffic that ended up using the South Atlantic route in 1943-44, because their own projections for air traffic were based upon peak air operations of the past and the adding of 25 daily landings to each daily peak.⁸⁹

In order to tackle this problem, the Roosevelt administration, Air Transport Command (ATC) and Pan Am operated on three tracks. To begin with, Pan Am could no longer be entrusted with the operation of the South Atlantic route, since high levels of air traffic were simply too much for one private airline to handle. As a result, ATC took over the operation, but not the modernization, of the South Atlantic wing (consisting of Pan Am airfields in Latin America) and the Takoradi route by the end of 1942.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ "Parnimirim field -- Natal," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

⁸⁸ *The Encyclopedia of Aircraft*, ed. Robert Jackson (San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2004), s.v. "Consolidated B-24 Liberator," 142.

⁸⁹ File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 37.

⁹⁰ "Traffic," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 2, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 42. "Reasons for Militarization of PAA-Africa, Ltd.," 29 July 1942, Collection 341, Box 25, Folder 22, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

The second track was to renovate more airfields in Latin America in order to prevent the Pan Am airfields, currently in use, from becoming bottlenecked by airplane landings. On January 19, 1943, the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, A-4, Colonel Richard Ballard urged the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff to double the South Atlantic Wing's air facilities and personnel to cope with the staggering increases in air traffic. He also revised the projected landings sharply upwards to 3000 landings in April 1943 and 6000 landings in December 1943. The Acting Chief of Staff for ATC Colonel Harold Harris also concurred with Ballard's view and called upon ATC to establish a network of small landing fields that "would seem to have advantages from the standpoint of traffic handling, base construction, operations, weather, etc."⁹¹

As a result of the Ballard-Harris memoranda, Air Transport Command and Pan Am made the following changes to the Pan Am airfields. To begin with, they created two kinds of air routes – medium routes and long-range routes – for medium-range and long-range aircraft. The medium routes, as indicated in the table below, were the four following⁹²:

A. Florida	B. Florida	C. Florida	D. Florida
Borinquen, Puerto Rico	Losey, Puerto Rico	Losey, Puerto Rico	Jamaica
Atkinson, British Guiana	Zandery, Surinam	St. Lucia	Aruba/Curacao
Belem, Brazil	Sao Luis, Brazil	Cayenne, French Guiana	Atkinson, British Guiana
Natal/Recife, Brazil	Recife, Brazil	Sao Luiz, Brazil	Belem/Natal, Brazil

The long-range aircraft, by contrast, travelled along the four long range routes listed below⁹³:

⁹¹ "The Ballard-Harris Memoranda (January 19, 1943)," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 37.

⁹² "Report," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 40.

⁹³ Ibid.

A. Florida	B. Florida	C. Florida	D. Florida
Waller, Trinidad	St. Lucia	Atkinson, British Guiana	Borinquen, Puerto Rico
Fortaleza, Brazil	Fortaleza, Brazil	Natal, Brazil	Cayenne, French Guiana
Dakar, Senegal	Dakar, Senegal	Dakar, Senegal/Ascension	Fortaleza, Brazil

The advantage of this strategy, involving medium range and long range air routes, was that the aircraft were not only streamlined along certain air routes in accordance with their flying ranges and cargo load (heavier cargoes reduced the flying range). But in addition, medium range and long-range aircraft were provided with alternate places to land in response to unexpected contingencies, such as an airfield being oversaturated with planes or adverse weather conditions. Zanderly field (Surinam) served as an alternative to Atkinson field (British Guiana); Sao Luiz field (Brazil) was an alternative to Belem field (Brazil) (which often experienced tropical thunderstorms) and so on.⁹⁴ Pan Am airfields even divided up the aircraft according to types. Parnamirim (Natal, Brazil) handled two-engine tactical aircraft, transporter and the Central African 4-engine planes, while the new airfield being developed in Fortaleza (after construction at Picy field was cancelled in November 15, 1943) serviced the 4-engine planes destined for Dakar.⁹⁵

Through this arrangement, Air Transport Command and to a lesser degree Pan Am were able to process thousands of landings and departures annually through the South Atlantic route en route to combat zones in North Africa. Furthermore where there were deficiencies in this scheme, improvisation on the part of the personnel working at the landing fields made up for them. Parnamirim airfield, for example, theoretically reached the saturation point (after which it

⁹⁴ Ibid., 39-40

⁹⁵ "Traffic," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 43.

became bottlenecked) upon accepting 60-70 planes daily. Yet a report to ATC, dated April 19, 1943, observed, “Each time the estimate saturation point has increased, and by means of improvisation, additional planes are able to be cared for and dispatched.”⁹⁶ The drawback to improvisation, however, was that many of the maintenance personnel at Parnamirim were overworked and some even collapsed out of exhaustion while working under the wings of the planes.⁹⁷

Weather Forecasting and Communications

While supervising and directing the construction of the landing fields, Pan Am and the War Department were also concerned about how weather affected air travel. One of the themes of this chapter has been that air facilities were constructed to compensate for the deficiencies in the flying capabilities of aircraft. Tactical aircraft with relatively short-ranges (240-1960 miles), such as the fighter Curtiss P-40 Warhawk (240 miles), the A-20 (1000 miles) and the Lockheed Hudson (1960 miles), needed to land in the Caribbean or South America to refuel. Heavy cargoes also reduced the flying ranges of even long-range aircraft, like the B-17 and B-24 strategic bombers, forcing them to land in South America. Adverse weather complicated air travel even more, especially in a context of heavy air traffic (which automatically increased the likelihood of airplane crashes) and heavy cargoes (which had the effect of circumscribing their flying range).⁹⁸

⁹⁶ “Report,” file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 39.

⁹⁷ Huge B. Cave, *Wings Across the World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1945), 58.

⁹⁸ *The Encyclopedia of Aircraft*, ed. Robert Jackson (San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2004), s.v. “Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress,” 87, “Consolidated B-24 Liberator,” 142, “Curtiss SB2C Helldiver,” 153, “Lockheed

Pan Am and the War Department's aim, therefore, was to establish an efficient weather service, hire personnel to run it, and introduce standardized maps for all pilots to enhance air traffic safety. In order to create an efficient weather service, Pan Am built weather stations of types A, B, or D at Atkinson field (type A, August 28, 1941), Waller field (type A, January 23, 1942), Hato Field, Curacao (type B, March 15, 1942), Parnamirim, Natal (type A, March 15, 1942), Belem (type A, April 9, 1942), and Zandery field (type D, July 9, 1942). Type A stations provided complete forecasting and observing services; type B stations only provided forecasts; and type D stations only provided weather observing services.⁹⁹

Unfortunately, Pan Am's construction of these weather stations alone was not enough to ensure that pilots, as late as early 1942, received timely weather updates to make informed decisions about how to avoid adverse weather. The reason for this deficiency was two-fold. To begin with, the number of weather forecasters and weather observers had reached only 30% and 75% of their authorized strength, respectively, by March 1942. Many Pan Am airfields also lacked modern radio equipment to communicate with the planes about changes in the weather or to help them land. As a result, weather reports only reached the weather stations after 6-10 hours, when they should have arrived there within one hour. Yet with a time lapse of 6-10 hours, weather stations obviously had great difficulty warning pilots in a timely manner about adverse weather ahead so that they could avoid it.¹⁰⁰

By 1943, however, Pan Am addressed many of these shortcomings by hiring more personnel and installing modern radio equipment. The number of weather forecasters and

Hudson," 305. *Air Warfare: An International Encyclopedia, Volume I*, ed. Walter Boyne (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2002), s.v. "Douglas A-20 Havoc," 180.

⁹⁹ "Weather," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 29.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

observers reached 76% and 87% of their authorized strength by early 1944.¹⁰¹ In addition, Pan Am introduced voice weather broadcasts in Belem (April 1943), and Natal and Ascension (May 1943), where they reported the weather at 5 and 35 minutes past the hour, while the Regional Control synoptic weather bulletin broadcast was developed to provide weather broadcasts on the Caribbean, South America and West Africa four times a day over the government-run 20-kilowatt station, WEK, at New Orleans, Louisiana. Finally the Army Corps of Engineers built radiosonde stations in Belem (September 1943), Natal (October 1943), Ascension (October 1943), Amapa (January 1944), Sao Luiz (January 1944) and Fernando do Noronha (February 1944), which sent balloon-borne instruments up into the air to gather data on temperature, humidity, wind direction, and atmospheric pressure.¹⁰²

The final point on air traffic safety concerns standardized maps. In the fall of 1942, the U.S. Army Air Force sent the third and fourth mapping squadrons to South America to photograph the entire coastal area from Panama to Rio de Janeiro. Unfortunately, these new maps were only available on January 1, 1944.¹⁰³

In addition to the weather stations, Pan Am installed new radio stations in Belem (May 17, 1942), Ascension Island (May 18, 1942), Natal (May 18, 1942), Recife (October 27, 1942), Fortaleza (March 12, 1943), Bahia (March 23, 1943), Fernando do Noronha (June 10, 1943) and

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰² <http://www.ofcm.gov/fmh3/text/chapter1.htm>; "Weather," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 30.

¹⁰³ "Briefing," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 29.

Clevelandia (September 8, 1943). These radio stations helped the planes to land and take-off and communicated changes in the weather.¹⁰⁴

Unfortunately, the radio communications had several shortcomings. One of these was the huge amount of confusion over codes in relation to military planes. The codes for military aircraft (which were changed daily) informed the airfield personnel whether the incoming planes were friendly or not.¹⁰⁵ Yet sometimes the wrong codes were used. Other times airfield personnel lacked the tools and the expertise to decipher the right codes. Eventually these problems were resolved partly through the hiring of more cryptographers (so that the existing cryptographers were not overworked) and ATC's instructions in November 8, 1942 to send all arrival and departure and positional messages in the clear, while encoding the sensitive messages.¹⁰⁶

Meanwhile in Africa, Pan Am moved far more swiftly in setting up a modern well-knit radio system. The Pan Am-Africa radio station in Accra was completed on November 14, 1941 and thirteen more ground stations were constructed in Lagos, Maiduguri, Kano, Khartoum, El Fasher, El Geneina, Freetown, Roberts Field, Fort Lamy, Salahah and Gura in the following year.¹⁰⁷

Supporting Infrastructure

Supporting infrastructures, such as roads, railways and harbors, were indispensable to the operation of a modern airway system. The War Department and Pan Am not only had to worry

¹⁰⁴ "Communications," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 31.

¹⁰⁵ A.C. Monohan, "Safe Landings," *Science News Letter* 48, No. 8 (August 25, 1945): 127.

¹⁰⁶ "Communications," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 31-32.

¹⁰⁷ Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa: Across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am* (MacLean, VA: Paladwr Press, 1998), 105.

about how to transport heavy equipment and other supplies to the construction sites in order to modernize the airfields. They also had to concern themselves with transporting airplane parts, fuel, food and other items to the airfields quickly and on a sustainable basis. In order to overcome these challenges, Pan Am and the armed services either made the most of the existing supporting infrastructure or made significant improvements to it.¹⁰⁸

In Latin America, the Pan Am airfields faced huge supply problems even though most of them shared the natural advantage of being situated near the coast. In 1942, the Pan Am airfields had virtually no tools, spare parts, or Air Corps supply items. Consequently Pan Am had to depend as much as possible upon local sources of supply. For instance, they ordered hammers, wheelbarrows, hand tampers, shovels, picks, rakes, 40 foot extension ladder, and small hand rollers locally to aid in the construction of its airfields at Belem, Recife and Parnamirim (Natal).¹⁰⁹ The Parnamirim field, as another example, had to import electricity from Natal before it acquired a 50 kilowatt electrical generator by mid-1942.¹¹⁰ When equipment could not be obtained locally, Pan Am had the supplies flown in on overloaded aircraft (which heightened the risk of airplane fatalities) or arranged for ships to deliver heavy equipment and specialist tools (the ships risked being sunk by German U-boats).¹¹¹

Eventually the supply problems at the Latin American airfields were overcome, though not without time and difficulty. Pan Am had to make improvements to the access roads so that

¹⁰⁸ Harold Lee George, "The Air Transport Command, Army Air Forces," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 230 (November 1943): 90.

¹⁰⁹ Andrew Lewis to Business Manager, 18 June 1942, "Materials and Equipment Required at each Land Plane Base," Collection 341, Accession II, Box 361, Folder 1, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

¹¹⁰ "The Bases," File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 18.

¹¹¹ "Supply," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 25; "Overloading," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, *Ibid.*, 44.

supplies and equipment could be transported with greater speed to the airfields. In Brazil, the Roosevelt administration contracted Pan Am to construct access roads to the airfields at Belem, Parnamirim (Natal) and Recife (the latter two airfields being considered essential to divide up the enormous amount of air traffic that was utilizing the South Atlantic route beginning in late 1942).¹¹² The Supply Section of Air Transport Command, meanwhile, built up stockpiles of operational parts and spares and tools. By March 1943, the Supply section was able to deliver these supplies to the Pan Am airfields on a regular basis. One month later the Pan Am airfields also started receiving typewriters, paper clips, notebooks and other industrial products in regular shipments.¹¹³

In Africa, meanwhile, the situation as regards supply and infrastructure was even more complex. Unlike Latin America, Pan Am had to improve landing fields that were situated further inland and linked by primitive infrastructure. The narrow gauged railroads that connected Lagos on the Nigerian coast to Kano, for example, were not designed for transporting heavy equipment. As a result, railway transport of equipment and supplies for the airfields was often slow. The infrastructure beyond Kano consisted of narrow roads and unpaved roads, which had the effect of further bottlenecking the movement of trucks, trailers and carryalls that were carrying rear springs, filters, transmitters and other important items to the airfields.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Corps of Engineers to Deputy Contracting Officer, 17 February 1942, NARA 2, RG 77, file CE 6282 (Latin American) 236, Box 104; "The Barber Agreement," file: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 8.

¹¹³ "Supply," File: PAA Africa Ltd: Air Corridor to Victory, Collection 341, Accession I, Box 22, Folder 2, PAA Archives, University of Miami, 25.

¹¹⁴ William Rudolph, "Strategic Roads of the World: Notes on Recent Developments," *Geographical Review* 33, No. 1 (January 1943): 116, 118; Deborah Wing Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II* (PhD diss. New York University, 1973), 103.

Pan Am dealt with these shortcomings in several ways. Initially Pan Am had little choice but to utilize the narrow-gauged railways and deficient roads to transport equipment and supplies necessary for airfield construction. They also depended upon manual labor to carry out some of the construction work and camels to transport the gasoline to the Khartoum and El Obeid fields in Sudan.¹¹⁵ Eventually they made improvements to the supporting infrastructure to ensure that the airfields, comprising the Takoradi route, were supplied quickly and on a sustainable basis. For example, Pan Am constructed additional roads in Central Africa to accelerate the movement of supplies to the Takoradi airfields situated further inland.¹¹⁶ In the spring 1942, the Board of Economic Warfare contracted Pan Am to build harbor facilities and all-weather access roads in Liberia in order to transport supplies to Roberts airfield.¹¹⁷ Oil pipelines were also constructed to provide fuel to the African airfields, making the use of camels unnecessary.¹¹⁸

Salvaging Operations and Medical Staff

In addition to the infrastructure improvements made to the airfields, roads and harbors, Pan Am and later Air Transport Command also improved air traffic safety and, in the process, maximized the number of aircraft being ferried along the South Atlantic route by maintaining excellent salvaging operations and medical staffs at most of the Pan Am airfields.

¹¹⁵ Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa: Across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am* (MacLean, VA: Paladwr Press, 1998), 29.

¹¹⁶ Deborah Wing Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II* (PhD diss., New York University, 1973), 103.

¹¹⁷ Runals to Willis, 27 June 1941, NARA 2, RG 77, file ADP 611 (Liberia), Box 103; Hyde to Gorlinski, 8 April, 1942, NARA 2, RG 77, file ADP 600.12, Ibid; Allison to Ely, 15 April 1942, NARA 2, RG 77, file CE 381, Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Hugh Cave, *Wings Across the World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1945), 62.

The salvaging operations became increasingly important after 1942 when the number of airplane crashes increased in tandem with the tremendous growth in air traffic along the South Atlantic route. There were several reasons for the rise in airplane crashes, including inexperienced pilots, overloaded and improperly loaded planes, and maintenance and mechanical difficulties. In addition to these factors, adverse weather conditions also contributed to airplane crashes along the South Atlantic route. The Caribbean and South American experienced tropical storms which could not always be avoided.¹¹⁹ In December-March, airplanes flying in Chad and Sudan could encounter sandstorms, known as haboobs (the localized version) and harmattan (more widespread), which were characterized by winds that sometimes had the velocity of a hurricane and carried the sand as high as 10,000-15,000 feet.¹²⁰

Thanks to efficient salvaging operations in Latin America and Africa, however, few aircraft and their pilots were irretrievably lost. In 1943, for example, a B-24 strategic bomber crashed in the Brazilian rainforest 71 miles from Belem after being blown off course by a tropical storm. The Belem airfield responded by sending over its salvaging crew. The salvaging crew not only found the B-24 strategic bomber and the pilots, but it cleared the jungle to create a runway and flew the plane to Belem airfield for refueling and maintenance.¹²¹ The salvaging operations enjoyed comparable success in Africa.¹²²

Yet perhaps Air Transport Command's (ATC) biggest achievement in enhancing air traffic safety was finding a permanent solution that enabled airplanes to survive sandstorms

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 68-70.

¹²⁰ Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa: Across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am* (MacLean, VA: Paladwr Press, 1998), 93.

¹²¹ Hugh Cave, *Wings Across the World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1945), 57.

¹²² Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *Pan Africa: Across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am* (MacLean, VA: Paladwr Press, 1998), 98-99.

while flying to Cairo. In 1943, an ATC expert was flown into Africa to study the damaging effects of sand on airplane engines. An ATC report determined that the problem could be solved by the use of sand shields to prevent sand from infiltrating a plane's gear assembly, causing the plane to crash. The ATC then sent a rush delivery of 2000 sand shields back to Africa. Thanks to this innovation, airplane crashes along the Takoradi route were greatly reduced.¹²³

Along with the salvaging crews, Pan Am's medical staff also contributed to air traffic safety. The potential for the spread of disease in Latin America and Africa was high and could affect the working ethic of the personnel who operated the airfields as well as the pilots. Unless the health of the employees was maintained, the airway system's capacity to process thousands of aircraft was likely to be reduced. Initially Pan Am's record for taking medical precautions was a mixed one. The airline inoculated its employees against typhoid, cholera, tetanus, yellow fever and small pox before they left the United States for Latin America and Africa.¹²⁴ However, Pan Am's initial handling of the malaria virus was dubious. In a rush to modernize and then operate the Takoradi route, Pan Am sent its employees to West Africa (which was infested with malaria) without proper protective measures. Between October 1 and December 26, 1941, 300 Pan Am employees or one out of every three men succumbed to a malaria epidemic.¹²⁵ The Roosevelt administration did not fail to take notice. On January 13, 1942, Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle expressed to War Secretary Henry Stimson his concern that, "40% of [Pan Am's] personnel [in West Africa] was found to be infected with malignant tertian malaria, and that similar infection was expected to occur in a new group of men within six weeks of their arrival." On February 4, War Secretary Stimson wrote back that it appears "adequate precautionary steps

¹²³ Hugh Cave, *Wings Across the World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1945), 62-66.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹²⁵ "Health Record in Africa," *The Science News-Letter* 43, No. 24 (June 12, 1943): 374.

have not been taken to protect the health of Pan American Airways employees in West Africa.”¹²⁶

Yet ultimately the War Department and Pan Am developed and implemented a permanent solution to the problem of malaria. The War Department advised Pan Am on what preventative measures to take to avoid the incidence of malaria in the future. Following these instructions, Pan Am screened all the quarters and introduced bed nets (to reduce the likelihood of mosquitoes spreading the disease while employees were sleeping); it required all personnel to wear long trousers, long sleeved shirts and mosquito boots (those employees who failed to dress as such were sent to the local jail) and to take daily doses of atabrine (vaccine against malaria); and it segregated American living quarters from native quarter by at least ¼ mile (on the assumption that malaria epidemics originated among the native inhabitants). It also sprayed American and native quarters with insecticides; drained, oiled and dusted the swamps and other mosquito breeding areas with Paris green; installed sewage systems, modern toilets and showers; and created fresh water wells to ensure that the employees could bathe and swim regularly. Finally Pan Am’s Medical Department conducted regular inspections to ensure that all of these measures were carried out and to record on any developments as regards the health of Pan Am’s employees.¹²⁷

As a result of a combination of preventive measures and treatment, the rate of infection among Pan Am employees fell to only 1% by early 1942.¹²⁸ One year later, only 37 employees out of the 1300 Pan Am personnel serving in Africa were sent back to the United States for

¹²⁶ Berle to Stimson, 13 January 1942, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/32B, Box 4048; Stimson to Hull, 4 February 1942, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/53, Ibid.

¹²⁷ Akin to Surgeon general, 5 June 1942, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/170, Box 4048; “Medicine and PAA-Africa,” 9 March 1943, folder 6, Collection 341, Accession II, Box 259; “Health Record in Africa,” *The Science News-Letter* 43, No. 24 (June 12, 1943): 374.

¹²⁸ “Medicine and PAA-Africa,” 9 March 1943, folder 6, Collection 341, Accession II, Box 259.

medical reasons. These included peptic ulcer (8), recurrent attacks of malaria (5), strained back (4), alcoholism (2), psychoneurosis (2), chronic otitis media (2), pulmonary disease (2), dermatitis (2) and miscellaneous conditions (10).¹²⁹

Final Comments

Pan Am finished airfield construction under the Airport Development Program ended in the mid-summer of 1944. By then the War Department had paid Pan Am as much as \$90 million for the construction of the airfields and an additional \$10 million for maintenance costs. Half of this money was devoted to airfield construction and maintenance work in Brazil alone, since the airfields on the Brazilian Bulge were instrumental for processing the unprecedented amount of air traffic that went along the South Atlantic route.¹³⁰

Yet the U.S. Army and Pan Am's success in developing and operating an airways system capable of handling so much traffic came not without great difficulty. As noted before, the U.S. Army and Pan Am faced the challenge of operating the airway system while still developing the airfields for military purposes. Moreover, the inherent technical challenges involved in constructing such a system were combined with an inevitable plethora of local problems and roadblocks that had to be overcome; everything from contractors, to obstruction by local officials, inadequate supporting infrastructures, and outbreaks of disease. Each of these kinds of obstructions could materially affect the viability of the airway, and therefore had to be transcended in some way.

¹²⁹ "Health Record in Africa," *The Science News-Letter* 43, No. 24 (June 12, 1943): 374.

¹³⁰ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, *The Western Hemisphere: The Framework of Hemisphere Defense* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 258.

Making a judgment on Pan Am and the Army's efforts to modernize and operate the Pan American Airway System presents a considerable challenge. Airfield construction was a messy and sometimes chaotic process. Moreover, contrary to what Pan Am scholars have claimed, Pan Am by late 1942 simply did not have a big enough organization (nor for that matter did any other airline) to handle thousands of planes each year. As a result, Air Transport Command had to intervene to operate the individual airfields. Yet as the Pan Am archives also make clear, the Army took longer than expected to recruit the qualified personnel needed to ensure that the Pan American Airway System operated efficiently. In short, very little in the record on airfield construction or airfield operations suggested that Pan Am and the Army worked efficiently and reacted swiftly in the face of unexpected challenges. The Roosevelt administration and Pan Am certainly prepared the renovation of the Pan American Airway System long in advance; but these preparations (which began in early 1939) seemed woefully inadequate three years later when the airway system was expected to undertake tasks unanticipated by the war planners.

Yet in the midst of this messy process, Pan Am and the Army managed to get a lot of things right because the Pan American Airways System ultimately delivered for the war effort. Pan Am airfields became an integral part of the battlefield. True the Allied armed forces fought and won their own battles, but they owed their success in large part to the airfields (largely concealed from the enemy) that facilitated the transportation of their military equipment and supplies to the combat zones and enabled them to eventually achieve air supremacy over the enemy.

Chapter 6 Postwar Planning and the Retention of the Global Base Empire

Months before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and a declaration of war was passed in the Congress, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was already embarking on a global hegemonic project to transform the United States into a world empire and erect a “new world order” buttressed by U.S. military power.¹ This new world order was to be built around several U.S.-led institutions, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization that regulated the contradictions between American and global interests in a way that benefitted the United States and its allies.² Wilsonian values of “free enterprise” and liberty (vague and idealistic like the “progressive” aims of American imperialism) were to be transmitted to European colonial areas via international trusteeships and to the American informal empire through American advisors and American corporations. But the other crucial ingredient was military bases and particularly airfields; some of them constructed on the island colonies recently taken from Japan, but many more obtained through bilateral agreements with foreign governments.³ The latter formed the United States’ world-encompassing extraterritorial empire. Moreover, the importance of this extraterritorial empire was believed back then to be huge since military bases, as scholars David Vine and Chalmers Johnson observed, became “a primary means by which the United States keeps other nations within a global political-economic order most favorable to the United States, thus maintaining its global political and economic supremacy.”⁴ U.S. military bases underscored the United States’ interest

¹ Patrick Hearden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 244-45; Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, xii-xiii.

² Neil Smith, *American Empire*, xii, 21.

³ S-119 Preliminary, Provision of Bases for Common Use, May 6, 1944; PIO-157 Preliminary S-106 Preliminary, December 21, 1943, *Ibid.*, Box 76; Melvyn Leffler, “The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-48,” 349-50.

⁴ David Vine, *Island of Shame*, 46.

in the Pacific, Asia, the Middle East and Europe; kept friendly governments in power; and enabled the United States to project its power and influence and enjoy privileged access to the world's foreign markets, cheap labor and raw materials.⁵ Given how important airfields were in underpinning U.S. global power, the State Department's planners and U.S. military planners set out in the spring of 1943 to retain airfields (which the Franklin Roosevelt administration, Pan Am and the U.S. Army constructed in 1940-44) around the world after the war ended.

Three contexts shaped postwar planning and postwar airfield planning. One was the lofty Wilsonian ambition, widely shared within the State Department in particular, to erect a "new world order" that insured global security, lowered trade barriers to pave the way for an open world economy, cemented American control over foreign markets and natural resources vital to the national security of the United States, reinforced the unequal power relations existing between European colonial elites and their non-white subjects, supported pro-western authoritarian regimes in their efforts to circumscribe the liberties of their non-white populations (granting political liberty to non-whites at home or abroad was seen back then as a sure route to world anarchy), and finally advanced a "civilizing mission" globally to reform the peoples of the world in the American image. This Wilsonian vision was rooted in the United States' imperialist past, but it had the potential to fundamentally change the world's future.⁶

The second context was technological innovation. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the United States and the other great powers made huge strides in military technology which, in the case of airpower, exponentially increased the flying range⁷, speed and carrying capacity of

⁵ Joseph Gerson, "The Sun Never Sets," *The Sun Never Sets*, 13-14. Bruce Birchard, "New Directions for U.S. Policy," *Ibid.*, 358-59.

⁶ This Wilsonian vision will be explored at the beginning of this chapter.

⁷ The average flying range for aircraft was only eight hundred miles in 1928. Seventeen years later, the B-29 strategic bomber had a flying range of more than 4000 miles.

military airplanes and made airpower far more destructive. Owing to these advances, postwar planners wanted to extend the United States' defense perimeter further into the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in order to make it more difficult for potential rivals to project their military power against the Western Hemisphere. Defense in depth seemed prudent given that even a lesser power Japan had unfurled its airpower on American soil.⁸

A third context affecting postwar airfield planning, which will be the focus of this chapter, was the global expansion of American military power. Washington policymakers developed postwar plans for a "new world order" to meet what they considered to be the global nature of the United States' national security requirements. These requirements included not only the defense of the nation's borders, but also the promotion of Wilsonian values (i.e. democracy and the Open Door) around the world to create allies amenable to U.S. interests; depriving potential adversaries of the opportunity to acquire sufficient economic power to rival the United States; and economic security based, among other things, on maintenance of worldwide access to the goods and raw materials needed to enhance American economic and military supremacy. In fact, the definition of national security had changed so much that even Assistant Navy Secretary James Forrestal was moved to point out on May 10, 1943, "There is no such thing as security and the word should be stricken from our dictionary. We should put in every school book the maxim that power like wealth must be either used or lost."⁹

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the importance of postwar airfield planning to the Franklin Roosevelt administration's efforts to build a "new world order." The first and second sections contextualize postwar airfield planning with an exploration into the Franklin Roosevelt administration's global imperialist ambitions as well as its bold schemes to integrate

⁸ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 78.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Far East into a “new world order” and protect foreign markets and sources of raw materials in the bargain. The third section argues that postwar airfield planning was meant to aid in the attainment of the national security objectives outlined above. The existing scholarship, using the studies of the military planners as evidence, has argued that the Franklin Roosevelt administration was only interested in retaining U.S. airfields that protected the United States’ physical boundaries. Yet military planners were not the only ones responsible for postwar airfield planning. The civilian planners in the State Department planned to retain airfields around the world (largely in the guise of commercial airfields) to insure that the United States always had the capacity to deploy its military power globally in the postwar era. The fourth section deals with the impact of the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s decision to retain U.S. airfields abroad after the war on U.S.-Soviet relations.

Lofty Wilsonian Ambitions

As the Second World War neared its end, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors planned to transform the United States into a global empire and remake the world in the American image. As early as May 1940, postwar planner Harold Wilson was so concerned about the imperialist sentiments expressed by his State Department colleagues that he warned them, “We are not confronting a period of the nineteenth century, but are living in a century where industry and warlike power are growing in various portions of the world, thus making infinitely more difficult the maintenance of a far-flung empire.” In September 1940, Assistant Secretary Adolf Berle echoed what many of his State Department colleagues were saying, when wrote in his diary, “I have been saying to myself and other people that the only possible effect of this war would be that the United States would emerge with an imperial power greater than the world has ever

seen.”¹⁰ Norman Davis, who headed up the Security Sub-Committee for the Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy (ACPPF), declared, “We shall in effect be heirs of the [British] Empire and it is up to us to preserve its vital parts.” He continued talking like that throughout the Second World War.¹¹ In May 1942, Davis observed, “The British Empire as it existed in the past will never reappear and the United States may have to take its place.”¹² On December 12, Davis argued that the United States must “keep the British Empire together, but try and avoid its being used to fight us economically and take advantage of us.”¹³ Isaiah Bowman, who chaired the Territorial Sub-Committee for the ACPPF, stated on April 10, 1943, “We shall not be any less troubled by colonial problems than Britain has been troubled in the past; but.. we shall have to do something positive about this problem because of our security interests. Otherwise we shall be leaving to chance areas in which we have a direct concern.”¹⁴

The United States’ global imperialist project was not an end in itself, but a means to building a desirable world order that embraced American principles and created stable conditions for the United States’ global national security interests to thrive. Most postwar planners understood they were creating this new world order. On September 26, 1942, Isaiah Bowman said, “Our development toward a dream world is one which he favored...”¹⁵ On October 31, 1942, Under Secretary Welles referred to the “new world order” as a competing vision for Europe which conflicted with “old types of military theories and organization.”¹⁶ Professor James Shotwell, on the other hand, expressed reservations about remaking the world in the

¹⁰ Patrick Hearden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 244.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹² Laurence Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust*, 163-64.

¹³ P-Minutes 37, December 12, 1942, NARA 2, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55.

¹⁴ Division of Special Research, P-Minutes 37, April 10, 1943, *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Division of Special Research, P-Minutes 26, September 26, 1942, *Ibid.*

¹⁶ P-Minutes 27, October 3, 1942, *Ibid.*

American image: “It is essential that history, culture and outlook of peoples be considered in any international organization. If our whole outlook on these questions is dominated by the typical evangelism of America and if we try to make the world over in our image, we are headed for failure.”¹⁷ However, Shotwell’s opinion was only the minority view.

The global imperialist project may seem at odds with the Wilsonian vision of a “new world order” based upon international cooperation and universal freedom. Yet as this dissertation has pointed out, American imperialists of the early 20th century often proclaimed their intention to extend the area of liberty while enslaving those “savages” who were not deemed ready for it. Moreover, American imperialists cooperated with other “civilized” nations to maintain world peace and continue the civilizing mission.¹⁸ This imperialist mentality, which prevailed in the early 20th century, hardly changed four decades later. The only difference was that Wilsonians were employing internationalist language to provide legitimacy to their empire. On January 19, 1943, Commerce Secretary Jesse Jones explained that the United States’ “world order-keeping” role was comparable to the large scale order keeping performed by empires throughout history:

The only other even remotely comparable task of world order-keeping in history has been performed by the British, partly through the exercise of force and the possession of superior economic power, but in large measure through genuine cooperation with other sovereign nations. The Holy Roman Empire kept a semblance of order on the continent of Europe for several centuries through the combination of religion, force, and family ties. Other examples of large scale order keeping – the Roman, Ottoman, and Chinese Empires – have been based on either naked force or religion or both.¹⁹

Moreover, Jones recognized how important international institutions were to legitimizing and concealing American global hegemony. Jones cautioned against the United States building a

¹⁷ P-Minutes 59, June 12, 1943, RG 59 Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55.

¹⁸ See Chapter 1.

¹⁹ JM Jones to Pasvolsky, January 19, 1943, RG 59, Entry 558, Records of Leo Pasvolsky, 1938-45, Box 4.

territorial “World Empire,” since “any endeavor to do so would only result in chaos.” Thus, the United States had to join the United Nations in order to immediately assume “world leadership” over other nations and take care of their security and economic well-being.²⁰

The Franklin Roosevelt administration’s ambition to build a global American empire was reflected not only in the statements of the postwar planners, but also in its Wilsonian vision for the world. Wilsonian idealism was imperialism in another guise. It advocated national self-determination and democracy for predominantly Caucasian societies (just like American imperialists of the early 20th century did) since they were considered mature enough to exercise these rights. Conversely, it supported continued colonial rule or its equivalent (i.e. a dictatorship or absolute monarchy) for the darker races, since they were seen as too childlike to be capable of self-government or developing economic resources. The rationale for keeping colonial rulers and pro-western authoritarian regimes in power was to promote economic development, raise living standards, and gradually civilize non-whites for national self-government. Finally the Open Door policy, which called for the reduction of trade barriers, was to be implemented globally and hopefully lead to greater economic development and higher living standards around the world.²¹ If everything went according to the postwar planners’ plans, then the outcome would be a peaceful “new world order” headed along the path to democracy and insuring the long-term survival of the United States’ global national security interests.²²

In light of these contrasting Wilsonian visions, it was not surprising that the Franklin Roosevelt administration advocated one set of Wilsonian principles for the white race and a

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Michael Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States gained and wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 197-98; Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, xvi.

²² Nathan Godfried, “Economic Development and Regionalism,” 481.

somewhat different set for non-whites. The European states, given their Caucasian societies, were to regain their right to national self-determination and democracy almost immediately. At the Yalta Conference (February 1945), Franklin Roosevelt persuaded Soviet dictator Josef Stalin and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to sign the “Declaration on Liberated Europe” to commit the great powers to working with the liberated peoples in solving their political and economic problems through free elections.²³ The postwar planners also devised ambitious schemes to rehabilitate the European economy since the European states were expected to become important consumers of U.S. exports in the postwar era. As early as 1942, Welles and his colleagues favored a regional trade bloc for Eastern and Central Europe that served as a market for U.S. exports and a check to potential Soviet or German expansion.²⁴ This plan was only abandoned by 1944-45, because the Red Army had occupied most of Eastern Europe and was poised to invade Central Europe.²⁵ Welles and the postwar planners also developed an economic program for Germany, which they recognized as the economic engine for Europe. This plan envisaged Germany’s complete disarmament and that opening up of its economy to greater trade. Finally it avoided the post-World War I mistake of saddling Germany with enormous reparations (which were bound to stifle German and therefore European economic activity).²⁶

Non-whites were to occupy an inferior political and economic status the postwar plans for the “new world order.” The European colonies in Africa and Asia were not going to regain their independence, but instead would be put under international trusteeships.²⁷ The international

²³ S.M. Plokhy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace*, 392, 400.

²⁴ Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 180-81, 201-03.

²⁵ S.M. Plokhy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace*, 393.

²⁶ Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 109-111, 114.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 147-50.

trusteeship had its origins in the 19th century. In 1900, Senator Albert Beveridge claimed the United States was holding its colonies in a “sacred trust” until its darker-skinned inhabitants were ready for self-government. In the meantime, American colonial rulers would civilize the now-whites and gradually teach them about self-government until they had earned the right to national self-determination and to participate fully in their democracy.²⁸ The international trusteeship adhered to the same 19th century imperialist logic, except there was a mechanism in the trusteeship – the U.S.-led regional councils – to ensure that the colonial powers actually took steps to assist in the political and economic development of their colonies.²⁹

Other than this distinction, however, the international trusteeship was predicated on the imperialist assumptions that had been employed to justify American colonial rule in the Caribbean and the Pacific. During the early 1940s, the State Department’s postwar planning sessions produced several reports explaining why non-whites were unprepared for self-government or economic emancipation. On December 21, 1943, the Security Sub-Committee of ACPFP explained that:

Colonial peoples are too weak to protect themselves. They do not have national unity, capacity to govern, or industrial strength, and they have not been encouraged by their rulers to become strong. Since they are weak, they constitute both a cause and an object of dispute between nations. They fall prey easily to predatory nations, and their natural resources and strategic value make them desirable to such nations.³⁰

On April 17, 1943, the Political Studies Sub-Committee posited, “it is useless to expect native peoples to develop such [natural] resources and dangerous to leave them in control of vital

²⁸ “Beveridge of Free Trade,” *NYT*, 30 March 1900, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FB0F13FA385D12738DDDA90B94DB405B808CF1D3>

²⁹ Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 149-50.

³⁰ PIO-157 Preliminary S-106 Preliminary, December 21, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59 Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76.

raw materials that may be coveted by an aggressive power. The regional council would therefore have to assume responsibility for promoting economic development, while providing equal opportunity to all countries for investment and safeguarding native interests.”³¹ Upon first glance, this view-point may appear strange because what relation does race have to economic development or national security. Yet for many postwar planners, vast swaths of the world and their natural resources were vulnerable to an aggressor precisely because they were inhabited by child-like non-whites who knew nothing about the free enterprise capitalist system.

These patronizing imperialist views may seem incompatible with the Atlantic Charter, but the postwar planners recognized no such contradiction because they believed that the colonized were too immature to determine their own political and economic destiny. As one Political Studies report dated April 17, 1943 put it:

The question was raised as to whether the people of the mandates and conquered territories should have any voice – in accordance with the Atlantic Charter – in the choice of trustees and the extent of trusteeship control over the resources and economic development of the area. It was suggested that the trusteeship plan is predicated on the assumption that most of the peoples concerned are as yet incapable of expressing such a choice...³²

Therefore, the establishment of international trusteeships was imperative to “modernize backward people and prepare them for full self-government.”³³

Behind each State Department report on international trusteeships were committee meetings where high-ranking postwar planners expressed with great frankness their views on why the colonized should remain under colonial tutelage. On August 8, 1942, Stanley Hornbeck, who was the State Department’s Far Eastern expert, informed his colleagues:

³¹ P-Minutes 52, April 17, 1943, Ibid., Box 54.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

Now when it comes to the economic matter the more freedom some peoples have the less well off they are economically. The average Negro does enough work to get enough to live on and no more. Peoples of the South Seas are similar. He is not interested in property or culture and you have to impair his freedom to make his economic standards higher. That is where you have not only a dilemma, but a 'trilemma.'³⁴

On August 15, Under Secretary Welles was horrified at the prospect of allowing all people irrespective of race to immediately gain their political independence and manage their economic resources: "The majority of them are clearly not able to govern themselves. They do not possess adequate resources, political capacity nor education. After a short period there would be anarchy in all the areas with sad results for world peace."³⁵ On October 3, Welles stated that "the Negroes [in West Africa] are the in lowest ran of human beings" and "should be left in the hands of the British Government."³⁶ On November 13, Isaiah Bowman argued "that the backward condition of the bush negroes of Dutch Guiana, who were largely descendants of escaped slaves, made any talk of political representation for them impossible."³⁷ The question was raised at that same meeting whether Nazi Germany would see the international trusteeship as hypocritical, given that the United States criticized the Axis powers for violating the sovereignty of other nations. Bowman replied "that the principle of encouraging self-government had to be considerably modified in order to fit the varying characteristics of different areas. The fact that this would give Germany the chance to criticize the proposed settlements was not a sufficiently strong objection to modify the proposals."³⁸

³⁴ P-Minutes 21, August 8, 1942, Ibid., Box 55

³⁵ P Minutes 22, August 15, 1942, Ibid.

³⁶ P Minutes 27, October 3, 1942, Ibid.

³⁷ T Minutes 27, November 13, 1942, Ibid., Box 59

³⁸ Ibid.

There are several reasons why these reports and private statements on non-whites are significant. To begin with, they prove that the Franklin Roosevelt administration's interpretation of the United States' national security requirements was not based solely on objective criteria, like available information on external threats and careful appraisals on which interests were important. Racism and the "civilizing mission" also influenced how Washington policymakers viewed national security and world peace. Captive to an imperialist mindset, Washington policymakers believed that anti-colonial movements and their constituencies posed a major threat to world peace. Moreover, they based these fears chiefly on the old imperialist belief that "colonial peoples," owing to their racial composition, were too primitive for self-government and could plunge the world into chaos if left to their own devices. Like the American imperialists of the early 20th century, Under Secretary Welles and other postwar planners were convinced that the international trusteeship was crucial for limiting the freedom of non-whites and preventing the new world order from unraveling. Lastly this imperialist mindset, combined with the realization that colonial powers were too exhausted militarily to hold their own, motivated the Franklin Roosevelt administration to transform the United States into a global empire and master organizer and leader of the "new world order."³⁹

Considering that racism shaped government thinking on democracy, it was not surprising that the Franklin Roosevelt administration saw strategic partnerships with dictatorships and

³⁹ As early as March 28, 1942, Under Secretary Welles, Assistant Secretary Berle, Isaiah Bowman, Hamilton Fish Armstrong and other postwar planners agreed that the international executive body, consisting of four great powers, "would have to confront not only armed movements but popular movements in states and ideological movements generally." Minutes P-4, March 28, 1942, RG 59 Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 54. On December 21, 1943, the Security Sub-Committee stated in a preliminary report entitled "United States Security in Relation to Colonial Areas" stated that "a large part of the colonial area of the world is in the hands of weaker nations, themselves too weak to protect their colonies. Indeed, with the decline of France and Italy, the only strong power having colonies are Great Britain and the United States..." PIO-157 Preliminary, S-106 Preliminary, December 21, 1943, Ibid., Box 77.

absolute monarchies as the only sound method for promoting economic growth, higher living standards and the civilizing mission in areas (populated primarily with non-whites) where the United States had vital economic and strategic interests. To begin with, the Franklin Roosevelt administration largely denied freedoms to non-whites at home; so it was not a stretch to help despots do the same thing abroad. Moreover, the postwar planners believed that allowing any democratic experiment to occur in China, one of the Latin American countries, or the Middle East would invite anarchy and the most unfortunate results for civilization and world peace, since non-whites were viewed as inept at political and economic management.⁴⁰ In other words, the Wilsonian vision resulted from a complex interplay of three variables: national self-interest (protecting U.S. interests), Wilsonian idealism (which mirrored the idealism in American imperialism), and assumptions about race. These three variables and the interactions between them provided the ideological basis for the authoritarian “reform from above” approach which had been enforced in the American colonies since the 18th century and now defined the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s approach to dictatorships and absolute monarchies who presided over larger non-white populations.⁴¹

One of the testing grounds for this authoritarian “reform from above” approach was China whose leader Chiang Kai-Shek (1928-49) was pro-American and a dictator. The postwar planners seemed to be sufficiently content with Chiang Kai-Shek’s dictatorship (1928-49) that they neglected to draw up any plans to assist China in making the immediate transition to democracy. However, those same planners did prepare a bold economic program for China that involved using U.S. public and private investment to promote industry, extend the electric grid to the countryside, improve communications, expand the production of mineral resources, enhance

⁴⁰ P Minutes 22, August 15, 1942, Ibid., Box 55.

⁴¹ Frank Schumacher, “The American Way of Empire,” 39, 42.

public health and education services, and modernize agriculture. If the program was successful, the postwar planners believed that China would continue to serve the United States' interests.⁴²

The same "reform from above" approach was also applied to the Middle East. The State Department's Iranian policy became the basis for its entire Middle East policy and therefore deserves some comment here. To begin with, the Iranian policy did not forecast any democracy for Iran in the near future. True the President's Special Envoy Patrick Hurley wrote to Franklin Roosevelt on December 21, 1943 that the U.S. government's directive was to "assist in the creation in Iran of a government based upon the consent of the governed..." Yet Hurley and Franklin Roosevelt understood that Iranian democracy was not an immediate possibility. Hurley wrote, "Without any opposition [from Britain and the Soviet Union] and with the cooperation and support of the intelligent and patriotic leaders of Iran, it will take generations to achieve in Iran free enterprise and a government based on the consent of the governed."⁴³ At the same time, the State Department did develop an ambitious economic program for the Iranians that involved U.S. foreign aid, American advisors, and a partnership with Iran's pro-western Shah Muhammad Pahlavi (1941-79). In January 1943, Near Eastern Division officer John Jernegan informed Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson about his plan to aid the Iranian economy with "disinterested American advisors," loans and trade. Jernegan hoped that U.S. foreign aid would "build up Iran to the point at which it will stand in need of neither British nor Russian assistance to maintain order in its own house." Jernegan also speculated, "If railroads, ports, highways, public utilities, industries are to be built, we can build them and turn them over to the Iranian

⁴² Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 119-20, 122.

⁴³ *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume 3: Alliance Declining, February 1944-April 1945*, ed. Warren Kimball (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1984), 4-6.

people free of any strings.” On February 11, 1943, Wallace Murray of Near Eastern Affairs (sub-division of the State Department) successfully rallied the State Department around Jernegan’s plan. Then on August 16, Hull forwarded a synopsis of the Jernegan plan to Franklin Roosevelt who endorsed it.⁴⁴ The Franklin Roosevelt administration also sent over American advisors to begin educating the Iranians about democracy.⁴⁵

As Franklin Roosevelt was poised for re-election to a fourth term, the State Department’s Iranian policy became the basis for U.S. Middle Eastern Policy. On the surface, the U.S. Middle Eastern Policy appeared to have a plan to transform Middle Eastern states into democracies over the near term. On November 1, 1944, the State Department released a report stating that one of the “political objectives of the United States in the Middle East” was “assurance of the rights of peoples to choose and maintain for themselves the types of political, social, and economic systems they desire.”⁴⁶ Yet this objective was, in fact, projected for the distant future rather than the near term. For the present, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors were concerned with establishing partnerships with Middle Eastern governments to improve their economies and create “a higher standard of living for their people” in the expectation that these improvements would lead to “greater political and economic stability.”⁴⁷

America’s Economic Interests

⁴⁴Nathan Godfried, “Economic Development and Regionalism,” 483; Eduard Mark, “Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947,” 52.

⁴⁵ *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume 3*, ed. Warren Kimball, 6.

⁴⁶ Report by the Coordinating Committee of the Department of State, 2 May 1945, “American Economic Policy in the Middle East”, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1945*, 8: 34.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

Although an altruistic strain ran through much of U.S. foreign policy, the Franklin Roosevelt administration planned a new world order chiefly to protect the United States' economic interests which were truly becoming global during the Second World War. These economic interests were the world's markets, raw materials, and cheap labor and they were important not only to big American corporations, but also for sustaining American global hegemony. As Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors understood all too well, the United States could not wield a preponderance of power in the world in the long run without controlling the economic collaterals of that power. On May 3, 1943, Isaiah Bowman remarked that, "The important question is what resources will be available to enable us to hold our world position, and from this standpoint the next twenty-five to thirty years will be a strain because our best resources – those which have given us a favorable trade position – will be used up." James Shotwell agreed, pointing out that "when the war ends various nations will scramble for the raw materials and economic processes needed to remake the world. The American people, if they are not on their toes, may see the resources the world slip away under controls and methods hostile to the interests of this nation..." Similarly Senator Austin stated, "The most important political premise concerning international organization will probably be security, which will in part depend upon having the materials to wage war and maintain our peacetime economy."⁴⁸ Later on July 23, 1943, Norman Davis equated national security with preventing "the development of power which was out of balance" and contended that, "With our resources plus an agreement with others, we could be part of the predominating force."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ P Minutes 54, May 1, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Lot 60D-224, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 54.

⁴⁹ P Minutes 48, July 23, 1943, Ibid., Box 76.

American global hegemony depended not only on utilizing economic sources of power, but (as the Franklin Roosevelt administration recognized) on denying natural resources to one or more potential adversaries. The G-2 Agency spoke to this very issue in June 1943, when they raised the possibility of Britain falling into an alliance with the Soviet Union “that might eventually align the manpower and resources of Eurasia against us. Our interest demands that the United States, not Great Britain, become the stabilizing wheel of the world.”⁵⁰ Later on December 21, the postwar planners concluded that the United States should consider taking steps – in the event that the new international organization fails to include a “sufficiently strong security system” – to gain control over colonial areas because otherwise their “economic resources might be used to weaken our strengths or increase that of an enemy.”⁵¹

An additional economic concern, incentivizing postwar planners to advocate a U.S.-led global economic order, was perceived need for foreign markets. The United States continued to overproduce for the domestic market and therefore needed access to foreign markets to profitably dispose of its surplus production. In March 1940, Welles advised Franklin Roosevelt that the United States would need overseas markets when the time came to make the transition from a wartime economy back to a peacetime economy.⁵² Under Secretary Edward Stettinius agreed: “As I see it, the United States will need the greatest international trade our country has ever had following the war. The State Department must be prepared to establish by international agreements and otherwise conditions under which private industry can develop it.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 232.

⁵¹ PIO-157, Preliminary S-106 Preliminary, December 21, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76.

⁵² Patrick Hearnden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 227.

⁵³ Stettinius to John Lee Pratt, 10 March 1944, *Isaiah Bowman Papers, Series 58, Ferdinand Hamburger Jr. Archives*, John Hopkins University.

In light of these concerns, the postwar planners sought to erect a new global order where the United States' economic needs would be met. Bowman believed that the United States to have access to "American Lebensraum," which he equated to the world's markets, raw materials and cheap labor.⁵⁴ In March 1941, John Abbink declared, "If we are to establish our kind of 'new world order' in the realm of economics, it must be launched while our growing might can accent its various provisions."⁵⁵

The scope of American economic ambitions, in short, was almost global and only stopped at the fringes of the closed economies of the Soviet Union and its communist allies. In the Far East, the State Department's postwar planners saw potentially large markets for the United States' surplus production and huge reserves of raw materials for the American war machine and peacetime economy. China was considered especially important both for its potentially large market and mineral reserves, but also because the Franklin Roosevelt administration saw this nation as a gateway to the markets and natural resources within the Asian subcontinent.⁵⁶ Southeast Asia possessed much smaller markets, but this region was still economically important owing its treasure trove of raw materials and its strategic location along one of the main sea routes to India. As the Security Sub-Committee report on "The Strategic Importance of Singapore and Hong," dated October 26, 1942, explained:

The strategic importance of Singapore is due to its unique geographical position. Situated at the southeastern tip of Asia, it controls the Straits of Malacca, the passageway between the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. The direct trade route from the Middle East to China and Japan, and the secondary

⁵⁴Neil Smith, *American empire*, 319-20, 349; Ebere Nwaubani and C. Nwaubani, "The United States and the Liquidation of European Colonial Rule in Tropical Africa, 1941-1963," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 43, Cahier 171 (2003): 512-14.

⁵⁵Patrick Hearnden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 230.

⁵⁶Walter La Feber, "Franklin Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina: 1942-45," *The American Historical Review* 81, No. 5 (December 1975): 1281.

route to Australia and New Zealand, runs through the narrow defiles. They are bound by lands rich in strategic raw materials: tin, rubber and oil.⁵⁷

With regards to the Middle East, the postwar planners were also attracted to the prospect of prying open markets for American surplus production. Yet a far more important consideration guiding the postwar planners was that the Middle East possessed some of the largest oil reserves in the world. For the United States, controlling foreign oil supplies was believed to be an economic necessity and crucial to the United States' long-term national security. On February 12, 1937, Interior Secretary Ickes warned the Senate Finance Sub-Committee, "... the United States is using up its oil reserves faster than the rest of the world, as a result of which there will be an oil shortage in the United States long before there is an oil shortage in the rest of the world."⁵⁸ The war, which greatly increased oil consumption, aggravated this problem,⁵⁹ leading the U.S. government in early 1943 to predict domestic oil shortages by the first months of 1944.⁶⁰

Against this backdrop, the Middle East's oil reserves became hugely important for the Franklin Roosevelt administration. At a meeting on the Division of Special Research on September 26, 1942, Bowman explained to Welles, Berle and his other colleagues:

We have in the Near East one of the three greatest oil fields in the world, and the handling of this situation is going to be one of the most teasing problems that we will have to deal with... We cannot think of ourselves as completely withdrawing from this major oil area of from Suez, any more than we

⁵⁷ S Document 43, October 26, 1942, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76.

⁵⁸ Ickes to the Senate Finance Sub-Committee, 12 February 1937, Harold Ickes Papers, Box 218, Library of Congress.

⁵⁹ Michael Stoff, "The Anglo-American Oil Agreement and the Wartime Search for Foreign Oil Policy," *Business History Review* 55, No. 1 (Spring 1981): 61-62.

⁶⁰ Fred H. Lawson, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21, No. 3 (August 1989): 309.

can withdraw from the administration by an international agency over the outlets of the Mediterranean.⁶¹

Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors hoped not only to substitute Middle Eastern oil production for the Western Hemisphere's oil production, with a view to conserving the latter. They also planned to use Middle Eastern oil to fuel the economic recoveries in Japan and Europe.⁶² In late 1943, the United States already had considerable oil interests in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia's oil reserves were owned solely by the California Arabian Standard Oil Company (Casoc) since the early 1930s, which in turn was controlled by Standard Oil Company of California (Socal) and Texas Oil Company (Texaco).⁶³ American oil companies also controlled all of Bahrain's oil, 50% of Kuwait's oil concession and a 23 ¾% share of the oil concessions in Iraq, Qatar and Trucial Oman (which Britain's Iraq Petroleum Company owned).⁶⁴

The Franklin Roosevelt administration's long range aim in the Middle East was to protect American oil interests in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar and Trucial Oman and acquire new ones. Saudi Arabia's petroleum, for example, was considered in the State Department to be "one of the world's greatest prizes."⁶⁵ To ensure that the United States never lost control over this prize, Franklin Roosevelt in 1941 linked a \$425 million loan to Britain with increased payments to Saudi King Ibn Saud to protect Casoc's oil concession.⁶⁶ Interior Secretary Ickes then

⁶¹ P Minutes 26, September 26, 1942, NARA 2, RG 59 Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55.

⁶² Hull to Ickes, 13 November 1943, *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, Strategic Issues* [microfilm], Reel 9: Petroleum, 946; Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 79-80, 237-238.

⁶³ James Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia: the United States and the Dhahran Airfield, 1945-46," *Diplomatic History* 4, No. 2 (Spring 1980): 191.

⁶⁴ Hull to Leahy, 15 December 1943, *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, Strategic Issues* [microfilm], Reel 9: Petroleum, 964.

⁶⁵ Hull to Ickes, November 13, 1943, *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, Strategic Issues* [microfilm], Reel 9: Petroleum, 946.

⁶⁶ James Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia," 191.

advanced three successive proposals to control the Middle Eastern oil supply, which included having the U.S. government purchase the Saudi oil concession; build a government-owned pipeline across the Arabian Peninsula; and finally negotiate an oil agreement with Britain.⁶⁷ The proposals foundered, but they were significant for demonstrating that the security of the Middle Eastern oil supply was uppermost in the minds of the Washington policymakers.

At the same time the Franklin Roosevelt administration was trying to consolidate control over U.S. petroleum interests, the State Department postwar planners were eyeing the large oil reserves in Iran. As early as the summer 1942, the postwar planners took note of Iran's "valuable oil resources" which made it a country "of vital importance."⁶⁸ They also believed that Iran was important as a strategic buffer for shielding U.S. petroleum interests in the Persian Gulf region from potential Soviet expansionism (the Soviet Union had intervened militarily in Iran in 1941 and had come very close to the Persian Gulf).⁶⁹ Later in November 1943, the State Department assisted Socony Vacuum Oil Company in its negotiations with the Iranian government to develop a new oil concession in the south because, in Secretary of State Hull's words, "both from the long-range standpoint and for war purposes, the Department looks with favor upon the development of all possible sources of petroleum."⁷⁰ Although these U.S.-Iranian oil negotiations failed to produce an agreement until after the war, they are significant for illustrating how far the United States was prepared to go to secure additional oil interests in the Middle East.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Stephen Krasner, "A Statistic Interpretation of American Oil Policy toward the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly* 94, No. 1 (Spring 1979): 82-83.

⁶⁸ "Iran," 27 August 1942, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, folder 9, Sumner Welles Papers, Box 56, FDRL.

⁶⁹ Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 157.

⁷⁰ Eduard Mark, "Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947," 55.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 54-56. For further reading on the U.S.-Iranian negotiations over obtaining access to petroleum reserves, see Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War*, 298-313.

During the war, Africa also attracted the attention of the State Department postwar planners. North Africa had shallow markets and few raw materials of which the postwar planners were aware (Libya's oil reserves were only discovered in 1958), but it was situated athwart the strategic air, naval and overland routes to the Middle East whose known oil reserves were considerable. Therefore, Under Secretary Welles and the planners advised that the United States take an active role in assisting the peoples of French Morocco, French Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and the Spanish colony of Rio de Oro with their political and economic development. The framework through which the United States expected to achieve these aims was the international trusteeship (dominated by Americans) whose purpose was to ensure that France and Britain gradually prepared their own colonies for self-government and did more to develop colonial resources for the benefit of the dependent peoples.⁷²

In contrast to North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa assumed even greater importance in the State Department's eyes because of its substantial mineral reserves. The planners were keen on seeing these reserves developed not only for the benefit of the Africans themselves, but also to sustain the United States' hegemonic position as a military and economic power. Once again, the Franklin Roosevelt administration proposed international trusteeships as the framework for ensuring that the European powers opened their colonies up to American investment and trade and did more to aid in the economic and political development of their colonial subjects.⁷³

Postwar Airfield Planning

⁷²Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 160.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 161

The achievement of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's Wilsonian and economic aims was deemed impossible by the postwar planners without a global network of military bases buttressing (what historian O'Sullivan called) a "U.S.-led international order."⁷⁴ Thus, postwar airfield planning assumed a prominent place in the Franklin Roosevelt administration's planning for the "new world order." By the early 1940s, airpower was the first weapon among equals in modern warfare. On June 12, 1943, James Shotwell told his colleagues at the Division of Special Research, "We have by no means realized what vast changes in the world are taking place with the development of airpower... we do not need to go into this problem today but it should be noted in connection with our discussion of the international organization."⁷⁵ Furthermore, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors assumed that airpower would become more important in the future once the United States developed the atomic bomb (which could only be transported by military aircraft at that time). In light of airpower's importance to defense and offense, the Franklin Roosevelt administration could not erect a "new world order" supported by U.S. military power without making airpower an integral component of it. Thus, in December 1942 and early 1943 respectively, Franklin Roosevelt directed the military planners and the State Department's civilian planners to develop postwar plans for retaining U.S. airfields around the world.⁷⁶

Among the most important airfields (that the Franklin Roosevelt administration planned to retain) were those in the Middle East and Southern Asia. These two regions had potentially large foreign markets and were rich in raw materials that could support the United States' world position. These regions were also strategically important. The most advanced American strategic

⁷⁴ Ibid., xii-xiii

⁷⁵ P Minutes 59, June 12, 1943, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55.

⁷⁶ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 42-43.

bomber by 1945 – the B-29 “Super-fortress” with an operating radius of between 1500 and 2000 miles when carrying a 10,000-15,000 lb bomb-load – could hit 80% of the targets inside the Soviet Union only when operating from airfields in Western Europe, the Middle East and Southern Asia.⁷⁷

The Franklin Roosevelt administration’s postwar plans for U.S. airfields had two parts. To begin with, the military planners pursued defense in depth by creating a defense perimeter of military airfields that extended eastwards from the Far East to the Azores. The United States’ national security interests outside its defense perimeter, however, would be defended with commercial airfields that could be converted into military use.⁷⁸ The reason for this distinction was political. The Franklin Roosevelt administration realized it probably needed Congressional approval to finance the maintenance of U.S. military airfields in the postwar era and, therefore, it prepared its postwar plans for military airfields with Congress in mind. They made the calculation that Congress was prepared to extend the United States’ air defense perimeter much further than in the prewar period, but not to see U.S. military airfields established on a permanent basis in Europe, North Africa (excepting Morocco), the Middle East or the Asian subcontinent.⁷⁹

The challenge facing the Franklin Roosevelt administration was in finding a device for globalizing American airpower and providing its worldwide role with international legitimacy. There were two possible options, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. One option was for the United States to join the Soviet Union, Britain, and China in forming an international air force that would police the world, deter aggression, and if necessary wage preemptive war in

⁷⁷John Buckley, *Air Power in the Age of Total War* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1999), 205. Elliott Converse, *Circling the Earth*, 172.

⁷⁸John Andrew Miller, *Air Diplomacy*, 84; Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 59-60, 62-63.

⁷⁹Adolf Berle, memorandum, 10 January 1944, Box 54, Adolf Berle Papers, FDRL; Berle to Hull, 12 January 1944, *Ibid*.

the postwar era.⁸⁰ Hugh Wilson's memorandum (which was based upon discussions with Under Secretary Welles on April 19 and 26, 1940) dated May 1, 1940 explained that this international air force was to consist of bombing and fighting planes stationed at "strategic points" on "neutral soil" or "internationalized soil, islands perhaps." The actual location of the postwar airfields, however, had yet to be determined.⁸¹

The advantage of the international air force was in concealing the United States' dominant role in that body.⁸² After the United States entered the war, the Franklin Roosevelt administration publicized the international air force as four great powers working together as equals in policing the world. Yet the concept of an international air force as a model of international cooperation conveniently glossed over the fact that the United States produced the majority of the world's strategic bombers, which gave it a decided advantage over its partners in the alliance. Furthermore, this strategic advantage became even greater, since the Franklin Roosevelt administration expected the U.S. Air force to possess the atomic bomb by the postwar era.⁸³

True the Interdepartmental Subcommittee on International Aviation (ISIA) emphasized that the "units of the [international military air] force should have freedom of passage through the airspace of all countries, with refuelling and repair privileges at all airports available for international civil use," which seemed to imply that the Soviet, British and Chinese air forces would have as much freedom flying through the world's airspace as the United States. Yet ISIA added an important condition to that freedom: "Outside of a nation's own territory, such rights of passage and technical stops should not be available to national military aircraft except by special

⁸⁰ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 42-43, 63-64.

⁸¹ Hugh Wilson, memorandum, 1 May 1940, Appendix 5; from Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945*, 459.

⁸² Anne O'Hare McCormick, "First Specifications for the Postwar Order," *NYT*, 1 June 1942, 12.

⁸³ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 63-64.

permission or when in service under international orders.” In other words, none of the members of the international military air force could fly into another nation’s airspace without the permission of the nation in question or from their counterparts in the international air force. This condition favoured the United States which alone had the international influence to negotiate air agreements with other countries and gain access to their airspace.⁸⁴

Finally if the conditions for joining the international military air force were unacceptable to the Soviet Union, China, and Britain, the United States was prepared to use its airpower to unilaterally protect its interests. On July 16, 1943, Vice Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board Edward Warner addressed that very issue in one of his proposed changes to the ISIA plan:

The importance of air transportation facilities to overseas military operations should be recognized. It should be the policy of the United States, in planning air transportation, to seek to assure the provision and maintenance of such landing areas and other facilities, and to create such a nucleus of operating organization and materiel, as will adequately support such plans for the assurance of international security as may be put into effect in the postwar period, or, alternatively, adequate to insure American security by independent action if no sufficient plans for joint international action are developed or applied.⁸⁵

However, the international air force came with disadvantages as well. Chairman Norman Davis and the postwar planners on the Security Sub-Committee rejected the international air force as “impractical” and “a damn fool thing,” since there was no way of making sure that the Soviet, Chinese, and British air contingents would be more loyal to the international air force than to their respective governments.⁸⁶ Moreover, Franklin Roosevelt did not believe that the

⁸⁴ “Interdepartmental Subcommittee on International Aviation,” 19 June 1943, Box 55, Adolf Berle Papers, FDRL.

⁸⁵ Warner to Berle, 16 July 1943, Adolf Berle Papers, Box 55, Ibid.

⁸⁶ P Minutes 47, July 16, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76.

international air force would garner enough support. Owing to these two factors, the Franklin Roosevelt administration eventually shelved international air force altogether.⁸⁷

The State Department's opposition to the international air force, which led to the abandonment of this proposal, was important in the sense that it cleared up a mystery about postwar airfield planning that has befuddled Airpower historians, like Michael Sherry and Elliott Converse, to this very day.⁸⁸ The Army and Navy leaders undoubtedly had global pretensions about American airpower's role, but by 1944 they appeared to support a regional configuration of military airfields that did not match those pretensions. The B-29 strategic bomber, after all, could hardly be expected to hit major targets inside the Soviet Union from an airfield on the Azores. The question facing airpower historians then was why did the armed services appear to abandon its plans for a global configuration of U.S. military bases? The answer appears to be that Franklin Roosevelt only charged the military planners with selected postwar airfields for the international air force and that, once this proposal was scraped, the military planners were instructed to focus on selecting military airfields only for the United States' regionally-based defense perimeter. Hence in December 1942, the President did give secret instructions to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JSC) to determine which postwar airfields an international air force would need and these instructions, in turn, led to several postwar airfield plans. On March 15, 1943, the Special Army Committee (which the Army Air Force and the Operations Division Officers

⁸⁷ John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*, 30.

⁸⁸ Michael Sherry argued that postwar airfield planning went from being global to regional in scope and ceased "to match the pretensions to global peacekeeping of the Army and Navy leadership." Moreover, if the JSC failed to account for the Soviet Union as a possible adversary, this was because "bureaucratically isolated, most planners also fell prey to a kind of parochialism which discouraged anticipation of the USSR as an enemy." Elliott Converse reached conclusions similar to Sherry, arguing that the JSC only selected postwar airfields in North Africa, the Northern Tier region and Southern Asia when the Soviet Union emerged as a potential enemy. Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 68, 242; Elliott Converse, *Circling the Earth*, 11.

dominated) proposed assigning 3500 military aircraft, along with 1 million air and 500,000 ground personnel, to the “European-African” and “Pacific-Atlantic” theatres. Around the same time, the JSC exceeded the President’s instructions by broadening its directive to include commercial as well as military airfields, on the grounds that commercial airfields might be “designed primarily for future military use.”⁸⁹ On March 16, 1943, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC), which served under the JSC, sent Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle a postwar airfield plan selecting air base rights to “(1) a route across Africa, (2) a route across the Middle East extending to the Far East and (3) a route through the southwest Pacific” which were to become “the U.S. air component of an international military force.”⁹⁰

Yet after the State Department’s Security-Sub Committee (under Norman Davis’ chairmanship) rejected the international air force, the military planners produced JSC 570 plan – which Franklin Roosevelt endorsed on November 1943 – which selected postwar airfields in Brazil, Ecuador, French Guiana, British Guiana, Mexico, Canada, Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland, the Azores, the Canaries, the Cape Verde Islands, Casablanca (Morocco), Dakar (Senegal), Liberia, Ascension Island, the Dutch East Indies, Christmas Island, Japan’s former Pacific possessions, Indochina (today’s Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos), Burma, China and the Philippines. The geographic scope of JSC 570 was very impressive, but significantly it left out airfields in French North Africa, the Belgian Congo, British Central and East Africa, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Iran and India – which Franklin Roosevelt, on January 10, 1944, instructed Secretary of State Hull to cover under “executive agreements” that were set to expire after the war.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 59-60, 62-63.

⁹⁰ Elliott Converse, *Circling the Earth*, 11.

⁹¹ Berle, memorandum, 10 January 1944, Box 54, Adolf Berle Papers, FDRL; Berle to Hull, 12 January 1944, *Ibid*.

Yet the military planners' change in focus from global to regional configurations of airpower did not mark the abandonment of government efforts to retain airfields around the world for military purposes. There was another option for globalizing American airpower, which was to retain commercial airfields around the world with a view to converting them to military use in a national emergency (the definition of which was up to the discretion of the executive branch). This unilateral option, however, not only carried the risk of overextending the United States' military power, but it was also likely to cause a popular uproar at home upon discovery.

For the Franklin Roosevelt administration to successfully retain airfields around the world, the unilateral option had to be carried out in secret. The President, therefore, secretly gave the State Department's postwar planning committees sole responsibility for developing plans for retaining airfields outside the United States' defense perimeter. By making this administrative change, the Franklin Roosevelt administration concealed the role of military considerations in its postwar airfield planning concerning North Africa, the Middle East and Southern Asia, since the State Department was better known for supporting big business than military planning.^{*} Finally what made the Franklin Roosevelt administration's concealment effort so successful was that the commercial rationale was genuine. Many of the air routes traversing the Middle East and Southern Asia were economically viable. Thus, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was able to convince Congress and the American people that it wanted to retain U.S. commercial airfields in North Africa, the Middle East and Southern Asia for commercial reasons only.⁹²

^{*} The effect of this administrative change on what the military planners knew or did not know about postwar planning is speculative. Some Army and Navy men were on the State Department's postwar planning committee meetings, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other military personnel were probably left out of the loop.

⁹² Berle, memorandum, 10 January 1944, Adolf Berle Papers Box 54, FDRL; Berle to Hull, 12 January 1944, Ibid.

Yet the State Department's civilian planners and the military planners knew full well that these commercial airfields could be converted into military use if U.S. interests were threatened. As early as December 12, 1942, Senator Warren Austin commented, "There is being created a network of American commercial aviation which is auxiliary to, and supports the war effort of the United States" Norman Davis responded that the "American commercial network" being referred to "was of such vital importance to this country from the point of view of security that we must certainly maintain the ground we have now occupied in that field." Welles reacted to Davis' statement by observing that "he did not see how that could be done unless the Government itself is interested."⁹³ Later on July 16, 1943, Davis (as chairman of the Security Sub-Committee) stated, "... one phase of American security was to have a strong civil aviation which took account of our worldwide interests, and that we should take care to deal wisely, in considering future developments, with the bearing of this on our military security."⁹⁴ Welles, Davis, and Austin were not alone in conceiving of U.S. commercial airfields in this way. On March 24, 1943, Berle (who chaired ISIA) pointed out that the United States can insure its military security in part by extending its air routes worldwide.⁹⁵ On July 10, 1943, the Assistant Secretary of War for Air Robert Lovett (who attended many of Chairman Berle's ISIA meetings) informed the Chief of the Army Air Forces Arnold about the security benefits of a strong international air transport system that was readily adaptable to military use in case of war. Lovett added that American airlines could keep the airfields operational for the armed forces.⁹⁶

⁹³ P Minutes 37, December 12, 1942, NARA 2, RG 59 Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 55

⁹⁴ P Minutes 47, July 16, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Ibid., Box 76.

⁹⁵ Alan Dobson, "The Other Air Battle," 429-39.

⁹⁶ John Andrew Miller, *Air Diplomacy*, 84.

In July 1943, the Security Sub-Committee developed a scheme for retaining U.S. commercial airfields around the world for military purposes that was eventually embraced by the Army, Navy, and Air Force. On July 16, Davis and his colleagues studied the question of whether one American airline should control all the international commercial air routes or if several American airlines should be handed that responsibility. There was also the philosophical question of whether the government should own the airline or airlines operating abroad or if relying upon private enterprise was a better option. Both questions were related to national security, since the approach that ensured a successful commercial air service overseas was the one guaranteeing that the United States would hold onto its worldwide commercial air routes for military purposes in the postwar era. The postwar planners rejected the monopoly idea because competition was seen as their “secret weapon” against the foreign airlines. On the other hand, excessive competitive could hurt all the American airlines and complicate the U.S. government’s task of holding onto U.S. commercial airfields after the war ended. Thus, the Security Sub-Committee concluded that competition among the airlines would be regulated. The committee also agreed that the U.S. government should rely on private enterprise to operate the worldwide aerial networks. Myron Taylor explained, “If we pursued our traditional system of free enterprise, we could retain our present position, but that if the government entered the field, we would lose it.”⁹⁷

On July 23, Chairman Davis convened another meeting of the Security Sub-Committee to discuss the retention of worldwide commercial air networks for military purposes. Davis and Admiral Arthur Hepburn, however, disagreed on commercial aviation’s contribution to military aviation. Hepburn believed that commercial airlines could “furnish a reserve of pilots” and

⁹⁷ P Minutes 47, July 16, 1943, NARA 2, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76.

“meteorological facilities” for wartime. Davis responded that the American airlines “have a great number of facilities” and that “it was to us a security interest to have adequate landing facilities.” These assertions prompted Hepburn to respond that, “these landing facilities could not be assured unless other forces could land freely in order to defend.” Davis, however, was not discouraged and he noted that Hepburn’s response “was true also of naval bases.” The meeting concluded with Myron Taylor asking whether the State Department had a map “showing worldwide commercial aviation facilities” and “suggested that military experts might superimpose on such a map the places useful to the United States for air security purposes.” Davis replied that “this map certainly should be obtained.”⁹⁸

Over the next few years, the United States succeeded in extending its commercial aerial networks around the world. The Security Sub-Committee’s recommendations on commercial aviation were quickly accepted by the armed services, as evidenced by Chief of the U.S. Air Force Arnold’s telegram to Franklin (dated March 25, 1944) which stated:

The national policy with respect to the international commercial aviation policy should include maximum encouragement of regulated private competitive enterprise in United States international air transport operation; ownership and operation of communication systems serving United States airways beyond the continental limits by a single governmental agency (or by a private agency subject to government supervision) adapted to immediate utilization by the Army Air Forces in an emergency...⁹⁹

⁹⁸ P-Minutes 48, July 23, 1943, Records of Harley Notter, 1939-45, Box 76.

⁹⁹ Arnold to Franklin Roosevelt, March 25, 1944, *President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Office Files, 1933-45, Part 4: Subject Files* [microfilm], Reel 2, 969-970.

On January 31, 1945, McCloy explained that the War Department's policy on commercial aviation was that a "strong United States air transport system, international in scope and readily adapted to military use, is vital to our air power and future national security."¹⁰⁰

Later at the International Civil Aviation Conference in Chicago (November/December 1944), the U.S. delegation reached several agreements which created a body of air law and a provision for bilateral agreements that paved the way for U.S. commercial air routes in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Southern Asia.¹⁰¹ Trans World Airlines (TWA), for example, operated an uneconomical, but militarily important, air route in North Africa for the U.S. armed forces¹⁰², and acquired air rights to Cairo, Basra, Dhahran, Bombay, Calcutta and Shanghai. Pan Am negotiated bilateral agreements allowing it to fly across Europe to Istanbul, Ankara, Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, Karachi, New Delhi and Calcutta.¹⁰³ By 1945, the Harry Truman administration took advantage of these extensive air routes to obtain air transit rights for the U.S. Air Force in Recife, Casablanca, Algiers, Tripoli, Cairo, Dhahran, Karachi, Delhi, Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok, Saigon and Manila.¹⁰⁴ In accordance with the postwar airfield plans of 1943, the U.S. government relied on American airlines to maintain all thirteen airfields with the understanding that they would be adapted for military purposes in times of crisis or war. Finally, the network of British military airfields in the Middle East and Asia could also potentially be interwoven into aerial component of the American extraterritorial empire, in the event that the

¹⁰⁰ Melvyn Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-48," 353-54.

¹⁰¹ John Andrew Miller, *Air Diplomacy*, 208.

¹⁰² Elliott Converse, *Circling the Earth*, 111.

¹⁰³ George Brownell, "American Aviation in the Middle East," *Middle East Journal* 1, No. 4 (October 1947): 403.

¹⁰⁴ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 58.

United States and Britain found common cause against the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵ The United States, in short, was now able to project airpower on a global scale not only because of its impressive aircraft technology, but also because of its worldwide commercial air routes.

The State Department's Aviation Diplomacy with Saudi Arabia

In addition to the postwar airfield planning that occurred behind closed doors, the State Department took bolder steps to secure the United States' hegemonic position after the war by negotiating for postwar air rights in Saudi Arabia between 1942 and 1945.¹⁰⁶

The significance of these U.S.-Saudi negotiations was two-fold. As noted above, Saudi Arabia had some of the largest oil reserves in the world and therefore the construction of a U.S. airfield was necessary for protecting U.S. petroleum interests in the region.¹⁰⁷ The California Arabian Standard Oil Company (Casoc), which controlled Saudi Arabia's oil reserves, almost certainly understood the importance of the U.S. military airfield in that light, since several Casoc employees aided the State Department in the negotiations. William Lenahan, for example, had "for several years represented [Casoc] at Jidda." On July 7, 1942, Secretary of State Hull considered sending Lenahan "to Jidda to assist in eventual negotiations regarding air bases in Saudi Arabia." Although Hull assured the American legation that Lenahan "would of course sever all connections with the California-Arabian company," the employee's ties were bound to

¹⁰⁵ Hans Weigert, "U.S. Strategic Bases and Collective Security," *Foreign Affairs* 25, No. 2 (January 1947): 253.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Stoff, *Oil, War and American Security: the Search for a National Policy on Foreign Oil, 1941-1947* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1980), 60-61; Elliott Converse, *Circling the Earth*, 171.

¹⁰⁷ James Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia," 193.

influence his conduct nonetheless.¹⁰⁸ Seven days later, Minister Alexander Kirk, one of the leaders in the negotiations with Minister James Moose, reported to Hull:

Moose has adequate contacts both official and unofficial to assist him in his dealings with the local Government and if the special services of Lenahan are required in addition to the members of Casoc already in Saudi Arabia, he would be far more useful as a bonafide member of that company than as a 'phony.' I have consulted Moose on the foregoing who concurs...¹⁰⁹

In other words, Ministers Alexander Kirk and James Moose believed that Lenahan was more useful to the negotiations as a Casoc employee rather than as someone pretending not to work for the oil company anymore.

In addition to the interpersonal ties, Casoc on July 27, 1942 also assisted the State Department by providing aerial surveys of possible emergency landing fields in Saudi Arabia. The Casoc memorandum described possible fields in Ras Misha'ab, Abu Hadriya, Jubail Field, and Ras Tanura along with the surrounding topography and infrastructure.¹¹⁰

In addition to the oil dimension, the State Department's diplomatic efforts strongly implied that it had every intention of retaining intermediary airfields (leading up to Saudi Arabia) in North Africa, Europe and the Middle East. In 1945, the most advanced U.S. military aircraft was the B-29 strategic bomber with a flying range of 1500 to 2000 nautical miles (when carrying 10,000-15,000 lbs in bombs) or a maximum flying range of just over 4000 miles. Yet the United States and Saudi Arabia were separated by 7448 miles, which meant that – assuming intermediary airfields were not retained after the war – the B-29 strategic bomber could not make

¹⁰⁸ Hull to American Legation, 7 July 1942, NARA 2, file 890F.7962/8 [Microfilm], Drawer 42, T-1179.

¹⁰⁹ Kirk to Hull, 14 July 1942, NARA 2, file 890F.7962/13, Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Berle to Stimson, 19 September 1942, NARA 2, file 890F.7962/38, Ibid; Casoc Headquarters to State Department, 27 June 1942, NARA 2, file 890F.7962/38, Ibid.

the journey from the United States to Saudi Arabia without crashing in the North African desert. Therefore, the State and War Departments must have had a plan for retaining other airfields.¹¹¹

The 1942 negotiations were a partial failure for the United States because Saudi King Saud granted air routes to Britain and the United States that were so circuitous as to be almost useless to any aircraft.¹¹² But on July 29, 1944, the State Department renewed its aviation diplomacy with Saudi Arabia with the intention of gaining King Saud's permission for the construction of a U.S. airfield in Dhahran next door to the oilfields.¹¹³

The underappreciated rationale for these negotiations, which most historians have overlooked, was to provide long-term military protection for U.S. petroleum interests in the Persian Gulf.¹¹⁴ In June 1944, Admiral William Leahy noted that Franklin Roosevelt approved a military airfield in Dhahran in June 1944 "so that we, particularly our Navy, would have access to some of King Ibn Saud's oil."¹¹⁵ Similarly on February 22, 1945, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) (which Franklin Roosevelt referred the Dhahran airfield question to) concluded that the erection of a U.S. military airfield in Dhahran as one of "the channels of possible assistance" for protecting Saudi Arabia's oil reserves.¹¹⁶ The SWNCC report also observed,

As soon as such approval has been secured and appropriately communicated to the King through the British Foreign Office, negotiations with respect to the field, including efforts to secure postwar rights

¹¹¹ Elliott Converse, *Circling the Earth*, 172; Flight distance:

<http://www.travelmath.com/flyingdistance/from/United+States/to/Saudi+Arabia>

¹¹² Michael Stoff, *Oil, War and American Security*, 60; Moose to Hull, September 8, 1942, NARA 2, file 890F.7962/34 [microfilm], Drawer 42, T-1179.

¹¹³ James Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia," 193.

¹¹⁴ Barry Rubin, "Anglo-American Relations in Saudi Arabia, 1941-45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, No. 2 (April 1979): 263.

¹¹⁵ Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War*, 306.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 311; Ad Hoc Committee of the SWNCC, 22 February 1945, *FRUS: Diplomatic Relations, 1945*, 8: 852.

of the nature specified in SWNCC 19, should be undertaken under the supervision of the State Department.¹¹⁷

Soon after the SWNCC report was released, Franklin Roosevelt approved it.¹¹⁸

The latest round of U.S.-Saudi negotiations made Britain fearful of possible American designs on its own oil interests in the Middle East. Britain, therefore, tried to undermine the State Department's negotiations with the Saudis. Yet in the end, the State Department reached a compromise with Britain and Saudi Arabia on April 17, 1945 that allowed for a U.S. airfield to be built in Dhahran on condition that the British Commonwealth was granted over-flight and landing rights to Saudi Arabia to be used "only in case of an emergency."¹¹⁹

Having persuaded the British to withdraw their objection to the Dhahran airfield, the Truman administration sent a three-man delegation to start negotiating with the Saudis on May 19. Two days later, King Saud consented to a U.S. military airfield in Dhahran. But the drawback was that the United States had to turn over the Dhahran airfield to Saudi Arabia after the war ended.¹²⁰ The Truman administration, however, saw the agreement only as a first step toward acquiring post-war rights to the Dhahran airfield. In September, the President circumvented Congress by ordering the War Department to finance the construction of the Dhahran airfield out of funds that had been appropriated for the war effort.¹²¹ On November 1, the U.S. government informed the King of its intention to seek postwar rights to Dhahran. After two months of diplomacy, Acting Foreign Minister Yasin signed an air agreement with the United States on January 2, 1946 which gave the Army Air Force "transit rights" to Dhahran for

¹¹⁷ Ad Hoc Committee of the SWNCC, 22 February 1945, *FRUS: Diplomatic Relations, 1945*, 8: 855.

¹¹⁸ Barry Rubin, "Anglo-American Relations in Saudi Arabia, 1941-45," 263.

¹¹⁹ Stettinius to Eddy, 17 April 1945, *FRUS: Diplomatic Relations, 1945*, 8: 874.

¹²⁰ James Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia," 198.

¹²¹ Fred H. Lawson, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict," 311.

three years.¹²² The United States ended up keeping the U.S. airfield in Dhahran until 1962, when it was obliged by the Saudi monarchy (which was worried that the airfield would stoke anti-American-inspired social unrest that could topple the monarchy) to give it up.¹²³

Rising Tensions with the Soviet Union

As a result of the important postwar decisions made with regards to airfields in 1943-45, the United States effectively exerted military control over vast areas of the global commons (i.e. much of the world's airspace, ocean space and land surface) and was able to project its military power almost with impunity while restricting economic, military and political assistance to potential adversaries. Yet one of the drawbacks of a global base empire was that the United States ended up reviving tensions with the Soviet Union. At that time, the State Department's postwar planners probably anticipated some friction with the Soviet Union. After all, the United States was usurping the Soviet sphere of influence over northern Iran, which the Stalinist regime considered a vital national security interest. Yet what the postwar planners did not adequately foresee was the Soviet Union posing a formidable challenge to the United States in the future.¹²⁴

U.S.-Soviet diplomatic relations were never good, but they did not have to deteriorate as sharply as they did. As the war drew to a close, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors had little reason to regard the Soviet Union as a major threat at least for the next few years. American economic growth averaged 7.7% per annum between 1942 and 1945, thereby cementing the

¹²² James Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia," 202.

¹²³ Rachel Bronson, *Thicker than oil: America's uneasy partnership with Saudi Arabia* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 79.

¹²⁴ Barry Posen, "Command of the Commons," 8-9, 16.

United States' economic supremacy.¹²⁵ The Soviet economy, by contrast, was devastated by the war. Furthermore, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was aware of the Soviet Union's economic plight. On August 20, 1943, Chief of Staff Marshall learned from Sir Alan Brooke that the Soviet Union "would be terribly weakened after the war" and would "require a peaceful Europe" in order to speed up its recovery.¹²⁶ U.S. intelligence analysts reached similarly conclusions around the same time. On February 5, 1945, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) reported to the JSC that the Soviet Union would have to limit military spending to the 1938 level "in order to achieve maximum economic recovery and development" and attain "by 1952 the economic position projected for 1942 in the Third Five-Year Plan." Considering the lag in Soviet economic development, the Kremlin will probably "avoid conflict with Great Britain and the United States, or even such tension as would lead to an armaments race, at least until after 1952." The Soviet leadership would only rearm before 1952 if "it conceives its vital interests relating to national security to be threatened."¹²⁷

Yet the Franklin Roosevelt administration was concerned about the future of the postwar world. Colonial empires were crumbling in the face of nationalist demands for independence. Most European, Middle Eastern and East Asian governments faced major economic challenges resulting from years of economic devastation or dislocation wrought by the Second World War. The failure to cope with these economic problems could lead to greater social unrest down the road. Roosevelt and his advisors understood that the Soviet Union had little, if anything, to do with these problems or even the social upheavals that were likely to result from them. But the

¹²⁵ Niall Ferguson, *The Cash Nexus: Money and Power in the Modern World, 1700-2000* (New York: Basic Books), 406.

¹²⁶ Meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 20 August 1943, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943*: 911.

¹²⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Memorandum, February 5, 1945, *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, Soviet Union* [microfilm], Reel 1, 002-004.

Franklin Roosevelt administration also believed that these potential social upheavals could redound to the benefit of the Soviet Union unless they were managed to the benefit of the United States. Within that context, the Franklin Roosevelt regarded the retention of a global base empire as essential.¹²⁸

The Franklin Roosevelt administration's determination to prevent the Soviet Union from benefitting from an unstable postwar world was rooted in decades of animosity towards that country. In 1919, Franklin Roosevelt served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Woodrow Wilson administration which sent a small American army into Northern Russia alongside British and French contingents to assist the pro-Tsarist Whites in an unsuccessful attempt to topple the Soviet regime.¹²⁹ Democratic vice presidential candidate Franklin Roosevelt made anti-communism an issue in the 1920 election when he claimed that the Soviets would never have invaded Poland had the United States joined the League of Nations and rallied the international community against them.¹³⁰ Two decades later, the United States entered the Second World War as an ally of the Soviet Union and Britain, but the Franklin Roosevelt administration's animus towards the Soviets had not gone away. One of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's motivations for seeking a second front in Europe was to curb the Soviet Union's territorial ambitions.¹³¹

Later on August 20, 1943, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, a U.S. intelligence agency) commissioned a memorandum, called "Can America and Russia Cooperate," that described the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany as chief obstacles to U.S. postwar aims of

¹²⁸ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 1, 2, 5, 7, 9; Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, xvi, 137-39.

¹²⁹ *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C.*, R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, 1095.

¹³⁰ "Franklin Roosevelt Blames Senate on Poland," *NYT*, 13 August 1920.

¹³¹ Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 231.

fostering “peace, freedom and prosperity” in Europe. The memorandum argued that the United States had “to supplement the Anglo-American forces by building up all possible auxiliary strength (Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, Czech, Polish, Yugoslav, Greek and especially French), both before and after the expected Allied landing in Western Europe” if it wanted to achieve its “major aims.” Yet even then “the strength of the United States, Great Britain, and their satellites will continue to be substantially less than that of either of the two great continental powers – Russia or an undefeated Germany.”¹³² In light of this disparity in military strength, the memorandum suggested three alternative strategies:

(1) That an attempt be initiated immediately to compromise our differences with the Soviet Union and to build upon such interests as we have in common with that power.

(2) That America and Britain continue to follow, for some time to come, a strategic and policy very largely independent of that of the Soviet Union, in the hope of achieving in this way both the defeat of Germany and an improved bargaining position for a somewhat hostile settlement with Russia.

(3) That we attempt to turn against Russia the full power of an undefeated Germany, still ruled by Nazis or the generals.¹³³

Significantly the Franklin Roosevelt administration entertained the memorandum’s third option. On August 20, 1943, Chief of Staff George Marshall requested “the British Chiefs of Staff’s views on [whether], in the event of an overwhelming success, the Germans [would] be likely to facilitate our entry into the country to repel the Russians?”¹³⁴

Later in 1944, anti-Soviet rhetoric temporarily disappeared from within the Franklin Roosevelt administration. Yet this was only because Franklin Roosevelt, concerned about the

¹³² “Strategy and Policy: Can America and Russia Cooperate?” 22 August 1943, *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, Part 1: 1942-1945, Soviet Union* [microfilm], Reel 1, 564-65.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 566

¹³⁴ Meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 20 August 1943, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943*: 911.

possibility of damaging leaks that may jeopardize the wartime alliance, had censored his subordinates against speaking out about the Soviet Union and postwar planning.¹³⁵

Motivated by anti-communism and concern over the postwar world's future, the Franklin Roosevelt administration tried to marginalize the Soviet Union. U.S. diplomatic efforts at the Civil Aviation Conference in Chicago (November/December 1944)¹³⁶ and the State Department's aviation diplomacy with Saudi Arabia prepared the ground for the retention of a chain of airfields along the Soviet Union's southern periphery.¹³⁷ The full implications of this aviation diplomacy, however, only became clear in the months following Franklin Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1945 when the construction on a large U.S. airfield in Dhahran, the State Department's pursuit of air rights throughout the Middle East, and growing U.S. military activity in the Persian Gulf region caught the Stalin regime's attention. The Stalin regime concluded from these American initiatives that the United States was transforming the Middle East into a staging ground for possible air strikes against the Soviet Union.¹³⁸ In particular, the Stalin regime feared U.S. aerial bombardment of the Baku oilfields (expected to supply 75% of the Soviet Union's oil production under the third five-year plan) from air bases in Iran. As the Stalin regime recognized, U.S. commercial airfields could be adapted to the military needs of the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. airfield in Dhahran was large enough for the B-29 strategic bomber.¹³⁹ The

¹³⁵If anti-Soviet rhetoric faded within the administration in 1944, this was only because Franklin Roosevelt found it politically expedient to censor his own subordinates against speaking out about postwar planning or the Soviet Union. See Brian Villa, "Military Preparedness for the First Postwar Years, 1943-47," *Review in American History* 6, No. 2 (June 1978), 254-55.

¹³⁶John Andrew Miller, *Air Diplomacy*, 208.

¹³⁷Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 80.

¹³⁸Fred Lawson, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict," 309.

¹³⁹Eduard Mark, "Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947," 57.

Stalin regime, therefore, exploited the Soviet military presence in Iran¹⁴⁰ by lending its support to the Azeri and Kurdish separatist movements (in Northern Iran) as well as taking additional steps to fortify the air and land approaches (also in Northern Iran) leading up to the Baku oilfields. The Soviets were acting defensively, but through their actions they touched off the Iranian crisis which almost culminated in a dramatic showdown with the United States.¹⁴¹

The crucial point, which often gets overlooked in the historiography¹⁴², was that the Franklin Roosevelt and Truman administrations probably realized that the pursuit of air rights in the Middle East would lead to tensions with the Soviet Union. Moreover, they understood that any steps that the Stalin regime was likely to take in reaction to U.S. diplomatic efforts were defensive in nature. The Franklin Roosevelt administration first learned of the Stalin regime's sensitivity to American intrusions into Iranian airspace halfway into the war. In the spring of 1942, the Soviet Union desperately needed more war materiel to counter the German offensive that was expected in the summer of that year and the most efficient way of providing military assistance was to have American planes transport it through Iran and into Southern Russia. Yet on March 5, 1942, War Secretary Stimson informed Secretary of State Hull that the Soviets were refusing to allow American planes to fly beyond the assembly plants in Basra (Iraq) and Abadan

¹⁴⁰ In 1941, Anglo-Soviet forces occupied Iran to protect one of the major arteries – along which war materiel flowed – to the Eastern Front. Soon after the occupation, the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States agreed to withdraw their troops six months after the war. The Soviet Union and Britain had agreed to withdraw their military forces six months after the war ended. See Eduard Mark, "Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947," 51.

¹⁴¹ Fred Lawson, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict," 309; Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 80.

¹⁴² Historians Fred Lawson and Melvyn Leffler see the United States and Soviet Union as both acting defensively in Iran, but interpreting each other's actions as threatening to each other's national security interests. The problem with this argument was that the Truman administration had good reason to expect its pursuit of air rights in the Middle East to come across as threatening to the Soviets. Yet U.S. petroleum interests trumped any desire to preserve amicable U.S.-Soviet relations. Fred Lawson, "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict," 308-309; Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 80-81.

(southern Iran).¹⁴³ On November 17, 1944, Franklin Roosevelt and his advisors learned from Chargé in Moscow George Kennan that the Soviets feared American penetration into Northern Iran.¹⁴⁴ On February 5, 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the Franklin Roosevelt administration that the Stalin regime was fearful of “capitalist encirclement” and would only take action against threats to its national security.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, the possibility that Washington policymakers could not foresee the consequences of their aviation diplomacy in the Middle East is unlikely.

More plausibly, the Truman administration placed the United States’ petroleum interests in the Persian Gulf and ergo the need for a defensive buffer in Iran to protect those interests above amicable U.S.-Soviet relations. The result, which was hardly surprising, was the Iranian crisis pitting the United States’ preponderant military might against the Soviet Union while Iran played the ignominious role of a geopolitical pawn. The outcome was easy to predict too. On March 26, 1946, the Truman administration responded to the Soviet tactics by backing the Iranian government’s resolution to the UN Security Council calling for Soviet troops to leave Iran. Wishing to avoid a war with the United States, the Stalin regime backed down in March 1946 by agreeing to withdraw the Soviet military by May and recognizing Iran’s sovereignty over its northern provinces. In December, the Iranian government suppressed the separatist movements in the north and the United States emerged from the crisis triumphant.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Stimson to Hull, 5 March 1942, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/86, Box 4048.

¹⁴⁴ Gary Hess, “The Iranian Crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War,” *Political Science Quarterly* 89, No. 1 (March 1974): 122.

¹⁴⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Memorandum for Information, No. 374: Estimate of Soviet Post-War Capabilities and Intentions, February 5, 1945, *Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, Soviet Union* [microfilm], Reel 1, 003.

¹⁴⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, 310-12; Eduard Mark, “Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947,” 61.

In the aftermath of the Iranian crisis, the United States' military bases (including its airfields) continued to cause friction with the Soviets. On September 12, 1946, a Soviet admiral wrote in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* that the U.S. Navy policy was clearly offensive and he pointed to U.S. naval bases in Okinawa, Iceland and Greenland as proof. In the same month, Soviet Ambassador in Istanbul Nikolai Novikov informed the Stalin regime that President Truman and his advisors believe "that the United States has the right to lead the world" and "all the forces of American diplomacy – the army, the air force, the navy, industry and science – are enlisted in service of this foreign policy." Moreover, the United States had embarked upon "broad plans for expansion" that "are being implemented through diplomacy and the establishment of a system of naval and air bases stretching far beyond the boundaries of the United States, through the arms race and through the creation of ever newer types of weapons."¹⁴⁷ As late as 1949, the Soviet leadership charged the United States with transforming Iran into a military base. Secretary of State Acheson denied this charge, but Iran for all intents and purposes had indeed become a military base in the American empire of bases.¹⁴⁸ However, the most significant consequence of the Franklin Roosevelt administration's decision to retain airfields in South Asia and the Middle East was undoubtedly the Cuba Missile Crisis, when the Soviets tried to plant nuclear missiles on Cuba aimed at the United States and the whole world seemed to be teetering on the brink of a nuclear showdown. As Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev later explained in his memoirs, one of the main reasons for putting the Soviet missiles on Cuba was the presence of U.S. military bases along the Soviet Union's southern border:

¹⁴⁷ *Major Problems in American History Since 1945*, eds. Robert Griffith and Paula Baker (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 80.

¹⁴⁸ George Lenczowski, "United States' Support for Iran's Independence and Integrity, 1945-1959," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 401, *America and the Middle East* (May 1972): 51.

In addition to protecting Cuba, our missiles would have equalized what the West likes to call ‘the balance of power.’ The Americans had surrounded our country with military bases and threatened us with nuclear weapons, but now they would learn just what it feels like to have enemy missiles pointing at you; we’d be doing nothing more than giving them little of their own medicine.¹⁴⁹

Concluding Remarks

During the early 1940s, the Franklin Roosevelt administration embarked upon empire-building on a scale that was unprecedented. Postwar planners forecasted international trusteeships for Africa and large parts of Asia which, while under the supervision of the U.S.-led regional councils, were meant to reinforce unequal power relations between European colonial rulers and their non-white subjects and impose the “civilizing mission” on the latter (seen at the time as primitive) to prepare them for self-government in the distant future. The postwar planners expected these international trusteeships to last anywhere between a few decades to more than a century, since granting self-government to non-whites any sooner than that (in the view of Welles, Bowman, and others) would lead to anarchy and chaos. In spite of their many claims to the contrary, the Franklin Roosevelt administration had not broken free of the imperialist mindset of the early 20th century.

Similar assumptions about the incapacity of non-whites for self-government also influenced the Franklin Roosevelt administration to form strategic partnerships with pro-western dictatorships and absolute monarchies which appeared to support the “civilizing mission” and who believed in keeping the freedom of their subjects within strict bounds. These countries were incorporated into the United States’ informal empire.

¹⁴⁹ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, ed. Edward Crankshaw (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1970), 494.

The Franklin Roosevelt administration also prepared the ground for the conquest of new island colonies in the Pacific, which were to serve as potential outposts for U.S. naval stations and military airfields. The fates of these islands were decided not by a consultative process that included the islanders, but behind closed doors at the State Department's postwar planning committees. Moreover, the postwar planners knew that these annexations violated the broader principles of the Atlantic Charter. Yet the Atlantic Charter's existence was predicated on the assumption that a viable international security system could be established. The postwar planners, with their realism, harbored no illusions that a world organization could insure global security and therefore resolved to transform the Pacific into an exclusive American space.¹⁵⁰

Underpinning this vast multi-faceted empire were worldwide networks of military bases and commercial airfields that could be converted to military use in a national emergency. If some historians failed to see that the postwar planners were constructing configurations of airpower that encircled the earth, this is only because they underestimated the military significance that the planners attached to the American empire's commercial dimension. Thanks to U.S. commercial air routes extending across North Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Asia, the United States' extraterritorial empire could exist even in the absence of U.S. military bases, as long as administration officials saw commercial airfields as potential military assets and had the power and diplomatic leverage to convert them to military use.

Yet the seemingly coherent and hubristic vision that the President and most of the postwar planners had in their minds became an enormous mess when translated into practice. Some aspects of the twin-vision of a "new world order" and the global empire were foiled early on. The postwar planners thought that the colonial powers would embrace the international

¹⁵⁰ PIO-157 Preliminary S-106 Preliminary, December 21, 1943, NARA 2, RG 59, Records of Harley Notter, Box 76.

trusteeship, along with the American supervision that came with it. But by 1944, the colonial powers watered down the international trusteeship idea so much that it became identical to the unsupervised mandate system developed during the Versailles Conference (1919). As a result, the U.S. government had to develop new strategies for projecting its power and influence into the colonial areas.¹⁵¹

The vast majority of the American global empire's failures, however, came after the war. The postwar planners were perceptive enough to see that the anti-colonial movements were picking up momentum, but they were overconfident that the United States could use its preponderant power to manage decolonization on its own timetable and to its own advantage.¹⁵² Norman Davis, for example, thought that the United States could preserve the British Empire's constituent parts. But in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the British Empire collapsed before successive waves of decolonization.¹⁵³ Under Secretary Welles believed that Belgian Congo would only regain its independence in around 2042, but the Congolese moved forward the date of their independence to 1960.¹⁵⁴ In the era of decolonization, Washington policymakers were more likely to be overtaken by events than to shape them in the way they wanted.

The presence of U.S. strategic bases, moreover, was insufficient for keeping peace in a crisis-prone world order. The United States had military bases in China, but these were not

¹⁵¹ Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 149-50.

¹⁵² John Sebrega, "The Anticolonial Policies of French D. Roosevelt: A Reappraisal," *Political Science Quarterly* 101, No. 1 (1986): 84. Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 136-37, 139.

¹⁵³ Patrick Hearden, *Franklin Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 245; P.J. Marshall, "1918 to the 1960s: Keeping Afloat," In *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, ed. P.J. Marshall (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2001), 100-105.

¹⁵⁴ Christopher O'Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*, 161.

enough to stop the Communists from overthrowing the Chiang Kai-Shek regime in 1949.¹⁵⁵ The U.S. airfield in Saigon was similarly ineffectual and only drew the United States into Vietnam's brutal civil war (1965-73).¹⁵⁶ In Iran, the U.S. base empire appeared to be successful in propping up Muhammad Pahlavi's royal dictatorship, but that strategic partnership went down in flames during the Iranian Revolution (1978-79).¹⁵⁷

In addition, the American extraterritorial empire created considerable friction with the Soviet Union. For example, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev cited U.S. military airfields south of the Soviet Union as one of his main reasons (the other was to save Cuba from invasion) for putting nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962 and precipitating a showdown with the United States known commonly as the Cuban Missile Crisis.¹⁵⁸

Although the American empire experienced all these failures, the United States remains the world's strongest military power firmly in control of most of its global national security interests. Yet subsequent events have belied the Franklin Roosevelt administration's belief that the United States was powerful enough to create the world order that it wanted. The world was far too diverse and complex for a coherent vision of a "new world order." For the United States, the extraterritorial empire has been more of a liability than a source of strength.

¹⁵⁵ Michael Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship*, 307-308.

¹⁵⁶ *The Bases of Empire*, ed. Catherine Lutz, 14.

¹⁵⁷ Denis Doyon, "Middle East Bases: Model for the Future," In *The Sun Never Sets*, 283-84.

¹⁵⁸ Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, ed. Edward Crankshaw, 494.

Conclusion

By late 1945, the United States possessed an empire of bases that circled the earth. U.S. military airfields and naval bases guarded strategic sea lanes to the markets of the Far East and were integral to the United States' defense in depth strategy for preventing another Pearl Harbour.¹ This base structure also facilitated the deployment of U.S. air, naval and ground forces into Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.² The United States continued to maintain bases in Latin America and Canada to ensure that the Western Hemisphere remained under its control. U.S. military airfields and other bases were retained throughout most of Western Europe and were complemented with the United States' transit air rights to bases in North Africa, the Middle East and the Asian subcontinent. This vast base structure, covering Western Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia, was not only important to the U.S. government's containment strategy against the Soviet Union, but it also ensured that the United States had privileged access to the world's markets, sources of raw materials, and cheap labour. Only the closed economies of the Soviet Union and its communist allies were beyond the reach of the U.S. government's geopolitical ambitions.³

The U.S. base empire was a reflection of the geopolitical ambitions of the Washington policymakers who created it. And personal ambition to use the base empire to achieve international objectives is the common thread running throughout this dissertation. Although domestic and external pressures constantly tried to assert themselves in the halls of power, Washington policymakers ultimately navigated around them to create an empire that was worldwide in scope. What is more this extraterritorial empire was seen as an invaluable tool not

¹ Hal Friedman, *Creating an American Lake*, xxv; Melvyn Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-48," 350.

² *The Bases of Empire*, ed. Catherine Lutz, 15.

³ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 56-59.

only for transforming the world economy into an exclusively American space for American enterprise, but also for remaking the world in the American image.

The genesis of the global imperialist project was the early 20th century when Washington policymakers arrived at the key concepts of their imperialist foreign policy: (1) the ambition to replace Britain as master organizer and leader of the new world order; (2) the Open Door ideology which posited a vision of an open world economy with lower trade barriers; (3) the “civilizing mission” designed to inculcate non-whites at home and abroad in American ideals and values; and (4) an expanding chain of naval stations and airfields designed to facilitate quick communications and make the growing American empire easier to manage and control.⁴

These imperialistic foreign policy ideas lasted at least until the 1940s and possibly even beyond that point. They were complemented by the U.S. government’s aviation policy which, following Britain’s example, sought to equip the American empire with new aerial infrastructural technologies beginning in the late 1920s.⁵ This aviation policy was important for at least two reasons. To begin with, the U.S. government’s decision to help the domestic airlines expand their airways systems in the United States to assist Pan Am in expanding its air routes in Latin America indicated an important change in American imperialism. The United States certainly had territorial colonies, most of which were in the Pacific, but its empire was in the process of being reinvented largely along the basis of extraterritoriality. In the late 1920s and 1930s,

⁴ Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 2; Arthur Dudden, “The American Pacific: Where the West was also Won,” 98-99; Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 43-44; Stephan Haggard, “The Institutional Foundations of Hegemony: Explaining the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act of 1934,” *International Organization* 42, No. 1 (Winter 1988): 91; “Beveridge of Free Trade,” *NYT*, 30 March 1900, http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FB0F13FA385D12738DDDA90B94DB405_B808CF1D3; Wesley Newton, *The Perilous Sky*, 43; Gordon Pirie, *Air Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 1.

⁵ “Text of the Conference Discussion on Aircraft,” *NYT*, January 10, 1922, 3; “Conference Report Text,” *NYT*, January 28, 1922, 2;

Washington policymakers were pulling the marines out informal colonies like Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic and ending protectorates in Cuba, Panama, and Liberia, but crucially they also retained control over the infrastructural technologies, like the Panama Canal and the naval station at Guantanamo, Cuba, that allowed them to deploy military power in the Caribbean and the Pacific.⁶ Moreover, the U.S. government's aviation policy was an important factor in the process of the American empire reinventing itself. Pan Am airfields (which totaled 250 by 1938), constructed throughout the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, could be adapted for military purposes and used to facilitate the transportation of U.S. armed forces to any part of the Americas where U.S. strategic and economic interests were threatened.⁷

Over the course of the Franklin Roosevelt era (1933-45), the United States became a global empire with air bases around the world. The origin of this significant development was the brewing U.S.-Axis tensions starting in the early 1930s. Chapter two, which covers this period, advances two main arguments. The first of these was that U.S.-Axis tensions can best be understood in terms of two clashing visions. Germany and Japan were striving for regional hegemony within Europe and the Far East respectively and their geopolitical ambitions clashed with those of the Franklin Roosevelt administration which had embarked on a quest starting in 1933 for a "new world order" in which the United States play the leading role (in order to protect its global national security interests). This clash of visions better explains why the Franklin Roosevelt administration several steps against Germany and Japan which including recognizing the Soviet Union in November 1934 to create a counterweight to the Axis powers; the use of the

⁶ Michael Mann, "American Empires," 21.

⁷ Deborah Ray, *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Air Base Program of World War II*, 37; "Aviation Corporation of the Americas, Holding Company of the 'Pan American' System and Aviation in Latin America," March 1931, Collection 341 (1), Box 25, Folder 9; Peck to Thach, February 1, 1932, Accession II, Collection 341, Box 231, Folder 18, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

Reciprocal Trade Act by early 1938 as a weapon against Germany; economic warfare planning, starting in early 1935, against all the Axis powers; support for Pan Am's expansionist efforts across the Pacific (in 1934-38) to create a chain of airfields that could be adapted for military purposes and used against Japan; and rebuilding American airpower.⁸

The third chapter shows how all these elements – economic warfare planning, helping Pan Am construct a trans-Pacific route, and rebuilding American airpower – all came together as Western Hemisphere Defense. The policy of Western Hemisphere Defense was an elaborate plan – disguised deceptively as defense measures to ward off a potential Axis invasion – to construct and otherwise improve infrastructural technologies throughout the Americas to support air and naval patrols which, in turn, would seize control over the Atlantic and Pacific and enforce economic sanctions against the Axis powers.⁹ Pan Am airfields played a hugely important role in the economic blockade, since they possessed many of the facilities that the U.S. air force needed and could be adapted to military use (following some major renovations). Lastly the impact of the U.S.-led economic blockade was devastating; with the result that Axis-led Europe was reeling economically and Vichy Admiral Francois Darlan declared in June 1941 that the United States had won the war by virtue of controlling the Atlantic with its airpower.¹⁰

The fourth chapter shows how the Franklin Roosevelt administration deepened the United States' involvement in the Second World War. Responding to Germany's surprisingly successful blitzkrieg offensive into the Low Countries and France, the Franklin Roosevelt

⁸ *The Evolution of Our Latin American Policy*, ed. James Gantenbein, 163; Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945*, 13, 30.

⁹ Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, 8-9; White to Morgenthau, 8 April 1939; "Diary of conversations and work with President Franklin Roosevelt," *The Presidential Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (1938-1945), ed. Paul Kesaris, Film No. 665 [microfilm], Reel 1.

¹⁰ Leahy to Hull, 4 June 1941, *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1941*, 2: 185; Mark Mazower, *Hitler's empire*, 260-261.

administration embarked upon a proactive war preparation strategy designed to establish the strategic prerequisites – airfields in Northwest Africa, the Takoradi air route, and airfields in the Middle East and Southern Asia – for the United States’ entry into the Second World War. This strategy was mostly successful. The Franklin Roosevelt administration failed to persuade the Vichy French to grant their Dakar and Tangier airfields to the United States, along with over-flight rights in Morocco and Algeria. But the Franklin Roosevelt administration did reach an agreement with Britain, enabling Pan Am to modernize the Takoradi route and take over its operation. By the time the Japanese attacking Pearl Harbor, the United States most of the airfields necessary for deploying its military power into the Mediterranean theatre.¹¹

The significance of these Pan Am (the Army took over most of them in late 1942) became apparent in late 1942 and 1943 when Anglo-American forces were successfully deployed in Egypt and Northwest Africa. Chapter five has explained the largely underappreciated role of military airfields near the frontlines, but also far away from them in West Africa, South America, and the Caribbean basin in helping the Western Allies achieve air superiority and capitalize upon it to liberate all of North Africa and a third of Italy in one year.¹² These airfields (modernized and operated by the Army and Pan Am) were a crucial part of the battlefield since without them the United States could not rush military supplies, strategic bombers and tactical aircraft to the combat zones and make a material difference in the outcome of its military operations.¹³

¹¹ Diary entry, November 9, 1940, *The Adolf Berle Diary, 1937-1971* [microfilm], Reel 2, 1014; Satterthwaite (RA) to Bonsal (RA), 18 November 1940, NARA 2, RG 59, file 811.79680/3, Box 4048; Keith Sainsbury, *Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at War*, 20; Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors*, 67-68, 70; Deborah Ray, “The Takoradi Route,” 340-358.

¹² Walter Boyne, *The Influence of Airpower upon History*, 232.

¹³ Reference ADP, Collection 341, Accession 1, Box 18, Folder No. 1, PAA Archives, University of Miami.

Even before the United States formally entered the Second World War, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was planning the “new world order” that was to follow the war. As Chapter Six has demonstrated, postwar planning contained several important elements ranging from international trusteeships to strategic partnership and from idealism to securing national security interests through the medium of the largely extraterritorial empire. But the overall thrust of postwar planning was to apply on a worldwide scale those imperialist foreign policy concepts that had been developed by the early 20th century. These included the ambition to organize and lead a “new world order”; the creation of a world economy of lower trade barriers open to American trade and investment; the civilizing mission embodied in the international trusteeship and even strategic partnerships with pro-western authoritarian regimes; and a chain of military bases (to keep the American empire intact) updated with commercial airfields in North Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Southern Asia that were constructed during the war, but which were ready for conversion into military use if the perceived need for their use arose. The rationale for applying all of these elements was to bring about a peaceful world order that would keep the global national security interests of the United States safe.¹⁴

The resulting American global empire and “new world order” was never as successful as the Franklin Roosevelt administration’s vision of it. Anti-colonial movements tore apart important parts of the “new world order,” the Soviet Union presented a significant challenge to it, and even domestic opinion was unwilling to endure the burdens of empire as the protests against the Vietnam War prove.¹⁵ The extraordinary thing was that these great political upheavals resulted, to a significant degree, from several postwar planners meeting at the State

¹⁴ Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, postwar planning, and the quest for a new world order, 1937-1943*, xiii, 94-179; John Andrew Miller, *Air Diplomacy*, 84; Michael Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 59-60, 62-63.

¹⁵ Michael Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, 120-21, 157.

Department in the early 1940s to discuss how the world order was going to be organized and remade in the American image. They are a reminder of the hero of Greek mythology, Bellerophon, who, filled with hubris, tried to fly Pegasus to heaven. Bellerophon never completed his journey because he was struck off of Pegasus by a bolt of lightning and fell to his death. When viewed from an airplane or from maps, the world certainly seems smaller and easier to control. Yet the history of the postwar revealed that the world was too diverse, complex, and unruly to comport with a sweeping and coherent Wilsonian vision of a “new world order.”

Appendix (Figures)



Figure 1.1: Dinner Key Airport, Miami, Florida, was the site of Pan Am's maiden flight to Havana, Cuba on October 19, 1927. Back then, Pan Am only flew an air service from Miami, Florida to Havana, Cuba. Yet four years later, with the help of airmail subsidies and the State Department's diplomatic influence, Pan Am transformed into a sprawling multinational with air routes throughout most of Latin America. Today Dinner Key is the site for an up and coming museum dedicated to celebrating Pan Am's past.

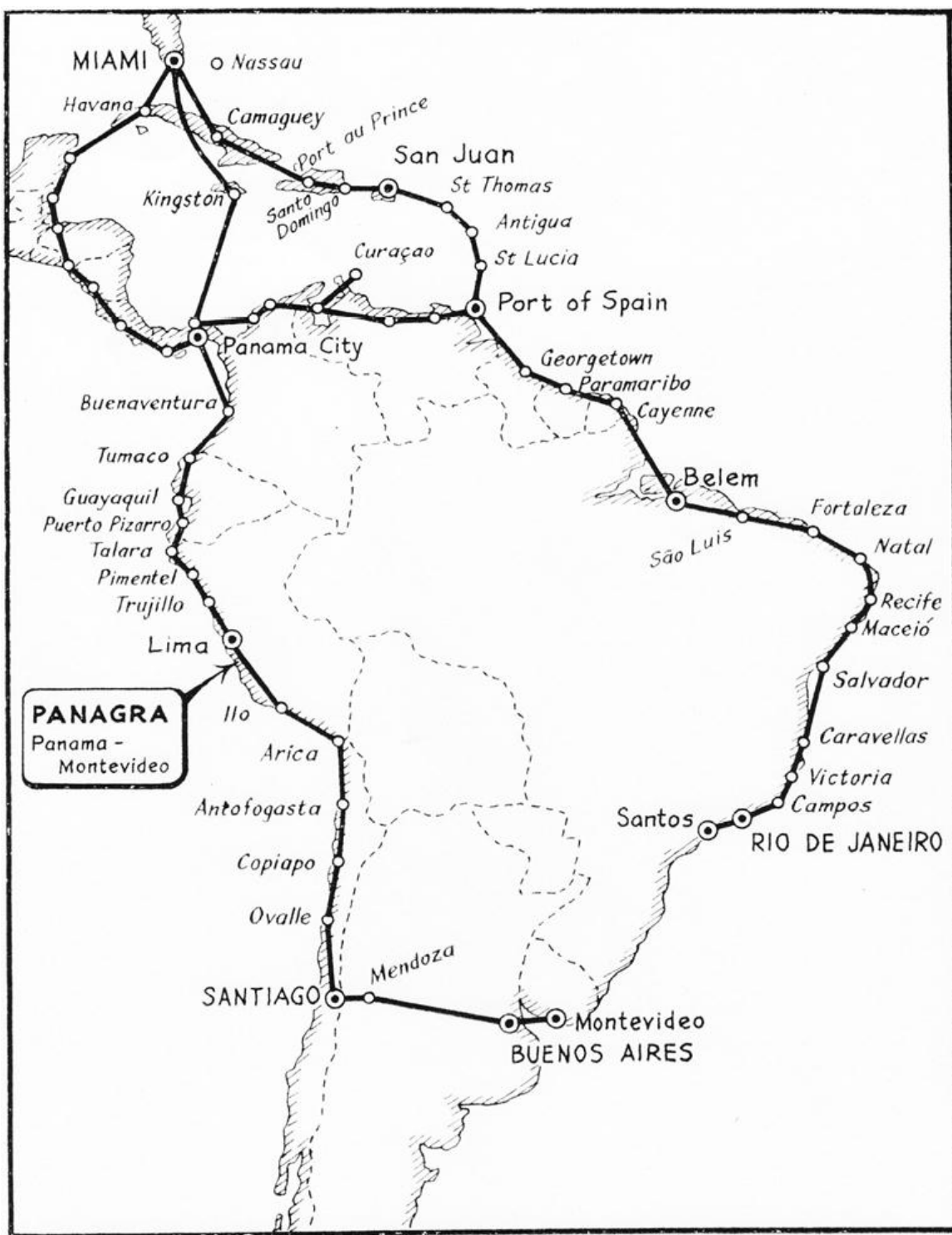


Figure 1.2: The extent of Pan Am's air routes in 1931. Although serving a commercial purpose, Pan Am airfields were also part of the United States' underground base empire. In case of hostilities, Pan Am airfields could be adapted for military purposes and utilized by the U.S. Air Corps (forerunner to the U.S. Air Force).

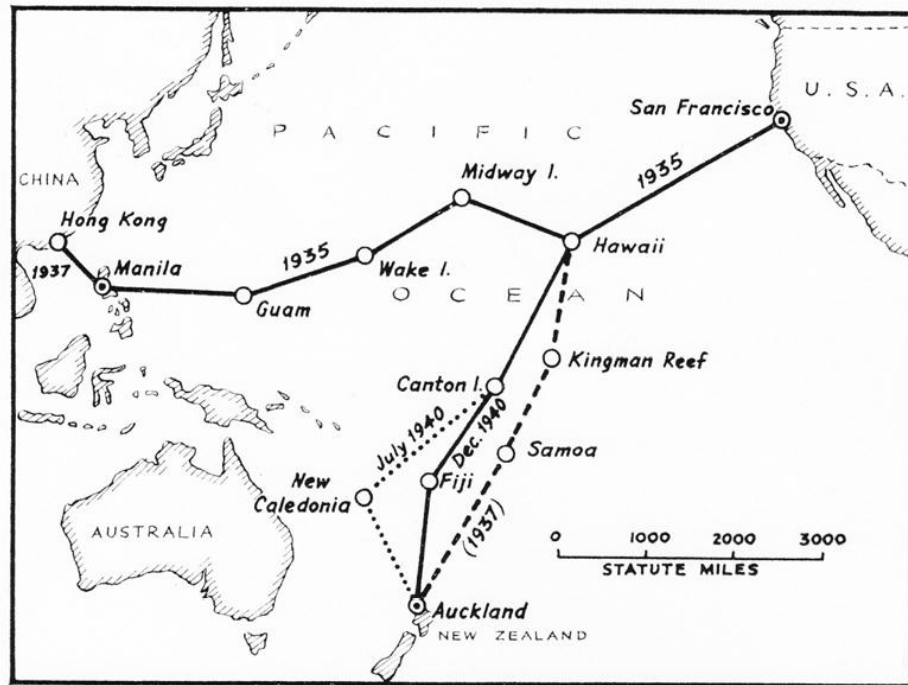


Figure 1.3: In 1934-39, the U.S. Navy Department granted Pan Am air rights to the islands of Hawaii, Midway, Wake, Guam, Luzon (Manila), Kingman Reef, American Samoa, and Canton with the understanding that the Pan Am airfields constructed at these locations would be adapted to military use in case of hostilities. The Franklin Roosevelt administration's intention (as reflected in its war plans) was to use these Pan Am airfields as bases of operations for enforcing the economic blockade against Japan.



Figure 1.4: Nazi Germany's borders on the eve of the Second World War. In September 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union both invaded Poland, but the Western Allies only declared war on the former.

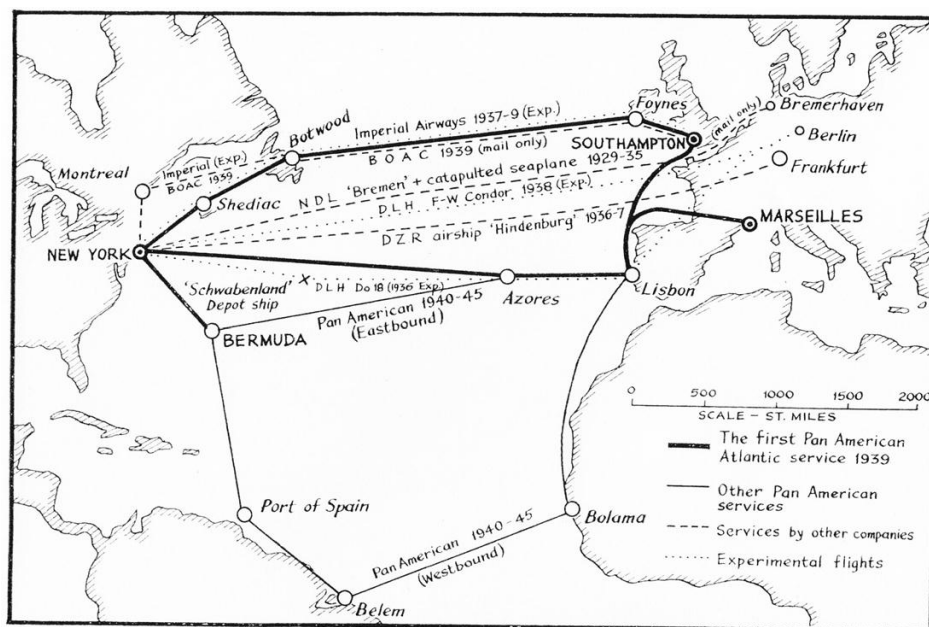


Figure 1.5: Pan Am's transatlantic air routes, inaugurated in early 1939, were invaluable in controlling transatlantic flows of money and information that may benefit the Axis powers. In addition, the State Department temporarily contemplated helping American Export Airline establish a transatlantic air service from New York to Rome (via the Azores and Cadiz, Spain) if Italy's Benito Mussolini regime (1922-43) would abandon Nazi Germany.



Figure 1.6: In September 1940, the United States controlled military airfields in Canada and the Caribbean (the latter as a consequence of the bases-for-destroyers deal with Britain) and was poised to develop Pan Am's airfields in Central and South America for military purposes as well following air negotiations with the Latin American governments.

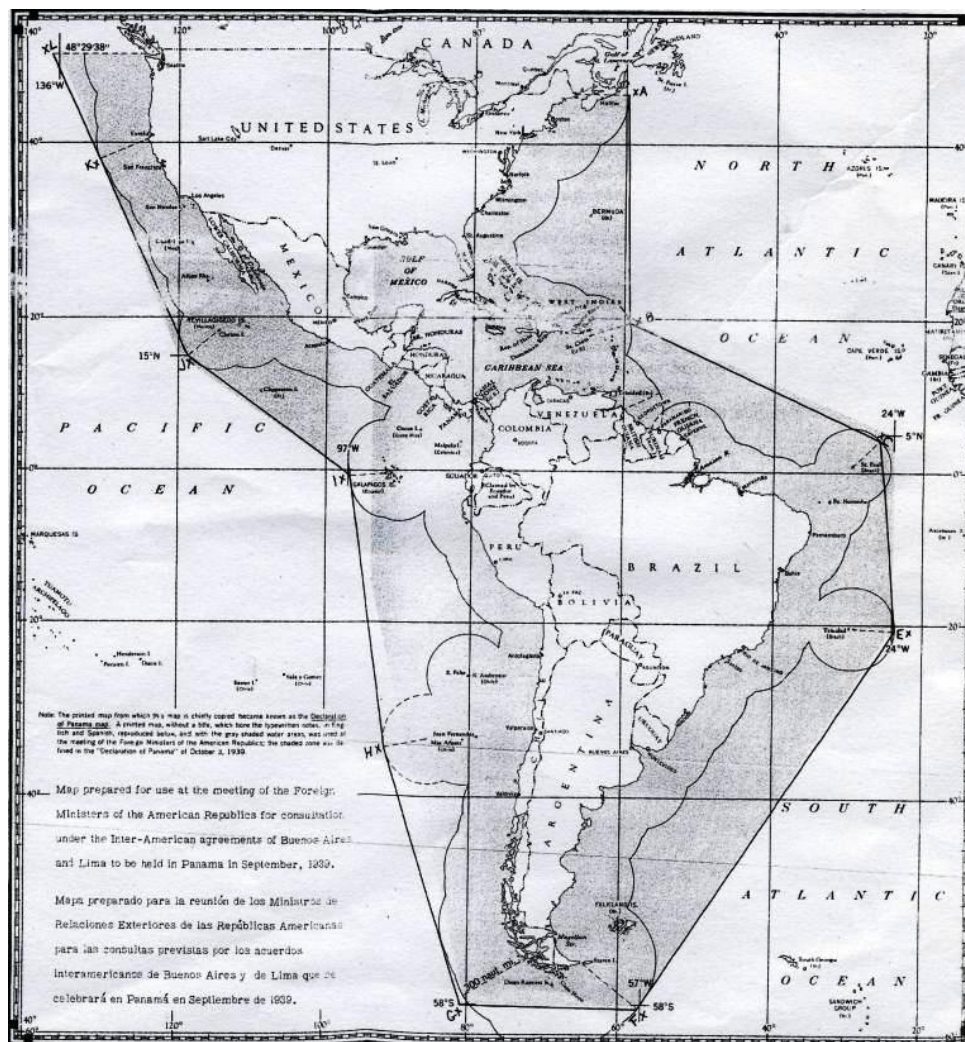


Figure 1.7: The “Neutrality Belt” (consisting of U.S. warships), as it was agreed to at the Panama Conference, was unable to forcibly stop any belligerent warships, since the achievement of such an aim was impossible without bringing the United States into the war. However, this “Neutrality Belt” did prevent smugglers from transporting raw materials across the Atlantic to Italy and Germany.

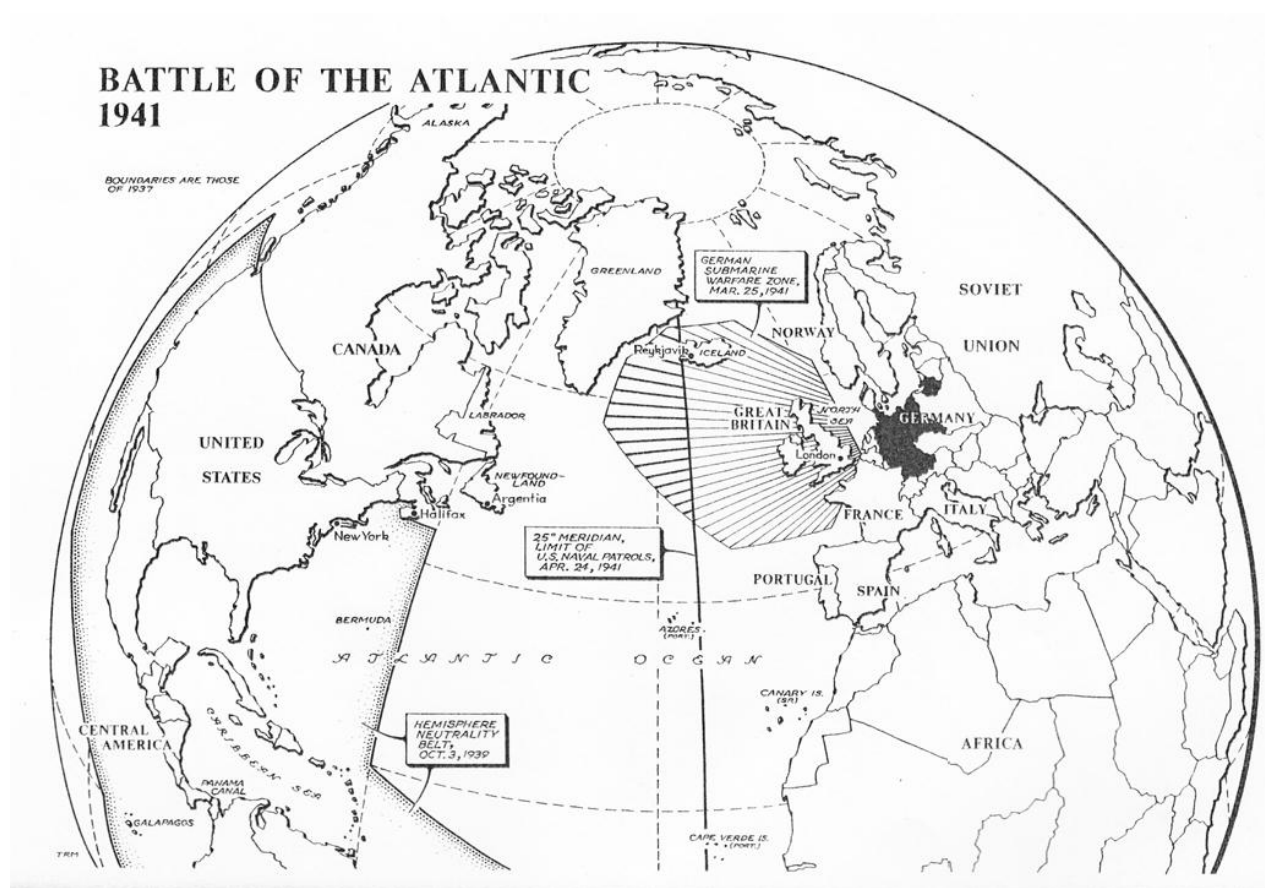


Figure 1.8: This map shows how far the “Neutrality Belt” extended into Atlantic Ocean on October 3, 1939 and then on April 24, 1941. Significantly, the “Neutrality Belt” eventually extended into the region that Germany designated at its war zone, leading to undeclared naval warfare with German U-boats.

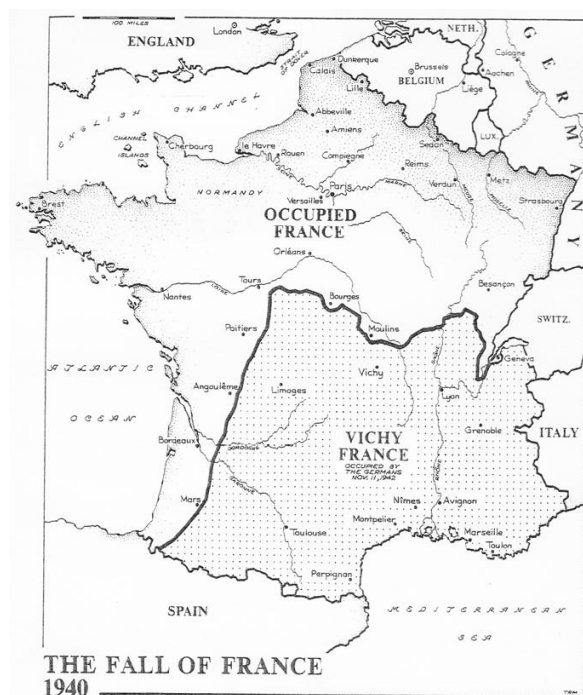


Figure 1.9: Beginning in late July 1940, the Franklin Roosevelt administration entered into negotiations with Vichy France (above) to obtain air rights to Dakar, French West Africa (Senegal in pink), Morocco or Algeria in order to establish the strategic prerequisites (i.e. airfields) for bringing the United States into the war (below).



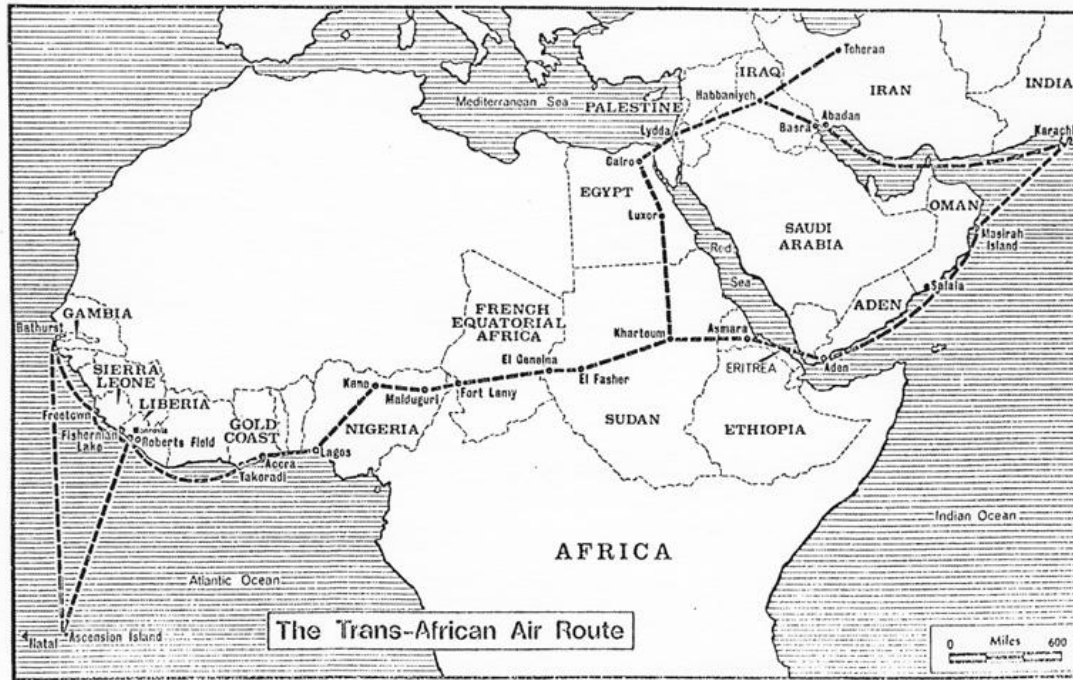
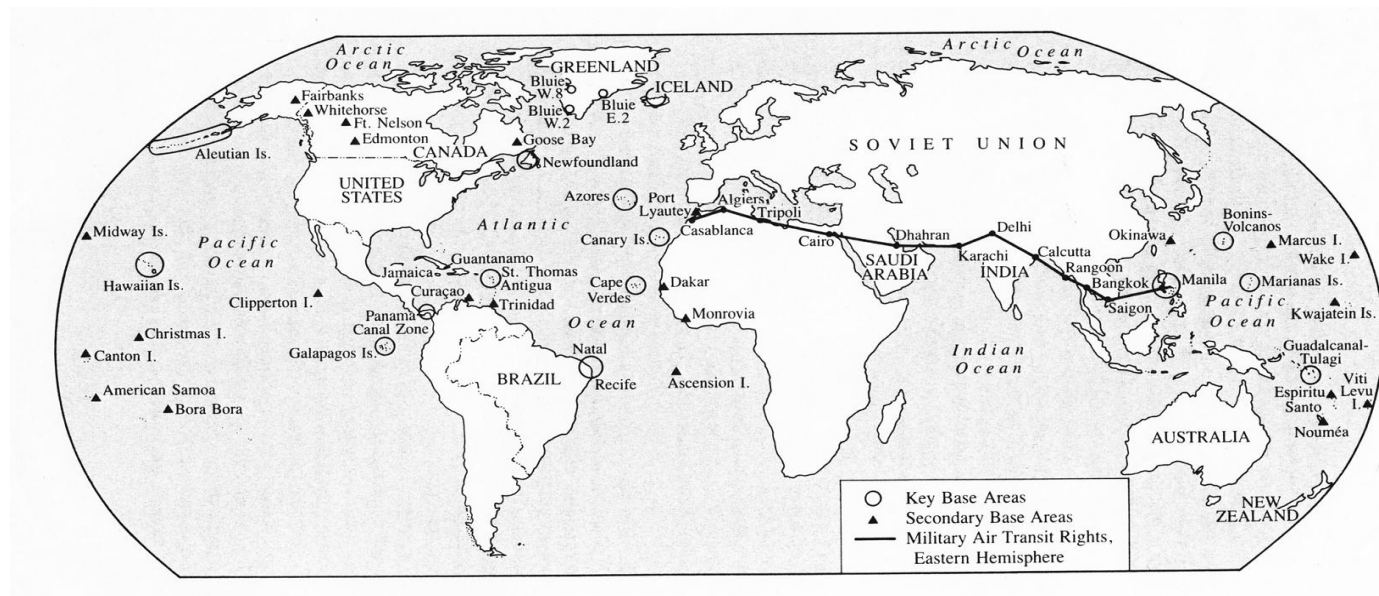


Figure 2.1: In June-October 1941, the Franklin Roosevelt administration reached an important air agreement with Britain's Winston Churchill ministry to have Pan Am (the U.S. government's chosen instrument) modernize and then take over the operation of the British airfields that comprised the Takoradi route (signified by the dotted line above). As the above map indicates, the Takoradi route extended across central Africa and the Indian Ocean to Karachi (which is today one of Pakistan's largest cities). The Franklin Roosevelt administration and Pan Am also reached similar agreements with Liberia's Edwin Barclay government and Charles De Gaulle's Free French forces relating to the modernization of airfields and the construction of new airfields.

Figure 2.3: The map below shows the extent of the United States' base empire by late 1945. The Port Lyautey-Saigon air route (signified by a long black line) is maintained by private American airlines in peacetime with the understanding that it will be turned over to the U.S. Air Force in the event that vital U.S. national security interests were threatened in North Africa, the Middle East or Southern Asia.



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