

The Anti-Interventionism of Herbert Hoover

by Justus D. Doenecke

*Division of Social Sciences
New College of the University of South Florida*

"We are passing through the most serious moment in the history of the world since the year 410 A.D.—the year of the fall of the Roman Empire and the capture of Rome by the barbarian king, Alaric." So commented Herbert Hoover on May 25, 1940, to the bar association of Nassau County, New York. German troops had just reached the English Channel. The bulk of British and French forces in Belgium and northwestern France were trapped. The world, said the former president, was experiencing "the most gigantic drama of 1,000 years."¹

Yet the very same Herbert Hoover who had voiced such alarm was a major opponent of American entry into World War II, so much so that *Life* magazine just over six months before had called him the nation's most effective isolationist. Hoover, it said, was more energetic than Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, more realistic than Senator William E. Borah, more discreet than Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh.²

If one uses the term "isolationist" in the classic sense—as applying to one seeking to avoid political and military commitments—by 1938 Hoover certainly qualified.³ But the term has usually been given a negative political connotation and indeed has been used as a political weapon. Hence a much closer look at Hoover's brand of anti-interventionism is necessary.

This essay begins with some brief coverage of Hoover's background and then notes the degree of isolationism in his presidency. It then shows how Hoover's reputation as an isolationist really came about because of the positions he took during World War II and the Cold War. However, before it traces these positions, it describes Hoover's general views, as presented in 1942, on the dynamics of modern war. The essay concludes by finding that any contemporary significance of Hoover lies less in his specific responses to specific crises than in his broad approach to international relations.

Author's Note: This article is based upon a paper delivered on April 14, 1982 before a conference entitled "Herbert Hoover's Social Philosophy and Contemporary America," sponsored by the Hoover Presidential Library at West Branch, Iowa. In preparation for publication, the author has drawn upon more recent scholarship.

By taking such a comprehensive view of Hoover's foreign policy, one can put several stereotypes to rest. Hoover was neither indifferent nor apathetic toward developments overseas, and he paid far closer attention to foreign policy than did, say, his close friend and political ally Senator Robert A. Taft. His long work in relief showed a care not only about nations in the abstract but about the individuals within them. His analysis of the causes of modern war revealed real sophistication, and if anything, he placed too much stress on economic pressures and market factors. No mere naysayer, he always thought seriously about the problems of international organization and envisioned a form of organization centering on regional councils.

Were one living in 1929, one would have found few Presidents entering the White House with as much international experience as Herbert Hoover. As a mining engineer, then a leading businessman, Hoover had lived in such diverse areas as South Africa, Burma, Peru, Mexico, and Siberia. He had traveled camelback in western Australia, dodged shellfire in Tientsin. A contemporary biographer noted, "Hoover boarded an ocean liner as casually as you or I take a trolley-car to our daily jobs."⁴ If Hoover had a permanent residence before World War I, it was London. There was a time when even high school students knew of Hoover's accomplishments with the Belgian Relief Commission, the Supreme Economic Council at Versailles, and the American Relief Administration. Hoover in fact had more than a share in determining power alignments in postwar Europe. As secretary of commerce, he worked unceasingly to capture overseas markets, and he was so aggressive on behalf of his department that Secretaries of State Charles Evans Hughes and Frank B. Kellogg believed he was poaching on their turf.

One biographer, David Burner, has noted just how interventionist Hoover could be. By the time of the *Lusitania* incident, he despised Imperial Germany and found war inevitable. Had the United States not entered the Great War, Hoover maintained in 1919, German autocracy would have smothered Europe. He ardently believed, perhaps even more so than did Woodrow Wilson, that the League of Nations could remedy the wrongs of Versailles. America, he claimed, possessed a "trusteeship to the world-community for the property which she holds."⁵ In short, Hoover could have been seen as a cautious—and at times not so cautious—Wilsonian.

Even had Hoover died a few years after leaving the White House, say in 1935 or 1936, it is doubtful whether he would have been remembered as an isolationist. Note, for example, the Manchurian crisis of 1931–1933. If one were to look back at the crisis, and look back without realizing that World War II was in the offing, from one vantage point the crisis would have shown Hoover as an alert world leader. Hoover approved the temporary seating of an American representative at the League Council in Geneva. He took pride in the fact that his administration would not recognize the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo.⁶ In February 1932, he ordered 1,400 American troops and part of the Asiatic fleet to Shanghai,

there to protect the besieged American population, and in so doing faced much public criticism for being too belligerent. He approved the famous Borah letter, in which Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson warned Japan that continued belligerency would result in American battleship reconstruction and fortification of Pacific territories. He vetoed a Philippine independence bill, suggesting that total freedom exposed the islands to Japanese threat.

Nor was this all. As president, Hoover recommended American membership in the World Court, albeit with the reservations drafted by diplomat Elihu Root. He promoted the London Naval Conference of 1930 and the Geneva Disarmament Conference of 1932. He desperately sought an international economic conference, one that could coordinate trade, currencies, and marketing and thereby help alleviate the worldwide depression. He initiated much of the Good Neighbor policy, first by his good-will tour of Latin America shortly after his election, second by his gradual withdrawal of marines from Nicaragua and Haiti, and third by keeping hands off troubles in Cuba. Until 1937, it could well be argued that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was far less of an internationalist than his predecessor.

None of this is to argue that there could not have been more internationally minded presidents than Hoover. While opposed to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Hoover fought any economic pressure on Japan.⁷ Hoover signed the restrictionist Smoot-Hawley tariff. He refused to recognize the Soviet Union. Like his immediate predecessors and successor, he was extremely cautious about cooperation with the League. (During the Manchurian crisis, the cooperation with the Council lasted only three days.) However, on the basis of the presidency alone, it would be hard to classify Hoover as an isolationist in the same way that one would use this term for William E. Borah, Hiram Johnson, Gerald P. Nye, and until 1942 Arthur H. Vandenberg.

The reputation of Hoover as a leading isolationist, one who occupies a prominent place in various books on isolationism, comes about primarily because of his opposition to World War II and Cold War involvements.⁸ Moreover, Hoover's later involvements color much evaluation of his foreign policy and often cause historians to exaggerate the "isolationist" tendencies within it. But to understand the nature of Hoover's anti-interventionism, and thereby see why he took the positions he did, one should begin by looking at Hoover's broad view of the forces determining international behavior.

In a highly publicized book entitled *The Problems of Lasting Peace* (1942) and written with retired Republican diplomat Hugh Gibson, Hoover outlined what he saw as the causes of modern war. Some causes were hardly surprising, including militarism, nationalism, imperialism, and ideology. Hoover by no means excluded economic factors. Though he denied that he was a "complete" economic determinist, he claimed that market and population pressures played "a striking part on the world stage today." In fact, they were "among the primary causes of the collapse of the world into this second World War." The Quaker statesman also

sounded a bit like an old-time Calvinist in his claim that man was "a combative and egocentric animal," who "loves contest" and "hates easily."⁹

In analyzing the origins of World War I, Hoover suggested that the leaders of several powers—Russia, Germany, and Austria—risked war to avoid internal pressures of nationalism and democracy. Germany in particular, he said, bore much responsibility for the "origin and conduct of the war." He continued, "No amount of punishment could have been devised to do full justice for the crimes and brutality of those four years."¹⁰ Hoover, however, strongly condemned the harshness of the Versailles peace. He was particularly critical of France. French diplomats, he claimed, heightened German fears of encirclement and destruction during the 1920s, drove Italy into the arms of Germany, and abandoned Britain when sanctions were applied during the Ethiopian crisis.¹¹ In contrast, Britain had wisely sought to bolster the status of the Weimar republic. The League too was a failure, as it had no effective means of even discussing, much less providing for, the peaceful change so needed to avoid war.¹²

Before Pearl Harbor, Hoover was more moderate than many anti-interventionists. He was suspicious of the proposal for a popular war referendum spearheaded by Congressman Louis Ludlow. It would only be effective, Hoover claimed, if all countries were democracies and would agree to this practice in common. The neutrality acts, he predicted, would collapse with their first contact with realities. If enforced, they could "place us in practical economic alliance with the aggressor."¹³ Late in March 1938, Hoover praised Secretary of State Cordell Hull's denunciation of international lawlessness, and in December 1940, he acclaimed the Roosevelt administration's protest against Russian bombing of Finnish civilians.¹⁴ He came to the defense of both William Allen White, national director of the interventionist Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, and the isolationist Charles A. Lindbergh. Both individuals, he said, were "single-minded men in their devotion to our country."¹⁵ In May 1940, Hoover reversed his criticism of defense appropriations, going so far as to endorse Roosevelt's proposal to spend \$1.18 billion on national defense. Speaking a week after Germany invaded the Low Countries and a day after German armies had invaded northern France, Hoover said that America's defense appropriations should be revised upward in light of these events.¹⁶ In December 1940, he commended Roosevelt for establishing the Office of Production Management and appointing industrialist William S. Knutson as its head.¹⁷ Hoover made guarded endorsements of Roosevelt's protests against German sinking of American ships.¹⁸

Yet, in most other ways, Hoover was strongly opposed to New Deal foreign policy, and he made no secret of it.¹⁹ He first started publicly to address himself to foreign policy matters in January 1938, when he accused the Roosevelt administration of leading an arms race. The United States, he declared, should fight only if the Monroe Doctrine were violated. In opposing economic coercion as a diplomatic tool, Hoover called for strict neutrality in global conflicts.²⁰

Although he claimed that the greatest force for peace was public opinion, in late March 1938 he called for another international economic conference, one that could reduce the economic barriers he saw at the root of much of the world's problems.²¹ The governments of Germany, Italy, and Japan, he said in October 1938, faced severe shortages of food and materials. For Germany, however, such shortages could not be relieved either by war on the Western democracies or by territorial acquisitions overseas. Such opportunities, as Germany itself undoubtedly realized, lay "in the economic expansion and development of Eastern Europe," and Hoover later said privately that he had endorsed the Munich agreement. The United States was not in danger, for the totalitarian powers found peaceful trade worth more than any conquests in the Western Hemisphere.²²

Hoover always stressed his personal opposition to totalitarian regimes. After meeting with Hitler and Goering on a visit to Europe in March 1938, he said that Germany's material recovery could never compensate for the loss of personal freedom.²³ In fact, he told Hitler himself that the Nazi system could never be accepted in the United States.²⁴ The events of the Crystal Night caused Hoover to compare Nazi persecution of the Jews to "Torquemada's expulsion of the Jews from Spain." A blow, he declared, was being struck "at civilization itself."²⁵

Hoover maintained, however, that "military and totalitarian philosophy is not new in the world." "The democratic nations," he continued, "have always had to live with such bedfellows."²⁶ To fight a country because of its ideology "would lead the world to worse destruction than the religious wars of the Middle Ages," he remarked.²⁷ In fact, the issue in Europe really did not concern democracy versus dictatorship at all, but was rather a conflict between the "haves" and "have-nots." England and France were "imperialistic democracies, controlling millions [of people] of subject races."²⁸

At times, Hoover saw peace in the offing. In part, this was because he believed that France and Britain had an adequate defense.²⁹ In part, Hoover believed that Germany had no desire to fight England, France, or Belgium; rather it planned to move east and south. According to one Hoover associate, the former president thought that this move would "do no harm for general peace, as Germans would give better government than now exists in Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and parts of Czechoslovakia."³⁰ Hoover found the Soviet Union ineffective, as it lacked leadership and, for the immediate present, had a Japanese threat to its rear. He referred to its government as "a gangster regime, far removed from the earlier communist principles" and "a sort of a racket."³¹

Yet, at other times, he saw war ahead, with Roosevelt's belligerence—in his eyes—being one of the prime causes.³² (In one statement, he went so far as to advocate rearmament, saying that "to be respected is the first step to our peace in a dangerous world."³³). True, in commenting on Austria a week before the Anschluss, Hoover found half the population willing to accept any government that would give them peace.³⁴ And true, in February 1939, Hoover suspected

that Germany was approaching economic crisis.³⁵ In March and April, however, he claimed that it was only the craft of British statesmen (“today the only outstanding skillful group of world diplomats”) that kept the world from war. Had Roosevelt been as calm as Chamberlain, “he might have been of great service in bringing these people around a council table.”³⁶

Once war broke out in Europe, Hoover predicted that allied advantages—such as superior sea power—might well win the war for them. At worst, a stalemate was in the offing.³⁷ Two months before the conflict began, Hoover had suggested that future belligerents exempt food from any blockade and permit neutral observers to monitor any attacks on civilians.³⁸ When war came, Hoover resumed his proposal concerning air attacks, suggesting the Scandinavian countries as monitors.³⁹ The British government turned down Hoover’s suggestion, with Foreign Undersecretary R. A. Butler claiming that difficulties of enforcement were “almost insuperable.”⁴⁰

Hoover also favored repeal of the arms embargo and the enactment of cash and carry. Differing with such isolationists as Hiram Johnson and William E. Borah, Hoover believed that arms sales would “give an emotional outlet to the American people” and thereby reduce pressures for intervention.⁴¹ There was, however, one qualification: a ban on the shipment of all offensive weapons should be retained.⁴²

By the end of 1939, Hoover was avoiding policy recommendations. The closest thing to analysis and recommendation came in a speech to the Circumnavigators Club of New York. Here Hoover expressed the fear that the great nations faced twenty-five years of war. The American people, he said, had a stake in the preservation of both the British Empire and the German state.⁴³ Privately Hoover told Lindbergh that it was inevitable that Germany would expand and, if necessary, by fighting. Britain, he went on, had been on the decline since World War I.⁴⁴ Hoover’s main energies, however, were first spent on efforts toward Polish relief.⁴⁵ After the Soviet Union attacked Finland, doing so on November 30, Hoover headed the Finnish Relief Fund.⁴⁶ He also called upon the United States to withdraw its ambassador to Russia in protest, while keeping a *chargé d’affaires* there to handle necessary business.⁴⁷

Once Germany attacked the Low Countries, then France, Hoover warned against panic. On the one hand, he denied that the United States could be attacked.⁴⁸ On the other, he called for increased defenses and in this connection mentioned a strong navy.⁴⁹ He defended the actions of King Leopold of Belgium, whose surrender was widely criticized for not giving sufficient warning to the allies.⁵⁰ He predicted that defeated France hoped to organize “a Catholic totalitarian group of Spain, Italy and the Balkan states against the Germans.”⁵¹ In August 1940, he claimed that England would repulse the German attack.⁵²

Yet, by November, Hoover saw nothing but stalemate lying ahead in Europe, for neither side could invade the other.⁵³ Unlike many isolationists, he had few

hopes in a negotiated peace.⁵⁴ And, unlike such militant isolationists as Lindbergh and Colonel Robert R. McCormick, Hoover called for “all the support to England that we can.” He stressed that such aid must be given within the framework of existing laws that, at this time, prohibited loans to any nation (such as Britain) that had not paid its war debts.⁵⁵

In a press statement released on August 11, 1940, Hoover launched his plan to feed some 27 million Europeans, mostly women and children. Unless food was immediately made available, he said, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and Poland faced “wholesale starvation, disease and death.” Possibly France too would be “in difficulties.”⁵⁶ Hoover stressed that the European peoples were not asking for American government appropriations, charity, or ships. They did not even want the right to purchase food in the United States. Rather they sought permission import food from other parts of Europe, if there were any food there, or from elsewhere overseas. A neutral international organization would supervise the operation, protecting supplies from the occupying armies.⁵⁷ Early in 1941, Hoover spoke to Secretary of State Cordell Hull concerning the role food could play in Spain, North Africa, and unoccupied France. “We must use food,” he said, “amongst neutrals and semi-neutrals both for purposes of confidence and affection and also as a Sword of Damocles.”⁵⁸

At first, Hoover was optimistic, thinking that England would permit food to pass through its blockade once it had won the Battle of Britain.⁵⁹ However, he soon found the British in opposition.⁶⁰ He kept stressing that his scheme would not feed the Germans and that, in many ways, the blockade would still be honored.⁶¹ Indeed, both belligerents would benefit in quite different ways, Germany by avoiding “a cesspool of contagious disease with dangers of their own infection” and Britain by preserving “the good-will of millions of the nationals of these little nations.” If the occupied peoples were not fed, their skilled workmen would accept jobs in German munitions factories in order to protect themselves and their friends.⁶²

At home, Hoover’s plan met with real success. By the middle of February 1941, he was able to see his Committee on Food for Small Democracies endorsed by 600 prominent Americans. Over 1,500 chapters had been formed. The interventionist *Time* magazine called Hoover “an eloquent keeper of the U.S. public conscience,” and such notables as General John J. Pershing and Admiral William V. Pratt endorsed Hoover’s efforts.⁶³ However, the British were even able to block a pilot project to feed Belgium, a country Hoover considered particularly threatened by famine.⁶⁴ The former president received significant support in Congress. However, he was under no illusions about chances for success, declaring, “It is rather an uphill battle in view of the war psychosis.”⁶⁵ Even at the time of Pearl Harbor, his proposal was tied in committee.

By September 1940, Hoover was predicting that Germany and Italy would dominate most of Europe from Russia to the Atlantic as well as controlling

dependencies in Africa and the East Indies. As Japan would continue to seek control over Asia, and as Russia would be leading still another totalitarian bloc, about 60 percent of the world's population and about 40 percent of the world's trade would be under totalitarian control. In 1938, about 40 percent of U.S. exports went to these totalitarian areas. But now, Hoover said, the United States would be confronting a world of devaluation, inflation, blocked currencies, limited use of gold, and lack of investment capital. Hence all countries would face shrinking export markets. As Latin American countries could not sell their agricultural surpluses to an already overstocked United States, they would have to trade with totalitarian areas.⁶⁶

Hoover, however, believed that the United States could weather any such threat. Diminishing exports and the threat of foreign dumping could be met by the creation of more home industries. New American factories, producing for domestic consumption, would hire displaced workers and, at the same time, free the nation from foreign dependence. By applying labor-saving devices, fostering capitalism as a system, and maintaining free competition, the United States could not only meet foreign competition. It could continue to sell abroad. "We must work our machines and our heads harder," he said.⁶⁷ If necessary, the nation could even conduct its foreign trade on a barter basis without sacrificing democracy at home.⁶⁸

Such risks, Hoover believed, were far better than the loss of political or economic freedom that would accompany any war. In 1941, Hoover recalled that in World War I, all governments resorted to dictatorial authority, although "in the democracies we used soft phrases to cover these coercions." But whatever cosmetic terms one used, "governments in business was Socialism, and government dictation was Fascism." Any future war would lead the nation to bankruptcy, with the savings of the people lost. America's debt would equal 50 percent of its wealth.⁶⁹ Hoover had claimed as far back as 1938 that the United States would not remain as democracy under such conditions.⁷⁰

Given Hoover's anxieties, the events of 1941 in particular filled him with dismay. Lend-lease gave such sweeping powers to the president that it threatened "the preservation of democracy in this country."⁷¹ Convoys, he kept insisting, could only lead to war.⁷² In April, he claimed that Britain could not possibly win the conflict.⁷³ Furthermore, full-scale American participation could only weaken Britain, while doing little to achieve allied victory.⁷⁴ Far better to supply Britain with needed bombers, fighter planes, tanks, food, munitions, and minor warships.⁷⁵ Yet if, in Hoover's eyes, Britain could not win, it did not have to lose, for Hitler's domain suffered from serious internal weaknesses.⁷⁶

Early in 1941, Hoover told Hull that the Germans had no intention of attacking the Western Hemisphere, at least for "a very long time." To the contrary, they sought first to settle with the British, then to dominate Russia. The Germans, he said, were "a land people . . . not a sea people," and he claimed that the Soviets could be conquered with two army corps. "Their purpose in this war,"

he claimed, was to free themselves "from eastern encirclement."⁷⁷ When, on June 22, Germany invaded Russia, Hoover predicted an early German victory, one that would "dispose of that infecting center of Communism." In fact, Hoover predicted that at the end of the Russian campaign, "Hitler will propose terms to the British that they will accept."⁷⁸ Quick to use the new war to buttress his anti-interventionism, Hoover commented in a public speech that collaboration between Britain and Russia offered strategic values to both sides, but made "the whole arguments of our joining the war to bring the four freedoms to mankind a gargantuan jest."⁷⁹ Even late in November 1941, when Germany had long been besieging Moscow, Hoover opposed aiding the Soviet Union. "Aid to Russia may sound practical now," he wrote Republican leader Alf Landon, "but the world will pay dearly for this debauchery of our ideals of freedom."⁸⁰

By the middle of 1941, Hoover realized that his anti-interventionism was exposing him to strong attack. He wrote an interventionist friend, to whom he was personally quite close, "For what my life and conscience are worth, they become valueless to me or anyone else if I do not persist in what I so deeply believe. I would greatly welcome total eclipse from dealing with the contemporary world. But so long as my voice will be heard I shall do the best with it that I can."⁸¹

United States relations with Japan only compounded Hoover's fears. Hoover had endorsed nonrecognition during the Manchurian crisis, but he would go no further, and during the thirties he opposed applying further pressure. In November 1938, he called Japan's war on China "as horrible as that of Genghis Khan."⁸² In July 1939, however, he argued against terminating the 1911 commercial treaty with Japan. He feared that its renunciation would result in Japanese outrages upon American citizens in Asia that, in turn, would result in war.⁸³ To embargo aviation gasoline and high grade iron and steel scrap was simply "sticking a pin in a rattlesnake."⁸⁴ To freeze Japanese assets was even more appalling. Such American pressure could not get the Japanese out of Indochina. Moreover, so he wrote privately in August 1941, "When Hitler wins in Russia—as he will eventually—and when the British make peace with him, or when we go to war and in the end make peace with him, the Japs will still be there. We will then probably go to war with them and when we will have made peace with them, they will still be in China and way stations."⁸⁵ In addition, war against Japan would be "God's gift to Hitler," as it would force the American navy to convoy in the Pacific and Indian oceans and thereby relieve pressure on the Atlantic.⁸⁶ While in June 1941 Hoover called for direct aid to China, he said privately in September that the United States should encourage Japan to seize southern Siberia.⁸⁷

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hoover publicly called upon his countrymen to close ranks. "We must fight with everything we have," he said.⁸⁸ Privately he was extremely critical of his government. If Japan had "been allowed to go without these trade restrictions and provocations," he commented, "she

would have collapsed from internal economic pressures alone within a couple of years."⁸⁹ "The Japanese," he declared soon after the attack, were "exhausted by the war with China." However, the economic sanctions levied by the Western powers drove them "to desperation." Hull's "ultimatum" of November 26, in which the secretary demanded complete withdrawal from China and Indochina, "meant war."⁹⁰ Hoover wrote to commentator Boake Carter, "The day will come when this war will be put in the scales of judgment, and when this time comes you and I will be found to have been right."⁹¹

Hoover often commented on strategy. Within a month after Pearl Harbor, he predicted the loss of the Philippines and Singapore—indeed the entire Far East. "It will then," he said, "be a five to ten years' war to get them back."⁹² In March 1942, Hoover specifically forecast the loss of China and India. Furthermore, he claimed that if Germany proposed "a good peace," many Englishmen might listen.⁹³ In July, he doubted whether Russia would hold out and privately wrote a friend, "Peace will be easier with the Communists out. Peace will be more lasting with that center of revolution in other countries eliminated." At the same time, Germany would be weakened, for the task of garrisoning the Soviet Union would take 1.5 million men.⁹⁴

As far as the Pearl Harbor attack itself was concerned, Hoover suspected that the War and Navy departments had failed to give the American commanders in Hawaii sufficient warning, and he wanted a thorough investigation.⁹⁵ Ever after, he was a strong supporter of revisionist historians. Charles A. Beard, for example, was no longer referred to as "that left-winger" but as one "right down our alley."⁹⁷ We must show, he wrote journalist John T. Flynn in 1946, that "the events of the last few years have been all wrong."⁹⁸

Once the United States entered the war, Hoover devoted himself to the coming peace. He had long claimed that a relatively innocent America was unqualified to help solve Europe's problems. For a thousand years, he said in October 1938, Europe had lived amid "age-old hates." Wherever the boundaries of that continent were drawn, "some people will be separated from their 'fatherlands.'" And five months later he said that "all European history is a treadmill of war for power and mastery."¹⁰⁰ Even in September 1941, he was referring to "the eternal malign forces of Europe."¹⁰¹

Yet, beginning in 1942, Hoover was full of suggestions concerning Europe, indeed the world in general. As I mentioned earlier, he coauthored *Problems of Lasting Peace*, and in many ways his wartime speeches and articles were elaborations of what was said in this work. As far as economic suggestions were concerned, they centered on the need to lower trade barriers. Here Hoover specifically spoke of the end of hostilities being immediately followed by the lifting of food blockades, instant relief to friend and foe alike, and a reduction of tariffs. In addition, the London Economic Conference of 1933 should be reconvened.¹⁰² When it came to the international state system, Hoover sought the general principle

of elective parliamentary government. At the same time, fearing a repetition of the chaos resulting after Versailles, Hoover wanted to make the independence of the small countries of central Europe contingent upon the lowering of economic barriers. Noting that for a hundred years irredentism was a source of war, he claimed that consideration should be given "to the heroic remedy of transfer of populations." Germany, he said, should not be dismembered; otherwise efforts of "this virile race" to reunite its nation would result in war. Seeking an end to reparations, he wrote, "We can have peace or we can have revenge, but we cannot have both."¹⁰³ Surplus populations should be channeled to underdeveloped regions, particularly Polynesia, South America, and Africa.¹⁰⁴

Hoover sought as well the reestablishment of neutral rights and the retention of wartime rules of the sea.¹⁰⁵ Disarmament had two aspects: total disarmament for enemy nations and immediate reduction of arms among the victors. At all costs, Hoover kept stressing, a general peace conference should be avoided. Far better to have a series of separate international commissions, each entrusted with such matters as international trade, boundaries, the government of "backward people," intergovernmental debts, war damages, and the building of international machinery. Using the commission method, "such assemblies as Versailles, with all its surroundings of emotion, propaganda, high pressure by groups, and log-rolling of governments can be avoided."¹⁰⁶

Aside from advancing such suggestions concerning peacemaking, Hoover spoke relatively little. He sought lenient peace terms for Italy and Japan.¹⁰⁷ He retained his suspicions of British power, and in particular, he suspected that England would use the war to dominate most of Africa below the Sahara.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, he feared that Britain was moving to "the extreme left."¹⁰⁹ Hoover was also apprehensive that the United States was involved in "economic imperialism" in the Near East.¹¹⁰ He endorsed a Pacific First strategy for fighting the war.¹¹¹

Hoover's great fears centered on the growing power of Russia. In 1943, he accused the Russians of deporting over 1.5 million Poles to concentration camps in Siberia, after which half had died of starvation.¹¹² In all the various conferences with the Russians, he said the United States had "appeased every time at the expense of the liberty and freedom of more and more human beings."¹¹³ He called upon Harry S. Truman, who became president in the middle of April 1945, to use American diplomatic and economic pressure to achieve free elections in Poland.¹¹⁴ A war with Russia," he told Truman, "meant the extinction of Western Civilization or what was left of it."¹¹⁵

As far as international organization was concerned, Hoover wanted each country to refer all disputes to arbitration, judicial settlement, or cooling-off periods, during which independent investigations would be conducted. Hopefully, provisions for peaceful change could be written into the body of international law.¹¹⁶ By 1943, Hoover—together with Hugh Gibson—envisioned two parts to international organization. The first involved a general world agency that would eventually

include all nations. The second, acting under this world institution, concerned separate councils of Europe, Asia, and the Western Hemisphere. The primary responsibility for peace would lie with these regional councils, who would command the international armed forces and settle controversies.¹¹⁷

The San Francisco conference to draft the United Nations Charter, said Hoover, was "the most fateful conference in all American History, one that might determine the future for the next hundred years."¹¹⁸ When the charter was drafted, Hoover called for its immediate ratification. Its major strength, he said, lay in its provisions for continuous meetings in which major problems could be aired. Other positive points included the reestablishment of the World Court, a trusteeship system for independent people, "limited action" to prevent military aggression, and machinery to promote social and economic welfare.¹¹⁹ While acknowledging that the new international organization could not liberate such captive nations as Poland, he hoped that it could serve as "a court to which they could appeal" and that it might give such countries "a chance for the future."¹²⁰

Yet Hoover was quite vocal in his criticism of the charter. It lacked a positive bill of rights and codification of principles.¹²¹ It needed a more elaborate regional machinery designed to prevent aggression.¹²² It contained unwise veto provisions.¹²³ Also missing were methods for revising outmoded treaties, possibly at ten-year intervals, a definition of aggression, and a commitment to reduce armies and navies. Hoover wanted "absolute disarmament" of the enemy powers and "relative disarmament of the victors; "maximum limits" should be set for armed forces in each nation.¹²⁴ He warned Congress not to part with its power to declare war.¹²⁵ Yet if Hoover was not totally sanguine, he said that the charter was the best one available.¹²⁶

During the immediate postwar years, Hoover kept stressing that it was the recovery of Germany that was crucial to the survival of western Europe. As early as October 1945, he opposed a vengeful peace. While not mentioning the Morgenthau Plan by name, he claimed that dividing Germany could only imperil the world. He went on to attack the forced labor of German prisoners of war, whom—he said—were being worked "under conditions reminiscent of Roman slavery."¹²⁷ Hoover's highly publicized trip to Germany, authorized by President Truman in February 1947, stressed that country's role as linchpin of Europe.¹²⁸

Hoover was less enthusiastic concerning aid to the rest of Europe. Beginning in 1946, he warned the United States against continuing its role of "Santa Claus."¹²⁹ In 1947, he opposed sending American military forces to Greece.¹³⁰ A year later, when publicist Bruce Barton sent Hoover one of his articles claiming that America had "bitten off more than it could chew," Hoover concurred. "You are right," he said. "I think we are headed for a nose-dive—and not too far off."¹³¹ In 1948, Hoover opposed the presidential nomination of Senator Vandenberg, recently a convert to internationalism. Were Vandenberg nominated, it "would be the greatest tragedy that could come to the Republican party."¹³²

The Marshall Plan received Hoover's backing, though the ex-president wanted the original proposal amended sharply.¹³³ In November 1947, after claiming that communism was becoming increasingly weaker in Europe, he called upon the United States to help other nations combat "their conspiracies."¹³⁴

All this time, Hoover was developing a military strategy. In February 1948, he called upon western Europe to form a regional defense alliance.¹³⁵ During the Berlin blockade, Hoover suggested a counterblockade of the Baltic and Black seas and an embargo by England, France, and the United States.¹³⁶ In June 1950, he combined a suspicion of military aid overseas with the belief that communism contained within itself the seeds of its own disintegration.¹³⁷

The Korean War, however, forced Hoover to focus upon military matters. On the last day of 1949, he had called for naval protection for the Chinese Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek, then fleeing to Formosa.¹³⁸ Once the conflict began, Hoover endorsed American military action. Declaring that the time for recrimination was over, he said, "To win we must have unity for action and purpose."¹³⁹ When, in the middle of October 1950, it looked as if General Douglas MacArthur could unite both North and South Korea, Hoover favored moving above the thirty-eighth parallel.¹⁴⁰ Yet, when the Chinese Communists threatened to overrun all Korea, he called for the withdrawal of all ground forces from both Europe and Asia. While referring to the American hemisphere as "this Gibraltar of Western Civilization," he called upon the United States to hold such "island nations" as Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines (and Britain if it so desired), to encourage Japanese independence, and to rely upon sea and air defenses.¹⁴¹ The firing of MacArthur met with Hoover's strong opposition. Not only was the general "a reincarnation of St. Paul into a great general who has come out of the East."¹⁴² His strategy could have brought victory in the Korean conflict.¹⁴³

In all of his outlines of military policy, Hoover continually promoted air power. An air strategy served as an effective deterrent, preserved American solvency, and could ultimately save Europe if that continent was overrun by ground forces.¹⁴⁴ To Hoover it was sheer folly to send more infantry divisions to Europe. In addition, such orders violated the separation of powers. "The time has come," he said in March 1951, "for civilian control of the armed forces of the United States."¹⁴⁵

Yet while Hoover was often cautious concerning American commitments, he still made proposals concerning international organization. In April 1950, he called for reorganizing the United Nations without Communist nations.¹⁴⁶ However, in testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1955, he opposed American withdrawal or the expulsion of Russia. He claimed that the international body had "not fulfilled all our hopes"; at the same time, it had shown more vitality than the League and should not be abandoned.¹⁴⁷ In 1962, Hoover proposed a new global alliance based upon regional defense pacts and called the Council of Free Nations. Such a council would not replace the United Nations,

but would step in when the UN failed to preserve peace.¹⁴⁸ There were other suggestions as well. For example, although Hoover had been a major public voice for West German rehabilitation, he privately hoped that a disarmed and united Germany could serve as a buffer state between Russia and the West.¹⁴⁹

In 1952, Hoover supported his close friend and fellow anti-interventionist Robert A. Taft for the Republican presidential nomination. However, after the convention, Hoover backed the more interventionist candidacy of Dwight D. Eisenhower against Democrat Adlai E. Stevenson. He still retained his skepticism concerning the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.¹⁵⁰ Yet during the Eisenhower presidency, he often expressed a general optimism concerning international conditions.¹⁵¹ He endorsed the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957, which pledged American support for Middle East countries repelling military aggression.¹⁵² When John Foster Dulles died in 1959, Hoover said, "We have lost our greatest Secretary of State."¹⁵³

During his last few years, Hoover's comments on foreign policy were infrequent. He called upon his countrymen to rally around Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy during the various crises over Berlin.¹⁵⁴ He backed Kennedy in the Cuban crisis while opposing American support of United Nations action against Katanga province.¹⁵⁵ Along with other former presidents, he supported the test ban treaty of 1963.¹⁵⁶

In recent years, it has become somewhat fashionable to portray Hoover as a prophet, one who offered a penetrating critique of American globalism. The very anti-interventionism that appeared so shortsighted in the forties and fifties is seen as a source of strength in the seventies and eighties. Historian Joan Hoff Wilson claims that "there is much to be said" for "the alternative foreign policy" that Hoover espoused, a policy

not based on unlimited interventionism or the military suppression of revolutions based on communist ideology, but rather on disarmament and peaceful coexistence. . . . That such ideas were not endorsed by his successors in the White House cannot be blamed on Hoover. It simply has taken until the 1960s and 1970s for the most constructive aspects of what Will Irwin in 1928 called Hoover's "new way" to be appreciated.¹⁵⁷

Hoover reminded another historian, William Appleman Williams, of John Quincy Adams. To Williams, Hoover was merely updating Adam's famous Fourth of July Oration of 1821, in which the sixth president said:

America goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. . . . She might become the dictatress of the world; she would no longer be the ruler of her own spirit.

Williams can only add,

Herbert Clark and John Quincy: too bad they are gone. Spiro Agnew could spend the rest of his life chasing after them, screaming all the while that it was time to take care of those effete radical-liberal snobs who are undermining and destroying the nation and its rightful place in the world.¹⁵⁸

Many, of course, are gratified that Hoover's reputation is finally being upgraded, though the source of this upgrading can sometimes be surprising. Yet, if evaluation of the historical actor is dependent upon attitudes toward current policy, we are in a quandary indeed. Different headlines can again create different interpretations, and the stock of one's reputation can fluctuate as easily as any item on the Big Board. One can envision a time when many Americans will believe themselves threatened by forces overseas, and if this takes place, what we see in the 1980s as Hoover's wisdom could again appear as utmost folly. It is extremely difficult to find a usable past that retains its "usability" decade after decade.

Hence the responsibility of the historian is quite different. It is first to present Hoover's reaction to specific crises, second to show why he perceived events the way he did. For if Hoover has anything to say to us today, it does not lie in his specific reaction to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, or to Hitler's expansion, or the Marshall Plan, or the Korean War. With a gift of 20/20 hindsight, even the strongest Hoover admirer could fault the ex-president on a number of positions, analyses, and predictions. Look, for example, at Hoover's endorsement of Munich in 1938, his prediction of an allied victory in 1939, his desire for a Japanese strike on Siberia in 1941, and his advocacy of MacArthur's risky strategy in 1951. In retrospect, Hoover greatly underrated Europe's ability to recover after World War II, and he showed himself far too skeptical concerning NATO. The fact that from 1949 to 1952, he appeared to endorse intervention in Asia while opposing it in Europe left him wide open to charges of inconsistency. Hoover's rhetoric could often be counterproductive, as shown by his frequent linking of the New Deal with totalitarianism. The whole policy of nonrecognition, of which he was particularly proud, smacks of a moralism that has often proven dangerous.

What is far more important is the way that Hoover at times could comment on the broader social forces he saw at work in the world. One should first note his initial reaction to Bolshevism. In a letter he wrote to President Wilson in March 1919, Hoover denied that the Bolshevik Revolution was rooted in conspiracy. He said, "It simply cannot be denied that this swing of the social pendulum from the tyranny of the extreme right to the tyranny of the extreme left is based on a foundation of real social grievance." To attempt to suppress this phenomenon by military intervention was the height of folly. Hoover continued, "We should probably be involved in years of police duty, and our first act would probably

in the nature of things make us a party with the Allies to re-establishing the reactionary classes."¹⁵⁹

This leads to a second point, the relationship between revolution and war. The formal name of the Hoover Institution at Stanford—the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace—was not bestowed accidentally, as its founder saw war leading inevitably to revolution, with peace only coming afterwards. (When a representative of the Institution met with Leon Trotsky a year before the revolutionist was assassinated, Trotsky said, "A fine name. The war of capitalist imperialism, the social revolution rising out of the war, and the lasting peace that will follow." The Institution representative replied, "I doubt if Mr. Hoover would approve of that interpretation.")¹⁶⁰

Hoover saw war per se as the breeding ground of collectivism, whereas peace tended to nourish a free society. He said in 1939, "Personal liberty and free economic life are not built for modern war."¹⁶¹ In any war, democracy becomes dictatorship, and the devastation spreads revolution.¹⁶² "The destruction, the miseries, the disillusionments and the moral degradation," he said in 1942, provided the very soil upon which revolution thrived.¹⁶³ Hence Hoover was especially sensitive to the need for peaceful change within the international system, and to the establishment of vehicles by which this change could be fostered. Hence also Hoover sought to mitigate against the brutality of war by protecting noncombatants.

We now come to a third point. Given Hoover's fundamental argument, that the Bolshevik Revolution reflected "blind gropings for better social conditions," Hoover's continual stress upon international relief makes excellent sense.¹⁶⁴ Hoover, the Quaker, was not simply acting as his religious faith demanded he must, that is, glorifying his Creator by charitable deeds or, to use the language of the early Society of Friends, "cultivating the inner plantation." To Hoover, relief was not simply a matter of generosity. Rather it could launch a nation on the road to recovery. Only when people were neither hungry nor destitute could such institutions as representative government and personal liberties arise. Again, to use Quaker parlance, "the outer plantation" could be cultivated only in an environment harboring neither fear nor want.

There is a fourth point, one that centers on the very meaning of national defense. Hoover was far from being a pacifist. Particularly after 1938 he pushed rearmament, and after 1950 he was militant in promoting air and sea power, often to the exclusion of ground forces. However, he always insisted that, in the long run, the nation was best protected by a healthy and productive economy.

Hence, although Hoover has offered few solutions for contemporary problems, one can often draw from his writings something far more important: an approach to international relations that roots the cause of much revolution in injustice, that sees war itself as spreading revolution, that seeks to alleviate the consequences of both war and revolution by relief aimed at stabilizing a society, and that sees a healthy American economy as essential to the functioning of a healthy international order. Such insights are worth the study of any statesman.

NOTES

1. *New York Times*, 26 May, 1940, p. 15.
2. *Life*, 6 November 1939, p. 25.
3. Manfred Jonas, "Isolationism," in Alexander DeConde, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy: Studies of the Principal Movements and Ideas*, 3 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1978), vol. 2, p. 496.
4. Unknown biographer quoted in Paul A. Carter, *Another Part of the Twenties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 180.
5. David Burner, *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life* (New York: Knopf, 1979), pp. 81–82, 147–48.
6. Indeed, Hoover hoped that the nonrecognition policy would go down in history as the Hoover Doctrine, not the Stimson Doctrine. As historian Christopher Thorne writes, such efforts to claim paternity merely proved that "the child was not yet as sickly as it was to appear when . . . many years had gone by." *The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931–1933* (New York: Putnam, 1972), p. 351.
7. Commenting on a movement to cooperate with League sanctions, Hoover wrote an inquirer, "There are some matters on which I believe the Government should be trusted to defend the interest of the country rather than to leave it to voluntary association." H. Hoover to Mrs. Paul FitzSimmons, March 2, 1932, the Papers of Herbert Hoover, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa (hereafter cited as Hoover Papers). Secretary Stimson immediately concurred, although to read the memoirs of both Hoover and Stimson later, one would not think so. In April 1932, Stimson wrote columnist Walter Lippmann that he found himself "in full agreement" with Hoover's belief that a boycott would lead to a destructive war. However, and this was the real issue between the two men, Stimson wanted to frighten the Japanese in a way that Hoover did not. "A Word unspoken is a sword in your scabbard," he said, "while a word spoken is a sword in the hands of your adversary." Copy, H. L. Stimson to W. Lippmann, May 19, 1932, the Papers of Newton D. Baker, Library of Congress. Also see H. L. Stimson to Henry Prather Fletcher, February 27, 1932, the Papers of Henry L. Stimson, Yale University Library. One could claim that Hoover was naive in his belief that the Japanese would never be able to "Japanify China and if they stayed long enough they will be absorbed or expelled by the Chinese." Memorandum in Ray Lyman Wilbur and Arthur M. Hyde, *The Hoover Policies* (New York: Scribner, 1937), pp. 600–601. However, this attitude was shared by many opinion leaders. See chapter 4 of Justus D. Doenecke, *When the Wicked Rise: American Opinion-Makers and the Manchurian Crisis of 1931–1933* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1984). It was also shared by Secretary Stimson and President-elect Roosevelt, who discussed this matter. See the Diary of Henry L. Stimson, entry of January 17, 1933, Yale University Library.
8. See, for example, Selig Adler, *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-Century Reaction* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957); Manfred Jonas, *Isolationism in America, 1935–1941* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966); and Justus D. Doenecke, *Not to the Swift: The Old Isolationists in the Cold War Era* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1979).
9. Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson, *The Problems of Lasting Peace* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1942), pp. 9, 13, 15.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 109. Quotations from p. 109.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 143–44. Hoover accused France of refusing in 1932 to cooperate in supporting representative government in Germany. *Ibid.*, p. 191. Hoover had long been quite negative concerning France. For example, after his trip to Europe in February and March of 1938, a close Hoover associate said, "The Chief saw the picture of Europe with France as the villain of the piece." See Perrin C. Galpin, "Through Europe with Mr. Hoover: February and March 1938," April 1938, p. 25, Hoover Papers. During the trip Hoover suspected that France would turn fascist at any time. See memorandum of E. Rickard, April 5, 1938, p. 1, Hoover Papers.
12. *Problems of Lasting Peace*, pp. 145, 164. Hoover was aware of Article XIX of the League Covenant, which provided for such change, but found it ineffective.

13. *New York Times*, 6 January 1938, p. 4. See also *ibid.*, 29 March 1938, p. 10. When Secretary of State Cordell Hull endorsed a new neutrality law, one that would have repealed the arms embargo and instituted cash and carry, Hoover found "plenty of sense" to the proposals. However, as the revisions permitted some presidential discretion, Hoover feared such powers in the hands of Roosevelt. See H. Hoover to John Callan O'Laughlin, July 18, 1939, Hoover-O'Laughlin correspondence, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace (hereinafter cited as O'Laughlin File). When the Senate turned down the proposal, Hoover saw an outbreak of "peace measles" in Europe. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, July 25, 1939, O'Laughlin File.
14. *New York Times*, 1 April 1938, p. 4; *ibid.*, 3 December 1939, p. 1.
15. Address to Pennsylvania Society of New York, December 21, 1941, as reprinted in H. Hoover, *Addresses Upon the American Road, 1940-1941* (New York: Scribner, 1941) p. 56 (hereafter cited as *Addresses 1940-1941*).
16. *New York Times*, 18 May 1940, p. 8.
17. Pennsylvania Society address, p. 57. When, in September 1940, the Administration announced the exchange of fifty "over-age" destroyers for a ninety-nine year naval lease, Hoover was silent concerning the ships, but called the new naval and air bases "important contributions to our defense." Gary Dean Best, *Herbert Hoover: The Postpresidential Years, 1933-1964*, 2 vols. (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), p. 168.
18. On May 21, 1941, a German submarine attacked an unarmed merchant ship, the *Robin Moor*, traveling from New York to Capetown. While Hoover opposed an effort to build up the incident into a *casus belli*, he did say that Roosevelt was right to protest strongly. He did not see American trading rights at stake, but rather opposed "the brutal treatment of passengers and crew." Speech at Chicago, June 29, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 97. See also H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, June 29, 1941, O'Laughlin File. On September 11, 1941, Roosevelt gave a Navy Day address, in which he claimed that Germany violated freedom of the seas. Hoover supported Roosevelt's "vigorous protest at firing upon American warships" as well as his protest at the sinking of American merchant ships without adequate protection for their crews. However, "edging our warships into danger zones" and "sending American merchant ships with contraband" were steps to war, taken without the approval of Congress. Speech at Chicago, September 16, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, pp. 105-6.
19. As early as September 1939, Hoover suggested that Lindbergh help form a nonpartisan organization to keep the nation out of war. See entry of September 21, 1939, *The Wartime Journals of Charles A. Lindbergh* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1970), p. 260 (hereafter cited as *Lindbergh Journals*). Hoover later begged off from joining the America First Committee, claiming that his own committee to feed occupied Europe had top priority. H. Hoover to R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., December 6, 1940, Hoover Papers. Yet he agreed to tap millionaire philanthropist Jeremiah Milbank for a contribution to America First. See H. Hoover to Robert E. Wood, July 11, 1941, *The Papers of the America First Committee*, Hoover Institution. Just after Pearl Harbor, R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., national director of America First, thanked Hoover for his frequent advice, to which Hoover replied that he had "been filled at all times with profound admiration for the battle" that the AFC had made. See R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., to H. Hoover, December 17, 1941; H. Hoover to R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., December 18, 1941, Hoover Papers. In the summer of 1941, Hoover was instrumental in drafting a public statement accusing the administration of fostering a "step-by-step projection of the United States into undeclared war." Such steps included naval action, military occupation of bases outside the Western hemisphere, and unauthorized aid to Russia. Aimed at attracting signers not affiliated with America First, it was fostered by former governor Alf Landon of Kansas, president Felix Morley of Haverford College, and president Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago. See Donald R. McCoy, *Landon of Kansas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 471-73.
20. *New York Times*, 16 January 1938, p. 4.
21. *Ibid.*, 1 April 1938, p. 4.
22. Speech to the Forum on Current Problems, New York, October 26, 1938, as reprinted in *Further Addresses Upon the American Road, 1938-1940* (New York: Scribner, 1940), pp. 87, 90 (hereafter cited as *Addresses, 1938-1940*). While paying tribute to "heroic" Czechoslovakia

- and its "heroic" leader Beneš, he noted how the Munich agreement removed impediments to this eastward expansion and claimed that it gave Europe time to relieve underlying economic tensions. See p. 88. In a campaign speech given in October 1940, Hoover praised Roosevelt for his messages to European leaders during the Munich crisis, as these urged to belligerents to continue mediation. Hoover suggested that Roosevelt "or his agents" put pressure on the Western powers to sign the agreement, with minds changed only when "certain opinion" in the United States condemned the pact. Speech at Lincoln, Nebraska, October 31, 1940, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 42. Hoover told *Newsweek* editor and former braintruster Raymond Moley of his conversation with Neville Chamberlain early in 1938. At that time Hoover said to the prime minister that Britain and France had no chance against Germany, which had a much more powerful war machine. Hoover claimed to have backed Chamberlain's actions at Munich and regretted that, in Moley's words, Chamberlain "got himself stampeded into a more belligerent attitude later." Much of the plight of Britain and France in mid-1940, Hoover said, was due to the rash and unwarranted encouragement they received from Roosevelt and from the American ambassadors. Entry of June 11, 1940, the Journal of Raymond Moley, the Papers of Raymond Moley, Hoover Institution (hereafter cited as Moley Journal).
23. *New York Times*, 9 March 1938, p. 1; 10 March 1938, p. 15. As far as positive accomplishments of the Nazi regime were concerned, Hoover pointed specifically to the marked increase in employment, housing, military strength, and general living standards. *Ibid.*, 1 April 1939, p. 4.
 24. Memorandum of E. Rickard, April 5, 1938, p. 2. Hoover Papers. Hoover later claimed that his negative comments concerning Hitler's regime had resulted in a hostile German press and that he had no doubt that he was on "their blacklist." H. Hoover to Percival C. Baxter, January 7, 1939, Hoover Papers.
 25. *Ibid.*, November 14, 1938, p. 6. Hoover claimed that if the German people were permitted to express themselves freely, they undoubtedly would not approve these acts.
 26. Speech to the Forum on Current Problems, New York, October 26, 1938, *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 86.
 27. Speech to Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, February 1, 1939, *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 99.
 28. "Foreign Policies Today," article in *Liberty Magazine*, April 15, 1939, as in *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 110.
 29. The two countries, said Hoover in April 1939, had three times the naval strength of the dictators; superior land fortifications; greater manpower, empires, and natural resources; and far more manufacturing and raw material reserves. *Ibid.*, p. 109. Furthermore, air warfare was so horrible that it had a sobering effect on the emotions of all countries. Speech to the Forum on Current Problems, New York, October 26, 1938, *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 88.
 30. Rickard memorandum, p. 3.
 31. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
 32. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, May 28, 1939, July 18, 1939, O'Laughlin File.
 33. *New York Times*, 12 November 1938, p. 2.
 34. Another 25 percent, said Hoover, wanted German rule desperately, and the rest strongly demanded an autonomous nation. Rickard memorandum, p. 1.
 35. Herbert Hoover to Adolph Miller, February 10, 1939, Hoover Papers.
 36. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, March 25, 1939, April 14, 1939, O'Laughlin File. See also Rickard memorandum, p. 5. Even when Hitler was about to invade Poland, Hoover thought that there was a chance of settlement. A note, sent by Hitler to French Premier Edouard Daladier, encouraged Hoover to believe that the Führer would compromise concerning the city of Danzig and some connection over the Polish corridor. He said, however, that the world understandably lacked confidence in Hitler since the seizure of Prague. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, August 28, 1939, O'Laughlin File.
 37. On October 3, 1939, the *New York World-Telegram* ran Hoover's interview with publisher Roy Howard. Hoover said that unless the allies were stupid enough to launch an offensive, their weapons could defend France. True, air power was destructive, but as either side could use it effectively, it could not determine the outcome. Moreover, improved anti-aircraft guns could offset any possible German superiority. As submarines were less dangerous than in World War I, the allies could retain control of the seas. Calling upon Americans to "keep cool,"

- he predicted that in time the allied blockade was bound to be effective. Indeed the allies could "sit there until their enemies were exhausted." Hoover found Germany in great danger economically, as it lacked the raw materials needed to maintain a long war. Here Hoover mentioned fats, fuels, iron ore, rubber, cotton, wood, copper, tin, and nickel. Neither Russia nor Central Europe could supply Germany with such items, and Germany did not have the credits to buy them from neutrals. *New York Times*, 4 October 1939, p. 12. See also entry of October 2, 1939, *Lindbergh Journals*, p. 267.
38. In July 1939, Hoover sought to establish certain rules of war before a major conflagration began. A commission of neutrals would administer the food shipments, while other neutrals would publicize any bombing of civilian populations. Public opinion alone, acting within the neutral states, would enforce the plan. Yet he claimed that his scheme had real power, for no belligerent would feel it could afford to alienate countries that controlled credit and supplies. Speech to International Convention of Christian Endeavor Societies, Cleveland, Ohio, July 6, 1939, *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 135.
 39. *New York Times*, 16 September 1939, p. 9.
 40. *Ibid.*, 28 September 1939, p. 6. On September 16, Roosevelt had expressed interest in the idea, sounding out Hull after receiving word from Joseph Moscicki, president of Poland, that Germany had bombed Polish open towns. *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1948), vol. 1, p. 678.
 41. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, September 4, 1939, O'Laughlin File. Hoover privately saw "grave dangers" in either retaining or repealing the embargo. H. Hoover to William R. Castle, September 14, 1939, the Papers of William R. Castle, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library. With an eye to politics, Hoover suggested that the Republicans assist Roosevelt in repealing the embargo while claiming as much credit as possible. Entry of September 15, 1939, the Diary of William R. Castle, Houghton Library, Harvard University (hereafter cited as Castle Diary).
 42. On October 10, Hoover made a proposal that, in some ways, went back to his proposal, first advanced in June 1932, at the Geneva Disarmament Conference. Hoover called for prohibiting any sale of "offensive" weapons, including bombing planes, ammunition for these planes, poison gas, and submarines. On the other hand, such "defensive weapons" as pursuit planes, light observation planes, and anti-aircraft guns could be sold. Statement entered by Arthur H. Vandenberg, *Congressional Record*, October 12, 1939, p. 320. Within a week, Charles A. Lindbergh, who had been in touch with Hoover over the matter, advanced a similar proposal. Interventionists attacked the plan on the grounds that such distinctions were outmoded, and even such an anti-interventionist as Borah wondered how such a plan could be enforced. *New York Times*, 12 October 1939, p. 16. In an effort to head off further criticism, Hoover gave a radio speech in which he denied that he was proposing dividing every kind of weapon into offensive and defensive categories. Rather he merely sought to ban weapons that "kill unarmed men, women, and children and destroy their homes." Speech of October 21, 1939, *Congressional Record*, p. A497-98. Although Hoover saw no immediate prospects for its adoption, he was pleased with the public response to his proposal and predicted that in six months it could get significant backing. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, October 23, 1939, O'Laughlin File.
 43. *New York Times*, 26 October 1939, p. 12.
 44. According to Lindbergh, Hoover told British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax that the only way to avoid a European war was to permit German economic expansion in central Europe. Entry of September 21, 1939, *Lindbergh Journals*, p. 260.
 45. Once Poland was invaded, Hoover offered his services for Polish relief. On September 25, 1939, at the direct request of Poland's prime minister and the Polish ambassador to the United States, Hoover became honorary chairman of the Commission for the Relief of Poland. The organization had many old relief aides as officers. Hoover spoke several times on behalf of Polish relief and testified before a special hearing of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. The British, however, insisted on maintaining their blockade and were supported by the Polish government-in-exile. Only minor supplies were able to reach Poland. See George J. Lerski, ed., *Herbert Hoover and Poland: A Documentary History of a Friendship* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), pp. 42-46; copy, H. Hoover to Jan Ciechanowski, April 23, 1941, Castle Papers.

46. By March 11, 1940, Hoover had raised \$2.5 million. Even after the war ended on March 12, Hoover called for aid to that destitute land and maintained his interest in Finland. For example, on November 3, 1941, Hull issued a statement declaring that the Finns, who were back at war with Russia, had ignored possibilities of peace in August. Moreover, said Hull, the United States had repeatedly warned them that Hitler confronted them with ultimate subjugation and that recently the United States had called upon them to withdraw their troops from Soviet territory or lose American friendship. William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941* (New York: Harper, 1953), p. 832. Hoover opposed such pressure upon the Finns. Claiming that Finland had surrendered one-third of its land to Russia, and had seen 600,000 countrymen driven from their homes, he asked, "Has America lost all sense of humane and moral proportions?" *New York Times*, 5 November 1941, p. 11. In March 1944, Finland was facing defeat at the hands of Russia. Hoover called upon the United States to use its good offices to stop the conflict. Declaring that Finland's aspirations were democratic, Hoover asserted that Finland either had to join the Axis or face the same kind of German "rape" that Belgium experienced. *Ibid.*, 25 March 1944, p. 2.
47. A close friend and former State Department official, William R. Castle, gently chided Hoover for this proposal. While Castle agreed with Hoover on the perfidious nature of the Soviet regime, he claimed that the move was an improper use of diplomatic instruments, might harm needed American representation, and could lead to war. Hoover replied that the "theoretically" agreed, but "if we are going to pursue a course of conduct towards Germany, Mr. Roosevelt ought to take responsibility for his friendly leanings towards the Communists." W. R. Castle to H. Hoover, December 7, 1939; H. Hoover to W. R. Castle, December 11, 1939, Castle Papers. In an article for *Collier's* magazine dated April 27, 1940, Hoover said that diplomatic recognition was "a sign that we believe they are respectable members of the family of nations." "More than a reestablishment of legalistic or trade relations," he went on, it gave a government the "right of entry into our homes" and "a recommendation to our neighbors." He asserted that he sought no intervention in Russia's internal affairs, much less any war. He denied that Communists could create a revolution within the United States. Yet he noted that an indignant people, fearful of "Communist sabotage of national life and poisoning the wells of liberty," might either take lawless vigilante action or go fascist, suppressing Communists by "cruelty and violence." "Russian Midadventure," article in *Collier's*, April 27, 1940, as in *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 159.
48. Late in May 1940, Hoover challenged Roosevelt's statement that Omaha, Des Moines, and New York could be attacked by air bases in the Western Hemisphere. To operate such a base, an enemy would first have to capture the territory, then fortify that base. This involved transporting thousands of planes and hundreds of thousands of troops past a fleet as strong as the combined fleets of Europe, omitting the British. Address in New York, May 27, 1940, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, pp. 8-9. In October, Hoover was even more specific. He denied that any combination of dictators could invade the United States with less than 10 million men. In addition, 22 million tons of ships would be needed, which was over twice the seagoing craft in their possession. Even if Japan and Germany were not fighting major wars, it would take three years to build enough of them. Once such a giant flotilla of 500 ships got out to sea, it would be subject to American air attack. Speech at Lincoln, Nebraska, October 31, 1940, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, pp. 44-45.
49. Hoover also called for a skeletonized but more flexible navy and for large additions of skilled personnel in reserves, air pilots, tank drivers, and gunners. Speech at New York, May 27, 1940, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 8.
50. The Belgian capitulation, made on May 28, 1940, created a wide gap on the northeastern flank and forced the British and French back on the beaches of Dunkirk. Hoover claimed that the allies were unable to aid Belgium, that Leopold had sustained heavy losses in protecting the retreat of the allies, and that the king saw "no further benefit to the Allied cause could be gained by the annihilation of his remaining troops and the massacre of a vast number of refugees." To Hoover, Leopold "acted loyally and with immense sacrifice." Statement on the surrender of the Belgian army, October 22, 1940, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 33.
51. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, July 8, 1940, O'Laughlin File.

52. *Ibid.*, August 15, 1940, O'Laughlin File.
53. In a conversation with Joseph P. Kennedy, American ambassador to Great Britain, Hoover stressed that neither side was able to invade the other, that Germany had enough food and materials to withstand any British blockade, and that both sides had enough planes to continue night bombing, a tactic that "would gradually reduce their cities to rubble heaps." Hoover claimed that the British possessed the "racial spirit and resolution" to hold out against conquest. Even if Germany and Italy drove the British out of North Africa, the war would not end. Memorandum, conversation with Joseph P. Kennedy, November 22, 1940, Hoover Papers.
54. Even when Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles made his trip to Europe in February 1940, Hoover saw no peace effort in the offing. Moreover, he said that "intervention of any kind is more likely to aggravate the situation than to improve it." H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, February 18, 1940, O'Laughlin File. Civilian hatreds, Hoover feared over a year later, were bound to be so fierce that no statesman could produce the necessary compromises. He wrote, "It is likely to be a twenty years war, for it can only be ended by exhaustion and revolution." H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, March 9, 1941, O'Laughlin File. See also H. Hoover to Walter Lippmann, April 3, 1941, Hoover Papers. When, in November 1941, advertising executive Chester Bowles outlined a detailed plan for a negotiated peace, Hoover saw no immediate possibility of its implementation. However, he told Bowles that the schema might be used before the winter was over. C. Bowles to H. Hoover, November 28, 1941; H. Hoover to C. Bowles, November 29, 1941, Hoover Papers.
55. Speech at Lincoln, Nebraska, October 31, 1940, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 50.
56. Press statement, "Starvation in the Occupied Democracies," August 11, 1940, *ibid.*, pp. 117-18. Hoover found the dependence of various nations upon food exports as follows: Belgium, 60-70%; Holland, 30-40%; Norway, 20-30%; Central Poland, 30%; France, 15%.
57. Reply to a Statement of British Refusal to Allow Relief of the Invaded Democracies, October 6, 1940, *ibid.*, pp. 119-20. According to one source close to Hoover, the ex-president did not expect to direct the feeding effort personally. He was quite willing to turn it over to the Red Cross or anyone the president might designate. W. R. Castle to Peter G. Gerry, April 7, 1941, Castle Papers. In conversation with Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Hoover claimed that "some Administration people" had told representatives of the small democracies that "they would get further with the food relief if I were eliminated." Hoover said that, if necessary, he would gladly step aside. Hull denied the accusation. Memorandum of conversation with Cordell Hull, February 28, 1941, p. 6, Hoover Papers. At first Hoover thought that even if the British allowed food through their blockade, the Germans would have refused and would thereby have borne the onus for starving Europe. Entry at August 21, 1940, Castle Diary.
58. Memorandum, conversation with Cordell Hull, February 28, 1941, p. 5, Hoover Papers. By the time Hoover felt assured of Germany cooperation. Entry of February 28, 1941, Castle Diary.
59. Entry of August 12, 1940, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *War Within and Without: Diaries and Letters, 1939-1944* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 136; entry of August 12, 1940, *Lindbergh Journals*, p. 378.
60. In a most revealing letter, Hoover outlined his early strategy. The feeding of these people, he said in August 1940, could make no difference in the outcome of the war. Had the British adopted Hoover's proposal, the Germans "in their present arrogant mood would have unquestionably refused the whole thing." The moral responsibility quite correctly would have fallen on the Germans, "where of course it belongs." At that point, public opinion pressures could work on the Germans, who eventually would have had to accept Hoover's plans or provide some relief themselves. Copy, H. Hoover to Raymond Graham Swing, August 19, 1940, Castle Papers. For Hoover's views of his differences with the British, see memorandum of his conversation with Sir Gerald Campbell, March 26, 1941, Hoover Papers. Campbell, British minister to the United States, pointed to a thousand Britons killed daily as justification for the blockade. Hoover replied that he "could see no reason why the death of British children required also the death of Belgian and Dutch children—their own Allies."
61. The Germans, Hoover said, would not get the food, for the stock would not exceed 140,000 tons and the German nation consumed about 1.4 million tons a month. Were the Germans to seize such food, they would only get a three days' supply. Hoover denied that such a plan would destroy the British blockade, for a blockade—properly understood—was not the pro-

- hibition of all ships, but "a notification that traffic cannot pass except by permission." The British themselves permitted food ships to pass through their blockade to Spain. Speech at Poughkeepsie, New York, November 15, 1940, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 128.
62. "When Winter Comes to Europe," article in *Collier's*, November 23, 1940, as in *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 144.
 63. *Time*, February 24, 1941, p. 18.
 64. Early in January, Hoover told journalist William Henry Chamberlin that he anticipated famine in Belgium. Norway, he said, was in the next serious condition. Entry of January 10, 1941, the Diary of William Henry Chamberlain, Providence College, Providence, R.I. In January 1941, the Belgian government-in-exile approved Hoover's plan, which would have involved soup kitchens for 1 million Belgian adults and 2 million children; German supplying of 1 million bushels of bread grains per month; and the supply of 20,000 tons of fats and soup materials from Hoover's committee. The Germans agreed to Hoover's proposal. They shipped some 800,000 bushels of bread grains into Belgium and were prepared to ship some 3.2 million more. The British refused to cooperate, insisting that their blockade remain intact. See "A Reply to British Refusal to Permit Relief," March 10, 1941, pp. 158-59. In challenging the British, Hoover made a number of claims, each one an effort to answer British objections. He declared that no food would go directly or indirectly to the Germans, who would find their own food supplies reduced by aiding Belgium. In fact, the plan would increase German transportation burdens. The program would be terminated immediately if the Germans violated the agreement. It would not be furnishing food to people working for the Germans, as it was limited to children and the destitute. *Ibid.*, p. 159. See also Hoover letter to (London) *Times*, April 16, 1941; copy, H. Hoover to Cordell Hull, April 24, 1941; copy, Cordell Hull to H. Hoover, May 10, 1941, Castle Papers.
 65. By November 1941, a petition endorsing Hoover's plan was supported by 54 senators and 212 congressmen, including such interventionists as Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma, John H. Bankhead of Alabama, and Walter F. George of Georgia. Another ninety-six congressmen told Hoover's committee that they would support the resolution when it reached the House floor. Raymond S. Richmond to Edwin C. Johnson, November 27, 1941, the Papers of the National Committee on Food for the Small Democracies, Hoover Institution (hereafter cited as NCFSD Papers). Senator Vandenberg consistently tried to have the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hold hearings on the proposal, but he was not successful. See A. H. Vandenberg to R. S. Richmond, July 17, 1941, September 15, 1941, NCFSD Papers. Hoover's Committee, however, opposed hearings on the grounds that opponents of the plan would use them as a forum for their views, while proplan arguments would go unnoticed. Far better hopefully to have it brought out of committee and on to the House floor. This maneuver would have been quite unorthodox. Yet, if the plan's advocates were successful, a full debate could bring about adoption of the proplan resolution by a handsome majority. R. S. Richmond to William B. Barry, November 16, 1941, NCFSD Papers.
 66. Address at University of Pennsylvania Bicentennial Celebration, Philadelphia, September 18, 1940, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, pp. 16-18.
 67. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-25. Quotation from p. 22. Hoover claimed that the United States was 93 percent self-sufficient. While he did "not relish it," the country—if necessary—could be 97 percent self-contained. "And the cost of it," he said, "would be less over twenty years than one year of war." Speech at Chicago, June 29, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, pp. 96-97.
 68. Entry of June 11, 1940, Moley Journal.
 69. Speech at New Haven, March 28, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 71; speech at New York, May 11, 1941, p. 85; speech at Chicago, June 29, 1941, p. 99.
 70. *New York Times*, 16 January 1938, p. 4. By the end of 1940, Hoover was a bit more optimistic. When Kennedy feared that American entry into the war would force it permanently into National Socialism, Hoover differed. He said that the United States could survive, though it might mean a lower living standard, as a democracy. Memorandum, conversation with Joseph P. Kennedy, November 22, 1940, Hoover Papers. Hoover predicted that even if the British won, they could not remain a democracy. H. Hoover to Edmond E. Lincoln, August 5, 1940, Hoover Papers.

71. *New York Times*, 11 January 1941, p. 4. See also H. Hoover to Sol Bloom, January 15, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, pp. 63-65. Hoover called lend-lease "a war bill" that "surrenders to the President the power to make war." However, he endorsed giving Britain all defense material that America could spare. He also favored granting Britain an appropriation of \$2-\$3 billion to buy defense goods. H. Hoover to W. R. Castle, March 1, and 5, 1941, Castle Papers. Once the lend-lease program was adopted, Hoover urged his countrymen to "unite in making a good job of it." Speech at New Haven, March 28, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 66.
72. If convoys were to be effective—so Hoover argued—the American navy must attack German submarines, ships, and planes. The United States would have to expand its naval and air bases abroad and equip these bases with expeditionary forces. "And that," he said, "is war for long years to come." Speech at New York, May 11, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 78. In commenting on various naval incidents in the fall of 1941, Hoover claimed that the *Greer* was the aggressor and that the *Kearny* was actually convoying British ships. H. Hoover to Edwin M. Borchard, October 29, 1941, the Papers of Edwin M. Borchard, Yale University Library.
73. In April 1941, Hoover said that Britain had lost western Europe and the Balkans, one-third of its merchant fleet, and up to half its port capacity. Its cities were being destroyed. Moreover, its blockade was not weakening Germany, whose air fleet was stronger than ever. American aid, the capture of Ethiopia, and large-scale destruction of German and Italian navies could hardly compensate for such handicaps. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, April 20, 1941, O'Laughlin File. In May Hoover said that the British blockade could not starve the German people or cut off vital raw materials. Neither country could invade the other. The war, he predicted, would increasingly center on nighttime bombing, with Hitler having to fly one-third the distance that Britain must. Speech at New York, May 11, 1941. *Addresses, 1940-1941*, pp. 80-81.
74. Were the United States to join the conflict, Hoover argued in May 1941, it would take ten years to build the 40 million tons of ships needed to invade Germany. America lacked 300,000 sufficiently equipped men needed to fight an equal number of Germans, much less fight the 5 million men under Hitler's command. Furthermore, if the United States went to war in the Atlantic, Japan would act in such a dangerous fashion that America would have to divert its energies to strengthening its Pacific defenses. Speech at New York, May 11, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, pp. 81-82.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
76. Late in June 1941, Hoover denied that Britain had lost. It had not given up a square yard of its empire, had managed to maintain an extraordinary portion of its exports of manufactured goods, and still drew a large part of its food supplies from Latin America. Speech at Chicago, June 29, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 90. Hitler's invasions had won him "the undying hate of two-thirds of the people under his control." Although these people could not launch an armed revolt against tanks and planes, they would "never accept a new order based on slavery." Hoover continued, "Conquest always dies of indigestion." *Ibid.*, p. 96. In September, Hoover said that the 200 million people subject to Hitler hated him. If Hitler occupied all Russia, he would only be adding 150 million more enemies. Speech at Chicago, September 16, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 104.
77. Memorandum, conversation with Cordell Hull, February 28, 1941, p. 7, Hoover Papers.
78. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, June 26, 1941, O'Laughlin File. Early in July 1941, Hoover claimed that Russia had never won a European war on the battlefield, as it possessed little war capacity or organization, much less generalship. However, Hitler would need a million men just to garrison the occupied land. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, July 7, 1941, O'Laughlin File.
79. Speech in Chicago, June 29, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 93.
80. H. Hoover to Alfred M. Landon, November 29, 1941, Hoover Papers. Early in November, Hoover feared that the United States would send armored divisions to Persia, there to aid the British Indian army supply the Russians. H. Hoover to Alfred M. Landon, November 1, 1941, Hoover Papers.
81. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, June 26, 1941, O'Laughlin File.
82. Address to Annual Meeting of York Bible Class, Toronto, November 22, 1938, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 185.

83. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, July 31, 1939, O'Laughlin File.
84. *Ibid.*, August 5, 1940, O'Laughlin File.
85. *Ibid.*, August 3, 1941, O'Laughlin File.
86. *Ibid.*, October 19, 1941, O'Laughlin File.
87. Speech at Chicago, June 29, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 101; H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, September 6, 1941, O'Laughlin File. The United States, Hoover said, should trade a Japanese withdrawal from territory south of the Great Wall for this "vast unpopulated area into which to expand." A month later, Hoover returned to the theme. Far better for Japan to dominate Vladivostok, which could protect Japan's flank against Russian threats, than for Germany to conquer it and use it as a submarine and air base against American commerce. H. Hoover to J. C. O'Laughlin, October 19, 1941, O'Laughlin File.
88. *New York Times*, 9 December 1941, p. 44.
89. H. Hoover to W. R. Castle, December 8, 1941, Castle Papers. See also H. Hoover to Robert A. Taft, December 8, 1941, the Papers of Robert A. Taft, Library of Congress.
90. H. Hoover to Frank R. McCoy, December 17, 1941, Hoover Papers.
91. H. Hoover to Boake Carter, December 11, 1941, Hoover Papers. See also H. Hoover to R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., December 18, 1941, Hoover Papers.
92. H. Hoover to James B. Howell, December 26, 1941, Hoover Papers.
93. H. Hoover to John C. O'Laughlin, March 10, 1942, March 24, 1942, Hoover Papers. (Note that here and henceforth I am usually citing the Hoover-O'Laughlin correspondence located in Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, not that in the Hoover Institution at Stanford).
94. H. Hoover to John C. O'Laughlin, July 14, 1942, Hoover Papers.
95. H. Hoover to John C. O'Laughlin, December 31, 1941, O'Laughlin File.
96. When, in 1950, historian Harry Elmer Barnes sent Hoover a revisionist pamphlet, Hoover endorsed Barnes's position. H. Hoover to H. E. Barnes, July 19, 1950, Hoover Papers. For examples of Hoover's effort to promote the career of revisionist historian Charles Callan Tansill, see H. Hoover to L. Quincy Mumford, August 30, 1957; H. Hoover to Kenneth Templeton, June 17, 1958, Hoover Papers.
97. H. Hoover to John C. O'Laughlin, March 25, 1939, O'Laughlin File; H. Hoover to W. C. Castle, November 16, 1945, Castle Papers.
98. H. Hoover to John T. Flynn, December 21, 1946, the Papers of John T. Flynn, University of Oregon Library.
99. Address to the Forum on Current Problems, New York, October 26, 1938, *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 89.
100. "Foreign Policies Today," article in *Library Magazine*, April 15, 1939, as in *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 113.
101. Speech at Chicago, September 16, 1941, *Addresses, 1940-1941*, p. 109.
102. Hoover and Gibson, *Problems*, pp. 206, 211, 218, 215. Hoover found demands for access to raw materials, a matter usually emphasized in peace proposals, exaggerated. Countries could always receive raw materials by trading in goods needed by others. In addition, synthetics were often available. See p. 219.
103. *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 278, 232-33. Quotation is from p. 248.
104. *Ibid.*, pp. 232, 236. In addressing himself to the specific topic of Jewish refugees, Hoover claimed that older, more fully settled areas no longer possessed the land or economic opportunities needed for immigrants. Even Palestine could absorb only a small part of the 3 or 4 million Jews needing relief. It was, Hoover suggested, the rich uplands of central Africa that would be ideal for resettlement. According to a leading Zionist, Hoover once suggested the transfer of Palestinian Arabs to Iraq, which would be irrigated to provide fertile fields for them. See letter to Elish'a M. Friedman to *New York Times*, 14 December 1945, IV, p. 8. For debate over the plan, see *ibid.*, 16 December 1945, IV, p. 8; 24 December 1945, p. 14; 6 January 1946, IV, p. 8; 13 January 1946, IV, p. 8. Hoover was silent over the whole matter, neither affirming nor denying that he was the author of this proposal.
105. Hoover and Gibson, *Problems*, p. 224. Hoover found freedom of the seas an overestimated issue. There had, he said, been no interference with the free peacetime movement of merchant ships for over a century. See p. 223.

106. Ibid., pp. 278-79. See also speech to Executives Club of Chicago, *New York Times*, 17 December 1942, p. 4. Hoover later modified his stand, saying that a general peace conference could be called after a cooling-off period. He warned that American veterans, returning to war-weary homes, were bound to possess a spirit of nationalism, isolationism, and prejudice. A cooling-off period would permit this inevitable climate to pass. A hundred percent, he said, must be settled for an international agency to have a chance. He told the Foreign Policy Association of Minneapolis, "It was six years from the victory at Yorktown to the Constitution of the United States and it was time well spent." *New York Times*, 4 September 1943, pp. 1, 4.
107. For Italy, see *New York Times*, 9 September 1943, p. 6. For Japan, see memorandum, conversation with Joseph P. Kennedy, May 15, 1945, Hoover Papers. Meeting with President Truman on May 28, Hoover suggested an allied declaration, to be made with the British and possibly the Chinese, concerning objectives in the Far East. The declaration would call for the restoration of Manchuria to China, unconditional surrender of Japanese military forces, complete disarmament of Japan for thirty to forty years, and American trials of those Japanese who "violated the rules of civilized warfare." The allies should commit themselves to retaining the Japanese form of government and should look to the eventual return of a prosperous Japan to the family of nations. They should indicate that Japan could keep Korea and Formosa. Korea, Hoover went on, saw its government much improved when Japan took that nation over. Furthermore, the United States had a treaty with Japan acknowledging its sovereignty over Korea. Hence legally there was no basis for its separation. The Formosans did not spring from the Chinese any more than they did from the Japanese. Therefore, China had no particular moral right to that territory.
108. H. Hoover to John C. O'Laughlin, January 24, 1943, Hoover Papers. Hoover was highly critical of Walter Lippmann's *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (1943). Lippmann, he said, was wrong in asserting that Britain had been an American ally for the past 120 years. The columnist in fact belonged to "a great class developing in the United States would see our reentry into the British Empire." H. Hoover to J. Reuben Clark, October 6, 1943, Hoover Papers.
109. Memorandum, conversation with Lord Halifax, January 8, 1943, p. 2, Hoover Papers.
110. H. Hoover to John C. O'Laughlin, April 10, 1944, Hoover Papers.
111. Ibid., April 25, 1943, Hoover Papers.
112. Ibid., May 9, 1943. Referring to what later became known as the Katyn massacre, Hoover stated that Stalin killed 10,000 Polish officers.
113. H. Hoover to John C. O'Laughlin, December 31, 1945, Hoover Papers.
114. *New York Times*, 19 March 1945, p. 13. When Hoover had first heard of the Yalta agreement, he had been quite optimistic. Offering impromptu remarks at a Lincoln Day dinner, Hoover declared that if the promises and ideals embodied in the agreement were carried out, "it comprises a strong foundation on which to rebuild the world." Ibid., February 13, 1945, p. 1.
115. Memorandum, conversation with Harry S. Truman, May 28, 1945, Hoover Papers.
116. Hoover and Gibson, *Problems*, p. 251.
117. *New York Times Magazine*, 4 April 1943, pp. 5, 37, 38. Both Hoover and Gibson expressed pleasure that Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill appeared, in a speech given on March 3, 1943, to be talking along similar lines. Europe's longest period of peace, the two men said in a joint statement, came during the hundred years that the Concert of Europe led the continent. *New York Times*, 23 March 1943, p. 4.
118. *New York Times*, 25 March 1945, p. 21.
119. Ibid., 19 July 1945, pp. 1, 14.
120. H. Hoover to Alfred M. Landon, February 18, 1945, Hoover Papers. See also *New York Times*, 27 March 1945, p. 11. For pessimism concerning Poland in particular, see H. Hoover to W. R. Castle, February 18, 1945, Castle Papers.
121. Included would be no aggrandizement or annexations; no territorial changes not in accord with the peoples concerned; the right to all peoples to free elections; equality in trade; freedom of the seas in peacetime; disarmament of aggressor nations; arms reductions in all nations; and the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy. Among the human rights Hoover listed were fair trial before execution or imprisonment; no compulsory labor or slavery; protection to minorities and "backward peoples"; and freedom of the press and religion. By incor-

- porating such tenets in the charter, Hoover claimed that the Security Council would have a standard of conduct upon which to make decisions. *New York Times*, 25 March 1945, p. 13.
122. In pushing his favorite theme of regionalism, he claimed that such a device would give smaller nations a greater voice and would relieve the new organization of its image as a military alliance of a few great powers. It would recognize that policies needed to prevent conflict differed with the region, and it would permit the Security Council to be relieved of many problems before they reached it. In particular, the United States, and probably most other nations as well, would be relieved that they were not constantly involved in problems everywhere. *New York Times*, 27 March 1945, p. 11.
 123. The Security Council veto, Hoover maintained, practically put the great military powers out of reach. He wrote, "World wars are not started by small nations." Indeed, the veto made the new world organization as weak as the League. *New York Times*, 18 April 1945, p. 17.
 124. On revising outmoded treaties, see *ibid.*, 25 March 1945, p. 21. On defining aggression, see *ibid.*, 19 July 1945, p. 14. On disarmament, see *ibid.*, 25 March 1945, p. 21. Hoover devoted much thought to the question of atomic controls. In public, he suggested that dropping the atomic bomb on Japan might have been necessary, but he expressed dismay over American apathy concerning the killing of "tens of thousands of women and children." *New York Times*, 14 October 1945, p. 17. Hoover privately told atomic scientist Niels Bohr that he considered the dropping of the bomb a crime. See entry of November 6, 1946, in Joseph P. Lash, ed., *From the Diaries of Felix Frankfurter* (New York: Norton, 1975), p. 290. In September 1945, Hoover called upon the United States and Britain to retain their atomic monopoly pending the time when controls could be devised. He suggested that the Security Council could control uranium ores by placing resident inspectors in each country possessing this resource. *New York Times*, 28 September 1945, p. 3. By August 1946, he was more cautious, declaring that America should hold on to the atomic bomb until there was general disarmament in the world. He said, "We should be willing to agree that it will never be used except in defense of free men." See *New York Times*, 13 August 1946, p. 3.
 125. *New York Times*, 19 July 1945, pp. 1, 14. When Congress approved the charter, Hoover said that provision should be made for delegating the authority to use American forces to the president rather than to the Security Council. The president should be bound to submit the question to Congress if a majority of the House and Senate foreign policy committees favored such a course. *Ibid.*, 25 March 1945, p. 21.
 126. *Ibid.*, 19 July 1945, p. 1.
 127. *Ibid.*, 14 October 1945, p. 17.
 128. In reporting back to Truman, the former president claimed that standards of food and shelter had sunk to "the lowest level in a hundred years of Western history." Hoover noted the traditional economic ties between Germany and the rest of the continent. He warned that holding Germany "in economic chains" would "keep Europe in rags" and thereby destroy "any hope of peace in the world." Hoover's two reports were entitled "German Agriculture and Food Requirements," February 28, 1947, and "Necessary Steps for Promotion of German Exports," March 18, 1947, Hoover Papers. Concerning the controversial denazification process, Hoover privately said that many Germans had been forced to join the Nazi party in order to participate in national affairs. Hoover conversation discussed in Sterling Morton to Robert Herbst, July 24, 1947, the Papers of Sterling Morton, Chicago Historical Society (hereafter cited as Morton Papers).
 129. *New York Times*, 13 August 1946, p. 3.
 130. H. Hoover to Bonner Fellers, August 29, 1947, Hoover Papers.
 131. H. Hoover to Bruce Barton, December 9, 1948, Hoover Papers.
 132. *Ibid.*, June 9, 1948, Hoover Papers.
 133. Hoover had a whole series of objections, including the folly of a four-year commitment; neglect of such countries as China, Japan, Korea, and Germany; and the high cost to the American taxpayer. Other Hoover proposals included restricting all appropriations to fifteen months; confining gifts to surpluses in food, coal, fertilizer, and cotton; demanding European repayment for grants of steel and other capital goods; concentrating upon German production; abandoning foreign exchange for all transactions; and levying a ceiling of \$3 billion. H. Hoover to Arthur Vandenberg, January 18, 1948, *United States Foreign Policy for a Post-War Recovery*

Program (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 797–802. Hoover told wealthy Chicago manufacturer Sterling Morton that if the Europeans gave up demands for a forty-hour, five-day week, they should have substantial help. S. Morton to R. Herbst, July 11, 1947, Morton Papers.

134. *New York Times*, 21 November 1947, p. 11.
135. *Ibid.*, 24 February 1948, pp. 1, 6. Hoover claimed that George Washington would amend his advice against “entangling alliances” in light of Europe’s misery. Yet Hoover also stated that the United States, in the event of war, could not rely upon a single ally. Britain and western Europe might remain neutral, the reason not being so much ingratitude toward the United States as fear of a Red Army of 2.5 million men. Hoover could not help noting that a regional military alliance would eliminate the need for an American commitment.
136. Hoover comments as conveyed in S. Morton to H. C. Stone, August 11, 1948, Morton Papers.
137. Noting that the western European countries had spent less than 10 percent of their budgets on military items and that the United States had spent 40 percent, Hoover mused, “Perhaps they feel helpless and cannot do otherwise than rely upon being neutral, in which case we are simply playing Stalin’s game by the economic exhaustion of our society.” Yet Hoover was optimistic, declaring that communism contained its own “germs” of disintegration. Some Russian satellites, he said, were already chafing under their oppressive rulers. If war could be avoided, the Russian empire would “decay in strength and even disintegrate.” Conversely, however, even if the United States won a major war, it would have to spend years occupying all Russia, China, and dependent countries. Ideologies, he stressed, could not be destroyed by machine guns. If the United States attempted such a feat, it would be engaged in “processes of repression and liquidation repugnant to the American people.” Memorandum to Kenneth S. Wherry, May 9, 1950, Hoover Papers.
138. If necessary, Hoover argued, the United States should give naval protection to Formosa, the Pescadores, and possibly the Hainan Islands. Such a policy would not only defend the Philippines and Japan; it might guarantee the “salvation of southeastern Asia.” H. Hoover to William F. Knowland, December 31, 1949, in *Congressional Record*, 1950, p. 83.
139. *New York Times*, 29 June 1950, p. 18.
140. Speech of October 19, 1950, *Congressional Record*, p. A7451.
141. Speech of December 20, 1950, *Congressional Record*, pp. 17018–19. To Hoover, efforts to halt communism by a land war would merely create a “graveyard” for “millions of American boys.” He called for total withdrawal from Korea; the world itself, he asserted, lacked the forces adequate to repel the Chinese Communists. Repeating a point that he had made in his October 19 speech, he questioned whether Europe possessed “the will to fight.” The continent was still haggling over the nature of German rearmament, had refused to permit Spain to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and had within it well-organized Communist parties. Before the United States contributed “another man or another dollar” to its shores, the Europeans should establish “organized and equipped divisions of such large numbers as would erect a sure dam against the Red flood.”

Addressing the country again early in February 1951, Hoover slightly modified his position. This time he openly favored defending the Atlantic Pact nations, declaring that air and sea power would deprive the Russians of “General Manpower, General Space, General Winter and General Scorched Earth.” Hence such a strategy would best protect Europe. While he opposed administration plans to send ground troops, he now endorsed the shipment of munitions. He sought independence for Germany and Japan, asserting that for a century both countries had damned “the Russian-controlled hordes.” Without West Germany’s participation in NATO, there could be little defense of Europe itself. Again Hoover called for total withdrawal from Korea, approved the sending of American arms to Nationalist China, and claimed that he would permit Chiang “to do what he wishes in China.” Speech of February 9, 1951, *Congressional Record*, pp. A773–75. Late in February, Hoover testified before joint hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees. He asserted that, if necessary, the hemisphere possessed the resources to stand alone. Indeed, it had an abundance of zinc, copper, cobalt, and uranium. See testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committee, February 27, 1951, *Assignment of Ground Forces in the European Area* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), p. 734–37.

142. *New York Times*, 27 April 1951, p. 14.
143. In January 1952, Hoover claimed that the Truman administration, by vetoing McArthur's strategy of "destroying the Chinese air sanctuary in Manchuria and the employment of Chiang Kai-shek's armies," had denied the nation victory. He attacked the truce negotiations, declaring that the United States had "retreated from the original purpose of unity and independence for Korea to an appeasement idea of a division of Korea about where it was before." Yet, fearing that too many commitments would ruin America's solvency, he said, "If our economy should collapse, victory would be complete. We cannot take that risk." Speech of January 27, 1952, *Vital Speeches*, XVIII (February 15, 1952), 258-61.
144. H. Hoover to Joseph R. McCarthy, March 12, 1951, Hoover Papers. See also conversation with George T. Eggleston in March 1951 as described in Eggleston, *Roosevelt, Churchill, and the World War II Opposition: A Revisionist Autobiography* (Old Greenwich, Conn.: Devin-Adair, 1979), pp. 206-7.
145. *New York Times*, 14 March 1951, p. 8.
146. According to Hoover, the Kremlin had "reduced the United Nations to a propaganda forum for the smearing of free people," and had thereby eliminated its role "as a preservative of peace and good will." Hence he wanted the UN to be organized without the Communist nations. If this move was impractical, he called for a "New United Front," composed of those nations "who disavow Communism, who stand for morals and religion, and who love freedom." Hoover denied that he was proposing a military alliance; rather his proposal was based "solely upon moral, spiritual, and defense foundations." Speech of April 27, 1950 to American Newspaper Publishers Association, *New York Times*, 28 April 1950, p. 13.
147. *New York Times*, 22 April 1955, p. 6. In June 1954, Hoover was more cautious. He said that the United Nations should not be abolished for it had aided in settling disputes among "secondary nations." At the same time, he called upon "the free nations who believe in God" to mobilize, either within or outside the UN, "against Red atheism and human slavery." See speech before Merchandise Mart Hall of Fame, Chicago, June 24, 1955, *Addresses Upon the American Road, 1950-1955* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 72.
148. Hoover added that the United Nations had "failed to give us even a remote hope of lasting peace." In fact, it had added to the dangers of war. *New York Times*, 11 August 1962, pp. 1, 2.
149. In January 1951, Hoover suggested that the United States settle the unification of Germany with Russia. After supervised elections, a neutralized and disarmed Germany could emerge. "Russia keeps agreements that are in her interest," he went on, "and this would be, and would also be in our interest if we get our ground forces out of Europe and cut expenses." H. Hoover to Mark Sullivan, January 9, 1951, Hoover Papers.
150. In 1957, Hoover claimed that even though the United States had spent between \$40 and \$50 billion, there were probably not more than six battleworthy divisions in the whole alliance. H. Hoover to J. Reuben Clark, November 29, 1957, Hoover Papers.
151. In July 1953, Hoover claimed that the riots of eastern Europe might reduce Russia's aggressive potential. *New York Times*, 6 July 1953, p. 3. In November 1954, speaking in the aftermath of Stalin's death, Hoover noted that the heirs to the Bolshevik revolution were less militant and more concerned with domestic improvements than were the first generation. *Ibid.*, 25 November 1954, p. 8. When the 1955 Geneva Conference was held, Hoover hoped that it might result in "an enduring peace for years to come." *Ibid.*, 9 July 1955, p. 32. In 1957, he found "the free world" strong enough to counter any Soviet threat. *Ibid.*, 10 August 1957, p. 6; 12 November 1957, p. 26.
152. H. Hoover to Alexander Wiley, January 24, 1957, Hoover Papers.
153. *New York Times*, 25 May 1959, p. 12.
154. *Ibid.*, 67 April 1959, p. 3; 10 August 1961, p. 5.
155. Obituary, *ibid.*, 21 October 1964, p. 40.
156. *Ibid.*, 29 July 1963, p. 2.
157. Joan Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975), pp. 280-81. Wilson also wrote that Hoover predicted that "an American empire based on rigid ideological motivation and coercive military tactics . . . would ultimately destroy the system of voluntary cooperation at both the international and domestic levels that he tried so hard

- to create after World War I." See "A Reevaluation of Herbert Hoover's Foreign Policy," in Martin L. Fausold and George T. Mazuzan, eds., *The Hoover Presidency: A Reappraisal* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), p. 186.
158. William Appleman Williams, "What This Country Needs . . . The Shattered Dream: Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression," in *Herbert Hoover Reassessed: Essays Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Inauguration of Our Thirty-First President* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 445.
 159. Herbert Hoover, *The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958), p. 118.
 160. *Stanford Daily*, 30 April 1940, p. 1.
 161. "Foreign Policies Today," article in *Liberty Magazine*, April 15, 1939, as in *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 113.
 162. "The Nine Horsemen and America," article in *Liberty Magazine*, June 5, 1940, as in *Addresses, 1938-1940*, p. 172.
 163. Hoover and Gibson, *Problems*, p. 126.
 164. Hoover, *Ordeal*, p. 118.