Weekly News Analysis

Foreign Policy Showdown Seen Over Roosevelt's Peace Appeal

By Joseph W. La Bine

EDITOR'S NOTE—*When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst, and not necessarily of the newspaper.*

International

Though U. S. citizens have been wont to decry Britain's vaccilating foreign policy, events of 1939 have focused more than passing attention on a similar problem at home: Does Washington officialdom agree on a sound, well-reasoned foreign policy? Is such a policy reflected in common-sense national defense?

Most Americans think not, though by and large they feel alike about Hitler and Mussolini, dislike war and want no part in an arms race. Yet informed Americans agree both Germany and Italy were manhandled at Versailles, agreeing also that the U. S. must have "adequate" defense, even if it means an arms race. On the subject of American interference in foreign affairs there is debate: One school prefers traditional isolationism, though this

SENATOR BORAH
All Europe looked bad to him.

group also resents President Roosevelt's strong reiteration of a long-standing U. S. interest in Pan-American solidarity. The other school discards silent isolationism as no longer possible in a world of fast communications where politicians ride the same boat with foreign tradesmen.

Until early April, President Roosevelt had accomplished little by way of clarifying foreign policy, thanks partly to an impasse with congress. Each White House plump for internationalism had been followed by congressional plumping for isolationism, until in one short week the President apparently took the ball from congress via three strokes that made the U. S. citizenry conscious of a definite interest in Europe's fish kettle. First was the apparently casual remark at Warm Springs, where Mr. Roosevelt promised "to return in the fall if we don't have a war." Later he explained that "we" meant western civilization, and that the remark was actually planned to "give direction" to public thought.

Next, while congressional isolationism began simmering, Mr. Roosevelt told the Pan-American Union's governing board that the Western hemisphere is willing to match "force to force" against aggression, in defense of New world institutions and independence. By this time congressional isolation was boiling, but a few hours later the President delivered his biggest stroke—a frank appeal for world peace via diplomatic note to Hitler and Mussolini. Its gist: The President would serve as intermediary between dictator states and 31 nations of Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor, whose integrity he wants them to respect. This would lead to an international conference for disarmament, economic settlement and at least 10 years of mutually guaranteed peace. Most fearful quotation: "Plainly the world is moving toward . . . catastrophe unless a more rational way of guiding events is found."

Congress held its breath awaiting formal replies, too concerned for reckless speech-making at the moment. Isolationism's cause seemed defeated, yet even liberal internationalists began worrying lest the U. S. be summoned to serve 1917's purpose again, i.e., bring peace to traditionally quarrelsome Europe. Idaho's Sen. William E. Borah wrote: "This is not a war over the questions of democracy or totalitarianism . . . These European powers, whatever their ideology or political views, pursue one and the same course . . . They all violate treaties, disregard . . . principals of right, pursue methods which inevitably lead to war and then call upon the United States, Canada and other nations to save them from their own intolerable and vicious methods."

Even so, the President's personal brand of foreign policy bore some fruit. Though German-Italian rejection was expected from the start, favorable replies rained on Washington so fast that one purpose was definitely accomplished: World opinion had at last been mobilized, drawing peace-loving assurances from lesser nations which fear dealing with either the Axis or the Anglo-French bloc, but who will speak their minds to an intermediary. Even more important was the psychological effect. Slow in sending their hostile, jointly prepared answers, the Rome-Berlin axis inferentially and involuntarily reminded the world that Europe's two dictators are guilty of aggression, moreover will be responsible for the war Europe soon expects.

Best anti-Roosevelt argument of isolationists is that Italy and Germany have already broken so many agreements that the President's dream of a 10-year peace "guarantee" is rather futile. Second best argument is that the note merely gave impetus to Britain's warlike Stop Hitler front, drawing France, Russia and England closer to a mutual defense pact, which is probably inspired by the unspoken hope that the U. S. is willing to join the party if need arises. Third argument is that Axis chiefs may grow hostile and seek revenge by discrediting democracies via a new territorial grab, such as Danzig, which Britain and France have already agreed not to protest. Since such renewed belligerence would be a direct slap at President Roosevelt, isolationists still see hope for their cause.

Refugees

Patterned after Red Cross and Salvation Army, the Friends Service committee was formed in Philadelphia during the World war by Quakers. An earlier Philadelphia Quaker was Joseph Scattergood, who in 1880 built a Quaker preparatory school at West Branch, Iowa. Closed in 1931 for want of funds, Scattergood school reopens May 1 for another sort of preparatory work. Its main building renovated, its caretaker's home turned into a dormitory, the institution will house 40 to 50 refugees who can spend a maximum of 90 days there getting bearings for a new life in the U. S. Then they will shift for themselves, making way for new arrivals.

Business

A Republican, Edward J. Noble built his confectionary business into a mint called Life Savers before President Roosevelt named him chief of the civil aeronautics authority. Because he represents business, also because he believes—unlike many businessmen—that U. S. industry can move forward under current governmental regulations, Mr. Noble was too good a friend to be left in the non-controversial field of aeronautics. Result: He has been named assistant to Harry L. Hopkins, new commerce department chief who is conscientiously trying to make that traditionally dead-end office into a vital aid to U. S. business.

But Harry Hopkins is admittedly trying to sell the New Deal to business (though not without carefully removing obvious stumbling blocks) and he may have his eye on the 1940 presidential campaign. Hence Mr. Noble makes a good "front man," and now the front man is himself looking for front men.

At his first press conference in the new job, Mr. Noble gave U. S. newspapers a want-ad for patriotic,

EDWARD J. NOBLE
Help wanted.

distinguished business leaders who, like himself, will take $1 a year each to assist the department's business expansion efforts. His purpose: "I want to get around me men smarter than I am to do specific jobs."

Departmental objectives, in the Noble opinion: (1) Restore confidence, leading to increased business volume, leading in turn to lower taxes without disturbing government's revenue or extraordinary expenditures; (2) help industry reabsorb the unemployed; (3) build foreign trade, especially to combat the Nazi-Fascist threat in South America.

People

Appointed, **James Slattery,** Illinois commerce commission chairman, U. S. senator to succeed the late J. Hamilton Lewis.

Resigned, **H. F. McElroy,** for 13 years Kansas City's city manager, father of **Mary McElroy,** once a kidnap victim.

Resigned, Son **Elliott Roosevelt,** as president and a director of Hearst Radio, Inc., to spend more time with his Texas State Radio network.

Relief

His 1939 relief vote may be a record on which many a senator and congressman will rise or fall next election. Reason: Congress is determined to outlaw the present system, substituting something closer akin to state administration in which states will also pay a bigger share. If the plan succeeds, fine; if not, disgruntled relief clients could make hostile constituents at election time.

Major idea is that of South Carolina's Sen. James F. Byrnes, who boasts coalition support for a measure to place WPA, PWA, CCC and NYA into a new public works agency, provide old age assistance payments, liberalize unemployment

SENATOR McNARY
He also neglected financing.

compensation and increase aid to unemployables. Federal supervision would continue unabated, though bipartisan administration would attempt to quiet cries of politics-in-relief.

Many Republicans support the Byrnes bill, but the solid congressional economy front may break down under relief debate. Going whole hog against federal supervision, Oregon's Sen. Charles L. McNary (G. O. P. minority leader) wants WPA eliminated entirely because of serious "structural defects" which inevitably produce periodic "scandals." His program: (1) Return relief administration to the states; (2) create bi-partisan federal boards to allocate funds; (3) create bi-partisan state boards to disburse relief money.

Though Senator Byrnes scoffed mainly at the impossibility of "bipartisan" boards, both proposals had one other major defect, namely, financing. Senator McNary would compel states to contribute not less than 25 per cent of funds spent within their borders. Senator Byrnes would have states pay one-third. The stumbling block is that the U. S. will not cut its tax levies, yet without such cuts the 48 states cannot raise their levies to reassume relief costs which the government began easing from their shoulders in 1933. The hoped-for solution, already under discussion, calls for U. S. allocations based 50 per cent on population and 50 per cent on unemployment, proportionately higher grants going to "sub-marginal" states with less than average per capita income.

Science

In 137 B. C., two Chinese astronomers who reported an eclipse were beheaded for being drunk. Four hundred years earlier an eclipse scared the Medes and Persians into ending their five-year war. No such consequences resulted one mid-April day when the sun, moon and earth staged a similar phenomenon. Passing in front of the sun as astronomists predicted, the moon eclipsed from one-third to three-fourths of the fiery ball in a show visible throughout most of the U. S., much of Europe and eastern Russia.

Asia

Discouraging to a disguised Japanese visitor would be modern Chunking, new headquarters for westward-driven China where newsmen have been shown for the first time how crafty Gen. Chiang Kai-shek is sinking the industrial roots of a new nation, while Nippon wrestles with war-wrecked coastal districts.

Projects include a $2,500,000 iron and steel works which far-sighted Chiang began building early last fall, where a 30-ton blast furnace, a 10-ton open hearth and a 10-inch rolling mill will soon be in operation. Nearby, under American trained directors, are two Chinese-built electric furnaces making ship anchors, rails and smaller steel items.

Another important project is a vegetable oil cracking plant where experimental production will soon start on artificial gasoline refined from oil comparable to high grade motor oils. At other sites in Chungking's vast new industrial district reporters saw silk, cotton and electric plants, while several thousand workmen were laboring over new factories.

Lest Japan push westward to capture Chungking, Chinese are expanding their industrial life to other places like Szechuan, Yunnan and Kweichow.

Miscellany

Geneva's international labor office reports U. S. unemployment (estimated at 11,523,000) led all other nations in 1939's first three months. Thirteen nations reported increased unemployment in this period.

Bruckart's Washington Digest

Signs of Impending Trouble for National Labor Relations Board

Advocates of Amendment of Wagner Act Grow More Vociferous; Law Itself and Its Administration Cause Widespread Criticism; Some Expert Stalling.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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WASHINGTON.—It was only a few years ago that any politician, seeking a harvest of votes, would rather have cut off his right arm than offend organized labor. In a close fight, the labor vote held the balance of power. Labor unions forged ahead with remarkable force.

But labor started fighting within its own ranks and there came the C. I. O. Rather, John Lewis, the leader of the mine workers, got ambitious and broke away from the old established and respected American Federation of Labor and gave birth to the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

So, many politicians, including President Roosevelt, turned to C. I. O., because it was modern, streamlined, aggressive. It appeared, for a time, that C. I. O. was going to be the big power among the workers. Having that advantage, C. I. O. went to town, as the football players say. Its strength was manifest in congress and under the impetus of C. I. O. force, Senator Wagner, the New York Democrat, brought forth the national labor relations act, under which the national labor relations board was appointed and began functioning.

That much is history.

But now there are signs of impending trouble for the national labor relations board. With its main support, the C. I. O., having its troubles in collecting dues, and with the peace efforts of President Roosevelt who sought to get union men of the United States back in one organization having failed dismally, the labor board is up against it. In fact, to summarize the situation in the homely expression of my boyhood home: it looks like the swashbuckling, defiant calf is just about ready to choke itself because of too much rope. It may not happen in this session of congress, but it will happen before long. Why? The answer is that organized labor, as represented by the Lewis faction, made the same mistake as greedy big business frequently makes. It became arrogant; it bit off more than it could chew. The reaction has now set in.

Demands for Amendment of Labor Act Grow Noisier

Advocates of amendment of the Wagner labor act have been knocking at the door a long time. Recently, the knocking has resembled sledge hammer pounding. A very large number of senators and representatives have heard it.

As a matter of fact, it was Mr. Roosevelt's efforts to get A. F. of L. and C. I. O. back into a single national union that has delayed the moves in congress looking to amendment of the labor law. C. I. O., having stood by the President when he was a candidate and having fought for his cause time after time, was entitled to the President's services as a peace negotiator. Many persons thought there would be a happy reunion, but there was no chance at all from the very outset of the negotiations, and the affair did nothing to lift Mr. Roosevelt's prestige, especially in the rural areas where C. I. O. and sit-down strikes have much the same meaning.

While the administration's plans for a union reunion were slipping, there came that sensational verdict by a federal court jury in Philadelphia which assessed $700,000 damages against the sit-down strikers in a hosiery plant. The damages were assessed directly against the men who did the job, and thus for the first time a responsibility, as well as a right, was given to labor. The right to strike long has been established and labor must guard it; never before, however, had there been a court determination that liability also exists if damage is done.

It is unnecessary here to review what the labor relations board has been doing. Time after time, it has been accused of dancing to the bagpipes played by C. I. O. The American Federation of Labor, among other critics, has charged it with rank C. I. O. favoritism. The board does not consist of persons capable of winning very much respect. True, I believe they have very alert and fast-moving minds, but I cannot help regarding them as without any trace of judicial temperament. Without doubt, the country would be better off had all three members been ousted months ago.

Act and Its Administration Causes Widespread Criticism

It is, perhaps, as much because of the terrible administration of the law as from the inequities of the loosely drawn law itself that the criticism has been so widespread. Hundreds of cases, coming before the board, have left employers with personal losses as a result of one-sided determinations. Labor unions, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, have repeatedly asserted they could not obtain justice if the C. I. O. figured in the situation. In any event, there are now senators and representatives sponsoring a hatfull of amendments to the law, and a large number of these amendments are being promoted by the A. F. of L. lobby at the capitol.

There is one amendment, for instance, that proposes to disband the present three-man board and supplant it with a five-man board. That, of course, is the political maneuver to get rid of people with whom congress is disgusted. The amendment is by Senator Walsh, Massachusetts Democrat.

Senator Walsh also has introduced several other amendments, one of which, in particular, is worth noting. It would attempt, at least, to eliminate "prejudicial delays." That sounds rather academic. It is, however, important because, according to the A. F. of L. explanation, delays by the board have worked, or have been used, to the advantage of C. I. O. If the C. I. O. was not sure that it had a majority, according to the other union, rather thinly disguised reasons for delays were brought up. Then, C. I. O. organizers would start their drives.

Whether the A. F. of L. charges are true and whether the criticisms of employers have been justified, it remains as fact that C. I. O. is now opposing amendment to the act.

Hearings Are Delayed by Various Stalling Maneuvers

Supporters of the law in its present form and defenders of the board as it is now made up succeeded for example in delaying hearings on amendments to the act for more than a month. They urged Senator Thomas of Utah, committee chairman, not to hold hearings while peace negotiations were in progress. They insisted that it was unfair to embarrass the President in his attempts to restore unity in the labor movement, and argued that hearings would bring bitter statements into print. Mr. Thomas yielded to the plea for delay, but eventually the pressure for action became too strong even for the Utah senator to resist.

And the friends of the law were right when they anticipated bitter words. Senator Wagner in his testimony spoke rather blatantly about critics being unacquainted with the purposes of the law. He felt, too, that there was no need for haste about changes. He rather hinted that there were some Ethiopian gentlemen in the woodpile, but failed to put his finger on them. He simply was standing pat about the whole thing.

A little later, however, the C. I. O. people named the terrible "conspirators" who wanted the act changed. The American Federation of Labor had "conspired" with the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. There was the fine unseen hand, the Chamber of Commerce, big business, personified. It was the guilty party; it was speaking for the employers who want to grind poor workmen into the dust, destroy unionism, wreck the families of the wage earners—or so the C. I. O. shouted. Well, as far as I am concerned, I fail to see why the C. I. O. picked the Chamber of Commerce. It is so thoroughly discredited that it hasn't had any influence at the capitol in 10 years. Why anyone should think that the Chamber of Commerce could have started a movement as strong as the present demand for change of the labor act is quite beyond me. But that was what the C. I. O. charged. It may have been what Senator Wagner meant.

Say Changes Would Benefit Neither Labor Nor Industry

Finally, the labor board itself appeared before the senate committee and announced it had an "open mind." Its mind was so open that it submitted a document of 360 typewritten pages, analyzing the proposals for changes and arriving generally at the conclusion that the proposed changes were no good. In substance, the board said that the bulk of the changes being pressed "would benefit neither labor group, nor would they be of help to industry." Most of all, in the labor board's mind, the amendments would "conflict with the basic purposes of the act."

Thus, as the hearings were concluded and the committee seeks to do some deliberating on its own account, labor finds itself still fighting within itself, lacking direction and one could almost say, lacking purpose. It is too bad that there must be the same greed, the same thirst for power within the ranks of workers as there is among political leaders and heads of governments. Those fellows who play the game of politics can lose their jobs and the country is none the worse. But when political labor leaders play their games and lose, the pawns are the workers who have no means of protection.

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SAFETY TALKS

The Careless Male

It appears that the male of the species is more careless than the female.

Of every 100,000 males in the United States, 119.6 were killed in accidents during 1937, reports the National Safety council.

Only 51.3 of every 100,000 women suffered accident deaths.

Painful Shaving

Shaving in the South Sea islands until recently was a painful process. The operation was performed by means of a shark's tooth set in a wooden handle. With this crude instrument, native barbers literally sawed off the beard, but in case the victim had a tender skin his hair was singed off as are the pin feathers of a plucked chicken.—Washington Post.

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