

WSM

May 7, 1950

Good morning friends:

We have had an exceedingly busy and hardworking week in Washington.

The United States Senate after finally approving Senator Kefauver's resolution to investigate crime passed a bill to extend the Economic Cooperation Administration, properly known as the Marshall Plan, for another year. The House of Representatives held late sessions every day including yesterday as it plowed through paragraph by paragraph, item by item, the twenty-nine billion dollar appropriation bill providing funds for each and every activity of the United States government.

The executive branch of the government seemed busy. Secretary of State Dean Acheson left for London where he is to meet with the foreign ministers of Great Britain and France. President Truman had numerous callers and made several statements. The Presidential press conferences must be quite an ordeal. With some hundred or more smart, alert men propounding questions it is to be expected that the President would upon some occasions make an unwise off-the-cuff remark. He seems to handle his press conference now better than during his first and second year as President but no one can be expected to hit a home run every time he goes to bat.

On last Thursday the President answered a question by saying that he was not alarmed over the cold-war situation and described it as much better than in 1946. Furthermore he said that our national defense budget for the 1951 fiscal year would be lower than now. Surely the President would not, upon mature thought, say that he was not alarmed over the increasing tension between the Western world and the Soviet Union. Just two weeks ago I was invited to the State Department along with other members of the appropriations committee where



Secretary Acheson and his assistants gave us a review of what we thought was a worsening international situation. I recall distinctly that State Department assistants pointed out twenty some odd places on the globe where Russia was increasing her pressure including the shooting down of one of our planes over the Baltic <sup>Sea</sup> ocean. I thought this meeting was called for the purpose of giving us a background against which to consider the request which came a few days later to increase our appropriations for war planes and submarines. The request came from the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the approval of the Secretary of National Defense and the President. With the picture that had been presented to us we felt we had no choice. My Committee, Republican and Democrat alike, voted unanimously for the funds which the Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense and President said were necessary to provide adequate national defense.

Likewise, during the week the leaders of our armed forces appeared before the House Armed Services Committee and told them a <sup>similar</sup> story of increasing tension and asked that the selective service act or draft law be extended. The House Armed Services Committee voted 31 to nothing, Democrat and Republican voted alike, to favorably report a bill to extend the Selective Service Act for another two years. It <sup>happened to be</sup> ~~was~~ just at the time the Committee was acting that the President made his off-the-cuff remark that he was not alarmed over the situation and that it was better now than in 1946. Now, I doubt if President Truman would <sup>and said,</sup> make that statement after mature deliberation. Surely he could not do so if he had the same information which the Department of State and the Department of National Defense <sup>does have</sup> had given to me and I am sure that he ~~has~~ this information and more.



*On the contrary,*  
As far as I can see there has been no overall improvement. There has been no  
let up in the pressure that the Soviet Union has exerted wherever there has been  
an opportunity for disagreement, *where* or a weak spot has appeared. Nor has there been  
any let up insofar as I can see in the aggressive extension of Communism towards  
its goal of world domination. What then could have prompted the President's  
statement that the situation was better now than in 1946? I do not <sup>now</sup>  
what the President had in mind but since the debate on the ECA Bill was nearing  
a climax in the Senate he may have been thinking of Western Europe and the  
success of this program in that area. Undoubtedly the situation is better in  
Western Europe than in 1946. For at that time France and Italy were teetering  
on the brink of Communism as was Greece. Turkey was under serious pressure.  
In fact, the whole of Western Europe was in a state of chaos, misery and want  
and the threat that it would come under the complete domination of communist  
minorities was grave and real. Today all of Western Europe including Western  
Germany has regained a great deal of economic and political stability and have  
well in hand the communist minorities which in 1946 and 1947 came dangerously  
near to taking over. *at least,* So in Western Europe, I believe one can say that the situation  
is ~~much~~ better than in 1946. Were it not so the Marshall Plan, the extension  
of which has been <sup>now</sup> approved by both the House and Senate for another year, would have  
been a failure. <sup>B</sup> But when we look at other parts of the World *the whole globe,* we see that aggressive  
communism has made significant advancements. All of China has fallen under  
Communist Domination since 1946. Other gains in satellite countries have been  
<sup>The</sup> consolidated. / Military strength of the Soviet Union has been maintained and in



some respects built up. For instance, Russia now has the atomic bomb which she did not have in 1946.

I sometimes wonder, in fact, I often wonder if it is advisable for the President of the United States to submit himself to a series of grilling impromptu questions by men whose profession it is to make searching and provocative inquiries. It must be quite an ordeal for any man to face a barrage of a hundred or more newspaper men all of whom have numerous questions. No man, not even a President can be expected to have at his fingertips a carefully prepared statement on any and all questions. Some Presidents have refused to have such press conferences replying only to questions submitted in writing. Former President Roosevelt seemed mostly to enjoy them and handled them expertly though even he had slips of the tongue. President Truman has improved in his technique of handling press conferences and of late has been more careful than heretofore but as his statement last Thursday indicates, he is still apt to ~~make~~ let slip an inadvisable remark when subjected to the cross fire of impromptu questions—and where is there a man who would not be apt to do the same thing upon occasion.