

Washington Digest

Sincerity Marks Peace Parley at San Francisco

Creation of Flexible Organization Foreseen; Position of President Truman Bolsters Hand of U. S. Delegation.

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.—There is something significant, I believe, in the fact that this world conference which hopes to plot a happier course for the future of the world is being held at the Golden Gate. I can't help contrasting the atmosphere with that which enveloped the gathering on the banks of the Seine 26 years ago, which I also covered.

I think there is much more hope for success for this gathering than there was for the Paris conference two decades ago, although most of us who crowded into its opening session on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris on a sunny January day in 1919, were well supplied with hope, too.

I think the meeting place was well chosen and if the agenda becomes unfinished business, it might well be cleared on the same spot where the clean fog sweeps in from the Pacific whose wide waters unite the east and the west.

There still lingers on California's shores the memory of its multifold historical national contacts. It was here in "Drake's Bay" that the famous English explorer is said to have stepped to repair his ship. I say was Drake's bay for later, Cermeño, the Spaniard, on a voyage from Manila in 1595, was shipwrecked in the same body of water and gave it its present name of San Francisco bay. The Franciscan missionaries built missions a mile-day's journey apart from southern to northern California. The sword followed the cross and Portola's Spanish soldiers fought their way up to what is still called the Præsidio, the very year the American nation was born.

Less definite are the records of the czar's explorers but the "Russian river" just north of here remains a flowing memento of their early visits.

Less distinguished Chinese and Japanese came and raised their problems; great settlements of Hindus remain in the state and colonies of Swiss and Italians toil among vineyards reproducing the products of their homelands.

Seek to Build On Firm Ground

As I write these lines two things appear as near certainties as certainties exist in this kaleidoscopic world. The United Nations are sincere in the hope of erecting some sort of structure which, if it is humanly possible to do so, can provide a place for the shelter, care and feeding of the dove of peace. A shadowy and almost paradoxical corollary of this statement is the frank acknowledgment that probably one desideratum primum omnium of only one of the great powers is the international organization itself. What Russia and Britain want, first of all, is an inner citadel girded by strong mutually protective alliances. The rest of the structure is, for them, largely window dressing. Nevertheless, to obtain cooperation among the strong few, they are willing to include the weaker many.

The second thing which I think even at this juncture can be predicted is that no matter how harmonious the building of this new temple of hope may be, the final edifice will be constructed on such a broad foundation and with such wide portals, that it will not confine its tenants to any very strict restraint of action. There will be plenty of room to turn around in it, in case some of the occupants feel they don't want to go in exactly the same direction as their fellows. This is not a cynical conclusion—it is simply the result of a practical desire not to put anything in the way of getting something started. The American delegation realizes that.

An agreement on major questions which could be decided following the meeting of Stettinius, Molotov and Eden was announced by the delegation before we left Washington, which meant that Senator Vandenberg was satisfied that the wording of the final agreement which the Americans would accept contained enough elasticity to provide an "escape clause." This assures the senate and the American people that

this nation will not be bound, even by implication, to support injustices perpetrated by other nations, past or present.

Truman Understands Congress' Viewpoint

With Harry Truman in the White House the position of the delegation has been strengthened by his announcement that he would not attend the meeting in person, but would back up his delegates from his desk "where he belonged." There are several other things that augur well for harmony. The senate knows that Mr. Truman is not personally committed in any way to Britain or Russia since he did not participate in any of the talks of the Big Three; they noted his remark that Foreign Commissar Molotov when he arrived in this country would pay his respects to the President of the United States "as he should." This time the mountain had come to Mahomet, not the reverse.

Lastly, there is the very potent fact that President Truman was Senator Truman for a long while. He knows the legislative viewpoint and, to know the legislative viewpoint, not academically as an outside observer, but as a long-time possessor of that viewpoint, is of great practical importance. Remember the frequent controversies between the administration and congress in the past few years. Note, likewise, two of the outstanding successes in obtaining cooperation between the executive and the legislative branches: Cordell Hull and James Byrnes, both former members of congress.

So much for the hope for domestic harmony. Now consider the difference between the position of the United States in 1919 and the United States in 1945.

Then, it is true, our entry into the war made victory possible. But now we have taken over the major burden of the fighting and in so doing have become the most powerful country in the world and of all the powerful countries, the one which emerges with its military resources least impaired—by far the most powerful in terms of army, navy and war material and wealth.

On the whole I think it is fair to report a general feeling of optimism on the part of the American delegation and at least a feeling on the part of other delegates I have met, of willingness to try to justify that optimism.

A G.I. President

It is a long time since we have had an ex-soldier in the White House. President Truman is the first veteran of World War I to accept the mansion.

As you know he broadcast to the troops overseas soon after he addressed congress. Naturally the movie-cameras and the sound-track boys were there. So were the army photographers. But the Big Boys get the priorities at such shows. The newsreels, the top-flight magazines and the rest. The boys in uniform were pushed back. They didn't belong.

As a result they got a sad side shot that was strictly ng.

So the officer in charge went up and asked if he could have a re-take. "Certainly," (or words to that effect since we don't quote Presidents) said President Truman. "Go ahead, we'll do the whole thing over."

Well, army pictorial does things right. It has some of the best Hollywood technical men in uniform. It took a long time to get just the right lighting. So an official came up and said:

"You have just ten minutes more."

Up spoke the captain: "Do you want the President taken right or wrong?"

The President broke in: "Take all night if you want to." (or, as I said, words to that effect). This picture was for the G.I.s.

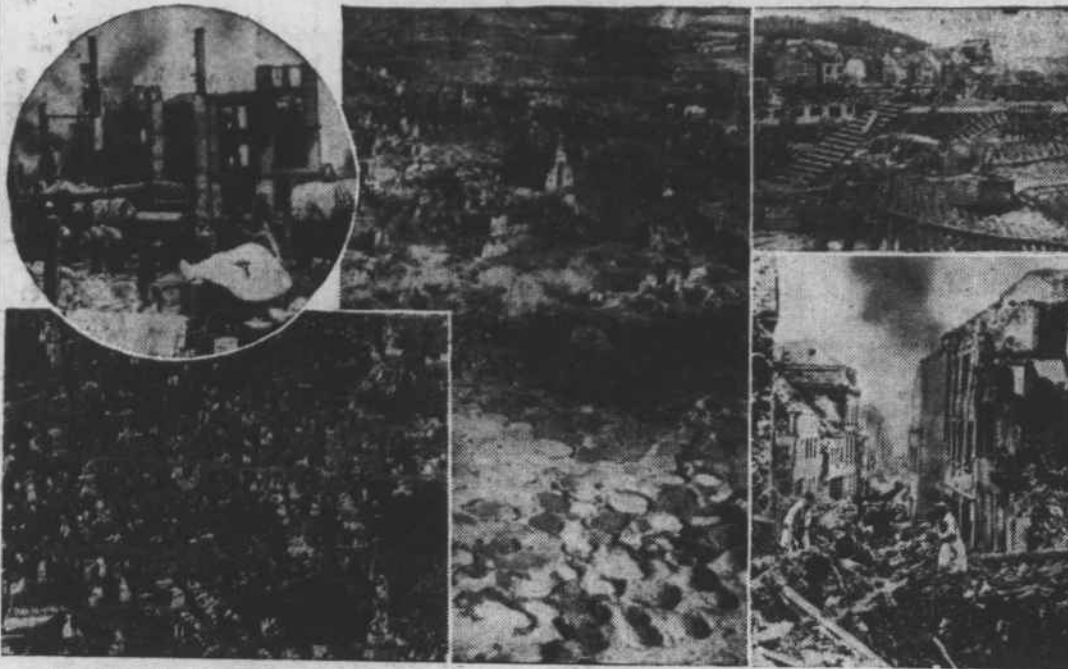
And so they fiddled and fooled until they had the lights right, until they had everything just right.

And then the President went ahead and did his speech over again.

It is one of the best action shots taken in the White House.

But you won't see it. It was just for the G.I.s.

German Cities in the Path of Allies' Advance



City after city in Germany is being leveled to the ground by the Allied air forces and the advancing artillery and infantry units. Among the cities to which war has been brought home by the advancing victorious Allies are: upper left, Aeschaffenburg; lower left, Duren receives its quota, little remaining of city on Roer river after saturation bombing. Center: View of Wesel, focal point of American forces on Rhine. Upper right, Limburg railroad marshalling yards after bombing. Lower right, Eitburg.

War Returns to Okinawa, Japan's Nerve Center



In 1853 the Leatherneck complement of Commodore Perry's squadron accompanied him on a visit to Okinawa. The Devil Dogs, in the current assault, found the long narrow island made up of plateaus and ridges. Most of the population of 443,000 is engaged in a substandard of agriculture. Centuries of being kicked around, in the game of power politics, has produced a mixed race with strains of Malayan, Korean, Chinese and Japanese—a people completely ignorant of the United States. Photos above show the natives after the American invasion.

Meiji Shrine Burned to Ashes



The grand Meiji shrine, near the Imperial palace of Japan in Tokyo where the Emperor often officiated, was among the places hit in a four-hour-long raid by a huge fleet of American superfortresses. The Jap communique, which told of the raid in which Imperial palace buildings were hit, said the sanctuary was burned to ashes.

Wins Novel Award



Sgt. Josiah E. Greene, Washington, Conn., won first prize in MacMillan contest for his novel, "Not in Our Stars." Back from Italy, he is now a link trainer instructor.

B-29 Hero Honored by General



Maj. Gen. Willis H. Hale, former commanding general of the army air forces in the Pacific ocean area, paid S/Sgt. R. E. Erwin of Bessemer, Ala., on the arm after presenting him with the congressional medal of honor for picking up a burning bomb over Tokyo and tossing it out of a B-29. Members of the crew whose lives he saved stand by.

New Baseball Czar



Albert "Happy" Chandler, former U. S. senator from Kentucky, who has been appointed to succeed the late Kenesaw Mountain Landis as baseball's czar.



WORLD LEADERS PICTURE
By the thread of one man's life hung personal relationships which affected nations. Prime ministers and potentates, once close to Franklin Roosevelt, now must learn how to get along with an unknown gentleman in the White House. Certain army-navy officials, who always knew how Roosevelt would react on this and that, now must do business with a man they once criticized.
To illustrate how the pendulum of fate has swung, here are some of those who will miss Franklin Roosevelt most:

WINSTON CHURCHILL—was able to call the late President on the telephone at any time night or day. Their relationship was more intimate than with most members of their own cabinets. When Churchill couldn't get Roosevelt, he talked to Harry Hopkins. Their friendship was equally close. Hopkins and Churchill used to stay up late at night sipping brandy long after FDR had gone to bed, and it was those late-hour talks that sometimes worried U. S. army-navy men. For vital policy, sometimes was moulded after midnight.

Churchill had planned to hold national elections, probably in June, and Roosevelt's friendship would have been one of his great campaign assets. That asset is now out the window. Instead he must do business with a man he doesn't know and who chairmanned a committee whose members were quite critical of certain British lend-lease and international air policies abroad.

Some political observers believe that makes Churchill's political future very uncertain.

ADMIRAL ERNEST KING—The Commander of the Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations really ran the navy under Roosevelt, and he ran it with a high hand. He ignored the late Secretary Frank Knox whenever he felt like it, knowing he would get a sympathetic ear at the White House. He even overruled Knox on such a trivial matter as a gray-blue summer uniform for the navy, though Knox had decided it would cut too heavily into the consumption of textiles.

Knox's successor, Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, has played in with King. He had to. If King didn't agree with him, the admiral came out bluntly in press conference and said so.

But now there is a new man in the White House who wrote a caustic report bitterly critical of the way the admirals slowed the war by failure to build adequate landing boats. The new President also did not hesitate to throw his hooks into the navy whenever the brass hats got inefficient, especially on their inexcusable procrastination in building destroyer-escort vessels. So fellow-admirals are watching to see just where King now sits.

GENERAL B. B. SOMERVELL—No army officer clashed with the Truman committee more frequently and more head-on than the tough-talking chief supply officer of the army. Somervell differed with Truman on all sorts of things, and the Truman committee reports are studied with criticism of the army's supply job.

Truman is not a man to nurse personal grudges and won't demote or transfer Somervell. General Marshall always maintained that despite mistakes he was the best man they had. But Somervell will never become chief of staff, or rise any higher in the army.

HARRY HOPKINS—Of all those around Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins will miss him most. Their's was a very close personal relationship. Although Harry has been criticized vitriolically, sometimes even by other presidential intimates, FDR never wavered in his devotion. In a way, Harry took the place of Roosevelt's eldest son, Jimmie, whom he once hoped would be his secretary. So Harry will miss his old friend terribly.

The critics will say that Hopkins will miss him because of the glamour, the power and the prestige. But actually there was a love and devotion between the two men which few realized and even fewer understood.

Note—Several years ago, Roosevelt gave Hopkins permission to take notes on their discussions and write his memoirs. "You have no money, Harry," he said, "and you're foolish if you don't take notes on our conversations. You have my full permission to use them later." But Hopkins, always too busy, always engrossed with winning the Chief's next objective, never had time to take notes. He knows more about Roosevelt than any other living man, but most of the secrets will go with Hopkins to the grave.

BERNARD BARUCH—The man who talks with Presidents, no longer has the key to the White House. During the bitter battles between the War Production board civilian group and General Somervell's military clique, Baruch always backed up Somervell. In fact, he was one of Somervell's most vigorous supporters.

Truman, on the other hand, fought in the WPB civilian corner. Also Bernie was for Byrnes, not Truman, at the Chicago convention. So he may not be such a close friend to Presidents any more.

THE CHEERFUL CHERUB
My spirits are cheerful
and airy and gay,
I'm so filled with gladness
I just effervesce
A little more joy and I'd
simply capsize—
My troubles are
just for a
balloon, I guess
[Illustration of a cherub]

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DOAN'S PILLS

BARBS... by Baukhage

The miners came in '48 to California, the diplomats in '45 are digging in to stay.

America is bankrupt, says a Jap foreign office spokesman—yenful thinking.

Max Schmeling, former heavyweight champion, who was put in a concentration camp and "treated" for defecation by the Nazis, is now a welterweight, according to the Berlin correspondent of a Swedish paper.

One of the shortages which has not been called to general attention is the lack of garbage cans. The OPA says that only one-fifth of the number demanded is being produced. This will soon be evident to anyone who doesn't hold his nose.