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Patterns in Rhetoric : Critical American Foreign Policy Toward Hungary, 1848-1956

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Abstract

An abstract of the thesis of Timothy S. Moon for the Master of Arts in History presented August 10, 1998.

Title: Patterns in Rhetoric: Critical American Foreign Policy Towards Hungary 1848-1956.

During three critical junctures between 1848 and 1956 America's Foreign policy towards Hungary took on a similar pattern of strong rhetoric on Hungary's behalf with little or no action. These critical periods involved the Hungarian revolution and its aftermath between 1848 and 1852, the brief period of democratic government in Hungary following World War I, and the Hungarian revolution in 1956. The Rhetoric by the United States regarding Hungary in these instances was also directed more as a treatment of American domestic and or foreign policy interests that were not necessarily related to Hungary. This thesis is an analysis of the rhetoric by the United States during these critical periods in Hungary.

PATTERNS IN RHETORIC:

CRITICAL AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS HUNGARY

1848-1956

by

TIMOTHY S. MOON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
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To Mom

Thanks for everything; I miss you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my wife Anita who's patience, encouragement, and editing skills have been indispensable.

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Introduction

Between 1848 and 1956, American and Hungarian interests intersected at three important junctures: the first Hungarian Revolution and its aftermath between 1848 and 1852, Hungary's brief stint with democracy under Mihaly Karolyi following World War I, and the Hungarian revolution in 1956, this time in opposition to Soviet rule. Although these three periods were characterized by drastically different sets of circumstances, United States foreign policy actions followed a similar pattern in each case. This pattern consisted of strong American rhetoric in support of these efforts by Hungary towards self-determination, followed by little or no meaningful action by the United States on Hungary's behalf.

These episodes shared a number of other significant similarities. First, they all involved critical periods in Hungary's history when the establishment of an independent democratic state seemed distinctly possible. Prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the above periods represented Hungary's best

opportunities for achieving some form of democratic government. Secondly, during each episode Hungarian leaders looked first and foremost to the United States for assistance in these efforts. Third, the responses by the United States to these particular events in Hungary were aimed at accomplishing specific American domestic and or international interests that were not necessarily related to Hungary. American rhetoric in these instances was not designed as a sincere effort to deal with these problems in Hungary but rather to utilize the events in Hungary as a springboard to address other more pressing American interests elsewhere. This dynamic contributed to both inflating the level of American rhetoric in support of Hungary, and preventing meaningful aid on Hungary's behalf. Finally, in every case Hungarians mistook this rhetoric by the United States as a commitment to aid Hungary, despite the fact that no concrete promises of meaningful aid were ever offered.

In December 1851, Louis Kossuth the leader of the failed Hungarian Revolution between 1848-1849, arrived in New York city amidst an almost frenzied outpouring of popular support. In the minds of many Americans, Kossuth had become the symbolic leader of the struggle against

tyrannical rule in Europe and thus the logical spokesman for American intervention against Europe's ruling tyrants. The United States was beginning to emerge as an economic world power and the public's realization of this, in conjunction with the eruption of these conflicts in Europe, sparked a national debate over the need for American intervention against European Monarchs. This debate brought pressure to bear for the first time on the warnings by George Washington against America becoming entangled in European power struggles. George Washington had argued eloquently in his farewell address against the wisdom of the young nation becoming mired in power struggles on the continent of Europe. Thomas Jefferson also repeated this warning as President. The question was whether these warnings were still relevant considering the rapid growth in the influence and power of the United States and the nature of these struggles in Europe.

In addition to the popularity of intervention, Americans were becoming increasingly pre-occupied with the issue of slavery and the ominous possibility of a divided union. American politicians, although enamored of the popularity of Kossuth, generally opposed intervention in Europe. Some, to be sure, opposed

intervention as a result of their sincere commitment to Washington's warnings, but others were simply paralyzed by the perilous state of the Union due to the controversy over slavery. It was commonplace for the latter group to balance their emotional opposition to Europe's tyrants with the wisdom of George Washington, allowing them to stop short of proposing any actual opposition. This enabled these leaders to appeal to the strong republican nationalism in the country for political support without actually committing to any meaningful form of intervention.

Prominent politicians that appealed to this nationalism as a treatment for other issues were Secretary of State Daniel Webster, and Senator Stephen Douglass. Daniel Webster, despite his opposition to intervention, rhetorically pointed to the day when a government in the American model could be established on the lower Danube, during a Congressional banquet given in honor of Kossuth, January 7, 1852. And Stephen Douglass pressed for an interventionist foreign policy as a means of covering the conflict over slavery within the Democratic party.

For eight months, Kossuth traveled throughout the United States raising money to re-energize his

revolution, and promoting his concept of Intervention for Non-Intervention, trying to enlist America to intervene on behalf of Hungary in a renewed revolution. Russia had come to the aid of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1849 to squelch the first revolution, and Kossuth was confident that American involvement would effectively prevent such an occurrence a second time.

Despite the rhetoric on the part of American political figures, Kossuth's efforts to enlist American intervention in his cause were unsuccessful. Congress could not even muster enough votes to call for a formal American protest to Russia for her role in putting down the revolution. Eventually, Kossuth's popularity dwindled because he was unwilling to take a stand on the slavery issue, which both angered the abolitionists in the North and intensified the suspicions toward his cause in the South.

In July of 1852, Kossuth abandoned his efforts to secure American support and sailed for London. Hungarian interests had proven important enough to evoke emotional rhetoric by high American officials but too small to merit meaningful American action. In addition, America's pre-occupation with her own domestic problems had proven more influential in fashioning rhetoric

towards Hungary than the problems in Hungary itself. This pattern would be repeated seventy years later when America would seriously reconsider the issue of intervention in Europe following the out break of World War I.

Shortly following America's entrance into World War I, Woodrow Wilson offered his famous 14 points as a means of countering Bolshevik rhetoric from Russia. He also hoped these principles would act as a foundation for ending the war and assuring a lasting peace in the world. Later, Wilson employed rhetoric regarding a war to make the world safe for democracy to counter the strong isolationist tendencies in the American public.

The tenth of Wilson's 14 points dealt directly with the Habsburg Empire and the minority populations which composed it. Initially this point was designed to simply secure the rights of these minorities but to keep the empire intact. Later it was decided, however, that full independence for these minorities along ethnic lines would be preferable. Both Secretary of State Robert Lansing and President Wilson felt that this would hasten an end to the war by dividing the Habsburg Empire from within. Wilson specifically stipulated that Hungary also should be encouraged to pursue a status independent from

the existing Austro-Hungarian Empire.[1]

On October 30, 1918, three days before the Armistice between Austria-Hungary and the Entente Allies, Hungary capitulated and declared independence from the Habsburg Empire, announcing the formation of a liberal democratic state under the leadership of Mihaly Karolyi. Karolyi had been a fervent opponent of the war dating from the assassination of Prince Ferdinand in Sarajevo. He had also consistently pressed for liberal democratic reforms and enthusiastically embraced Wilson's 14 Points. This reputation for supporting liberal reforms was well known in both France and the United States, and it was generally hoped that it would gain favor for Hungary in the eyes of the Entente Allies.

Despite Karolyi's reputation, however, Hungary's conversion to democracy met with ridicule from France and skepticism and silence from the United States. Karolyi made numerous and at times desperate attempts to get the West, in general, and Wilson in particular to recognize efforts being made in Hungary, but to no avail. Wilson remained silent on the issue of Hungary, while the French aggressively sought further encroachments on to Hungarian territory as a means of

appeasing the claims of Romania and the Czechs. The French hoped to establish Romania and Czech as buffer states in Eastern and Central Europe against the threat of Bolshevism.

Finally, following the presentation of an ultimatum outlining demands for further Hungarian withdrawals from territory in Transylvania, Karolyi was forced to resign under pressure from the left and the Democratic Hungarian government was replaced by a Soviet style Bolshevik government. This new government in Hungary promptly announced that due to the imperialist intentions of the Allies "from now on we must look to the East for justice, as it has been denied us in the west"[2]. Wilson failed to act promptly to insure fair treatment for Hungary, consistent with his own rhetoric regarding a war without victors and independence for the Austrian-Hungarian minorities. Ironically, this hesitancy on his part resulted in the spread of the very Bolshevism his rhetoric was designed to prevent.

On October 23, 1956, Hungary erupted in revolution against Soviet control in Eastern Europe. For eleven dramatic days the world watched in amazement as Hungarians attempted to win independence from Soviet repression. No one dreamed that a revolt of this nature

by a Soviet satellite was possible. The United States was particularly surprised by this reaction in Hungary. Despite the fact that America, in conjunction with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's policy of liberation, had been pouring anti-Soviet rhetoric into Eastern Europe for years, via Radio Free Europe (RFE), none of its intelligence suggested that an uprising of this magnitude could be possible. The surprising nature of this revolt was additionally complicated by the United States preoccupation with the Suez crisis which was threatening to erupt into a world war.

On October 31, 1956, the Soviet Union surprised the world by announcing that it would withdraw from Hungary and allow the East European satellites a greater degree of political autonomy. Then on November 1, Imre Nagy, the popular leader of this movement in Hungary, announced that Hungary was withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact and seeking neutral nation status similar to that of Austria. Nagy then asked for United Nations help to protect Hungary's neutrality. It appeared to many that Hungary had succeeded in securing her independence from the Soviets but this hope was unfortunately short lived.

On November 4, the Soviet Union re-invaded Hungary and physically crushed the Hungarian resistance. In

all, 5,000 Hungarians were killed and another 20,000 were rounded up and sent to concentration camps in the Soviet Union. The Soviets appointed a new leader in Hungary and Imre Nagy was tried and executed for crimes against the state.

The tragedy of this event, from the standpoint of America's foreign policy, was the misleading nature of the aforementioned liberation policy. This policy, which called for a psychological offensive towards the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, was designed during the 1952 presidential election campaign, as criticism of Truman's policy of containment. Dulles saw containment as strictly defensive in nature and argued that by employing aggressive anti-Soviet propaganda, broadcast via radio into Eastern Europe, the US could re-take the offensive in the Cold War. Dulles claimed that the liberation policy would both de-stabilize Soviet control in the region and hasten the day that these nations would be liberated. Eisenhower, a strong believer in the power of propaganda, took steps to personally direct these efforts following his election to the presidency.

The problem with this approach to the Soviet Union was that liberation was only used as a cosmetic make

over of the containment policy. It was designed to create the appearance of a more rigorous foreign policy towards the Soviets, by Republicans, without actually committing America to any risky actions that could involve a direct conflict with the Soviet Union. Republicans had merely substituted strong words and unrealistic projections for meaningful action while, carefully asserting that they were only interested in peaceful evolutionary change. This propaganda, which many Hungarians interpreted as an American commitment to Hungarian independence up to and including direct U.S. aid against Soviet aggression, was designed by the United States more as a substitute for any type of direct conflict with the Soviets--to look tough on Communism without actually taking the risks of being tough. Unfortunately for Hungary, words proved to be of little use and American rhetoric towards Hungary, once again fell short of Hungarian expectations.

This is largely a political history. More specifically, it is an American political history. Although the above events involved strong social movements in both Hungary and the United States I will concentrate primarily on the responses of American

political figures to those movements and not on the movements themselves. This is not to diminish in any way the importance of the social aspects of these events. This particular project is focused on examining patterns in the American response to these particular events in examining the particular events themselves.

As a result, I have depended almost solely on the private papers of prominent American political figures and the foreign relations papers of the United States as primary sources of information. Although admittedly limited in scope, I think that this approach has enabled me to identify interesting patterns in the political responses by American politicians towards compelling political conflicts in countries that are smaller and less central to immediate American interests.

Finally, the criticism of influential American officials throughout this paper should not in anyway be interpreted as a complete vindication of Hungarian leaders during these events. There were errors committed in each of these events by Hungarians. American leaders were simply in a much more influential position and as a result their decisions, good or bad, carried more weight.

Chapter 1

"Intervention for Non-Intervention"

"We shall rejoice to see our American model on the banks of the Danube and on the mountains of Hungary"
Daniel Webster January 7, 1852

"I shall treat him [Kossuth] with all personal and individual respect, but if he should speak to me about the policy of intervention, I will have ears more deaf than adders"
Daniel Webster December, 30 1851

The European revolutions between 1848 and 1849 had a notable impact on the thinking of many Americans regarding the role of the United States in the World. Emboldened by the easy victory in the war with Mexico and the consequent expansion of the United States into the southwestern part of North America some began to imagine a role for America in the world that went beyond the normal confines of Manifest Destiny.[3] For these people, America needed to do more than merely set an example for burgeoning republics throughout the world. America needed to actively intervene to insure the success of such movements. The outbreak of the

revolutions in Europe and the reactionary response by Europe's ruling monarchs excited these nationalistic sentiments and gave wind to interventionist impulses throughout the United States.

Of the revolutions in Europe, Hungary's struggle against the Habsburg Empire, led by Lajos Kossuth, struck the greatest chord amongst Americans. Kossuth was a flamboyant and popular leader with a quick mind and a mesmerizing gift for public speaking. One American Congressman referred to him as a missionary of freedom, someone who through the splendor and power and brilliancy of his eloquence was setting the whole civilized world for the sacred cause of humanity.[4] Americans followed the revolution in Hungary with particular interest, and were greatly disappointed by the news that it had been put down. This conflict differed from the other revolutions in Europe in two important ways: First, Hungarian liberals, who were primarily large land owners, did not need to retreat to the protection of the monarch as a result of rebellions by local radicals. In France and Austria liberal reformers eventually had to turn back to the king to protect them from the more radical elements in the lower

classes. This did not occur during Hungary's revolution, largely due to the immense popularity of Kossuth who was able to appease radical elements in Hungary and generate support from the lower classes. He was a revolutionary hero who many in America were already comparing to George Washington.[5]

Secondly, the Hungarians had an Army something that other European revolutionaries did not posses. The Hungarian rebels consisted of many professional soldiers who had deserted from the Habsburg military while the majority of the other European rebellions were civilian led. As a result, when the Habsburg crown resorted to military power the Hungarians registered some impressive victories over Austrian troops. For a while, in the spring of 1849, it appeared that they might actually defeat the Habsburgs. In the summer of 1849 Russia came to the aid of the Austrians and Hungary, hopelessly outnumbered, was easily defeated. When word reached the United States that the revolution had been toppled by the combined efforts of Austria and Russia Americans were bitterly angry towards both the Czar and the Habsburg Empire.

In this highly charged atmosphere of American anger towards Europe's despots and heated fervor regarding the virtues of republican government, prominent Whig and Democratic politicians alike could not resist using rhetoric against Europe's monarchs in an effort to treat imposing domestic political problems and to garnish political support at home.

The slavery conflict, despite the compromise of 1850, which represented the best efforts of many of America's most prominent politicians to stem the sectional struggle, continued to plague the unity of the United states. Both Whig Secretary of State Daniel Webster, and Stephen Douglas, the popular Democratic Senator from Illinois, each a strong supporter of the compromise legislation, attempted to harness nationalist American sentiment regarding republican revolutions in Europe as a means of covering over the ever growing American disunion over slavery. Webster, as Secretary of State, directed his rhetoric toward contributing to the unity of the Country as a whole, while Douglas, a leading candidate for the Democratic nomination for the presidency in 1852, was concerned primarily with unity within the Democratic party.

Webster's response to the complaints of Chevalier Hulsemann, the Austrian Charge' d' affairs in December of 1850 was the most glaring example of the displaced rhetoric involving Hungary. Hulsemann had charged that the American government interfered unjustly and behaved disrespectfully towards the Austrian government by secretly dispatching its agent, Dudley A. Mann, to Austria in 1849 to determine the probability of Hungarian success in their revolution against the Habsburgs. Should Mann have determined that there was a strong likelihood of Hungarian success, he was authorized by President Taylor, to recognize Hungary as a free and independent state. As it turned out, the revolution had been crushed by the time Mann reached Austria so nothing effectively came of this mission. Nevertheless, Austrian officials got word of the Mann mission and Hulsemann protested loudly. Worried about the fragility of the Union, Webster desired to send a message on this occasion that would result in a renewed sense of national pride and unity.

National sentiment against Austria was still very strong, which rendered the protest by Hulsemann a perfect opportunity for Webster to fashion a response

designed to arouse the nationalistic sentiments of Americans. In addition, both Webster and his advisors reasoned that Hulsemann's letter of protest had been "sufficiently arrogant and saucy" to merit a strong response.[6]

The most abrasive aspect of Webster's response to Hulsemann involved a boastful comparison of the respective prominence of Austria and the United States.

> The power of this republic, at the present moment, is spread over a region of the richest and most fertile on the globe, and of an extent in comparison which the possessions of the house of Habsburgs are but a patch on the earth's surface...Its navigation and commerce are hardly exceeded by the oldest and most commercial nations; its maritime means and maritime power may be seen by Austria herself, in all the seas where she has ports, as well as they may be seen, in all the quarters of the globe. [7]

Webster went on to explain the American admiration and sympathy for republican ideals, and the Hungarian efforts to establish a free government.

> Certainly, the United States may be pardoned, even by those who profess adherence to the principals of absolute government, if they entertain an ardent affection for those popular forms of political organizations which have so rapidly advanced their own prosperity and happiness...and if the United States wish success to countries contending for popular constitutions and national independence, it is only because they regard such constitutions and such national independence, not as imaginary but as real blessings. They claim no

> right, however, to take part in struggles of foreign powers in order to promote these ends [8]

He was careful to assert that America had no intention of intervening in these struggles directly although he felt that it was unreasonable to expect the US to remain "wholly indifferent".[9] It is easy to see, however, how such rhetoric could have bolstered Hungarian hopes for American intervention, despite Webster's statements to the contrary. Kossuth enthusiastically praised Webster's response to Hulsemann in a letter to President Fillmore in July of 1851, six months prior to his arrival in America.[10]

Douglas, on the other hand, employed rhetoric regarding intervention primarily to contribute to the Unity of the Democratic party. He adamantly insisted that the Slavery controversy had been settled with the Compromise of 1850 and felt that the best way to assure unity in the party was to avoid focusing on the issue.[11] Consequently, Douglas took the opportunity presented by the fervor over the revolutions in Europe and Kossuth's visit to promote a progressive foreign policy and deflect attention away from Slavery.[12]

Douglas was also the favorite Candidate of the Young America Movement within the Democratic Party. This movement, was designed to reflect the Young Germany movements that had taken place in Europe during the 1830's. Its proponents distrusted the older ranking democratic members of Congress, whom they saw as entrenched in the politics in Washington and far to set in there ways to provide the kind of dynamic leadership the country required. "Young America" supporters often referred to these elder members of Congress as "Old Fogies". These young leaders were fiercely nationalistic and called for American expansion throughout the Hemisphere. Claiming that the United States was standing at the threshold of Manhood, Edwin D. Leon, the Founder of Young America, wrote that it was required that "the leadership of its young men, who would express their faith in the nations glorious destiny and use that political power to achieve that destiny."[13] Finally, Young America aggressively pursued a strong interventionist policy regarding republican movements throughout the world. Pushing for direct American intervention in these struggles as the best means of insuring their success and spreading the principals of American government worldwide. These

proponents also saw intervention, in part, as a good tool for deflecting attention away from the slavery issue.[14]

As one of the Youngest Democrats in Congress at age 40, Stephen Douglas, was a perfect candidate for "Young America". In addition to his age, Douglas was also a strong states rights man from the West who supported, albeit much less radically, the right of America to intervene in conflict when it was in her best interest to do so.[15]

Following the defeat of Hungary in August of 1849 Kossuth and some of his associates sought refuge in Turkey. For two years American officials negotiated with Turkey over the release of Kossuth. Austria wanted him returned to Austria to be tried for crimes against the state but American officials wanted him released to them so he could be offered asylum in the United states. In January of 1850, then Secretary of State John M. Clayton, instructed J.P. Marsh, the minister in Turkey to seek the release of the Hungarians into American hands:

> You are well aware that the deepest interest is felt, among the people of the United States, in

> the fate of Kossuth and his compatriots in Hungary, who have hitherto escaped the vengeance of Austria and Russia, by seeking asylum within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. It is desired by your Government that you should intercede with the Sultan in their behalf. The President would be gratified if they could find a retreat under the American flag.[16]

It would take another year and a half but eventually American efforts to gain the release of the Hungarians prevailed. Their release into American hands was seen as a significant diplomatic achievement for Daniel Webster, and America, in light of the fact that The United States lay half way around the World while Russia and Austria each posed an immediate threat to the declining power of the Ottoman Empire.[17]

Following his release from Turkey Kossuth sailed for America with hopes of securing the aid of the United States in an effort to resurrect his failed revolution. Kossuth was certain that US aid would prevent any further interference by Russia. Following an enthusiastic reception in New York city, involving a display of popular devotion rarely bestowed on a foreign visitor,[18] Kossuth confidently set out to confront the cherished warnings of George Washington against America becoming entangled in European conflicts, which he

correctly saw as the primary impediment to his efforts to enlist American aid. Armed with a copy of Washington's farewell address and an eleven volume set of Washington's works by Jared Sparks, Kossuth and his entourage spent the better part of a week developing a strategy to counter Washington's arguments. On the night of December 11, during a municipal dinner given by the city of New York in his honor, Kossuth delivered his argument and appealed for American intervention as a means of countering potential intervention by others i.e. Russia. This became popularly known as "Intervention for Non Intervention". Kossuth's basic thesis was that America had outgrown the need for Washington's warnings. The United States was an adult now and as such could not afford to isolate itself from the rest of the world. "Is the dress which so suited the child still convenient to the full grown man, nay the giant, which you are?" [19] Kossuth argued that continued isolation from Europe by the United States would ultimately do more harm to America than good by inhibiting its ability to rise to a power among nations contributing to its premature decay. Basically, Kossuth reasoned that America must exercise its power to influence the world or lose the power to affect the

world. Ironically, Woodrow Wilson would echo these same arguments 70 years later in justification of America's entrance into World War I.[20] In defense of this theory that America had grown beyond the need for Washington's warnings, Kossuth employed Washington's own prediction that America would one day be a power on the earth once its institutions became "settled and mature". [21]

Kossuth concluded his speech with the following suggestions: first, he asked that President Fillmore notify the Russian Czar that the United States would no longer look indifferently at any further aggression against Hungary. Second, he proposed that the American navy be used to patrol the Adriatic and guard trade routes from Russian interference. Finally, Kossuth called on the United States to formally recognize Hungary, and provide financial assistance to aid Hungarians in another revolutionary effort. Kossuth did not directly appeal for US military intervention beyond the naval patrols in the Adriatic. Although the speech was generally well received, convincing America's leaders of the necessity of intervention of any kind in

Europe would prove to be a much more difficult task for

Kossuth.

Shortly after Kossuth's arrival in the United States, Congress met to discuss a resolution to offer a formal Congressional welcome to Kossuth upon his visit to Washington D.C.. Some Congressmen, concerned about Kossuth's public statements calling for American assistance in a renewed revolution, feared that a formal welcome would antagonize European powers and represent a shift in America's policy of non-intervention in European affairs. Senator Clemens of Alabama called into question the character of Kossuth and claimed that since he had now chosen not to permanently abandon his country and live in America it was no longer necessary to provide Kossuth a formal welcome. Clemens also stated his fears that Kossuth's recent rhetoric concerning intervention was designed to engage the United States in a War Europe. Senator Foote, also of Alabama, took exception to these comments by Clemens, and characterized Kossuth as "The most illustrious person, in all respects, that the present generation had produced in any quarter of the world."[22] Foote argued that much of Clemens reasoning regarding Kossuth and intervention had been unfounded. Claiming that

intervention was designed more as a measure to prevent further conflict rather than cause one and that the resolution in discussion involved a formal welcome by Congress to Kossuth and was not a debate on the weighty issue of intervention.[23] The Senate agreed and the resolution was passed 33-6. All six of the no votes were from Southern Senators who feared economic repercussions from European monarchs as Europe was a major consumer of Southern agriculture. Southern politicians were also sensitive to the comments by anti slavery members of the Senate comparing oppression in Europe with that of slaves in the South.[24]

During this debate over Kossuth's welcome Stephen Douglas adamantly supported America's right to intervene in conflicts in Europe. Douglas argued that it was America's duty to demonstrate "heartfelt sympathy and admiration" for Kossuth, after which, he provided the following statement regarding the matter of Intervention:

> I hold that the principle laid down by Governor Kossuth as the basis of his action-that each State has the right to dispose of her own destiny and regulate her internal affairs in her own way, without the interference of any foreign Power-is an axiom in the laws of nations which every state ought to recognize and respect. I am prepared now to assert and affirm the proposition, by a vote of

> the Senate, as part of the international code. It is equally clear to my mind, that any violation of this principle by one nation intervening to destroy the liberties of another, is such an infraction of the international code as would authorize any State to interpose which felt that it had sufficient interest in the question to become vindicator of the laws of nations...We will have the right, under the law of nations, to interfere or not, according to our convictions of duty, when the case should be presented.[25]

This speech by Douglas became the rallying cry for intervention by David Sanders, the most vocal and abrasive proponent of Young America. In January of 1852, Sanders published the first issue of the Democratic Review, a monthly publication designed to campaign for the ideals of Young America. In his article Eighteen Fifty Two and the Presidency, Sanders all but endorsed Douglas for President and strongly denounced the "Old Fogyism" of other prominent leaders within the Democratic Party. Sanders claimed that Douglas's comments on intervention, during the debate over Kossuth's Congressional welcome, had entirely reflected his own and he was confident that the American people would overwhelmingly endorse them.[26] Sanders continued this pattern of promoting Douglas while bitterly attacking his "Old Fogy" colleagues in successive issues of the paper.

Although Douglas initially welcomed Sanders support, Sanders venomous attacks on his fellow Democrats caused him to regret any connection to Sanders or the Democratic Review. Eventually, Douglas begged Sanders to either stop the attacks on other Democrats or to start attacking him as well. Sanders refused, however, and Douglas's reputation within the party and his hopes for the presidency were permanently tarnished.

During the Congressional banquet welcoming Kossuth to the Capitol January 7, 1852, Daniel Webster offered some additional controversial comments on Kossuth and the revolution in Hungary. On this occasion Webster's rhetoric was directed toward bolstering personal political support. It had been a year since his letter to Hulsemann and now Webster had decided to seek the Whig nomination for president. The Kossuth banquet provided him with the perfect opportunity to shore up support from the proponents of intervention. The following comments were particularly vexing to Hulsemann and the Austrian government:

> These are the aspirations that I entertain, and I give them to you therefore gentlemen as a toast: "Hungarian Independence -- Hungarian control of her own destinies; and Hungary as a distinct nationality among nations of Europe."

In addition, Webster eloquently shared his hope for an American model of government in Hungary.

> Of course, All of you, like myself, would be glad to see her, when she becomes independent, embraces that system of government which is most acceptable to ourselves. We shall rejoice to see our American model upon the lower Danube and in the Mountains of Hungary.[27]

These statements were the last straw for the Austrian Charge' d' Affairs. Hulsemann angrily protested to President Fillmore that Webster's remarks were unacceptable. He then threatened to leave his post if Webster remained as Secretary of State. Webster feebly defended his remarks as the thoughts of a private citizen acting in an unofficial capacity. This did not pacify the Austrians and on February 4th, Austrian Foreign Minister Felix Schwarzenberg decided to discontinue diplomatic relations with Daniel Webster. Austria wanted Fillmore either to remove Webster on publicly disavow his remarks.[28] Due to the political popularity of both Kossuth and his cause and the enthusiastic manner in which Webster's speech had been received in the United States, Fillmore could do neither. On April 29, Hulsemann officially withdrew from his post.

Kossuth, on the other hand, was thrilled with the reception he received in Washington D.C.. On January 12th 1852 he sent a letter to President Fillmore to thank him for the "unprecedented honors" which were bestowed upon him.[29] He went on to express his enthusiasm over what he incorrectly perceived to be support by both the President and the Congress for American intervention on behalf of Hungary.

> The oppressed nations of the European Continent so highly interested in those principles will look with consolation at these memorable favors I was honored with, as to practical proof that the Chief Magistrate of this great Republic was indeed a true interpreter of its peoples sentiments, and met with the cordial concurrence of the enlightened Legislature of this glorious country when he officially declared that "The U. States cannot remain indifferent in a case when the strong arm of a foreign power is invoked to stifle public sentiment and to oppose the spirit of freedom in any country."[30]

Kossuth actually misquoted the last part of this statement from Fillmore. The President actually had said: "The American people can never be indifferent from such a contest; but our policy as a nation, in this respect has been uniform from the commencement of Our government".[31] The uniform policy that President Fillmore alluded to was Washington's policy of isolation from European conflicts, which had been standard American policy from the beginning of the young nation.

While Fillmore had been unwilling to correct Webster for his less than responsible use of rhetoric with respect to Hungarian independence, he had himself remained very constant both in private and in public regarding his opposition to American intervention in Europe. He was a conservative politician who looked suspiciously at radical deviations from the norm. This conservatism was perhaps most evident in his opinion of slavery, which he accepted as an unfortunate political reality that had to be accommodated, although he personally detested the institution. Above all, Fillmore considered himself a political realist, and as such, distrusted both Young America and Kossuth and scorned politicians, such as William H. Seward, who had so enthusiastically embraced them both. Despite Fillmore's consistent support for the status quo with regard to any form of American intervention in Europe, Kossuth was clearly encouraged about the prospects of procuring American intervention. Perhaps in his enthusiasm over Webster's comments and the grandiose treatment he had received in the Capitol he simply read too much into Fillmore's words.

Kossuth was not the only observer who saw Webster's Speech as an endorsement for intervention. Both the New York Herald and the New York Tribune, which had been

proponents of American intervention, saw the speech as being supportive of Kossuth's cause. The Tribune declared that the speech had exonerated Webster from responsibility for the administrations "shabby position" regarding Kossuth.[32]

Unfortunately for both Kossuth and Young America, neither Webster nor Fillmore had any intention of supporting intervention. In a letter to Richard Blatchford on December 30, 1851, Webster made the following remark regarding Kossuth and intervention. "I shall treat him with all personal and individual respect, but if he should speak to me about the policy of intervention, I will have ears more deaf than adders."[33] Webster was even more explicit in his letter to Charles J. McCurdy, January 15, 1852.

> All that has been done, or will be done at this department, on Mr. Kossuth's request, will be merely in compliance with the dictates of humanity and Charity...You may say in as explicit terms as you judge proper, that neither the President nor his Cabinet countenance any such thing as "intervention."[34]

It is unfortunate that Webster could not have been as explicit about his opinion of intervention in public as he was in private. If this was in fact the opinion of both he and the president, then Webster's comments had consisted of nothing more than a cynical

manipulation of public opinion at Kossuth's expense, which Fillmore no doubt justified as another unfortunate political necessity. Adding to this cynicism, Webster reasoned that since Kossuth had already visited the largest of the Northern cities, there was no reason to believe that enthusiasm for Kossuth or intervention would grow. "I venture to say, that the 'Intervention' feeling will doubtless subside gradually and rapidly, if nothing should take place, calculated to kindle it in to a new flame."[35]

For the moment, Webster had succeeded in straddling both sides of this politically sensitive issue. He countered the criticism from advocates for intervention using rhetoric that gave the appearance of support for such a course without formally endorsing it. His actions had caused a second embarrassing incident with regard to Austria but he had been willing to risk such an incident before in his attempt to renew a sense of American national unity so why not a second time as a means of bolstering his personal political ambitions?

On February 9, 1852 Senator John H. Clark of Rhode Island introduced a resolution to the Senate that sympathized with the Hungarian but upheld the United States policy of non-intervention.

> ...yet we recognize our true policy in the great fundamental principles given to us by Jefferson: "Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."[36]

Senator Seward of New York, suggested that the resolution be amended to include a protest against Russia for the role it had played in the demise of the Hungarian revolution along with a warning that the United States would not look indifferently on any similar actions.

> Resolved, that the people of Hungary in exercise of rights secured by them by the law of nations, in a solemn and legitimate manner asserted their national independence, and established a government by their own voluntary act, and successfully maintained it against all opposition by parties lawfully interested in the question; and that the Emperor of Russia, without just or lawful right, invaded Hungary and, by fraud, and armed force, subverted the national independence and political constitution thus established, and thereby reduced the country to the condition of a province ruled by a foreign and absolute power: The United States in defense of their own interests and the interests of Mankind, do solemnly protest the conduct of Russia, on that occasion, as a wanton and tyrannical infraction of the laws of nations...The United States will not hereafter be indifferent to similar acts...whenever or wherever they occur.[37]

Senator Clark countered that a protest to Russia would be a dangerous departure from the American tradition of non-intervention, which he referred to as the "settled and reiterated policy of our country." Seward responded

by sarcastically pointing out the interest being paid to the issue of our adherence to our principles by monarchs in France and Austria.

> It is passing strange, sir, that Louis Napoleon and Francis Joseph should take so deep an interest in our adherence to our principles, and in our reverence of him who inculcated them, not for the immunity of tyrants for the security of our own welfare.[38]

Seward argued further that America had changed since 1796 and that Washington's words in Seward's day, could not be applied directly without accounting for the differences that existed in both America and the world. As evidence for the changing nature of the world and the role of America he offered the example of Washington's treaty to pay ransom to Algiers and tribute to the Berber government and asked the Senators how many of them would vote for such a treaty today. Then Seward suggested that the reason none of them would have voted for such a treaty today is because "the times have changed and we must change with them."[39] Finally, Seward reminded his colleagues that it was only a protest that he was suggesting. Only an exercise of free speech that involved neither a military nor an economic commitment. "If we are not strong enough to speak, when shall we be stronger? If we never speak out, for what were national lungs given us?"[40]

This was the extent of Seward's support for intervention. Although America may have been in a position to use its navy to patrol trade, as Kossuth had suggested, it was in no position to be drawn into a war half way around the world. In addition, Hungary was probably in no position to renew any kind of sustainable revolution. Most of the military leaders who had made it possible in the first place had either been executed or put into prison and the chances of a revolution succeeding without them would have been slim even if popular support for such a cause could have been regenerated. As a practical matter the chances of another revolution in Hungary, at least for the foreseeable future, were not very good. This did not, however, rule out a formal American protest of Russian action in the matter. This would have been a mild form of intervention at best. Even the warning in Seward's resolution about America not looking indifferently to any similar acts did not commit America to any direct intervention in such an event. Seward simply desired for America to make a statement consistent with its own values regarding liberty and republican government which could have at least provided moral support for Hungary. This also would have at least fulfilled the first of

Kossuth's recommendations to President Fillmore.[41]

As it turned out, even a protest was too much to ask. Washington's warnings were effectively employed to block Seward's resolution. This decision, however, was more a reflection of the existing American insecurities regarding the slavery issue than a conviction concerning the strict adherence to the wisdom of George Washington. If America was truly the apostle for liberty to the world, as Americans liked to imagine, it was difficult to believe. In this case, the United States far more resembled the hypocrite condemned in the epistle of James who upon finding his neighbor in need smugly proclaims "go be warmed and well fed" without lifting a finger to help.[42] But then it is hard to see how publicly protesting the lack of liberty in Hungary while justifying slavery in America would have appeared any less hypocritical. Perhaps this explains some of the final comments offered by Seward in this debate.

> I believe that the Union is founded in physical, moral, and political necessities, which demands one government and would endure no divided states. I believe also, that it is righteousness, not greatness, that exalteth a nation, and liberty, not repose that renders national existence worth possessing.[43]

Webster's prediction that support for Kossuth would rapidly dissipate as he toured the South turned out to

be astute. Kossuth's popularity declined rapidly following his trip to Washington. This was primarily due to his refusal to take a stand on the slavery issue, which angered abolitionists in the North and fanned the suspicions of pro-slavery advocates in the South. His image also suffered amidst rumors that he had mismanaged the private contributions he had collected to revive his revolution. According to Seward's diary on June 12, 1852, of the fund which had amounted to $90,000 only $1,000 remained. Seward did not, however, attribute this to mismanagement by Kossuth. The monies had been used to fund efforts to organize a new revolution and to help pay for Hungarian refugees until they could find work.[44] As Kossuth worked in vain to expand support for his cause in the South, momentum for his cause in the North deteriorated. By the summer of 1852 the wave that was once young America, which had crested so passionately at Kossuth's arrival, and crashed down so dramatically on Congress during his trip to the Capitol, had swiftly washed up on the beach of public opinion and sunk beneath the sand of pressing American interests.

Ultimately, the same weakness which had plagued Kossuth in his revolution, the inability to guide the

enthusiasm that he generated to a sustainable end, also hampered him in his quest for American intervention in Hungary. As a master orator he easily elicited the enthusiastic support of cheering crowds but could not translate this into meaningful political support. He had naively failed to see through the rhetoric of American politicians regarding intervention in the same way he had missed the obvious signs pointing to the prospect of Russian intervention during the revolution in Hungary. In fairness though, his struggle was not against the wisdom of George Washington and those in Washington D.C. who strictly supported it, but rather, the imposing division over slavery that was tearing America at the seams and anxious American politicians at a loss for dealing with it. It is likely that George Washington himself would have failed in Kossuth's shoes.

Hungarian interests had been compelling enough to engender strong political rhetoric on the part of US officials, but no meaningful support. Furthermore, the rhetoric generated was designed more as a means of addressing pressing American domestic interests not for dealing constructively with either Hungary or Austria.

Both Webster's letter to Hulsemann and his remarks at Kossuth's banquet were embarrassing foreign policy mistakes which only resulted short term domestic results, the former acting as a passing and superficial covering for the growing disunity over slavery, and the latter providing Webster with a minor lift politically which proved futile as he died a year later.

In addition, Douglas's efforts to cover over the slavery issue using a progressive foreign policy also went for nought. Slavery proved far to pivotal an issue to be covered over with nationalist rhetoric. Douglas also never recovered from the onslaught, by Sanders, against other prominent Democrats. He lost the Democratic nomination in 1852, and never regained the status he enjoyed at the beginning of 1852.

In July of 1852, Kossuth and his wife boarded a ship under the aliases Mr. A. Smith and Lady, for fear of an Austrian assassination plot, and sailed for London. His mission in America which had seemed so promising on his arrival eight months earlier ended in complete failure. He would spend the rest of his life trying to enlist the aid of other nations in another

Hungarian revolution but never succeeded. He died at age 96 without ever returning to Hungary. His call for intervention for non-intervention, although both unsuccessful and short lived, became the first serious challenge in America's tradition of isolation from European conflicts. Ironically, America would not revive the issue of intervention in Europe again until World War I, when they would side with Britain and France against the empires of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Chapter 2

"Non-Intervention for Neutrality"

"We do not confine our enthusiasm for individual liberty and free national development to incidents and movements of affairs which affect only ourselves. We feel it wherever there is a people that tries to walk in these difficult paths of independence and right."
Woodrow Wilson, December 7, 1915[45]

"But right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things that we have always carried nearest to our hearts, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free."
Woodrow Wilson, April 2, 1917[46]

On March 22, 1919, following the presentation of an allied ultimatum to Hungary, outlining further Hungarian withdrawals from Transylvania, Mihaly Karolyi, the President of Hungary's first independent democratic government, resigned under pressure from the left and was replaced by Bela Kun, who installed a Soviet style Bolshevik government in Hungary. Although Karolyi had enthusiastically supported the rhetoric of Woodrow Wilson and actively pursued democratic reforms im Hungary, none of his appeals to the United States for recognition were answered. America chose instead to remain neutral with respect to the former Habsburg

Empire and its successor states at the conclusion of World War I, leaving Hungary, by default, at the mercy of France. The French were determined to exact revenge on Hungary for its role in World War I. The French also desired to satisfy the territorial demands of Hungary's neighbors, predominantly Romania and Czech which they saw as important allies in their struggle against Bolshevism in Russia,[47] and a future threat from Germany. Consequently, Hungarian democracy was overthrown and the Bolshevism, so feared by the Allies, arose right in the heart of Europe.

On October 30, 1918, three days before the Armistice between Austria-Hungary and the Allies, Hungary declared independence from the Empire and installed a liberal democratic government led by Mihaly Karolyi. Karolyi had been an active opponent of the war in Europe from the assassination of Ferdinand in Sarajevo to the armistice. He was an enthusiastic supporter of President Wilson's "Fourteen Points" and a long time proponent of liberal democratic ideals like land reform and universal suffrage. His liberal reputation was well known in both France and America and it was hoped that this would gain the favor of the

Allied governments, especially the United States. In a letter to Secretary of State Robert Lansing on February 1, 1919, Hugh Gibson, the Secretary of the Embassy at Paris, made the following comments regarding Mihaly Karolyi:

> Karolyi has of course carried on an active and open propaganda for several years for a peace on the terms proposed by President Wilson and has persevered at this course at great personal risk to himself. The Hungarian nobility naturally look upon him as a renegade and traitor, and some sections of the lower classes distrust him. [Karolyi was large land owner] He seems, however, to be a man of great sincerity, although quixotic and without much balance. He has, however, succeeded to a remarkable degree in holding the people together with one line of propaganda, to the effect that there is just one hope for Hungary that she should get justice from a peace on the lines laid down by President Wilson. . . The walls of Budapest are covered with great posters put up by Karolyi and bearing the President's portrait and the inscription 'A Wilson peace is the only peace for Hungary.'[48]

Karolyi's reputation and enthusiasm towards Wilson proved to be of little value as Hungary's independence and conversion to a democratic government was looked on suspiciously by the Allies. France ridiculed the new Hungarian Government and the United States remained silent. The French saw Hungarian independence as merely a means of getting out from under their guilt for the war which the French were not about to allow. In a meeting in Belgrade, November 7, between Karolyi and

Franchet D'Esperey the Allied commander and chief in the southeastern theater, D' Esperey made it clear that Hungary's break with Austria and Germany had come too late and they were still going to be seen as the enemy.[49] The French were also intent on compensating both Romania and Czech with Hungarian territory both as a means of rewarding them for their loyalty during the war and as protection against Bolshevik advances.

Between the signing of the Armistice with Austria-Hungary on November 3, 1918, and Bela Kun's Communist Revolution in March of 1919, America, contrary to the rhetoric of Wilson, played a very limited role with respect to the former Habsburg Empire and its successor states. This was surprising since point ten of Wilson's Fourteen Point plan for peace dealt specifically with Austria-Hungary calling for autonomy for its respective peoples. In May of 1918, Secretary of State Lansing modified point ten to accommodate Allied war goals by calling for the complete breakup of the Habsburg Empire into independent states along ethnic lines. Lansing reasoned that this would hasten the victory over Austria-Hungary by weakening her from within and ensure justice for the nationalities by freeing them

permanently from the Empire's domination. Within a few days, Wilson gave his approval for this amendment to the tenth point, adding specifically that the Hungarians should also be encouraged to form a state independent from Austria. Wilson's approval was recorded accordingly: "On the 27th, the President expressed his entire approval, his one suggestion being that Hungary should also be definitely considered an independent nationality, no longer united with Austria."[50]

Despite this stance, the United States did little following the Armistice either to encourage the efforts of the independent Hungarian government, or to actively take part in resolving the complicated issue of arranging the borders of these new states.[51] Hungary grew increasingly isolated from the victorious powers and tensions over border disputes festered unattended until the explosion following the delivery of the ultimatum for Hungary to make further withdrawals from Transylvania.

After the establishment of this new independent government in Hungary, President Karolyi made two separate appeals to the Western governments. The first, on November 19, 1918, was a thank you letter to

President Wilson for his recent message to the former peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a copy of which had been translated into Hungarian and sent to Budapest. Wilson urged restraint from violence and an attitude of moderation in the development of the new states towards self-determination:

> . . .it is the earnest hope and expectation of all friends of freedom everywhere and particularly of those whose present and immediate task it is to assist the liberated peoples of the world, to establish themselves in genuine freedom, that both the leaders and the peoples of the countries recently set free shall see to it that the momentous changes now being brought about are carried through with order, with moderation, with mercy as well as firmness and that violence and cruelty of every kind are checked and prevented, so nothing inhumane may stain the annals of the new age of achievement.[52]

Karolyi was very encouraged by this communication from Wilson to Hungary and took this opportunity to emphasize the democratic character of the new Hungarian government and to demonstrate Hungary's commitment to Wilson's Fourteen Points.

> Mr. President: It is with profound emotion and a heart full of gratitude that the National Council of Hungary and the Hungarian Government have learned of the message . . . which was transmitted to the peoples of Hungary . . . This message freed our souls and justified our moral consciences, since it proved peremptorily that of which we were always convinced, namely that the peoples of Hungary could count on the generosity of the western democracy. . . The victorious revolution of the Hungarian peoples has abolished the institutions which falsified and corrupted

> its own wishes. It has eliminated at the same time all the culpable politicians who oppress the people and who directly or indirectly declared, sustained and continued the most nefarious of wars. Finally, it has entrusted the power to men [who] have for a long time been the pioneers for democracy in Hungary. These men, Mr. President, have adhered
> from the first moment without reserve and with enthusiasm and gratitude to the principles which your excellency proclaimed to civilized humanity. . .[53]

Karolyi also carefully outlined the factors which he felt posed the greatest threat to Hungarian democracy.

> The victorious revolution has put an end to the war and thanks to an exemplary discipline been able to preserve order in a greater part of the country and above all the capital. Nevertheless, the new democratic regime perceives itself exposed to imminent dangers. On one hand our frontiers are seriously menaced by armed troops who making pretext of the known pretensions of their respective states but evidently without authority, are preparing to invade a certain region of Hungary. . . On the other hand an economic catastrophe is likewise menacing our country. Unless we have the possibility of importing coal from the exterior, our factories will stop, and our railroads. . . will be forced to suspend their service. It is then that famine will spread over all Hungary.[54]

Romanian troops were encroaching on the borders which had been established by the Armistice and the Czechs had stopped exporting coal to Hungary.

The second letter, which Karolyi sent to all the Allied governments, was a request for a renewal of relations with allied powers which had been interrupted by the war. In this letter, Karolyi communicated his

fear of impending anarchy and asked to have missions sent to Hungary.

> The Government of the Hungarian Republic applies to all the governments of the Allied powers and begs to be given the opportunity to renew the direct relations that were broken up by the war though the sending of special missions to the said governments. . . In order to ward off the peril of anarchy about to swoop upon the Republic of the Hungarian people, the urgent need is to put our Government in position to confer in the very near future with the allied governments.[55]

It is understandable, however, why some viewed the new Hungarian government with skepticism. Many saw it as merely a governmental sugar coating designed to prevent territorial losses. It is probable that neither the far right who had been largely responsible for Hungarian support of the war, nor the far left, that was committed to Bolshevism, would have submitted to the idea of a democracy apart from the threat of Hungarian territorial losses. The right clearly preferred some form of authoritarian government and the left wanted a dictatorship of the proletariat which Bela Kun eventually delivered. Colonel House, Wilson's close confidant with respect to foreign policy, spoke of the new government in Hungary as very democratic in form but controlled by Magyars committed to prevent the loss of territory which he saw as inevitable.[56] Although,

Karolyi's power did rest to a degree on his ability to hold together a very fragile and divided coalition united, in many respects, by the hope that he could gain leniency from the Allies the influence of the far right and far left in Hungary was, at least initially, exaggerated. They would later become more influential but this was due mostly to a worsening economy and the territorial encroachments of Romania and the Czechs. Despite this political dynamic, Karolyi was committed to liberal democratic rule, and his government, which was on the whole sincere about reform, was clearly Hungary's best chance, under the circumstances, for ensuring democracy. Unfortunately, Karolyi's appeals went unanswered and he and the Hungarian people, increasingly isolated from the Allies, grew anxiously desperate.

The reasons for American silence during this critical period following the Armistice are not entirely clear, although we do have some hints. First, Wilson seems to have supported a policy of non-intervention with respect to the development of the new states in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. In a response to Colonel House on November 1, 1918, regarding the transfer of arms to Yugoslavia, he made the following

comments:

> Referring to your number twenty seven strongly advice the mostly liberal possible concurrence in transfer of actual armed force to Czecho-Slovak and Jugo-Slav local authorities as best proof of our utter good faith towards them, but more caution towards Hungary. Local control of course infinitely better than foreign on every account. On principle and for the sake of the incalculable difficulties in the future keep hands off the pieces of Austria Hungary and reduce outside intervention to a minimum. This is the time to win the confidence of the populations there and the peace of Europe pivots there.[57]

This may explain the United States' hesitancy in responding to Karolyi and his government. Wilson clearly demonstrated an added caution towards Hungary, due to Hungary's alliance with Germany during the war. He also promoted the idea of reducing the degree of intervention from the outside to a minimum as the best means for assuring self determination and gaining the confidence of the respective states. What is not clear here is how intervention from other outside forces, i.e. France and Russia, was going to be prevented. It also seems unclear just exactly what was supposed to prevent any of these new states from determining themselves at the expense of their neighbors. The Yugoslavs, Czechs, and Romanians all pursued borders that could not be justified either on historical or ethnic grounds and Hungary was still hoping for territorial integrity or

status quo from the pre-war period despite the fact that only 48 percent of Hungary prior to the war was actually occupied by ethnic Hungarians. Even if these new states had possessed completely pure motives regarding the establishment of new borders, the complicated mix of ethnic groups, nationalities, and languages cried out for a trusted arbiter. Of the victorious powers only the United States and Britain were considered neutral by the Hungarians and only America had the prestige and the trust of all the new states to successfully oversee such an endeavor. Wilson himself admitted this when describing the high regard demonstrated by Europeans toward America claiming that "there is no nation in Europe that suspects the motives of the United States."[58] If it was true as Wilson claimed, that the peace of Europe would pivot in this volatile area, it is difficult to understand the logic of a policy of non-intervention by the United States.

Another reason for America's silence with regard to Hungary stemmed from the rapid demobilization of Allied troops which took place after the armistice was signed. Both the United States and Great Britain resumed isolationist postures towards the continent and France was left solely with the responsibility of enforcing

peace in Europe. Neither the United States nor Great Britain maintained any troops in Eastern or Central Europe. Since the Allies generally accepted the principle of "primary responsibility," which allowed the Ally that was predominantly active in an area to prevail with respect to that area[59], it is possible that the United States was just hesitant to interfere with French control. It is also important to note that the United States was never at war with Austria-Hungary during World War I, having only declared war on Germany.

The reluctance of the Allied powers to make final decisions on border conflicts prior to the conference and the magnitude of both internal and international problems each power was dealing with also, no doubt, contributed to the limited response to Hungary by the United States during the critical months following the establishment of democracy in Hungary.

Finally, it is probable that Wilson never fully considered the practical implications of the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into independent self-determining states. It is one thing to discuss broad concepts like self-determination and justice for nationalities; it is quite another practically to

implement such concepts. After a meeting with President Wilson October 7, 1918, Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the British Admiralty, reported back to Lloyd George that he had attempted unsuccessfully to get the President's interpretation of freedom of the seas. "In talking of his Fourteen Points, the President's views on the freedom of the seas appeared to be unformed."[60] It is at least plausible that if Wilson's ideas were unformed with regard to the second point involving something as comprehensive as freedom of the seas that his views on the implications of the tenth point, the complicated break up of Austria-Hungary may have been equally unclear. If so, this may also have contributed to Wilson's hesitancy early on to take an active role in implementing point ten of his program.

The extent of American diplomatic efforts towards Hungary during these critical months of Hungarian democracy consisted of two missions sent in January of 1919. The first was the Coolidge Mission, led by Professor Archibald Coolidge, sent to Budapest by Secretary of State Lansing as a means of determining the political conditions existent in Hungary and the surrounding states. The second, by George Creel, a

friend of President Wilson, was a mission to construct wireless receiving stations in Central Europe. Both of these men were impressed with Karolyi and sympathetic towards his struggle to gain the attention of the Allies. The following is a description of Karolyi found in a letter from Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace, on January 19, 1919:

> Count Karolyi has an attractive personality, well educated, experienced, broad minded. He realizes the difficulty of the situation and the futility of many of the plans proposed. He is doing his utmost under trying circumstances with not too great confidence in the future. One feels attracted to him and sorry for him. He seems a very good fellow but nervous and permanently worried, which is perhaps not surprising.[61]

In addition to reporting back on the political and economic situation in Hungary, Coolidge also had some thoughtful comments on the territorial conflicts between Hungary and her neighbors, predominantly Romania and the Czechs. It was clear to him that even under the best case scenario, Hungary was bound to experience the greatest loss. There were just too many areas of the country that were inhabited by a majority from a different ethnic group. He believed that it was wise to be as consistent as possible in drawing borders along ethnic lines and he proposed the principle that the country most harmed by any given decision should have

doubtful points decided in her favor. His support of drawing the borders along ethnic lines as closely as possible were consistent with Lansing and Wilson's goals with respect to the breakup of the Habsburg Empire. According to Coolidge, this type of breakup would contribute to the greatest likelihood of permanence of the respective states by limiting, as much as possible, the existence of discontented minority populations.[62] The French, on the other hand, were more concerned with strategic matters as regarded the new borders, and desired to bolster both Czech and Romania strategically to defend against Russian Bolshevism, at the expense of Hungary. As a result, the Czechs occupied considerable territory at the northern edge of the Danube, which Coolidge felt was clearly Hungarian:

> On the other hand, I see no reason or justice in allowing them to extend their dominion as they do at present for a considerable distance along the northern edge of the Danube in predominantly Hungarian Country. . . Hungary will suffer terribly in any case and should be left with as many possible of her former sources of wealth.[63]

As the first representative of the United States to visit Budapest, Coolidge received the royal treatment. He made it clear that he was not there in any formal diplomatic capacity and that all official communications with the Allies would have to be sent through the

existing channels, yet the adulation by Hungarians continued to the point of embarrassment on his part.

> I have continually insisted on the fact that there is nothing diplomatic about my mission. . . nevertheless, I have been unable to prevent what seems to be a general feeling that this is the first chance Hungarians have had at putting their views before the Allied powers and especially America. . . I have been overwhelmed with visits, appeals, memoranda, and attentions. These last have become embarrassing. For instance, I have been obliged to appear on the balcony of the hotel and say a few colorless words to the cheering crowds below. . . their faith in America and particularly President Wilson, is touching; and their expressions are I believe for the most part genuine.[64]

This demonstrated the desperation of the Hungarians with respect to their isolation from the Allies and their growing realization that their only hope for fairness lay with Wilson and the United States. Coolidge reported that he felt it was in the best interest of the United States to strengthen the position of Karolyi by announcing that the armistice lines were not final political frontiers. This was rejected, however, as it was felt such a decision could only be made at the Peace Conference.[65]

After the Creel Mission was complete, Creel met with the President personally to register his support for Karolyi. In this meeting, which took place February

2, 1919, Creel said that he felt that the Karolyi government was worth saving and encouraged Wilson to insist at the conference that the armistice be respected by all and that a letter be sent to Karolyi to invite him to send a delegation to Paris as soon as possible to present Hungary's case.[66] Although the issue of everyone respecting the armistice lines was discussed at the conference, Wilson never seriously considered sending a letter to Karolyi. Following this meeting, Creel put these recommendations in writing in a memorandum to Wilson, but there is no record of a response by the President. As a result, neither of these American missions to Hungary, which had been looked upon with so much promise in Budapest, bore fruit in any way. America formally remained ominously silent as Karolyi and his government politically withered on the vine. Fifty years later Charles Seymour, the chief of the Austro-Hungarian division of the American Commission at the time, would sum up America's silence as follows:

> But in a dozen spots along the Czech and Romanian border the Americans were too polite and too timid to quarrel. The Americans were also unorganized as a group, so that their judgment was never effectively concentrated or forcefully exercised. Responsibility for failure in this respect. . . was President Wilson's inability to organize and utilize the brains that were offered to him.[67]

On March 20, 1919, Colonel Vix, the Chief of the Allied military mission, presented Karolyi with the fateful ultimatum outlining a planned extension of the neutral zone between Romanian and Hungarian troops which demanded further withdrawals by Hungary; one hundred kilometers further than the original armistice had outlined. Hungarians naturally saw this move by the Allies as precursor to the ultimate fulfillment of French promises to Romania in the secret agreements of 1916, and predictably balked at the suggestion. Karolyi claimed that this was proof that Hungary was to be dismembered and Hungary's chief military advisors claimed that this would complete the economic, political, and military destruction of Hungary. Karolyi refused to sign, notifying Vix that any government that signed such a document would not last a day.[68]

Regardless of this resistance by Karolyi, the ultimate incident proved to be more than his government could withstand. The following day, Budapest erupted in protest and workers at the biggest factory in Budapest, demanded a change in Hungarian foreign policy, embracing Lenin, not Wilson, as a means of ensuring justice for Hungary. Later that night the Workers's Council met and formed a new Bolshevik government in Hungary headed by

Bela Kun. The meeting was opened with the following statement:

> The imperialists of the Entente took democracy and national self-determination as their slogans, but since victory they have acted differently. Our hope for peace was destroyed by the ukase from Colonel Vix. There is no longer any doubt that those gentlemen in Paris wish to give us nay imperialist peace. . . From now on we must look to the east for Justice, as it had been denied us in the west.[69]

Ironically, after this reaction, Hungary had no problem gaining the attention of the Allies, which Karolyi had so desperately sought. Lansing, Wilson, and Lloyd George all acknowledged that mistakes had been made with regard to the Allies' policy toward Hungary. They all recognized the nationalist roots of the Hungarian brand of Bolshevism and resisted French desires to resort to a military solution. On March 29, in response to a memorandum from Bela Kun[70], the "Big Four" discussed the possibility of sending an inter-allied mission to Budapest. Wilson asked that the possibility of sending a mission be discussed and Lloyd George concurred:

> After all, I don't see why we should treat the Magyars differently from the Croats. The Croats, like the Magyars, fought us until the very end and very vigorously. The Magyars have never been the enemy of France or England. Undoubtedly Statesmen like Tisza bear great

> responsibility, but they were supported only by a limited electorate. We maintain relations with the Croats and the Slovens who have on their consciences the death of a very great number of Allied soldiers. Why not enter in to conversations with the Magyars as well?

Orlando, the Italian representative, agreed. Lloyd George added that the conference could not afford to treat Hungary like Russia. "One Russia is enough for us."[71] Clemenceau wanted to put off the discussion until Colonel Vix had returned from Hungary. On March 31, the conference re-opened the discussion of Hungary. M.Pichon reiterated the French position that Hungary was a bitter enemy and should not be negotiated with about the interests of the nationalities. He added that now that there was a Bolshevik government in Hungary, we should be even more inclined to support Romania as a barrier against Bolshevism.[72] It is clear that the status of Romania and Czechoslovakia as barriers to Bolshevism was the real reason behind French animosity towards Hungary. The bitter enemy rhetoric was just an excuse to carve up Hungary as a means of gaining the allegiance of these two nationalities. Lloyd George's comments regarding the fact that the Croats and Slovens had also remained enemies to the end of the war demonstrated the double standard that the French were applying to the Hungarians.

Secretary of State Lansing commented that the demarcation line outlined in the Vix note had not been fair and that this was the fault of the conference. He added that it had been the Romanians not the Hungarians who had crossed the original line set down in the Armistice and that no Hungarian government could have accepted the new line. "This is what has thrown Hungary into Bolshevism."[73] The conference finally decided to send General Smuts to Hungary as a confidential agent with the authority to negotiate on territorial issues. This change in the attitudes of England and the United States towards Hungary unfortunately was too little and came too late to preserve democratic government in Hungary.

Following the failure of Hungary's democratic revolution in 1849, seventy years earlier, Louis Kossuth, the leader of that movement, turned to the west and sought intervention by the United States to aid in a renewed revolutionary effort. In a real sense, Karolyi's experiment with democracy was also dependent on meaningful American intervention to secure its success. Hungary alone could no more assure her self-

determination against larger and more prominent European interests in 1918 than it could against the interests of Russia and Austria in 1849. The notion that American neutrality would insure peaceful self-determination of the developing nations of the former Habsburg Empire was a product of the view that the enemy had chiefly consisted of the forces that had prohibited such self-determination, i.e., the Habsburgs, rather than the forces of power politics in Europe which had in many ways contributed to the viability of the Austro Hungarian Empire. In reality, the same characteristic which made America the perfect ally for Hungary, namely that it had no tangible interests in Central Europe, economic or political, were the exact tendencies that made her so undependable as a friend. Despite, Wilson's distrust of national self-interest, as a means of determining international relations,[74] self interest was a reality. There was simply nothing in Central Europe that America was willing to commit to protect. American intervention not neutrality was necessary to insure the development of some type of peaceful self- determination for Hungary and the rest of the successor States of the Habsburg Empire. Unfortunately, America was not ready for such a commitment. President Wilson's rhetoric

regarding a war without victors and democratic self determination had been designed more as a means of countering Bolshevik Rhetoric and bringing a rapid end to the war in Europe than as a means of assuring self determination for Hungary or any of the other successor States. Following World war I, America re-isolated itself from Europe, first militarily and then politically, and just as Kossuth had failed to enlist a commitment by the United States in 1852, Karolyi also failed in 1919. This time Hungary turned to the East for help against what they saw as the imperial intentions of the west and democracy once again eluded Hungarians until the democratic revolution in 1956.

Chapter 3

"Intervention in Word"

But liberation from the yoke of Moscow will not occur for a very long time...Unless the United States makes it publicly known that it wants and expects liberation to occur.
John Foster Dulles[75]

Never befriend the oppressed unless you are prepared to take on the oppressor.
Ogden Nash [76]

On October 23, 1956, following a confrontation between Hungarian college students and Communist officials, Hungary erupted into revolution. For the next ten days, Hungarians, led by Imre Nagy, successfully won their independence from the Soviet Union, only to have their hopes for independence dashed by a Soviet invasion on November 4th. The intensity and timing of this reaction against Soviet rule on the part of Hungary caught the entire world by surprise. This revolt was one of the first overt nationwide uprisings against Communist authority in the Soviet realm and it took place during the Suez Crises which was threatening to develop into a major war. This crisis in the Middle East both prevented the West from offering a united response in support of Hungary and provided the Soviets with an excuse to justify a military invasion of

Hungary.

The American foreign policy that preceded this revolt in Hungary and American diplomatic actions taken in response to it were confusing and ill-conceived. American actions toward the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe in the years preceding the revolution in Hungary were based on the Eisenhower administrations policy of "liberation." This policy, developed by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, was an effort to destabilize Soviet control in Eastern Europe through the use of aggressive propaganda broadcasts from radio stations in Western Europe. A war of words, so to speak, to foster nationalist and anti-communist attitudes in the satellite nations. Dulles described this process accordingly:

> We should let these truths work in us and through us. We should be dynamic, we should use ideas as weapons; and these ideas should conform to moral principles. That we do this is right for it is the inevitable expression of a faith and I am confident that we people do have a faith. But it is also expedient in defending ourselves against an aggressive imperialistic despotism. For even the present lines will not hold unless our purpose goes beyond confining Soviet communism within its present orbit.[77]

In this strange mixture of American exceptionalism and Cold War posturing Dulles promoted the idea that

despotism could indeed be overthrown by using ideas or words as weapons. Dulles was careful to assert that he was only interested in peaceful evolutionary reductions in the degree of Soviet domination[78] but curiously promised that this policy would result in freedom for substantial parts of Eastern Europe within a period of only ten years. He offered the separation from Soviet domination engineered by Tito in Yugoslavia as evidence that peaceful liberation in Eastern Europe was possible:

> We do not want a series of bloody uprisings and reprisals. There can be peaceful separation from Moscow, as Tito showed, and enslavement can be made so unprofitable that the Master will let go of his grip...[79]

The problem with this reasoning was that Tito's rebellion against Stalin was only peaceful because Tito had the means to defend himself from a Soviet attack. He was an extremely popular nationalist leader with a competent and independent military which had recently made it very difficult for the Nazis who had also tried to dominate Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia also had a border on the Adriatic Sea which offered Tito unencumbered access to Western aid if necessary. Finally, the Soviets never actually occupied Yugoslavia as they had the other East European nations which became their satellites. It was

Tito's unique situation and not his love of liberty that enabled him to peacefully separate from the Soviets. None of the other satellites possessed these advantages and Dulles never explained exactly how words alone would be sufficient to subdue Soviet military might in these countries. Even Radio Free Europe (RFE), As Early as 1953, was aware that words alone would be insufficient to assure the liberation of Eastern Europe. They contended that this would take a "confluence of forces" including military, economic, diplomatic, and propaganda.[80]

In addition, both Dulles and Eisenhower refused to acknowledge, or plan for the possibility that aggressive propaganda might result in a violent reaction. As mentioned above Dulles was convinced that this process could be accomplished peacefully. As a result, America's responses to both Hungary and the USSR during the critical days between the outbreak of the revolution and the Soviet invasion of Hungary were superficially centered on economic aid and failed effectively to address the realistic power dynamics at play in the conflict. The success of the financial aid to Yugoslavia probably contributed to this belief. On October 23, at the outbreak of the revolution in Hungary, Dulles

bragged:

> Did I not tell you that our financial aid to Yugoslavia...would come back ten fold?...the people in Poland, and Hungary, their leaders, have seen that it is possible to be independent from Moscow! We kept alive the yearning for freedom. It worked in Yugoslavia, it will work in Poland and Hungary. The great monolith of communism is crumbling![81]

Again, the degree of success liberation appeared to be having in Yugoslavia would prove much more elusive in Poland and Hungary.

Finally, it was not clear just how the policy of liberation, in the absence of some mechanism of enforcement, differed meaningfully from containment. After all, containment also had as its ultimate goal the liberation of Eastern Europe, but it wisely did not stress this or make any predictions as to when it would occur. The confusing nature of Dulles's notions regarding liberation was demonstrated in a televised discussion between Averell Harriman and Dulles during the 1952 presidential campaign. Harriman, the likely choice for Secretary of State in a Democratic administration, challenged Dulles regarding the meaning of liberation:

Dulles: The first thing that I would like to do

> would be to shift from a purely defensive policy to a psychological offensive, a liberation policy, which will try and give hope and a resistance mood inside the Soviet Empire...
>
> Harriman: Those are fine words, but I don't understand the meaning of them...We have the initiative in many parts of the world [but] it's dangerous to talk of liberation because liberation in the minds of Europeans means war...But nothing can be more cruel than to try and get people behind the iron curtain and have a new tragedy and massacre...
>
> Dulles: ...we don't support a move that would start a massacre. I wrote quite a little piece in life magazine.
>
> Harriman: I read it twice but I couldn't understand what you meant.[82]

If the United States was not willing to commit to any action beyond aggressive propaganda, it was difficult to understand what Dulles meant in his rhetoric regarding liberation. In conjunction with the Eisenhower policy of massive retaliation in the event of a Soviet attack, liberation was just a defensive policy disguised with aggressive rhetoric. This also was explicit in Dulles's arguments in favor of this policy.

> The positive policies we have outlined would create new and refreshing conditions of opportunity. Political aggression can then be ended. Local communist parties would lose much of their vigor and belligerence as the Soviet Communist party became ever more preoccupied with its own "home work" of coping with the restiveness of the captive peoples.[83]

In other words, as a tool for keeping the Soviets preoccupied with putting out fires in their own back yard, worrying about their satellites in Eastern Europe, liberation could effectively limit Soviet effectiveness in other parts of the world. In light of this it is easy to see why many Hungarians were bitter and cynical about the lack of meaningful action by the United States during this conflict. The following is a description of a conversation between Bela Kovacs, a prominent Hungarian politician, and officers at the US Embassy in Budapest the night of the Soviet invasion of Hungary:

> Legation officers who conversed with Kovacs impressed by his sincerity and honesty...Kovacs expressed opinion that US radio misled Hungarian people into believing they could count on effective US aid in the event of trouble with Soviets. Kovacs said that official pronouncements from the highest US government levels had also lent towards creating this illusion. He vehemently stated his opinion that if US policy towards Soviet Communism was purely defensive one the US should have directed its anti-communist propaganda activities at the USSR and should have left the East European states alone. Kovacs left little doubt that in his opinion the US for the attainment of its own selfish goals had cynically and cold-bloodedly maneuvered the Hungarian people into action against the USSR. [84]

"Cold blooded" maneuvering might have been an exaggeration by Kovacs, but his overall analysis of the

liberation policy was fair. It was wrong for the United States to promote liberation in these countries for the purpose of preoccupying the Soviets with no intention of acting beyond their propaganda efforts to assure such liberty. Essentially, Dulles's policy of liberation consisted of too much containment to make liberation workable and too much liberation to give containment adequate time. For liberation to have been a logical and workable policy, the Eisenhower administration would have had to at least consider the possibility that a conflict with the Soviet Union might occur requiring a military response by the US, despite the nuclear implications. There is some evidence that a willingness on the part of the United States to confront the Soviets more aggressively during this conflict could have succeeded without resulting in a war. According to the Russian spy Oleg Penkovskiy, Khrushchev gambled on the fact that the West would not respond militarily:

> Look what happened during the Hungarian events and the Suez crisis. We in Moscow felt as if we were sitting on a powder keg. Everyone in the General staff was against the "Khrushchev adventure." It was better to lose Hungary, as they said, than to lose everything. But what did the West do? Nothing. It was asleep. This gave Khrushchev confidence, and after Hungary he began to scream: "I was right!" After the Hungarian incident he dismissed many generals who had spoken out against him. If the West would have

> slapped Khrushchev down hard then, he would not be in power today and all of Eastern Europe could be free.[85]

The potential effectiveness of stronger American action is, however, beside the point. The fact is, liberation was not logical or workable merely as a cover for containment. The policy had to have some teeth if it was going successfully to promote liberation. The United States had to be prepared to defend such liberty, something American officials were unwilling to do. Conflict with the Soviet Union was not a risk that either Eisenhower or Dulles was willing to accept, and thus, liberation was irresponsible and misleading. It promoted the false image of America as a "defender of liberty" to those living behind the Iron Curtain, and this was to a large degree the real impetus behind the Hungarian belief that America would intervene to protect them from the Soviets.

In post-revolution surveys taken by a number of Hungarian refugees only a small percentage blamed RFE broadcasts for the Hungarian belief that America would come to their aid against the Soviets. Most believed this simply because they associated the very existence of American propaganda stations in Western Europe with

the idea that America would fight to defend Hungarian liberty.[86] This was also noted during a meeting of the special committee on Soviet and related problems which met November 30, 1956. In discussing Hungarian attitudes towards the United States they concluded that Hungarian disappointment arose primarily from their belief that since America had fostered liberty they would help Hungary in a revolt.[87] It was the overall public posturing by the US on liberation and not particular broadcasts by RFE that ultimately was responsible for instilling this belief in many Hungarians. Dulles had spoken loudly on the liberation of Eastern Europe, which falsely implied a commitment to liberty that went beyond merely talking, but he refused to carry a stick.

Politically, this provided Republicans with the advantage of appearing tough on communism while avoiding any prospect of an actual conflict with the Soviets, which naturally evoked fears of nuclear war. During the 1952 presidential election, Adlai Stevenson referred to liberation as a political tool designed to appeal to the fears of the immigrant voters. He described the policy as a "cynical and transparent attempt, drenched in crocodile tears, to play on the anxieties of foreign

nationality groups in this country."[88] He claimed it was a dubious effort to acquire the votes of immigrants who were fearful of prolonged subjection of their home countries in Eastern Europe, without generating anxiety over the prospect of a conflict that went beyond the use of aggressive words.

Eisenhower embraced the idea of liberation following his victory in the Republican primary, in the spring of 1952, as a means of appealing to the East European immigrant voting bloc, which normally voted Democratic,[89] and capitalizing on the general impression that the containment policy, devised by Democrats, had been ineffective at stemming Soviet advances throughout the world. In a speech to the American Legion in late August Eisenhower called for their help in a "great moral crusade to liberate the captive peoples".[90] Eisenhower was always careful, however, to stress that he was only interested in supporting peaceful movements towards liberation. During a speech in Early September Eisenhower vigorously stressed this point of peaceful liberation and then added that "The only way to win World War III is to prevent it."

In addition to the political benefits of Liberation, Eisenhower was also impressed with the potential of propaganda as a tool of war. During World War II, Eisenhower demonstrated an unusual interest in the potential of psychological operations stemming from his desire to avoid a costly and bloody conventional conflict."[91] Following his election in 1952, Eisenhower immediately set out to reorganize the propaganda efforts of the United States. Following the advice of propagandist C. D. Jackson, the acting assistant to the president on Cold War planning,[92] Eisenhower established the United States Information Agency (USIA) as the central agency for government propaganda. This move separated American propaganda efforts from the State Department and centralized it under the Presidents direct Control to avoid the confusion over propaganda that had caused problems in the final years of the Truman administration.[93]

Another recommendation that Eisenhower implemented involved the narrowing in the number of official American outlets for Propaganda. This provided the president with a couple of advantages. First it assured further control over officially sponsored material and

second it allowed for the covert direction of more polemic and less positive propaganda to those sources that were considered private. Under this scenario Voice of America(VOA) was considered an official source for communicating to those behind the Iron curtain while, Radio Free Europe(RFE) was utilized as a private source over which the United states supposedly had little control. Although the CIA had actually founded (RFE) in 1949, it was accomplished covertly under the cover of a private agency. This allowed Eisenhower a means to avoid taking responsibility should problems arise from the more risky messages directed towards these private agencies.[94]

This reorganization of the propaganda efforts of the United States allowed Eisenhower to personally direct both the day to day, and long range distribution of material to the world and covered he and his administration from potentially harmful results stemming from the non-official outlets of propaganda. This official distance between Eisenhower and organizations like Radio Free Europe, which played so pivotal a role in the conflict in Hungary, sheds a great deal of light on the direct role played by Eisenhower regarding the

eventualities in Budapest in the fall of 1956. Eisenhower's responsibility in this conflict has been vastly down played.

Diplomatically, liberation provided the United States with another important opportunity. The policy was an opportunity to slow Soviet expansion into parts of the world where America had important interests like the Middle East and Central and South America, by bogging it down in Eastern Europe, where the United States had very few significant interests. Increasing the cost to the Soviets of consolidating their gains in Eastern Europe at very little risk to the United States.[95] Although Eisenhower and Dulles would have rejected such a cynical analysis Dulles did make it clear that one of the functions of the policy would be to preoccupy the Soviets with problems in their own back yard.[96] It is otherwise difficult to explain the passive and, at times, even apologetic American diplomatic responses to both the Soviet Union and Hungary throughout the Hungarian revolution. Despite the compelling actions by Hungarians in their fight for liberty, America had no real interest to protect in Eastern Europe which would have justified the risk of a

conflict with the Soviets.

The United States was particularly surprised by the revolution in Hungary. Despite the steady stream of propaganda broadcasts into Eastern Europe via Radio Free Europe and Voice of America, none of America's intelligence suggested that a revolt of this magnitude was possible. Reports to the National Security Council on February 29, 1956, regarding the effectiveness of NSC 174, the United States policy toward the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe, revealed the following:

> Actions intended to disrupt the Soviet-satellite relationship may have caused some difficulties for Moscow, but no real evidence of a schism has yet made its appearance...it must still be concluded that a non-Soviet regime along the Tito model is unlikely to emerge in any of the satellites under the existing circumstances.[97]

The revolt was such a surprise the United States was caught without a minister at the legation in Budapest. Christian M. Ravndal, the Ambassador in Budapest prior to the outburst in Hungary had left for his new appointment as Ambassador to Ecuador and the new representative, Tom Wailes, did not arrive in Hungary until November 2, two days before the Soviet invasion. He never did present his credentials.[98]

America's surprise over this outbreak in Hungary

was further complicated by the escalation of tensions in the Middle East regarding control of the Suez Canal. In July of 1956 Egyptian president Gamal Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. Nasser was responding to the decision by both America and Britain to renege on their promise to finance the Aswan High dam. America was unhappy over Nasser's apparent camaraderie with Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Nasser nationalized the canal so he could use the tolls he collected to finance the Dam. This move threatened the prestige and power of Great Britain and France which had enjoyed a tradition as imperial powers in the region. It also threatened to interrupt Britain's access to needed oil supplies. This conflict between the Egypt, backed by the Soviets, and England and France came to a head at the most crucial point of the revolution in Hungary. On October 29, Israel, as part of a plan devised in cooperation with, Great Britain and France, to retake the canal by force, invaded Egypt and moved in the direction of the canal. On October 30, Britain and France followed suit and the world teetered on the verge of a major war. These actions by America's allies, despite the strong condemnation of American leaders, provided the Soviets with a way to justify a similar

response in Hungary. This new conflict also shifted the attention of both the United States and much of the rest of the world, away from Hungary to the Middle East. A region which was much more vital to Western interests.

Finally, in addition to the above conflict, the United States was in the middle of a presidential election. This fact was most clearly seen in the beginning of the conflict in Hungary as Republicans touted what initially looked to prove the effectiveness of their policy towards the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe. Many bragged, most prominently Dulles, that the uprising in Hungary was evidence for the efficacy of American actions in Yugoslavia and the rest of Eastern Europe. In addition to the anti-Soviet radio broadcasts into the region, America had also provided Yugoslavia with economic aid. Eisenhower was much more sober about the meaning of the events in Hungary and wisely does not appear to have used it for political gain.

Throughout the conflict in Hungary, American diplomatic efforts centered on offering financial incentives to both Hungary and Poland and providing assurances to the Soviets that the United States had no ulterior military motives for desiring the independence

of either. Needless to say, neither of these moves engendered any good will from the Soviets. After all, both Poland and Hungary had sufficient incentive to seek independence from the Soviets without financial promises and it was the Soviets, not the satellites, that were the obstacle to this. As a result, these efforts by the United States actually did more to antagonize than appease the Soviets.

Two watershed events took place between the initial outbreak of the rebellion on October 23rd and the Soviet invasion November 4. These events which should have sounded a strong alarm for pro-active and energetic diplomatic efforts by the United States. The first of these was the announcement by the Soviet Union that it would withdraw from Hungary and grant greater degrees of latitude for self determination to its East European satellites. The second of these occurred when Imre Nagy announced Hungary's intention to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact and requested United Nations aid in protecting their neutrality. Both of these were momentous events requiring a calculated and pro-active diplomatic response by the United States. Yet American officials did little.

On October 31, Pravda published a surprising statement by the Soviet government declaring a willingness on its part to allow for a greater degree of self-determination for its satellites. The Soviets promised to "build their mutual relations only on the principles of equality...and of non-interference in one another's internal affairs."[99] This statement also acknowledged the principle that Soviet troops would only be stationed in the satellites at the request of the respective countries:

> ...stationing the troops of one another state which is a member of the Warsaw Treaty on the territory of another state which is a member of the treaty is done by agreement among all its members and only with the consent of the state on the territory of which and at the request of which these troops are stationed or it is planned to station them.[100]

The Soviets then promised to withdraw their troops as soon as Hungarian officials deemed it necessary.

This was a remarkable statement by the Soviet Union which Dulles described as "the most significant utterance to come out of the Soviet Union since World War II."[101] On the evening of October 31st, President Eisenhower addressed the nation regarding the developments in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. He

mentioned these moves by the Soviets accordingly:

> Only yesterday the Soviet Union issued this important statement on its relations with all the countries in Eastern Europe. This statement recognized the need for review of Soviet policies, and amendment of these policies to meet the demands of the people for greater national independence and personal freedom. The Soviet Union declared its readiness to consider the withdrawal of Soviet advisers...and also...Soviet troops from such countries as Poland and Hungary... We cannot know if these avowed purposes will indeed be truly carried out... if the Soviet Union indeed faithfully acts upon its announced intention, the world will witness the greatest forward stride toward justice, trust, and understanding among nations in our generation.[102]

In the excitement over this announcement by the Soviets Dulles and Eisenhower overlooked an ominous condition that the Soviets had placed on this policy stating their intentions to protect what they referred to as the "socialist achievements" in these countries. This condition was stated as follows:

> To guard the socialist achievements of the people's-democratic Hungary is the chief and sacred duty of the workers, peasants, intelligentsia, of all the Hungarian working people at the present moment. The Soviet government expresses confidence that the peoples of the socialist countries will not permit foreign and domestic reactionary forces to shake the foundations of the people's democratic system...They will strengthen the fraternal unity and mutual aid of the socialist countries to buttress the great cause of peace and socialism.[103]

This additional rhetoric by the Soviets should have been

viewed suspiciously by American officials. After outlining what appeared to be a softening of the Soviets in Eastern Europe Eisenhower went on to review exactly how the United States had responded to date to the situation in Hungary:

> The United States has made it clear its readiness to assist economically the new independent governments of these countries...We have also, with respect to the Soviet Union, sought to remove any false fears that we look upon the new governments in these Eastern Europe countries as potential military allies.[104]

Although these moves were designed to relieve Soviet concerns about American motives with regard to Hungary they actually only antagonized them. American reassurances that they were not seeking military alliances with the new independent nations in Eastern Europe implied that these nations had acquired the option to make such alliances in the first place. In addition America's dismissal of any military motives with respect to the region only reassured Soviet confidence in the likelihood that a military solution to the problems in Hungary by the Soviets would go unopposed by the United States. It was clearly not in America's interest to get involved in a conflict with the Soviet Union but that does not mean they had to make this so clear to the Soviets. Leaving that unsaid would

have at least added a higher degree of risk to any decision by the Soviets to resort to an invasion. America had clearly taken the high road in the conflict in the Suez by condemning their allies Britain and France for their imperialistic actions in the Middle East. They had every right to publicly hold the Soviet Union to the same standard with respect to Hungary and Poland. This kind of approach could have been done without disclosing America's motives with respect to a potential use of force to defend Hungary. It was not in the Soviet Union's national interest to start a nuclear war with France and Britain but this did not stop them from threatening it. Surely they knew the consequences such an attack would have had on their own security. Why did the United States have to so quickly reveal its purely peaceful intentions. In December 1956, six weeks after the invasion of Hungary by the Soviets, Dulles offered the following as a defense of America's response during the conflict:

> ...we have no desire to surround the Soviet Union with a band of hostile states...We have made clear our policy in that respect in the hope of facilitating in that way an evolution-a peaceful evolution-of the satellite states toward genuine independence.[105]

According to Henry Kissinger, Dulles's apologetic tone

so soon after the Soviets' brutal invasion of Hungary and their irresponsible saber rattling in the Middle East was remarkable.

Although this posturing by Dulles seemed contradictory toward American convictions on peace or liberty, it was fully consistent with the genuine purpose of the policy of liberation. To pre-occupy the Soviets in Eastern Europe with little or no risk to American interests. Ironically, in conjunction with the Suez crisis it was the United States not the Soviets that were paralyzed. The Soviets ruthlessly squelched rebellion and liberty in both Hungary and Poland, in effect re-consolidating their gains in Eastern Europe, and then aggressively threatened the West with regard to the Suez crises. The United States stood by impotently.

On November 1st, the second of these momentous events occurred. Imre Nagy declared Hungary's neutrality and announced their withdrawal from the Warsaw pact. Then he asked for the United Nations to defend Hungary's neutrality. Dulles responded that "the occurrences in Hungary are a miracle. They have disproved that a popular revolt can't happen in the face of modern weapons...even the Soviet troops have shown no stomach

for shooting down Hungarians."[106] This decision by Hungary should have sent up a huge red flag. Even if the Soviets' earlier declarations regarding the independence amongst socialist states had been sincere, surely it must have been obvious to Dulles and other American officials that the stakes had been significantly raised with this decision by Hungary. No serious diplomatic efforts were taken by the United States to assuage the Soviet ego or compensate them for this obvious loss of power in Eastern Europe.

It is possible that an offer to discuss some form of concession to the Soviets to compensate them for their losses in Eastern Europe would have at least delayed the Soviet backlash against Hungary. Perhaps an offer by the United States to discuss the possibility of a neutralized united Germany along the lines of Austria in exchange for the neutrality of Hungary and Poland would have appealed to the Soviets. The United States might also have offered a reduction in NATO divisions in Germany in exchange for Soviet withdrawal from Hungary and Poland.

Perhaps none of these efforts would have been

effective, but the fact that nothing to compensate the Soviets was even attempted suggests that American officials completely missed the ominous nature of this declaration by Nagy. The unguarded enthusiasm displayed by Dulles following this decision by Hungary was hardly the reaction one would expect from a seasoned diplomat. Maybe he was just too pre-occupied with the Suez crisis to give proper attention to the conflict in Hungary. Perhaps he sincerely believed that words alone could peacefully subdue Soviet military domination. Perhaps he was merely blinded from realistically appraising the serious power dynamics by his fear of communism. Whatever the reason or reasons American diplomacy during these critical days following the outbreak in Hungary left a lot to be desired.

On the morning of November 4, 1956, 200,000 Soviet troops and 4,000 Soviet tanks brutally ended Hungarian independence. A total of 4,000 Hungarians were killed and another 20,000 were sent to concentration camps in the Soviet Union. A new leader was installed by the Soviets in Hungary and Imre Nagy was tried and executed by the Soviets for crimes against the socialist state. The uprising and subsequent massacre that was supposedly

not possible had happened while the spokesmen of liberty sat helplessly watching. Unfortunately words proved no match for tanks.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

In a sense, the circumstances that preoccupied the United States and in some instances contributed to the fashioning of American rhetoric, during the above events in Hungary, were coincidental. The conflict over the slavery issue, World War I and its aftermath, and the Cold War and the Suez crises were all conflicts involving enormous consequences to America and the World and the fact that these conflicts in Hungary took place within the context of these larger problems was to a degree a coincidence. However, in light of the growing rise in the prominence of the United States during these successive periods and the volatile and pivotal role played by Eastern Europe in Europe's struggle for power over the last few centuries, it is not entirely surprising that these explosive incidents took place in Hungary. Past experience had adequately demonstrated the need to handle Eastern and Central Europe with great care and America's growing stake in international stability should certainly have resulted in a degree of

soberness and caution with regard to its foreign policy in the region. Although particular events in Hungary specifically, and Eastern Europe in general, have come as a surprise to American policy makers, the fact that these events occurred in Eastern Europe, should not have been a surprise, and the need for care in avoiding any actions that could add to this historic volatility should have been evident. Yet with each of these events in Hungary American political leaders demonstrated a distinguished lack of appreciation for these dynamics.

During each of these episodes, America's rhetoric revealed a degree of naivete regarding the realistic power dynamics at work in Eastern Europe. This was perhaps the most confusing aspect for Hungarians who, as a result of centuries of experience, were intimately aware of their vulnerability to Europe's major powers and the need for intervention on their behalf by other powers if any degree of Hungarian democracy or independence was to be achieved. To Hungarians, it was inconceivable that the rhetoric of Daniel Webster, Woodrow Wilson, or the Eisenhower administration, could be embraced without some degree of appreciation for the realistic power dynamics at work in Europe. How were

Webster's allusions to an American form of government taking shape on the Danube or Wilson's ideas regarding autonomy for the Habsburg minorities supposed to occur without some type of realistic analysis of the European balance of power and the need for intervention to enforce such goals? How could Dulles's confident assertions on the likely liberation of Eastern Europe have been maintained without considering the strategic considerations at work both for the Soviet Union and other East European states. Had Dulles done such an analysis the mistaken conclusions he drew regarding the success of Yugoslavian independence and the possibility of duplicating such success elsewhere in Eastern Europe could have been avoided. The benefits of Yugoslavia's strong leadership, independent military, and advantageous geography were obvious factors in its ability to gain its independence from the Soviet Union. The need for intervention by other powers on behalf of countries in the Soviet Bloc in order to duplicate these advantages would have also been evident.

American leaders during these periods largely missed these implications and perhaps sincerely believed that statements of moral support would be enough to insure or proliferate the development of an independent government

in Hungary. Hungarians, on the other hand, assuming that America did understand the implications in her rhetoric and the necessary connection between Hungarian independence and American intervention, hastily assumed that such intervention was either possible and or eminent.

In addition, America's rhetoric towards Hungary, during these periods, was designed more as a means of achieving U.S. interests which often times had nothing realistically to do with Hungary. The motivation of both Daniel Webster and Stephen Douglas, in 1851 and 1852, with respect to their rhetoric towards Hungary, concerned primarily domestic political considerations. They both desired to use the situation with Hungary and Austria to achieve specific goals in American domestic politics. Webster's letter to Hulsemann was designed to excite nationalist sentiments in America which he hoped would unify the country in the midst of the growing tension over the slavery issue. And Douglas's proposal of a new and progressive American foreign policy was designed primarily to cover over divisions within the Democratic party over slavery. The compelling nature of the revolution in Hungary and the subsequent visit by Kossuth to America combined with the relative lack of any real

American interests in the region, fashioned Hungary as the perfect target for rhetoric by Webster and Douglas.

Wilson also applied rhetoric directed at problems within the Austro-Hungarian Empire to address much broader U.S. interests around the world. His rhetoric about making the World safe for democracy, along with his public denunciation of national self interest, were designed to make war more palatable to Americans who traditionally resisted involvement in the world conflicts. Wilson's fourteen point plan for peace, part of which called for autonomy for minorities within the Habsburg Empire, was offered as a means of both countering Bolshevik rhetoric and hastening an end to World War I. In May of 1918, at the urging of Secretary of State Lansing, Wilson agreed to a revision in Point Ten calling for the organization of independent states along ethnic lines. This was far more radical than the original call for autonomy. It was hoped by both Wilson and Lansing that this revision would succeed in dividing Austro-Hungary internally hastening its surrender. Wilson made it clear, with regard to this revision, That Hungarians should also be included on the list of minorities within the Empire seeking independence.

Following the armistice with Austro-Hungary and the subsequent breakup of the Empire, the value of Hungarian independence subsided greatly and appeals to Wilson for recognition of Hungarian democracy went un-answered. Adding support to the contention that Wilson's allusions to an independent Hungary were designed more as a means of achieving a quicker end to the war than as a sincere interest in an independent Hungary.

Finally, rhetoric by the Eisenhower regarding the liberation of Eastern Europe from Soviet domination was also designed to achieve goals, both internationally and domestically, far broader than any real U.S. interests in Hungary or any other East European State. The liberation policy was designed mostly as a political move to paint President Truman and the Democratic party as weak regarding communism. Republicans touted Liberation as a viable alternative to containment as a means of gaining support from East European immigrant voters, that traditionally supported democrats, and to discredit the Democratic party in general for everything from being soft on the Soviet Union to their domestic support for labor unions. Liberation was a cynical attempt to use the anxiety that Americans felt regarding the growing

tensions of the Cold War to attack and weaken democrats domestically both as a means of winning elections in 1952 and 1956, and to gain a legislative advantage in the years to come by painting liberal reforms, supported by Democrats, as communist or socialist in nature.

Although these periods involved critical and sometimes tragic errors with regard to American policies toward Hungary each successive conflict represented a greater degree of understanding by the United States officials for their role in the maintenance of international stability and the pivotal role that American intervention in Europe plays in such stability. Despite the lack of support for Kossuth and his desire of another revolution in Hungary, the debate over Young America in the 1850's represented the first real challenge to the policy of American isolationism. Wilson's effort to contribute to stability in the world through the development of the League of Nations despite his failure to get the treaty ratified, nevertheless indicated a growing understanding of America for its role in the maintenance of international stability. Finally, American policies such as the Marshall plan to secure the economic stability of Western Europe, notwithstanding the

failure in American policies regarding Hungary under Eisenhower and Dulles, reflected a further appreciation for America's role in preserving international security.

The recent unanimous vote by the United States Senate to ratify the treaty adding Hungary, Czech, and Poland to NATO may be evidence of even further appreciation by American leaders of their role in international stability. Although some opponents of the treaty feared that such a move would invigorate the Cold War, in reality the world today more resembles the world that existed during the early part of this century. A period when strong American intervention in Europe may have succeeded in preventing a World War but also a period when the isolationist tendencies in the United States were too strong to allow for such a possibility. A U.S. commitment to intervene in the event of a major conflict in this region may be precisely what is needed to prevent such an occurrence. In light of this fact, the recent vote for the entrance of Hungary, Czech, and Poland into NATO by the U.S. Senate may reflect a maturation in the understanding of American leaders toward their responsibilities in maintaining stability in the world by a demonstrating a willingness to intervene

in the event of a conflict. Should this be the case, perhaps it indicates that important lessons have been learned, for both the United States and Hungary, over the last 150 years.

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