

6. The War Within the War: Sumner Welles and American Anti-Colonialism, 1941-1943

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Among the many responsibilities confronting Sumner Welles as a result of U.S. entry into the war was the challenge of formulating a response to the emergent nationalism in the colonial world. He believed that, regardless of the war's outcome, much of the colonial world would be profoundly changed, and the question of how to ally the United States with these nationalist movements would become one of the most important challenges facing the nation after the war. America's entry into the war presented Welles with an enormous opportunity to press for reform in the colonial empires. He understood that the United States would no longer have to settle for merely offering advice on colonial matters from the periphery because, with American productivity and manpower directly supporting the war, Washington's leverage over wartime political issues had grown immensely. 1

What Welles sought was nothing less than the internationalization of the Monroe Doctrine. He would use a combination of public pronouncements, private diplomatic discussions, and his leadership of the postwar planning process to press for change and a reordering of the postwar colonial world. Just as John Quincy Adams had promulgated the Monroe Doctrine as a warning to the European powers that the United States would oppose any effort on their part to establish or reclaim colonies in the new world, Welles resolved to stretch the meaning of the Atlantic Charter to ensure that the imperial powers would not seek a return to the status quo at the end of the war. 2

As Welles saw it, decolonization was inevitable, and thus the United States should take advantage of the radical changes that would come in its wake. He believed the demand for self-determination would be a hugely important political factor during and after the war and that Washington could best promote its postwar interests by supporting the aspirations of the colonized peoples. 3

Yet Welles often sought to take the colonial debate to a higher level. His opposition to colonialism also had subtle links to the larger question of race, not only in the colonial world, but also at home. While American opposition to colonialism has often been premised upon assessments of British power and the exclusion of American commercial and trade interests, his wartime addresses also focused on its impact on the colonial peoples themselves. Throughout the war he proclaimed that the U.S. could not fight imperialism and colonialism abroad while perpetuating it at home by oppressing minority groups. The very ideological and racist nature of the war, with the German and Japanese emphasis on racial questions and distinctions, further underscored for Welles the spuriousness of racial arguments that had been used to justify colonial domination. 4

Walter White, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, met with Welles in May 1942 and urged that the administration call a "Pacific Conference" along the lines of the Churchill-Roosevelt meeting off the coast of Newfoundland. White proposed that Roosevelt meet with Indian leaders such as Nehru and Gandhi and a Chinese delegation led by Chiang Kai-shek and proclaim a "Pacific Charter" dedicated to ending colonial rule in Asia. He further suggested that a delegation led by Wendell Willkie that would include "a distinguished American Negro whose complexion unmistakably identifies him as being a colored man" should proceed to India and proclaim U.S. solidarity with the Indian struggle under the aegis of the Pacific Charter. [5](#)

In light of Hull's hostility to such a summit Welles suggested to the president that he politely tell White it was not "the appropriate moment for the United States individually to undertake an effort of this character." Nonetheless, the discussion with White no doubt reinforced in Welles's mind the connection many were making between Washington's policy toward colonial rule and the persistence of racism on the home front, and may have helped to subsequently inspire his far-reaching public remarks about race and colonialism. He would proclaim that the principles of the Atlantic Charter could not be limited to "the White race." "Peoples capable of autonomous government," he announced, "should be possessed of that right whether they be yellow or brown, black or white." [6](#)

In several of his wartime speeches he endeavored to equate the effort to oppose the racialist aims of the Axis powers with the fight for racial equality in the United States, thereby demonstrating his belief that the persistence of racism at home, while America pledged itself to destroy racial hatred abroad, ensured that war aims and colonialism would remain mired in the question of race on the home front. Throughout the war he strove to make a connection between the effort to destroy fascism abroad and the necessity to continue the reform and expansion of civil rights at home, publicly linking American attempts to liberate those living under colonial rule and Axis domination with the struggle for civil rights and the quest for better treatment for minorities in the United States. [7](#)



Shortly after his resignation, Welles said that he understood earlier than most that the emergence of Japan as a world power, coupled with the slower but nevertheless steady emergence of China as a full member of the family of nations, together with the growth of national consciousness among many other peoples of Asia, notably India, completely destroyed what he called "the fetish of white supremacy cultivated by the big colonial powers during the nineteenth century." The thesis of white supremacy could only exist, he argued, so long as the white race actually proved to be supreme. As he saw it, the nature of the defeats suffered by the Western nations in 1942 dealt a fatal blow to such pretensions. [8](#)

His Wilsonian views, such as his commitment to self-determination and free trade, also helped shape his genuinely anti-colonial outlook. ⁹ But this is not to say that his views on the subject were wholly idealistic or altruistic; his anti-colonialism also sprang from his pursuit of more self-interested aims. Like Wilson, Welles partly derived his anti-colonialism from a realistic assessment that the continuation of the colonial empires would adversely affect U.S. national interests. He wagered that any diminution of the colonial empires would work to the benefit of the United States by increasing its power and influence in the world. He also assumed the United States stood to gain from any weakening of the colonial economic systems because it would enable the U.S. to obtain valuable raw materials as well as offering new potential markets and opportunities to extend its free trade regime. He feared the United States might slip into another economic depression after the war, and thus he desired a policy of the open door and commercial expansion in colonial areas. Furthermore, with increasing wartime demands for oil and other resources for military and industrial purposes, the colonial question assumed even greater importance to him.

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Welles's views on the European colonial empires did not necessarily extend to Washington's relations with its Latin American neighbors, who were often seen in the outdated context of the Monroe Doctrine. While he again and again demonstrated his committed and principled opposition to European imperialism in Africa, the Near East, and the Far East, his defense of Washington's sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere must also be noted. Like Wilson before him, Welles saw no contradiction between his opposition to European-style colonialism and Washington's perpetuation of a virtual "informal empire" in the Western Hemisphere. He made clear distinctions between the behavior of the European powers in their empires and the Good Neighbor policy in Latin America. Unlike the imperialism of other nations, he assumed that many of the U.S. interventions sought to promote the security, happiness, and well-being of the Latin American peoples.

Furthermore, he justified much of Washington's historic interference in the hemisphere by arguing that, unlike the more formal colonial empires of other nations, the U.S. was merely interested in maintaining its own security, not in outright colonial domination. He thus justified interference in the region that was aimed at both bolstering the kind of hemispheric order Washington desired and seeking to keep other powers out. With regard to the question of self-determination, his own experiences in Cuba and the Dominican Republic made America's support for such a principle look at best ambiguous. Furthermore, his wartime pronouncements about the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter, when placed alongside his support for dictatorships in Latin America, often left the impression of being selective and situational. ¹⁰

Again, Welles saw clear distinctions. Such ambiguities did not prevent him from attacking the colonial status quo in many of his wartime addresses.

This would not be a war, he suggested, to merely resurrect or enlarge the empires of the victors. He assumed that the British, by agreeing to the self-determination clause of the Atlantic Charter, had unintentionally lent moral strength and legitimacy to the question of anti-colonialism. He thus used his public pronouncements to give the self-determination clause of the charter a more universal application that covered the colonial empires. To many British officials this clause applied only to the conquered nations of Europe and had little to do with the British Empire, whereas to Welles self-determination meant nothing if not defined broadly enough to encompass the European empires along with Europe. [11](#)

While Welles was one of the highest-ranking administration officials to offer such a stinging critique of colonialism, he was by no means the only American to challenge the colonial status quo during the war. The war had emboldened opponents of colonialism throughout the United States. Both Vice President Henry Wallace and the 1940 Republican nominee Wendell Willkie called for immediate independence in the colonial world, and powerful Congressional voices such as Senators Tom Connally and Robert LaFollette, Jr. urged President Roosevelt to put more pressure on the British over the issue of colonialism. Powerful news organs such as Henry Luce's Time-Life corporation also jumped on the anti-colonial bandwagon, and William Randolph Hearst's news empire was no friend of the British Empire. [12](#)

The British resented American anti-colonial views, and tension between London and Washington over colonialism played a greater role in the Second World War than it had in the First. Few issues so threatened the Anglo-American wartime alliance as did the tensions created by the colonial question. "I am not going to accept less favourable terms from the other German Willkie than I could get from Hitler," Churchill declared at one point in the war, while Leopold Amery, the British Secretary of State for India, added that he would prefer Hitler's "New Order" to Hull's "Free Trade."

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Nor did the British accept Washington's high-minded justifications for supporting self-determination. According to Anthony Eden, Roosevelt hoped the colonies, "once free of their masters will become politically and economically dependent upon the United States." Other British officials saw the Americans as "economic imperialists" or "economic expansionists" who aimed to supplant British interests throughout the world. [13](#) The British had good reason to feel insecure about their imperial possessions. Compounding the sting of American criticism, Japanese propaganda efforts in the Far East endeavored to capitalize on Allied failures by emphasizing the racial aspects of colonial rule, calling for an "Asia for Asians" and a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere." [14](#)

Welles sought to develop a broad policy to counter these



Japanese initiatives, one that would simultaneously undermine their propaganda efforts while allying the United States with the aspirations of the colonial peoples. One important component of his colonial strategy was the acceleration of independence for the Philippines. The

Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 made the Philippines a self-governing commonwealth, with full independence scheduled for 1946. In the wake of the Japanese invasion of the islands, the United States formally pledged that the Philippines would be made independent immediately upon its liberation from Japan, and President Manuel Quezon set up a government-in-exile in the Shoreham Hotel in Washington. Welles maintained close contact with Quezon and his entourage. He hoped to make the Philippines a case study for criticism of the other colonial empires. He assumed that America's treatment of the Philippines would set a useful example for the rest of the world, and he encouraged Roosevelt to allow the Philippines to sign the Declaration of the United Nations. [15](#)

Welles assumed that a similar approach in the case of India would provide a boost for the Allied cause. [16](#) He understood that resentment against the British ran deep in India, and he sought to ally U.S. war aims with those of the subcontinent's peoples. [17](#) In this vein, Roosevelt [18](#) suggested to Churchill at the height of the fighting in Burma in March 1942 that radical change in the British Empire "might cause the people [of India] to forget hard feelings, to become more loyal to the British Empire, and to stress the danger of Japanese domination, together with the advantage of peaceful evolution as against chaotic revolution." [19](#)

When London subsequently sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India in an attempt to reach a settlement with the Congress Party leaders by proposing dominion status for India, Roosevelt simultaneously dispatched to India Colonel Louis Johnson, a former assistant secretary of war. [20](#)

The president wanted to demonstrate America's commitment to reducing political tensions on the subcontinent, but also to show solidarity with the aspirations of the Indian people. [21](#)

The British deeply resented Johnson's presence, for it appeared that Roosevelt had sent an envoy to mediate between the British and the Indians. Furthermore, some British officials suspected that the true intent of American interference was to secure a large share of the postwar commercial market there. [22](#)



Welles originally wanted to take up the Indian question at the Atlantic Conference, but he instead had to accept the consolation prize of a vague declaration on self-determination. But with much of colonial Asia overrun by the Japanese in early 1942, he thought it an auspicious moment, and India an ideal place, for the Allies to act affirmatively in the name of self-determination.



In April 1942 he expressed to the president his hope that the Allies would support self-government throughout the colonial world. "In brief, what I had in mind," he wrote to Roosevelt, "was to recommend the announcement of a broad policy of liberation, insofar as the peculiar circumstances covering the Netherlands East Indies and Burma might make such an announcement possible, ... unfortunately, the breakdown of the Indian negotiations eliminates, at least temporarily, that possibility." [23](#)

A few days later Welles sent the president a second proposal further advocating "a broader and more far-reaching policy" of liberation in the colonial world:

I hope that the opportunity may be presented when the United States can join with the other nations directly interested in the Pacific regions in announcing their common determination to restore their liberties to all of the peoples whose territory has been invaded by Japan and to recognize the right to full independence of the Philippines and Korea and perhaps, if conditions seem to make it wise, Indochina. As I said in that letter, the reaching of an agreement for the dominion status or independence of India would have offered an admirable springboard for a declaration of this kind. It may be, however, that some other favorable opportunity will be presented before long for a broad announcement of this kind which would really imply that the United Nations were joined together in a war for liberation, namely, a war to end imperialism. [24](#)



He publicly articulated his desire to define the Atlantic Charter as a part of the struggle against imperialism during his Memorial Day Address at Arlington National Cemetery in May 1942, where he described the present conflict as a "people's war" and called for complete liberation in the colonial world. [25](#) It was perhaps the most far-reaching public pronouncement on the subject of colonialism issued by a senior American official during the Second World War, and it was consistent with his view that colonialism was anachronistic and reactionary and posed a threat to his vision of a new order in the postwar world.

The following day, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story on the speech, highlighting Welles's comments on colonialism with the pronouncement: "Age of Imperialism Ended." [26](#) Playwright Robert Sherwood, who also served as Welles's ally in the Office of War Information, arranged to have the speech broadcast in English and numerous subcontinental dialects over All India Radio and transcribed in more than 500 newspapers throughout the Raj. [27](#)

But his Memorial Day address immediately met with opposition from Cordell Hull, who thought it premature and too far-reaching. The secretary later claimed that Welles had acted independently and had never cleared the speech with him or the president. He thought Welles had misrepresented the views of the administration and was moving dangerously close to causing a breach between Washington and London. Hull subsequently reacted on July 23 with a radio address of his own on the question of colonialism, where he pointedly refrained from proclaiming the end of imperialism and tempered his remarks by saying that independence would come only to those who were prepared for it. "It has been our purpose in the past—and will remain our purpose in the future—to use the full measure of our influence to support attainment of freedom by all peoples who, by their acts, show themselves worthy of it and ready for it." [28](#)

Welles nevertheless continued to urge more decisive action. He warned the president in July 1942 that India was on the brink of chaos. To head off the approaching crisis, he suggested that the United States and China send representatives to New Delhi to serve as intermediaries between Indian Congress Party officials and the British. He thought such action "might serve in bringing about some satisfactory arrangement which would hold during the war period and could in any event, in view of the critical nature of the situation now existing, do no harm." [29](#)

But Roosevelt feared Churchill's reaction to Welles's proposal, particularly because of the inclusion of the Chinese, whom the prime minister distrusted. [30](#) The British labored to ensure that neither China nor the United States would interfere in India, [31](#) and they became increasingly sensitive to every nuance of American statements about the matter, at one point protesting to Welles about several items in the press implying that the administration aimed to pressure "both sides" in the Indian crisis. [32](#)

Not easily deterred by British protests, Welles had the planners take up the question of India in greater detail. They proceeded to discuss the fate not only of India, but of all the colonial empires as well, in an uninhibited and informal atmosphere. Welles understood that their views would necessarily clash with London's—more so now because the United States had expanding interests all over the world. He inaugurated the discussion by asking: "What has been the result of the situation we are now contemplating? With few exceptions there has been exploitation by European powers with very little if any advantage to the peoples concerned." [33](#)

As Welles had anticipated in his letter to the president, his survey of the colonial world coincided with the biggest civil disturbance in the British Empire since the Indian Army Mutiny of 1857. The so-called "Quit India" rebellion reached its height in August 1942, leading to the internment of many of the top nationalist leaders. [34](#) Yet Churchill maintained a truculent aversion to negotiating with Congress officials. This led to further

protestations from Washington, where the Indian struggle continued to garner more and more sympathy.

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To many, the upheaval on the subcontinent was merely the latest example of the excesses of imperial rule. [35](#) The crisis also captured the attention of the American public because U.S. troops were serving there assisting in the delivery of supplies to China. Welles understood that the presence of American troops in India might be interpreted as support for British imperial aims, and he worried that upheaval there would disrupt the Allied war effort and degenerate into a crisis akin to the Irish Easter Rising of 1916. [36](#)

He took a keen interest in the crisis in India, believing the stakes were enormous. He saw the question as much more than a petty quarrel between British and Indian statesmen. To Welles, it was part of a larger experiment in the complete liquidation of imperialism. He framed the debate by telling the other planners that political consciousness was sprouting up throughout the entire colonial world and that the United States should seek to lead these movements rather than follow in the wake of chaos. [37](#)

Welles and many of the planners believed that Britain aimed to pursue its traditional strategy of "divide and conquer" in India by pitting the Muslim minority against the Hindu majority. [38](#) Several planners saw this as just another example of a centuries-old divisive strategy, similar to that employed by the British during the American Revolution. The planners pointed out that the American colonists had succeeded against similar odds after the British departed because they reached an agreement among themselves and, most importantly, on their own terms. Some thus argued that it would be far better to allow India to work out its own destiny in a similar manner, by trial and error, and perhaps even through bloodshed. The prospect of war between Muslims and Hindus was real enough, but a colonial war between India and Britain seemed a possibility far more threatening to long-term U.S. interests in Asia. [39](#)

In the fall of 1942, Roosevelt decided to dispatch William Phillips to India as a special envoy. He would hold ambassadorial rank while on his mission, a significant designation in a nation that was still a British possession. Welles hoped the mission might "make it possible for the Indian people to know of our sympathy while at the same time avoiding even the semblance of friction with the British." [40](#)

He continued to believe that the best course the British could pursue in India would be a pledge of complete independence, much like the United States had given to the Philippines. But he had misgivings about Phillips's qualifications for the mission because he thought him "soft" on the question of British colonialism and too much of an Anglophile to be an honest broker in India. [41](#)

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Welles subsequently urged the president and Hull to reconsider the appointment. He hoped that, if they learned of Phillips's hidebound views, Phillips might be recalled or, at the very least, given firm and precise instructions to avoid siding with British imperial aims. "As you know," Welles wrote to Hull, "Mr. Phillips has not the slightest familiarity with the Indian picture. He has no knowledge whatever of present conditions in India, and his views on the subject, I assume, must be limited to the general impressions he has been given in London. In view of the tremendous importance of this question ... it would seem to me that Mr. Phillips ought to be brought back to Washington for full discussion of the policies of this Government in order that he may be intimately familiar with the President's views and those of this Department before he sets out on his journey." [42](#)

These fears may have been confirmed by a letter he received from Phillips just prior to his departure for India. "I am not a miracle man," Phillips warned Welles, "and I only hope that the Department fully appreciates that they have put up to me a job which nobody but a miracle man could accomplish. In reading my instructions very carefully I am wondering whether those in the Department who have prepared them fully realized the terrific internal dissensions, religious and political, which have gone on for hundreds of years and which make the situation so wholly different from that in the Philippines, which the instructions refer to as an example to be followed in India." [43](#)

Phillips was indeed initially flattered by his acceptance by the Raj. But once he arrived in India he became sympathetic to the cause of Indian self-rule and, much to London's dismay, he endeavored to mediate between Congress Party leaders and British officials. [44](#)

Welles and the planners knew the British would steadfastly oppose complete independence. They therefore briefly discussed placing India under some form of international trusteeship to help smooth its transition to independence, but they soon realized there was little they could actually do beyond gentle prodding and subtle pressure. Furthermore, they faced the daunting realization that any sudden change in the current status of the subcontinent might mean a tremendous loss of British and, by extension, Allied, power and prestige in Asia. It might also sever China's support link with the United States through the supply base in India. London's repeated threats that any change in their status there would disrupt the Allied cause had apparently carried some weight with the planners. [45](#)

Welles asked the committee to suggest other options they could pursue with regard to India and the colonial question. Norman Davis warned that they did not know nearly enough about the subject to act independently, adding that the whole matter was "loaded with dynamite" that could disrupt wartime relations with Britain and undermine the war effort. Davis suggested that the administration merely pressure Britain to make a stronger commitment to eventual independence. [46](#)

Welles, too, reluctantly, conceded that any gestures on behalf of India that undermined the Allied cause would obviously not promote the interests of the United States. The planners wanted to see change come to India and desired close and friendly relations with a future postwar government there, but they remained reluctant about doing anything beyond gentle persuasion to alter the situation on the subcontinent. While they reaffirmed their commitment to self-determination in general, the fire-breathing rhetoric of the spring of 1942 had clearly ebbed. [47](#) This shift laid bare their growing emphasis on wartime priorities at the expense of postwar liberation, but also foreshadowed an ongoing problem Washington would confront with regard to other colonial areas in the postwar era: how to demonstrate support for the drive toward independence without undermining key European allies. [48](#)

Beyond India, Welles also looked to the rest of Asia for opportunities to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to the liberation of colonial peoples. He thereby led the planners on a broad survey of the colonial situation in the entire Far East, while keeping in mind ways the United States might shape a "new order" in the region after the war. He desired a peaceful and orderly postwar Far East that would be receptive to U.S. interests. He thought that the great powers had exploited their colonies in Asia and that the peoples of the region had received nothing in return. He suggested the United States "must do more than say we hope these powers do something about their territories." The planners henceforth worked from the consensus that the United States should actively use its influence for the "liberation of the peoples of the Far East." [49](#)



The war had forced the United States to reexamine its interests in many areas of the world, particularly Southeast Asia, where Welles believed French possessions presented a major obstacle to a new postwar order in the region. The French empire had no place in his postwar designs. He had already proposed that France be completely disarmed at the end of the war as part of his aim to demote France from the ranks of the great powers.

Stripping France of its possessions would complement this strategy and might make possible an eventual American takeover of French naval bases in Indochina and Africa. [50](#)

In French Indochina, for example, U.S. officials began to look at ways to utilize Vietnamese nationalism, including Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh, which was seen as the most effective group resisting the Japanese within Indochina. More importantly, Washington assumed that nationalists might provide the United States with a useful ally in Indochina to carry forward American interests in the postwar period. Indochina would come to be seen as having potential for expansion of American interests in Asia and holding out the possibility of a U.S. naval base at Camranh Bay, a site the planners considered the fourth best naval site in the world. [51](#)

Welles believed Indochina's strategic importance had been strikingly demonstrated by Japan's use of the region as a springboard for further conquests. Before the war, America's interest in Southeast Asia had been growing steadily, with the volume of trade increasing throughout the 1930s and the U.S. importing greater amounts of natural rubber. But the Japanese takeover had alerted the U.S. to the region's importance as a producer of foodstuffs and raw materials and as a key strategic point near the major shipping routes of Asia. The Japanese occupation of French Indochina was a major factor in sparking the Pacific war. At the time of the Japanese seizure, Welles publicly denounced the Vichy French regime for violating the Wilsonian prohibition against territorial changes without the consent of those affected. [52](#)

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Welles feared that postwar instability in Indochina might destabilize the strategic equilibrium of the Far East, threatening the sea routes between America's trading partners. Southeast Asia continued to be a leading producer of natural rubber as well as an important source of oil, tin, tungsten, and other strategic materials. He believed control of the resources of this region would be crucial to the reconstruction of the postwar world. [53](#)

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Welles believed that the United States could not bring itself to a peace table without having ended French dominance of Indochina, and he and his colleagues felt strongly that France had lost any claim over territory there when French authorities allowed the Japanese to occupy the region. "There is a great moral question involved here and it is a question that will shape and color the history of the world after this war is over," he told the committee. "To get right down to the question, what inherent right has France to territory which she seized, sometimes by war, as recently as the 1880s, any more than has Japan to seize by force certain territories of China which she has now occupied? The only difference is in point of time." [54](#)



Welles sought to make sharp distinctions between the colonial practices of each European nation, and he had somewhat different views of the Netherlands East Indies. He told the committee that he approved of the way the Netherlands government-in-exile had lately decided to handle its colonial affairs. [55](#) He explained that the Dutch diplomat Eelco Van Kleffens had recently told him that a new constitution had been drafted to extend Dutch rights and responsibilities to the inhabitants of the East Indies, but never explained how this was to be reconciled with self-determination. Most importantly to Welles, the Dutch had also pledged that the Netherlands East Indies would be open after the war to American trade and influence. Throughout the war, the State Department would henceforth maintain better relations with the Dutch government-in-exile over the issue of colonialism than with any other power, partly due to Welles's high opinion of Van Kleffens and the Dutch pledge to honor the open door, but no doubt also partly due to Roosevelt's sentimental romanticization of the Dutch colonial experience. [56](#)

Nonetheless, Welles feared that, unless serious reforms were undertaken, the present situation in the Netherlands East Indies, where Dutch and Chinese landlords dominated an impoverished indigenous population, would lead to postwar instability. [57](#) The committee's staff produced studies underscoring the importance of the colony's rich resources for the postwar reconstruction of the world, focusing particularly on oil, as the East Indies ranked fifth among the oil-producing regions of the world. The planners also noted that the colony possessed strategically important deposits of bauxite (the source of aluminum). Furthermore, the planners called attention to the fact that the region, one of the most densely populated areas of the world, occupied a strategically critical location between the Indian and Pacific oceans, a position that would be vital to regional security in the postwar period. [58](#)

Welles also desired to accelerate an end to more than four centuries of Portuguese rule in Asia. He reserved his deepest scorn for the colonies of Macao and East Timor, which he described as the worst examples of colonial exploitation. He suggested they be forced into a system of international trusteeship at once, or at least have Macao handed over to China. To Welles, the "horrible conditions" in the Portuguese colonies should not "be continued in any healthy or reasonably logical world." [59](#) Yet the planners feared that London, worried about its less-than-tenable position in Hong Kong, might violently oppose such a radical approach to Macao and East Timor, and it was suggested that every effort be made to pressure the British to accept the dismantling of the Portuguese empire. [60](#)

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With regard to the Korean Peninsula, Welles suggested that every effort should be made to establish an independent nation at the end of the war. To many of the planners, Korea had a sentimental appeal, having been subjected to Japanese colonial rule longer than any other Asian territory. Made a Japanese protectorate in 1905, and annexed outright in 1910, Korea in 1919 tried to persuade the conferees at Paris to recognize its right to self-determination, an event many planners recalled with some regret. But Japan had been an ally during the Great War, and the peacemakers ignored Korean pleas. [61](#)

In the eyes of Welles and the planners, Korea's industrialization in the 1930s, coupled with its rich mineral resources and extensive coastline, made it a critical strategic point in the Far East. [62](#) Welles had already discussed with the president the possibility of creating a Korean government-in-exile, and he also contemplated the creation of a Korean guerrilla army to sabotage the Japanese war effort. [63](#)

Welles suggested that the questions posed by places like Korea needed to be discussed in a more systematic manner, at which point he introduced the subject of international trusteeships, where regional councils would oversee

the administration of dependent areas after the war. The details of such a plan, he added, would be worked out in his subcommittee on international organization. [64](#)

While debating what to do if the colonial powers sought to recover their lost possessions, Welles proclaimed that "the liberation of peoples should be the main principle" guiding American policy, and that those who could not yet govern themselves should be placed under international trusteeship. "Many of these peoples cannot undertake self-government at this time," he added. "This is where trusteeship comes in. The United Nations should endeavor to develop the ability of these peoples to govern themselves as soon as possible." [65](#)

Welles introduced this question at a political subcommittee meeting in August 1942. He hoped international trusteeships might offer a safe middle ground between continued colonial rule and complete freedom. He warned the planners that, if they allowed the colonial powers to maintain their possessions, it would not only dash the hopes of the dependent peoples of the world but would also undermine the U.S. aim of fostering a new world order. Worse still, it would place the United States on the side of the colonial masters, thereby damaging America's long-term interests in the developing world. On the other hand, Welles continued, it would be equally wrong to insist that at the end of the war all dependent peoples be "turned loose to their own devices." This would lead to instability, and worse, worldwide chaos. He said that much of the world was not yet ready for complete independence, and that they did "not possess adequate economic resources, political capacity, nor education." "After a while," he added, "there would be anarchy in all of the areas with sad results for world peace." [66](#)

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Welles explained that international trusteeships offered the best middle ground. He elaborated that the world organization would assume responsibility for trusteeship to ensure that "these peoples are given certain rights through continuing supervision and inspection." He explained that the United States would probably be the dominant power in the new world organization and would therefore have a powerful voice in determining the course of trusteeships. He hoped trusteeships would save the colonial world "from the otherwise inevitable result that the peoples will be exploited by the colonial powers." He desired a system that would teach the rudiments of self-government and advance dependent peoples toward independence while ensuring that the raw materials of the colonial world would no longer be subject to the exploitation of the imperial powers, making such resources more available for strategic purposes after the war. [67](#)

The planners made it clear that the United States was committed to eventual independence for colonized peoples, but perhaps not because of the ideals expressed by Welles in his Memorial Day address. He and the planners hoped that reform of the colonial world would once and for all destroy autarchic economic systems. They proposed that international trusteeships

be established not only to assist the dependent peoples in achieving political maturity and self-government, but also to promote the development and use of their economic resources in the interest of the rest of the world. Better still, trusteeship would work hand in glove with the open door by eliminating colonial monopolies in dependent areas. [68](#)

Welles wanted to avoid the perils of the old mandate system, which he believed had become a mere smokescreen for continued imperialism. He believed the mandatory powers had exploited the territories entrusted to them and had done nothing to prepare the way for eventual independence. [69](#) Trusteeships might promote a more evolutionary approach to the movement toward independence and a more regulated and controlled use of colonial resources for international purposes. [70](#) Unlike the mandates, where the mandatory powers were required only to make annual reports to the League, Welles's plan envisaged a program of continuous inspection. The trustee nations would be regulated by the regional organizations, which would have the authority to send administrators and observers to monitor the behavior of the trustee powers. Rather than acting as a mandatory power, the administering nation would act merely as the trustee for the regional councils. Real authority over the territory would henceforth reside with the regional body and not with the trustee powers, while disagreements between the trustees and the regional council would be appealed to the executive council of the international organization. [71](#)

In the Pacific, for example, Welles thought that a "Pacific Council" or an "Association of South Pacific Nations" should oversee progress toward independence in Burma, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, and French Indochina. He suggested Portuguese Timor might be handed over to the Dutch or placed under trusteeship, while Macao would be returned to China. He envisioned "international control" of Hong Kong and Singapore for "international police purposes." Furthermore, he hoped an independent but friendly Philippine Republic would have a seat on the regional body exercising trusteeship authority in the Pacific, thereby giving the United States a proxy on the regional oversight council. He even wished to make Manila the headquarters of any future regional institution. [72](#)

The questions posed to this view by the mandated islands in the Pacific revealed the selective nature of the American approach, in which Welles aimed to expand the Monroe Doctrine far across the Pacific. He believed these "relatively uninhabited" islands should not be turned over to international control but instead should be retained by the United States for security purposes. Norman Davis agreed. He explained that the mandated islands would be needed in the postwar period to serve as American air bases. Welles assumed that, due to the U.S. desire to retain the islands purely for security reasons, a "reasonable distinction" could be made between them and the areas where Washington was calling for trusteeship and eventual independence. He suggested that London's anticipated opposition to such a move could perhaps be silenced by holding out the

prospect of continued British strategic control of Singapore, for example, as a *quid pro quo*. [73](#)

60

This raised the larger question of how the British would react to these proposals. During one discussion about the British Empire, Welles read aloud the text of recent proclamations by the British Liberal Party and the British Labour Party, both calling for an approach to the colonial world akin to the suggestions offered by the political subcommittee. He believed it was the British Conservative Party, and not necessarily the British people themselves, that distorted Britain's views on such issues and precluded an accord with Washington. While he desired a system of trusteeship that would ultimately undermine the British Empire, he understood that the views of the British government, and particularly those of Churchill, could pose a serious threat to his colonial strategy. British officials vehemently opposed American attempts at trusteeship. Many in London believed Welles's plan to be a ruse to disguise an American quest for greater profits and resources. [74](#)

These concerns may have been reinforced after the American planners endeavored to clarify postwar colonial policy by issuing a "World Charter," which would extend the Atlantic Charter to regions other than Europe, most particularly the Pacific. Concerns about the scope of Welles's plan for international trusteeship, coupled with alarm over the possibility of a "World Charter" and recent anti-colonial pronouncements from administration officials, led the British to attempt to mollify American opinion. [75](#)

During Eden's March 1943 visit to Washington, British and American officials discussed postwar colonial policy, and Roosevelt presented Eden with Welles's trusteeship formula. Eden and U.S. officials also considered the prospect of issuing some kind of joint declaration on colonialism. [76](#) The foreign secretary found the American ideas unsatisfactory, for the Americans proposed the fixing of dates for granting full independence to all colonies. [77](#) Eden made plain his distaste for such ideas. London instead preferred to see full responsibility remain in the hands of each parent country. Eden wanted to keep other powers out of European colonial matters. He understood that if Washington began seeking the dismantling of French possessions, the British Empire might not be far behind. He therefore suggested that bilateral treaties between the controlling powers and their dependencies might be a more satisfactory approach. [78](#)

Welles acknowledged that the tensions arising over the question of trusteeship could threaten the durability of the U.S.-British alliance, but he also believed that a return to the colonial status quo might more profoundly jeopardize American interests. He charged London with assuming that the United Nations should fight to reconstruct and safeguard the British Empire. He wanted to find a means to force London to relinquish some control over its dependent areas—how to achieve this, he acknowledged, was altogether

another matter.

One possibility Welles considered was the issuance of a "Pacific Charter," which would reaffirm the universality of the Atlantic Charter. He believed that at the very least a "reformed" British Empire might conceivably become a valuable asset to the United States in the postwar era, but only if induced to cooperate politically and economically within a new international system. While the planners agreed that it would be in America's interest to eliminate European control in dependent areas, they failed to achieve accord on any means to achieve that result before the war's end. [79](#)

65

Welles told the planners in December 1942 that the United States should continue to use its growing influence in the Pacific to pressure the British. He thought the upheaval in the Pacific and the Far East, coupled with Britain's loss of power and prestige, would force a radical reconsideration of postwar alignments in the region. He and the planners had already considered the implications of these changes, and they searched for ways to exploit them. As U.S. interests in the Pacific continued to expand, the planners considered the postwar creation of an economic and military perimeter of friendly states in the region. [80](#)



Welles and the planners wanted to classify British Malaya, for example, as a strategic area subject to international control at the end of the war, [81](#) while they assumed that the future status of Hong Kong and Singapore would be wholly dependent upon American war aims. [82](#) The Special Research Division, for example, provided Welles and the planners with a number of policy options for Hong Kong, none of which included continued British rule. [83](#)

To the further horror of the British, Welles and his political subcommittee gave surprisingly serious consideration to Chinese views on European colonialism in the Far East. Welles believed it crucial that China be included in the discussion if the reconstruction of the world was to be successful. In any event, having more than 400 million Chinese as allies might prove very useful in the postwar years. Keeping in mind Roosevelt's desire that China be considered one of the "Four Policemen," Welles often gave more consideration to Chinese war aims than to those of either London or Moscow. [84](#)

He felt that China, having been dominated by foreign powers for most of its recent history, would feel threatened if global trends appeared to be heading in the direction of a "new imperialism" at the end of the war. Furthermore, China would become a symbol for the aspirations of millions of people beyond its frontiers. Any advance of China's status might change the very nature of the world order, leading to an erosion of imperial prestige throughout the colonial world and thus, indirectly, an increase in U.S.

influence. He feared that Sino-American relations in the postwar world might be jeopardized if the United States did not make a strong gesture of support for Indian independence, for example, as opposed to merely backing the British preference for dominion status. [85](#)

Welles assumed that American power, supported by China, would supplant European power as the hegemonic force in the Far East. China might also prove a useful ally in the other parts of the non-European world, exercising considerable clout and prestige in colonial areas. Chiang would remain a thorn in the side of British imperial interests throughout the war, and Welles hoped to exploit this by bringing China's influence and prestige to bear in critical matters such as French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, Portuguese Timor, British India, Hong Kong, and perhaps even Singapore. [86](#)



70

Welles and the planners therefore pushed to promote China as a great power on the assumption that the Chinese would support Washington's war aims over those of London and Moscow. Furthermore, American officials often found themselves in agreement with Chinese war aims, and Welles assumed that China might serve as a counterweight to America's other alliance partners. [87](#)

In March 1943, Welles briefed the planners on Chinese postwar aims in the Far East. He explained that China and the United States had similar views, as Chiang enthusiastically backed the American pledge to free the Philippines. China also desired independence for Korea as soon as possible. In addition, he added, the Chinese vehemently opposed British aims in the region, wanting the British completely excluded from any trusteeship responsibilities in the Far East. [88](#)

As a gesture of good faith to the Chinese, Welles recommended to the planners that Hong Kong and Macao should somehow be returned to China. He told the planners that the British might not much care about the fate of Portuguese Macao, but London would have to be offered something substantial in return for Hong Kong. Stanley Hornbeck, the chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, added that the Chinese detested the British presence in Hong Kong. He explained that they felt so strongly about the British that they would prefer almost any method of international solution to the status quo, but he feared that little could be done to change the British stand on Hong Kong so long as Churchill remained in power. Welles warned that he had "no illusions regarding the policy of the present British Government" in the colonial world. He reminded the committee that Churchill had "announced in no uncertain terms that he would not undertake the liquidation of the British Empire." [89](#)

Welles assumed that Chiang might accept U.S. support for a continued

Dutch presence in the East Indies so long as the Dutch government-in-exile carried out its pledges to extend the rights of citizenship to its dependent peoples and open the area to outside economic penetration. As for Burma and Malaya, he believed Chiang would demand complete independence but, most importantly, he said the Chinese felt strongly that there could "never be any peace or stability in the Far East until the Indian people have their independence ... and the only way is to grant full independence, with protection for legitimate British interests." He warned that the Chinese remained totally opposed to dominion status for India, instead favoring complete independence. [90](#)

Norman Davis warned of the possibility that, as China's power increased, it might become unreasonable and aggressive, seeking to overstep its authority in Asia and coming into conflict with U.S. aims in the region. Welles disagreed, retorting that he "did not think that the [Chinese] demand that the Indian people be independent and self-governing was [unreasonable]," while saying he did not believe any of China's aims were inherently imperialistic or implied a desire for territorial expansion. In any event, whatever Chiang's true intentions, he felt it imperative that the U.S. side with the colonial peoples in Asia. If Chiang sought to speak for the dependent peoples of the world, so much the better that he seemed to share so many of America's postwar aims. [91](#)

75

"The future of China is necessarily a question mark," Welles said. "We do not know whether the present government will remain in power or what type of government will [emerge], [but] the trend in the Far East is the development of an Asia for the Asiatics, the abrogation of the colonial regime of European powers in Asia, and in particular, the elimination of the British Empire as far as the Far East is concerned. The question arises as to what is the interest of the United States." [92](#)

Welles told the planners that the Chinese demanded independence or trusteeship for Indochina. "The truth concerning Indo-China," he told the committee, "is that in the hundred years the French have had it, very little has been done for the benefit of the dependent peoples in that area, and according to the present Chinese Government, the people there are far better fitted to obtain their independence than the people of any other protected area in the Far East." But as the months passed, heightened concerns about France's stability in the immediate postwar years would lead to a reassessment of the French colonial empire and its relationship to postwar France. Several planners feared that independence for Indochina would be a heavy blow to France's role as the postwar locus of European reconstruction.

While Welles may have continued to seek to prevent France's return to the ranks of the great powers, he also believed a revived Europe would only be possible with an economically viable France. He thought a compromise might be reached where the French could temporarily stay on in Indochina

as the chief administrator in the trusteeship plan, but only if France pledged to adhere to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, promised to grant eventual independence to Indochina, and opened it to external economic interests. [93](#)

As the planning committee's discussions of Asia progressed, American interests in the Far East continued to expand. Welles and the planners assumed that mastery of the Pacific would pass to the United States as a result of the war, and they wanted to ensure that no power, including the Chinese, would challenge U.S. hegemony in the region. Their attention thus focused on Taiwan, which had been of considerable strategic value to the Japanese, who had used it to administer the Pescadores, Hainan, and the Spratly islands, as well as to launch attacks to the south.

Democratic Senator Elbert Thomas of Utah, who had spent five years in the Far East as a Mormon missionary, warned that if the United States gave Taiwan and Hainan to the Chinese, Chiang might build a large navy to protect the islands, thereby challenging America's quest for postwar naval supremacy in the Pacific. Senator Thomas suggested that the U.S. maintain naval and air bases on Taiwan to discourage the construction of a Chinese navy and to protect America's strategic interests in the Far East. [94](#)

80

The senator told the planners that this could be done with very little difficulty, because China trusted the United States and had a "youthful attitude" and a "student psychology" toward Washington. Welles assumed that Taiwan would probably have to be returned to Chinese sovereignty, but he did not rule out the possibility that the island could be used for some kind of "international security purposes." After all, a Taiwan in friendly hands would have economic advantages for the United States and, more importantly, immense strategic value. [95](#)

Welles constantly sought to focus the attention of the planners on what he felt were the larger issues at stake in Asia and the Pacific: "The question is," he emphasized, "whether you can foresee a peaceful world when many millions of peoples are forced to accept a rule they do not wish to accept." He persisted in his belief that the United States had nothing to gain by supporting the status quo in the colonial world, and should instead continue to look for ways to profit from the inevitable upheaval. "Should we not try to make something advantageous to ourselves out of what is going to happen in the Far East?" [96](#)

Yet the Far East would not be the only area where Welles sought "to make something advantageous" to the United States. As U.S. interests and influence in the Middle East continued to grow during the war, the region became yet another area where British and American aims clashed over the question of imperialism.



In principle, Welles acknowledged London's primacy in the Near East, but he believed that the United States, due to its lack of colonial pretensions, might more successfully appeal to the peoples of the region. He assumed that the nations of the Near East desired to be free of the French and British and would henceforth embrace postwar American leadership in the region as more acceptable. The history of the Middle East in the decades after the war would not see the realization of that delusion. [97](#)

Leading the planning committee's survey of the colonial situation in the Middle East in the summer of 1942, Welles introduced a proposal for a "Middle Eastern Federation." Its membership would include Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, as well as Syria, Lebanon, Palestine-Transjordan, and possibly the British protectorates in Arabia. He argued that such a federation would help smooth the transition of peoples in the region to independence while resolving the Near East's many political disputes and promoting regional economic development. As in the case of his designs for the former territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Welles aimed to promote a sense of greater unity and cohesion in the former Ottoman lands of the Near East. He believed the Ottoman Empire had lent a degree of stability and coordination to that region that had been dangerously lacking in recent decades. [98](#)



85

Welles's committee also proposed the construction of a smaller Levantine sub-federation that would include Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Transjordan. He hoped a Levantine Federation would encourage TVA-like cooperative measures in agriculture, irrigation, power development, customs, and currency union. It might also help distract or circumvent British opposition to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

According to Welles's preliminary aims for the region, the British and French mandates would be terminated, and complete political independence would be granted to the new Levantine Federation. The war had brought enormous changes to the area, Welles told the political subcommittee in the summer of 1942, and complete independence for these mandatory regions was an urgent necessity. He worried that Axis propaganda would attempt to link the United States to British aims in the region, and thus hoped that Washington's backing for liberation might demonstrate America's independent standing in the Near East. [99](#)

France's collapse had seriously called into question its hopes of maintaining its possessions in the region, which the French suspected Britain and the United States secretly coveted. For the most part Welles believed French fears over their Levantine possessions were nothing more than foolish paranoia, but he nonetheless suspected that the British did indeed harbor designs on other strategically located French possessions such as Tunisia and

Djibouti. [100](#)

Although the Free French felt compelled to promise eventual independence for their Levantine mandates in the autumn of 1941, Welles feared their pledge would never be fulfilled. In August 1942, de Gaulle told an American diplomat in Damascus that the future of Syria and Lebanon could only be decided by a postwar French government, and in the meantime there would be little change in their status. But the American planners persisted in their commitment to independence for these possessions. "France at no time, under any government, has taken seriously its mandate responsibilities," warned the minutes of the political subcommittee. "The French have been disposed to consider the obligations of the mandate as just a phrase." [101](#)



Welles told British diplomats in Washington that he would never accept de Gaulle's wishes to uphold the colonial status quo in Syria and Lebanon because the United States did not even recognize de Gaulle as empowered to make any such decisions. He told the British Minister in Washington, Sir Ronald Campbell, that the Anglo-American allies should provoke a "showdown" with de Gaulle over the issue. [102](#)

Although the British encouraged change in the status of the French mandates, they bristled when discussing their own possessions in the region. Some members of the political subcommittee assumed the British could be compelled to grant independence to all of their Near East possessions east of Suez. Furthermore, Welles told the planners that the Suez Canal itself might become a potential "security problem" in the postwar era, and they discussed the prospect of internationalizing the canal (along with Gibraltar and Singapore) and occupying it with a multinational force of Arabs and Jews. [103](#)



The British also feared that the United States would attempt to preempt British petroleum interests in and around the Persian Gulf region. There was some basis for this fear, for American geologists had discovered vast oil reserves in the Persian Gulf region in the mid-1930s. With the increasing wartime demands for oil in mind, Welles and the planners took a keen interest in the postwar future of Iran. [104](#)

The planners noted that Iran contained "valuable oil resources" and was fast becoming a country "of vital importance." The British owned the oil concession in Iran, the fourth largest producer in the world, and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company maintained a virtual stranglehold on the Iranian economy. British and Soviet forces entered Iran in 1942, and State Department planners expressed concern that the Russians might seek to gain an outlet to the Persian Gulf through Iran, thereby disrupting the flow

of oil. [105](#)

The committee's consultant on Near East affairs, Wallace Murray, told Welles and the planners that the Iranians detested the British and Russians, but the United States stood to gain much in Iran due to the warm feelings Persians had for Americans. He added that the War Department was "building up a large mission there to take charge of the whole situation without appearing to do so" and that the United States was "running the police force" and had "the country's finances under our direction." Murray added that the United States had now become "the favored power in Persia." The minutes of one meeting noted that, "there is very little left in Persia that is not being run by Americans except the Crown, and Mr. Murray said he did not know whether we wanted to bother with that." [106](#)



When Welles briefed Roosevelt on Washington's growing interests in the region, he emphasized how Iran had the potential to be reshaped in America's image. Numerous American missions would provide food and supplies, restructure the Iranian economy and government, coordinate efforts in public health, and reorganize the Iranian police forces, all under the guidance of American officials. He told Roosevelt this would bring about "the ultimate conversion of Iran into an active and willing partner on our side." [107](#) Welles and the planners agreed that the United States should continue to exert "its disinterested influence in Iran after the war to strengthen the country and to support its independence against a possible resurgence of the continuing contest between Russia and Britain for special influence." [108](#)



In the spring of 1943, Welles gave a detailed report to the political subcommittee explaining the specifics of American policy in the Near East and North Africa. As Welles saw it, the United States held a unique position in the Near East, and American influence and prestige there were quite high, largely because "the people of the Near East realized that we have no vested political or territorial interests in the region." [109](#)

One of the greatest sources of tension that developed between London and Washington, however, concerned the postwar status of Palestine. The years between the wars had been tumultuous ones for the former Ottoman possession. Tension in the area was heightened by the fact that British strategic planners considered the mandate crucial to the defense of the Suez Canal, and also because of the urgent pressure for higher levels of Jewish immigration and consequent Arab resentment. Palestine had an importance disproportionate to its size and population, not only as a shield for the Suez Canal lifeline or as an important spiritual site for three great religions but also as the terminus of petroleum supplies for Britain and the bridge



between Asia and Africa. [110](#)

90

Welles dominated the administration's early discussions on Palestine. His enthusiastic support for the Zionist cause in Palestine in many ways anticipated America's later commitment to the state of Israel, and in the years immediately following the war he became one of America's most vigorous supporters of Palestine as an independent homeland for the Jewish people. [111](#)

On the question of a homeland for the Jews, Welles operated in an occasionally hostile environment in the State Department, where Anti-Semitism persisted. [112](#) His Zionism played a large role in influencing the kinds of policies he advocated in the Middle East. [113](#) His belief that only Palestine could provide the Jewish people with a homeland was reinforced by previously failed efforts to obtain a safe haven for Jews in other countries in Latin America and Africa. Since 1938, Welles had publicly castigated the Germans for their persecutions of the Jews, and he understood the desperate situation all European Jews faced. He served as a liaison between the Jewish leaders and the American legations abroad, channeling preliminary information about the "final solution" to Jewish leaders in the United States. [114](#)



In their quest to find some resolution to the problem of Palestine, American planners drew up a series of detailed reports that sought to address questions of Jewish immigration and Arab resettlement. While some members advocated trusteeship for Palestine, Welles argued vigorously for independence. He thought the United States might help underwrite public works projects in the region to enable Palestine to better accommodate more immigration so that "the Jewish people could realize the ambition gathering for many hundreds of years for a homeland, and nationality of citizens of Palestine would be on par with that of any other country." Welles and the planners subsequently endorsed complete independence for Palestine at their meeting of August 29, 1942. [115](#)

Welles warned that negotiations with the Arab population would be a waste of time. He suggested the United Nations use their police powers to enforce Jewish immigration into Palestine, and that the future there be tied to a complete reordering of politics in the region. "If we simply throw up our hands and say we are going to leave this to negotiation," he said, "it would merely be that we were going to allow an open sore to continue for an indefinite period ... [but] if the United Nations are prepared to encourage an Arab Federation and do what is necessary to push them along the road to prosperity and security, should not the Arab world be willing to agree to a solution which would accord Palestine to the Jews? A bargain might be struck with the Arabs, but the threat of force could be held over their heads." [116](#)

The planners feared that increased Jewish immigration would provoke further Arab backlashes. They therefore insisted that a "Bill of Rights" would be necessary for the protection of both populations. When members raised the question of protection for the Arabs, Welles argued that "Jewish nationalism could not be pushed aside" and that an independent Palestine, "composed of a homogeneous population, would not be in danger from the Arab federation...." At one point, the committee discussed whether a Jewish/Arab bi-national solution to the Palestine question would be more in accord with the principles of the Atlantic Charter, as opposed to a solution imposed by force. Welles added that, "Moslems are not always reasonable" but might accept international trusteeship of some of the religious sites in Jerusalem so that access would not be denied to any particular group. [117](#)



Welles's views on Palestine were destined to clash with those of the British. The Foreign Office tended to be pro-Arab and anti-Zionist, and many British officials assumed that American policy toward Palestine was influenced by Zionist propaganda in the United States. British officials had warned Welles that the creation of a homeland for the Jews in Palestine would undermine the war effort by playing directly into the hands of Nazi propagandists, and they feared that continued Arab agitation about Jewish immigration would undermine British influence and prestige in the region. [118](#)

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The British embassy in Washington often saw Welles as a virtual Zionist agent in the administration, an idea given some credence during Eden's March 1943 Washington visit when Welles suggested that the British should accommodate at least another 500,000 Jewish immigrants to Palestine. Eden's objections did not move Welles. The under secretary hinted that, at the very least, Palestine should be removed from British control. [119](#)

The British might have been astounded to discover that Welles often kept his true feelings in check about the future of Palestine. His resignation in the fall of 1943 would free him to speak his mind publicly about issues such as Palestine, and he would work more openly to aid the Zionist cause. [120](#)



Meanwhile, the British remained divided over the issue. Like Welles, Churchill had considered the history of British policy toward the Jews to be a breach of faith, whereas Eden continued his opposition to increased levels of Jewish immigration. After Welles's resignation, Roosevelt created a War Refugee Board made up of Morgenthau, Stimson, and Hull. Still, few Jews got through to Palestine during the war. Nevertheless, it would soon become increasingly apparent that the Zionist cause was growing into an unstoppable force that would soon overwhelm British and Arab opposition to a Jewish state in Palestine. [121](#)

Welles and the planners also held a series of meetings on North Africa, where they recommended a regional supervisory board of Turkey, Egypt, Britain, Spain, Greece, and perhaps representatives from a reconstructed France and Italy. These nations would oversee a Tangier-based regional council responsible for Spanish and French Morocco, French Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and the Spanish colony of Rio de Oro. Welles thought the United States could accrue power and influence in North Africa by demonstrating its sympathy for the dependent peoples of the region against their former colonial masters. [122](#)

Welles and his committee also undertook a survey of the rest of Africa, where, over the course of the previous half-century only tiny Liberia had escaped the interference of or colonization by the European powers. Prior to the war, Africa ranked low on the list of America's foreign policy priorities. But that began to change with Washington's growing fears of possible Axis penetration of West Africa, as well the emergence of Africa as an important theater of war for the Allies. Africa also loomed large as a site of valuable strategic materials, while its proximity to Allied shipping lanes gave it a heightened geopolitical value in the eyes of American planners. [123](#)



During the war, many Africans observed the weakening of their old colonial overseers and it became increasingly clear that, regardless of the war's outcome, the colonial powers would emerge greatly diminished. Once again, American planners thought the United States might fill the void. After all, Welles had long sought to extend the Monroe Doctrine to West Africa. But the committee's examination of Africa laid

bare one of the underlying weaknesses common to their survey of the colonial world. As the planners continued to discuss the postwar future of Africa, they encountered a startling array of cultural, political, and ethnic diversity, leading to their realization that the entire continent of Africa could not easily be lumped into one large regional council. [124](#) Thus, after several weeks of discussions, Welles and his colleagues proposed four regional councils for North, South, East and West Africa. [125](#)



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Welles believed the subcommittee should still adhere to the idea of bringing the peoples of other continents together in larger regional councils, but he reluctantly concluded that the geographical, political, and ethnic realities of Africa did not lend themselves to larger, more unified groupings. While the U.S. would not itself be a member of any of the African regional councils, the planners sought to exert American influence through Liberia, the diminutive West African republic founded in 1822 by emigrant freedmen from the United States with the support of colonization societies, where the Firestone Rubber Company controlled huge portions of territory and much of the economy. [126](#)

The discussion of Africa also led to the sobering realization that the colonial powers might have to be left temporarily in control after the war (but conditional upon their pledge to adhere to a set of principles such as the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter). Welles thought that, while North Africa's prospects for success looked reasonably good, the rest of Africa might have to be brought along the path to independence more slowly, partly due to the lack of economic and political development in the region but also because, as he told the planners, "the Negroes are in the lowest rank of human beings." [127](#)

When he brought this matter up during a meeting in October 1942, Norman Davis added that, due to the "backwardness" of Africa, the U.S. would most likely have to work closely with the European colonial powers. But Welles said he still favored stripping mandates from those powers such as the British and French who had considered them their sole property for the last twenty-five years. Nevertheless, when compared to Asia and the Near East, Africa ranked relatively low amongst his priorities. [128](#)

The Western Hemisphere was a much more immediate concern. Throughout the war, the European colonies in the New World gave Welles acute worry. U.S. war plans in the 1920s and 1930s had emphasized the dangers facing strategic positions in the Western Hemisphere, and Welles and the other planners remained preoccupied with the security of Latin America. He thus pursued some means of preserving and strengthening the Monroe Doctrine as one of the chief foundations of American foreign policy. Welles and his colleagues desired that all of the British, French, and Dutch possessions in the hemisphere be placed in a regional council for the Caribbean basin. He hoped that a regional council for the area would assist in the transition to dominion status, or even independence, and he acknowledged that not every colony in the region was ready for independence, adding that the "colored races in the Guianas were as unfit for self-government as anywhere in the Western Hemisphere." [129](#)

Welles sought to pressure the British to completely abandon the hemisphere after the war. He felt that Britain should be induced to turn over the Falkland Islands to Argentina, but the British naval base at Port Stanley should be taken for international police purposes. The planners believed the Falklands gave Britain a huge advantage in naval strategy. Welles described relations between Britain and Argentina as "a messy situation," and told the planners he thought Argentine claims to the islands "well-founded." In this case, self-determination was of less concern to Welles than geopolitical factors. He acknowledged that the strategically vital question of Port Stanley was intricately tied to the psychology of British imperial prestige, but he hoped the future of the port and its naval base could somehow be linked to a larger strategy seeking the internationalization of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, and Singapore for "international police purposes." [130](#)

Welles told the planners they should seek "the obliteration of European power in Central America." He detested the British presence in the region. He advocated political union for the nations of Central America, and thought Britain should cede British Honduras to Guatemala. Isaiah Bowman told the committee he believed that most of British Honduras was owned by four or five prominent Britons, whose presence should be "liquidated" at the end of the war. The planners claimed that Britain no longer had any reason to remain in the region, but they feared London would refuse to leave because it would be a further blow to British national prestige. Welles agreed, but hoped British Honduras might somehow be freed from British control after the war. He anticipated London might accept some undefined face-saving measures in the region and that continued Lend-Lease aid to Britain might provide some leverage. [131](#)

By the spring of 1943, the planners began to disagree over whether, as Welles proposed, trusteeships should cover all colonial areas or whether, as Hull argued, they should be limited to former mandates and other territories controlled by the Axis powers. All of the planners agreed with Welles that the mandates system had failed and that all responsibilities for the mandated territories should be transferred to the new international organization. Where they disagreed was over the future status of the rest of the European colonial possessions.

While the planners may have wanted to supplant European imperial rule, they realized that not all dependencies were ready for independence, and they could think of no viable alternative to European control in the immediate near-term. Hull's more modest view that trusteeships be limited to the mandated territories and Axis dependencies gradually gained support. "It was assumed," one of the political subcommittee's summaries concluded, "that the United States would favor the general principle of international trusteeship ... [but] would not seek to destroy any existing empire or to dictate to other countries concerning colonial administration." The postwar planning committees had thus significantly retreated from their original aims for trusteeship, but they still sought to erect numerous regional supervisory councils that would oversee the gradual emancipation of the colonial world. [132](#)

By April 1943, the committee's enthusiasm for trusteeships had noticeably changed. In the wake of Eden's visit the planners confronted the sobering realization that it might be difficult to impose their plans for trusteeship on the European empires. The planners also feared pursuing policies that might ultimately undermine the Allied war effort. Furthermore, Secretary Hull attended the meetings with greater frequency now, and his allies in the planning process, such as Leo Pasvolsky, Harley Notter, and Republican Congressman Charles Eaton of New Jersey, felt less inclined to hold their tongues as they had when Welles was in the chair. Hull moved to halt Welles's expansive schemes for colonial independence and trusteeship, which the secretary thought "extreme." He instead favored a vague joint Anglo-American statement on colonialism along with a curious and unexplained

proposal he called "international cooperation." He aimed to narrow the goals of the planning committees by applying trusteeship only to the former League mandates and Axis territories. [133](#)

But Welles continued to push for his version of the trusteeship plan. When he presented his draft proposal for trusteeship to the political subcommittee on April 10, Representative Eaton facetiously criticized the document as a "wonderful and idealistic scheme." Secretary Hull endorsed Eaton's criticism by pointing out that the American public would balk at the long-term expense of Welles's plan. But Welles defended the proposal by reminding the planners that the United States would probably limit its own trusteeship responsibilities to the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific. He added that the trusteeship plan was predicated upon the creation of an international organization. The revenues of dependent areas would go toward trusteeship expenses, and the principal administrative powers in a given territory would most likely cover other costs.

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He emphasized that trusteeship would promote future world peace, and reminded the committee that the British Labour and Liberal parties had called for a program akin to his trusteeship plan. Both proposals, Welles added, went well beyond many of the suggestions in his own draft plan. He also warned that many of the peoples of the colonial world had already demanded the complete overthrow of European rule. He was not above resorting to scare tactics to underscore his point. If the United States did not back his trusteeship proposals, he warned, the dependent peoples of the world might seek postwar guidance from China or, even worse, the Soviet Union. He also darkly hinted that there were dangerous political forces already at work throughout the colonial world that would lead to instability after the war unless Washington took daring measures. [134](#)

Welles reminded the members that colonialism had contributed to the tensions that had led to the last two wars. He described what he believed were the sources of instability and war in the colonial world: "In the first place, there is the unsatisfactory manner in which the mandate system has worked. In the second place, in various parts of the world there are many people who are clamoring for freedom from the colonial powers. Unless some system can be worked out to help these peoples, we shall be encountering trouble. It would be like failing to install a safety valve and then waiting for the boiler to blow up." [135](#)

In a final effort to defend his trusteeship plan, Welles emphasized that it would not necessarily be extended to American territories such as the Virgin Islands, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. He even sought to soften his previous views by telling the members that in some cases trusteeship might effectively impede potentially destabilizing independence movements. He singled out areas such as the Belgian Congo, where, he added, it might take more than a hundred years to achieve home rule. When New York Representative Sol Bloom, Chairman of the House Foreign Relations

Committee, said it might take "more than a thousand years" before the Belgian Congo would be prepared for independence, Welles agreed and added that in cases such as Portuguese Timor it might take just as long. [136](#)

Despite Welles's efforts, it soon became apparent that the initial enthusiasm for the trusteeship plan had ebbed. In some ways, the argument over trusteeship had only further divided the department. Hull sought merely to press the colonial powers to pledge themselves to eventual independence and to observe particular standards of conduct in their colonies. The secretary thought this course offered a more realistic approach than those ideas that had been discussed in the committee meetings during the period of Welles's ascendancy. Hull believed that "we could not press [the British] too far with regard to the Southwest Pacific in view of the fact that we were seeking the closest possible cooperation with them in Europe. We could not alienate them in the Orient and expect to work with them in Europe." [137](#)

While Welles thought Hull's views reminiscent of the failed mandates scheme, he himself had been steadily backing away from some of the more radical positions he had initially taken. Many of the discussions of the planning committees had contributed to altering his views, as had the stubbornness of the British, who continued to demonstrate that they would fight any American initiatives in the colonial sphere that they believed threatened the war effort. After the war, Welles lamented that at the time "no step could be taken politically, however beneficial it might promise to be later on, if it jeopardized or threatened to postpone victory." [138](#)

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Hull's views of trusteeship ultimately prevailed. When the political subcommittee released a summary of its conclusions on trusteeship in July 1943, it recommended its application only to the present mandated territories and Axis dependencies. [139](#) After Welles's resignation in August 1943, the State Department encountered further opposition to the trusteeship plan from within the United States government, as well as from the British. The U.S. military chiefs argued that national security requirements demanded that the United States keep the Pacific mandates, rather than have them placed in trusteeship. Hull, who had always been ambivalent about the more radical aspects of the proposal, had long since concluded that the whole trusteeship scheme was tainted by Welles's unrealistic and grandiose ambitions. [140](#)

The administration made a number of efforts to redefine trusteeship, but the plan as it existed in Welles's original conception continued to lose support. By late 1944, the United States signaled its retreat when it notified the British, French, and Dutch that it would not oppose a reimposition of European control in Southeast Asia. [141](#) The U.S. thus weighed in against support for independence or even trusteeships for much of the colonial Far East. [142](#) The U.S. military chiefs had long viewed the European colonial empires as sources of international stability, which could in some ways be

supportive of American strategic interests around the world in the postwar era. This view gained strength as the war neared its end. [143](#)

The upheavals of the Second World War did not resolve the question of the future status of the colonial empires. In the minds of many senior American officials, Cold War considerations would begin to take precedence over the national aspirations of the colonized peoples. [144](#) As for the Pacific mandated islands that the United States acquired at the end of the war, they largely turned out to be burdens rather than strategic assets. The ring of U.S. strategic bases in Asia and the Pacific proved useless when the United States sought to extend its sphere of influence to the Asiatic mainland in places like Korea and Vietnam. Nor did they in any way help to avert the Communist triumph in China, nor aid in the later defense of Taiwan. As for the European empires, they would later be dismantled for reasons that had nothing to do with American pressure. [145](#)

Furthermore, Welles's ideas on trusteeship failed to anticipate what would happen in the postwar colonial world, where the rapid pace of decolonization would overwhelm any effort at careful and incremental planning for the future. He failed to give adequate consideration to the problems of underdevelopment that would plague much of the post-colonial world. Merely ending the European colonial presence would not immediately resolve these dire economic problems. Hull had once noted that the dependent colonial areas would find it difficult to raise sufficient capital to support development and modernize their economies. He gave little thought to the possibility that the European colonial empires, despite their numerous shortcomings and abuses, had at times provided a kind of global equilibrium, and that their disappearance might provoke increased instability in the post-colonial world. Neither did he understand that the void created by decolonization might not be so effortlessly filled by the United States. By the late 1950s the United States would be confronted with an unmanageable crisis in much of the former colonial world, one where one of Welles's successors as under secretary would complain that American foreign policy found itself "focused on problems involving the bits and pieces of disintegrating empires." [146](#)

In some cases, the very chaotic revolutions and instability Welles sought to avoid came about due to the inherent nature of decolonization. During the war, he spoke with great moral fervor about self-determination, independence, and liberation in the colonial world. But decolonization often led to instability in the years that followed, and the paramount concern for order became the basis upon which policy toward nationalist movements would be reconsidered. The emphasis on self-determination and nationalism would henceforth take a back seat to the strategic and geopolitical concerns of the emerging Cold War struggle. No longer would there be talk of promoting change and upheaval throughout the world. When America became a superpower and hegemon it also became the chief defender of the global status quo, a prospect Welles might have once found curious in the

midst of his earlier optimism and support for the winds of change in the colonial world.

Notes:

Note 1: Welles sought to utilize this leverage to pressure the British over colonial matters and the question of trade. Walter LaFeber has argued that, "an examination of British and American records can lead to the speculation that the diplomats of each nation, with their eyes on postwar advantages, devoted more time to maneuvering against one another than to fighting the Japanese." See Walter LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina," *American Historical Review* 80:5 (December 1975): 1280. [Back.](#)

Note 2: Welles, an admirer of Adams, had the former secretary of state's portrait hung in a place of honor in his State Department office. [Back.](#)

Note 3: According to two Indian scholars, an examination of Welles's role "during and after 1942 indicates a possibility that even in 1941 he might have had a clearer perception than the President of the larger issues brought to the fore by the war." See M. S. Venkataramani and B. K. Shrivastava, *Quit India: The American Response to the 1942 Struggle* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979), 18. [Back.](#)

Note 4: Sumner Welles, "The Realization of a Great Vision," Address at the Arlington National Amphitheater, May 30, 1942, speech files, box 195, folder 5, Welles papers, FDRL; Welles, "Commencement Exercises of the North Carolina College for Negroes," May 31, 1943, speech files, box 195, folder 5, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 5: Welles to Roosevelt, May 22, 1942, and the attached Walter White to Roosevelt, May 4, 1942, box 151, folder 14, Welles papers, FDRL. The role of African Americans in U.S. policy toward colonialism has been the subject of renewed interest, most notably Penny M. Von Eschen's *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). [Back.](#)

Note 6: Welles to Roosevelt, May 22, 1942, and the attached Walter White to Roosevelt, May 4, 1942, box 151, folder 14, Welles papers, FDRL; Welles, "Address Before the Foreign Policy Association of New York," October 16, 1943, speech files, box 196, folder 4, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 7: Welles, "The Realization of a Great Vision," Address at the Arlington National Amphitheater, May 30, 1942, speech files, box 195, folder 5, Welles papers, FDRL; *New York Times*, May 31, 1942; Welles, "Commencement Exercises of the North Carolina College for Negroes," May 31, 1943, speech files, box 195, folder 5, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 8: Sumner Welles, *The Time For Decision* (New York: Harper, 1944), 297-298. [Back.](#)

Note 9: The anti-colonial sentiment of the Fourteen Points and the Atlantic Charter notwithstanding, the United States had also entered the race for empire at the end of the nineteenth century, and had intervened militarily in several Latin American countries. [Back.](#)

Note 10: Welles once wrote that he believed that U.S. interference in the affairs of other nations in the hemisphere amounted to mere "friendly advice" and that "thinking" Latin Americans would welcome Washington's interference in their affairs. See, for example, Sumner Welles, "Is America Imperialistic?" *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1924; as well as Welles, "Joint Action in the Americas," address to the opening session of the Meeting of Foreign Ministers at Rio de Janeiro, February 16, 1942, speech files, box 195, folder 4, Welles papers, FDRL; and Sumner Welles, "A New Era in Pan-American Relations," *Foreign Affairs*, April 1937. [Back.](#)

Note 11: Sumner Welles, "Wilson and the Atlantic Charter," November 11, 1941, speech files, box 195, folder 2, Welles papers, FDRL; Welles, "The Realization of a Great Vision," Address at the Arlington National Amphitheater, May 30, 1942, speech files, box 195, folder 5, Welles papers, FDRL; "The Atlantic Charter and National Independence," November 13, 1942, box 13, Notter files, National Archives. [Back.](#)

Note 12: Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 126-127; Wm. Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 198. In a 1942 "Open letter to the people of England," Henry Luce's *Life* magazine added: "One thing we are sure we are not fighting for is to hold the British Empire together. We don't like to put the matter so bluntly, but we don't want you to have any illusions. If your strategists are planning a war to hold the British Empire together they will sooner or later find themselves strategizing all alone.... In the light of what you are doing in India, how do you expect us to talk about 'principles' and look our soldiers in the eye." *Life*, October 12, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 13: Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 125; Anthony Eden, *The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning* (London: Cassell, 1965), 513. [Back.](#)

Note 14: David Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the 20th Century* (New York: Longman, 1991), 149-150. [Back.](#)

Note 15: P document 240, "Official Statements and Views Pertaining to the Administration of Dependent Areas After the War," July 12, 1943, box 57 [all planning documents and planning minutes are from the Notter files, National Archives, Record Group 59, unless otherwise noted]; Hamilton and Hornbeck to Welles, April 14, 1942, FRUS, vol. I, 902-903; Welles to

Roosevelt, April 17, 1942, FRUS, vol. I, 903-904; Sumner Welles, *The Time For Decision* (New York: Harper, 1944), 298-299. [Back.](#)

Note 16: This despite the fact that Welles was initially reluctant to tell British officials what course they should pursue with regard to India. His impatience with British policy in India steadily increased after the United States entered the war, when many British actions might thus be interpreted as having Washington's tacit approval. For an account of Welles's earlier hesitation to pressure the British, see, for example, Gary R. Hess, *America Encounters India, 1941-1947* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 25-31, 45, 181. [Back.](#)

Note 17: Welles and other U.S. officials had already pressured the British to allow India to sign the Declaration of the United Nations as a separate entity. Welles to Roosevelt, April 13, 1942, FRUS, vol. I, 1942, 870-872; Welles to Roosevelt, April 17, 1942, FRUS, vol. I, 1942, 903-904; P document 64, "India," August 27, 1942, box 56. [Back.](#)

Note 18: For Roosevelt's views on colonialism see, for example, Warren F. Kimball and Fred E. Pollock, "'In Search of Monsters to Destroy': Roosevelt and Colonialism," in Kimball's *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 127-157; as well as John J. Sbrega, "The Anticolonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Reappraisal," *Political Science Quarterly* 101:1 (Spring 1986): 65-84. [Back.](#)

Note 19: CAB 66/22 WP(42)118 "India," March 11, 1942, PRO; Roosevelt to Churchill, March 10, 1942, FRUS, vol. I, 1942, 615-616. [Back.](#)

Note 20: For the motives behind Johnson's mission, see, for example, Kenton J. Clymer, "Franklin D. Roosevelt, Louis Johnson, India, and Anticolonialism: Another Look," *Pacific Historical Review* 57:3 (August 1988): 261-284. Johnson's mission is also discussed in Venkataramani and Shrivastava, *Quit India*, 96-136; Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain, and the War Against Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 236-246; and Warren Kimball, *The Juggler*, 134-136. [Back.](#)

Note 21: P document 64, "India," August 27, 1942, box 56; P document 218, "Agenda for the meeting of April 3, 1943: India," box 193, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 22: John Kent, *British Imperial Strategy and the Origins of the Cold War, 1944-1949* (London: Leicester University Press, 1993), 5. [Back.](#)

Note 23: Welles to Roosevelt, April 13, 1942, FRUS, vol. I, 1942, 870-872. [Back.](#)

Note 24: Welles to Roosevelt, April 17, 1942, FRUS, vol. I, 1942, 903-904. [Back.](#)

Note 25: Sumner Welles, "The Realization of a Great Vision," Address at the

Arlington National Amphitheater, May 30, 1942, speech files, box 195, box 5, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 26: *New York Times*, May 31, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 27: Sherwood to Welles, June 25, 1942, box 83, folder 11, Welles papers, FDRL; Robert Aura Smith, New Delhi, to Sherwood, Washington, cable #145-149, no date, box 83, folder 11, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 28: Harley Notter, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation* (Washington: Department of State, 1950), 109; Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. II, (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 1228, 1230, 1484-1485; Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 175-77. [Back.](#)

Note 29: Welles to Roosevelt, July 29, 1942, *FRUS*, vol. I, 1942, 699-700. [Back.](#)

Note 30: Roosevelt to Churchill, July 29, 1942, *FRUS*, vol. I, 1942, 700. [Back.](#)

Note 31: When the Maharajah Holkar, of the once powerful Holkar dynasty of Indore, wrote to Roosevelt endorsing U.S. and Chinese intervention in the current impasse, British authorities intercepted the letter. When Welles raised the matter in a subsequent conversation with Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Minister in Washington, the British diplomat described the Maharajah as a "psychopathic case" to whom no attention should be paid. Memorandum of conversation by Welles, June 1, 1942, *FRUS*, vol. I, 1942, 666-667. [Back.](#)

Note 32: Memorandum of conversation between Welles and Campbell, "Situation in India," August 18, 1942, box 164, folder 4, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 33: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 34: See Venkataramani and Shrivastava, *Quit India*, 249-258. [Back.](#)

Note 35: "This war can be lost in India," the American journalist and social reformer Oswald Garrison Villard wrote in a letter to the *New York Times*. "From the very beginning of the war in Asia it has been the greater danger that this struggle would degenerate into a war of the colored races against the white." The noted British biologist and writer, Julian Huxley, added: "The world's conscience is beginning to grow a little uneasy over the fact of one country possessing another country as a colony, just as it grew uneasy a century or so ago over the fact of one human being possessing another as a slave." See "Summary of Opinion and Ideas on International Postwar Problems," September 9, 1942, Division of Special Research, box 190, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, folder 1, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 36: *New York Times*, August 13, 1942; CAB 65/27(42)109 August 10, 1942, PRO; CAB 65/27(42)113 August 17, 1942, PRO; P document 113,

"British Views with Respect to Colonies and Dependent Areas," October 2, 1942, box 56; P document 154, "The British Empire: Empire Institutions," December 9, 1942, box 57; Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 8; P minutes 21, August 8, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 37: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; P minutes 22, August 15, 1942; P minutes 51, April 10, 1943, box 55. [Back.](#)

Note 38: While Washington had some awareness of the scope of Hindu nationalism, much less was known about Muslim nationalism in India. See Betty Miller Unterberger, "American Views of Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Pakistan Liberation Movement," *Diplomatic History* 5:4 (Fall 1981): 313-336. [Back.](#)

Note 39: See Betty Miller Unterberger, "American Views of Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Pakistan Liberation Movement," *Diplomatic History* 5:4 (Fall 1981): 313-336; P minutes 37, December 12, 1942. Welles never believed the Muslim population of the subcontinent would be able to build an economically and politically viable state. See Sumner Welles, *Where Are We Heading?* (New York, Harper, 1946), 325-327. [Back.](#)

Note 40: Welles to Mrs. William Phillips, November 3, 1942, box 82, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 41: For an account arguing that Phillips was not as ignorant of Indian affairs as Welles assumed, see Kenton J. Clymer, "The Education of William Phillips: Self-Determination and American Policy Toward India, 1942-1945," *Diplomatic History* 8:1 (Winter 1984): 17, 19. Nevertheless, Clymer writes that, "someone less likely than William Phillips to sympathize with the Indian nationalist leaders, much less with the masses, could scarcely be imagined." [Back.](#)

Note 42: Welles to Hull, November 7, 1942, box 82, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 43: Phillips to Welles, December 10, 1942, box 82, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 44: Kenton Clymer, "The Education of William Phillips," 21-35. [Back.](#)

Note 45: P minutes 37, December 12, 1942, box 55. [Back.](#)

Note 46: P minutes 37, December 12, 1942, box 55. [Back.](#)

Note 47: P document 218, "Agenda for the meeting of April 3, 1943: India," box 193, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 48: See, for example, the account by Lloyd C. Gardner, "The Atlantic Charter: Idea and Reality, 1942-1945," in *The Atlantic Charter*, ed. Brinkley and Facey-Crowther (London: Macmillan, 1994), 61-62. A year after Welles's departure from the State Department he allegedly leaked to Drew Pearson

classified materials charging that the administration was missing a valuable opportunity to lead the forces of nationalism in Asia. Pearson's column touched off a storm of protest from British officials sensitive to the public revelation that U.S. officials had recommended postwar independence for India and the establishment of an interim coalition government in wartime. See Drew Pearson, "Confessions of an S.O.B.," *Saturday Evening Post*, November 3, 1956; as well as Roosevelt to Caroline Phillips, August 30, 1944, PSF, Roosevelt Papers, FDRL. Welles also criticized British handling of the Indian question in his books. See *Time For Decision*, 301-302; *Where Are We Heading?*, 324-328. [Back.](#)

Note 49: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942, box 55. [Back.](#)

Note 50: P minutes 4, March 28, 1942; Welles, *Where Are We Heading?*, 287; P minutes 38, December 19, 1942; Welles to Leger, November 26, 1943, with enclosure by Welles, "Our Obligation to the People of France," box 89, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL; P document 158, "Policies Affecting the Postwar Position of France," December 18, 1942, box 57; P document 158a, "Official Statements and Views Affecting the Future Status of France and the French Empire," January 29, 1944, box 57. [Back.](#)

Note 51: For U.S. views of Indochina's postwar importance in the 1942-43 period, see, for example, P minutes 4, March 28, 1942; P document 33, "French Indochina," August 4, 1942, box 56; E document 77 and T document 283, "Preliminary Draft: the Economic Relations of Indo-China," March 23, 1943, box 63. [Back.](#)

Note 52: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; P document 33, "French Indochina," August 4, 1942, box 56; P document 158a, "Official Statements and Views Affecting the Future Status of France and the French Empire," January 29, 1944, box 57. [Back.](#)

Note 53: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; E document 77 and T document 283, "Preliminary Draft: the Economic Relations of Indo-China," March 23, 1943, box 63, Notter Files, National Archives. [Back.](#)

Note 54: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 55: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942. In early 1944, Roosevelt would tell Halifax that the Dutch empire "had done a good job but the French were hopeless." See Walter LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina," *American Historical Review* 80:5 (December 1975): 1285. [Back.](#)

Note 56: Millions of Indonesians, however, disagreed with the State Department's rosy views of the Dutch colonial masters, and Sukarno's nationalist anti-colonial movement had broad public support. 250,000 Indonesians voluntarily worked for the Japanese war effort, and the ferocity with which much of the population opposed the return of the Dutch authorities at the end of the war demonstrated the depth of their loathing for continued European rule. During the Indonesian war for independence

(1945-1949) that followed the war, Van Kleffens vigorously opposed United Nations attempts to mediate between the Dutch and the Indonesian nationalists. See, for example, Robert J. McMahon, "Anglo-American Diplomacy and the Reoccupation of the Netherlands East Indies," *Diplomatic History* 2:1 (Winter 1978): 1-23. [Back.](#)

Note 57: Minutes of the Advisory Committee, February 12, 1942, box 54, Notter files; P document 42, "Netherlands East Indies," August 14, 1942, box 56; P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; P minutes 22, August 15, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 58: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; P document 43, "Indonesian or Malaysian Federation," August 11, 1942, box 56; P document 37, "British Borneo," August 14, 1942, box 56; P document 106, "Netherlands Indies, Now Under Japanese Occupation," September 18, 1942, box 56. [Back.](#)

Note 59: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; P document 40, "Macao," August 14, 1942, box 56; P document 41, "Portuguese Timor," August 14, 1942, box 56. [Back.](#)

Note 60: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; P document 35, "British Malaya," August 14, 1942, box 56; T document 375, "The Problem of British Malaya: Possible Solutions," October 13, 1943, box 65. [Back.](#)

Note 61: Furthermore, the 1905 Taft-Katsura agreement had already affirmed Washington's recognition of Japan's domination of Korea in return for Tokyo's pledge to respect U.S. control in the Philippines. See Jongsuk Chay, "The Taft-Katsura Memorandum Reconsidered," *Pacific Historical Review* 37:3 (August 1968): 321-326. [Back.](#)

Note 62: James I. Matray, "An End to Indifference: America's Korea Policy During World War II," *Diplomatic History* 2:2 (Spring 1978): 181-196; P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; P document 123-b, "International Trusteeship," December 8, 1942, box 56; P document 213, Agenda for meeting of March 13, 1943, box 57; S document 18a, "Conditions for Japanese Surrender to the United Nations," March 13, 1943; E document 155, Japanese Postwar Economic Considerations," July 21, 1943, box 82, Notter files. [Back.](#)

Note 63: Welles to Roosevelt, April 13, 1942, *FRUS*, vol. I, 1942, 870-872. [Back.](#)

Note 64: P minutes 20, August 1, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 65: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 66: P minutes 22, August 15, 1942. Welles also provides a detailed account of his views on international trusteeship in his *Time For Decision*, 300-305, 383-384. [Back.](#)

Note 67: P minutes 22, August 15, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 68: PIO minutes 5, August 21, 1942, box 85; PIO minutes 13, October 23, 1942, box 85; P minutes 22, August 15, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 69: For a discussion of the many inherent weaknesses of the mandates scheme see Andrew Crozier, "The Establishment of the Mandates System 1919-1925: Some Problems Created by the Paris Peace Conference," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14:3 (July 1979): 483-513. [Back.](#)

Note 70: PIO minutes 5, August 21, 1942, box 85; PIO minutes 13, October 23, 1942, box 85. [Back.](#)

Note 71: P minutes 22, August 15, 1942; P minutes 33, November 14, 1942; PIO document 95, "An International Trusteeship for Non-Self-Governing Peoples," October 21, 1942, box 56; P document 123-b, "International Trusteeship," December 8, 1942, box 56; P minutes 51, April 10, 1943. At Teheran, Roosevelt explained to Stalin a trusteeship plan remarkably similar to this. See minutes of the Stalin-Roosevelt meeting, November 28, 1943, *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference at Cairo and Teheran 1943* (Washington D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 486. [Back.](#)

Note 72: T document 336, "Regionalism in Southeast Asia: Background," June 24, 1943, box 64, Notter files; S document 43, "The Strategic Importance of Singapore and Hong Kong," October 26, 1942, box 77, Notter files; P document 213, "Agenda for the meeting of March 13, 1943: Part II: South Pacific Regional Supervisory Council," March 10, 1943, box 192, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, Welles papers, FDRL; draft memorandum on Malaysian or Indonesian federation, August 14, 1942, box 192, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, Welles papers, FDRL; Welles, *Time For Decision*, 30 [Back.](#)

Note 73: P minutes 27, October 3, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 74: P document 113, "Resolution of the Assembly of the Liberal Party (July 18-19, 1941)," October 2, 1942, box 56; P document 113, "Charter of Freedom for Colonial Peoples: Resolution of the Third War Conference of the British Labour Party, May 25-28," 1942, box 56; P document 113, "British Views with Respect to Colonies and Dependent Areas," October 2, 1942, box 56. [Back.](#)

Note 75: FO 371/31527 "U.S. Views on Colonial Policy," November 21, 1943, PRO; FO 371/31527 "The United States and the Open Door in the British Colonial Empire," by A. G. B. Fisher, December 2, 1942, PRO; CAB 65/28 WM(42) 166th Conclusions, December 9, 1942, PRO; FO 371/35366, Eden memorandum of conversation in Washington, March 29, 1943, PRO; CAB 65/34 WM(43) 53rd Conclusions, April 13, 1943, PRO. [Back.](#)

Note 76: The president also shared with Eden his views on the necessity of a strong China and the establishment of international trusteeships for French Indochina and Korea. [Back.](#)

Note 77: FO 371/35366, Eden memorandum of conversation in Washington, March 29, 1943, PRO; CAB 65/34 WM(43) 53rd Conclusions, April 13, 1943, PRO; "Declaration by the United Nations on National Independence," March 9, 1943, Hull Papers, folder 262, Library of Congress Manuscript Division. [Back.](#)

Note 78: CAB 65/28 WM(42) 166th Conclusions, December 9, 1942, PRO; FO 371/35366, Eden memorandum of conversation in Washington, March 29, 1943, PRO; CAB 65/34 WM(43) 53rd Conclusions, April 13, 1943, PRO; Eden to War Cabinet, "Foreign Secretary's Visit to Washington," March 30, 1943, PRO. Eden also thought that American suggestions about stripping France of Indochina were so harsh that they might warp the political situation in postwar Paris. "A Right Wing Government in France to be confronted with the dismemberment of the French Empire hardly seems a good idea," Eden wrote. As Walter LaFeber has concluded: "For the sake of British interests in both Europe and Asia, London officials felt they had no choice but to fight for a fully restored France." See LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina," 1280. During this discussion between Eden and Roosevelt, Welles warned the president that Washington had already gone on record, with statements from both Hull and Robert Murphy, for the restoration of French possessions. Roosevelt said the commitment referred only to North Africa, but Welles warned that no such modification existed. See Eden, *The Reckoning*, 378. [Back.](#)

Note 79: PIO minutes 5, August 21, 1942, box 85. [Back.](#)

Note 80: P document 113, "British Views with respect to Colonies and Dependent Areas," October 2, 1942, box 56; S document 43, "The Strategic Importance of Singapore and Hong Kong," October 26, 1942, box 77; P minutes 37, December 12, 1942; Division of European Affairs memorandum to Welles, "Problems confronting the United States in connection with the British Empire," December 12, 1942, box 193, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, Welles papers, FDRL; P minutes 47, March 13, 1943. For an account arguing that officials in Australia and New Zealand were more in agreement with the U.S. State Department than with London on many questions, see Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 18. See also G. St. J. Barclay, "Australia Looks to America: The Wartime Relationship, 1939-1942," *Pacific Historical Review* 66:2 (May 1977): 251-271. [Back.](#)

Note 81: P minutes 21, August 8, 1942; P minutes 22, August 15, 1942; P document 113, "British Views with respect to Colonies and Dependent Areas," October 2, 1942, box 56; P document 35, "British Malaya," August 8, 1942, box 56; T document 375, "The Problem of British Malaya: Possible Solutions," October 13, 1943, box 65; P document 43, "Indonesian or Malaysian Federation," August 11, 1942, box 56. [Back.](#)

Note 82: P minutes 22, August 15, 1942; for an account of the impact of the fall of Singapore on British thinking, see Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 134-146. [Back.](#)

Note 83: P minutes 22, August 15, 1942; T document 137, "The Problem of Hong Kong: Possible Solutions," October 23, 1942, box 61. [Back.](#)

Note 84: Welles to Ambassador to China Clarence Gauss, March 25, 1942, FRUS: China, 1943, 730; P minutes 47, March 13, 1943; see also Steven W. Mosher, *China Misperceived: American Illusions and Chinese Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 46-47; Ta Jen Liu, *A History of Sino-American Diplomatic Relations, 1840-1974* (Taipei: China Academy, 1978), 250-251. [Back.](#)

Note 85: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 86: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943; FO 371/31633, Churchill to Eden, February 13, 1942, PRO; Warren Kimball, *The Juggler*, 139. Against British opposition, Chiang visited the Indian subcontinent in February 1942, where he publicly expressed sympathy for the nationalist cause. [Back.](#)

Note 87: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943. Roosevelt conceded as much to Eden when he predicted that China would undoubtedly side with the United States in the advent of a future clash with the Soviet Union. The president deliberately downplayed Chiang's intense dislike of the British and the fact that the Generalissimo would most likely also oppose British interests. Memorandum of Conversation by Harry Hopkins, March 27, 1943, FRUS, vol. III, 1943, 38-39. [Back.](#)

Note 88: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943; P document 113, "British Views with Respect to Colonies and Dependent Areas," October 2, 1942, box 56; S document 43, "The Strategic Importance of Singapore and Hong Kong," October 26, 1942, box 77; P minutes 51, April 10, 1943; memorandum of conversation by Welles, July 28, 1942, FRUS, vol. I, 1942, 698-699. [Back.](#)

Note 89: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943; P minutes 51, April 10, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 90: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 91: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 92: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 93: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943; P document 158, "Policies Affecting the Postwar Position of France," December 18, 1942, box 57; P document 158a, "Official Statements and Views Affecting the Future Status of France and the French Empire," January 29, 1944, box 57; Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, vol.4 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1975), 531. Roosevelt was prepared to go further than Welles with regard to Indochina. In July 1943, the President told a gathering of the Pacific War Council that the French should be stripped of their colonial possessions in the Far East because they had "done nothing for the population, but had misgoverned and exploited it," and their return to Indochina after the war would "make bad feeling throughout the

Far East." "Indochina should not be given back to the French Empire after the war," he concluded. See Warren Kimball and Fred Pollock, "'In Search of Monsters to Destroy': Roosevelt and Colonialism," in Kimball's *The Juggler*, 140. [Back.](#)

Note 94: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943; S document 18a, "Conditions for Japanese Surrender," March 13, 1943, box 77. "American concern for Taiwan," according to Leonard Gordon, "was first stimulated by knowledge of China's 'sudden public interest' in the island shortly after Japan's expansion of hostilities in the Pacific in December, 1941." See Leonard Gordon, "American Planning For Taiwan, 1942-1945," *Pacific Historical Review* 37:2 (May 1968): 201-202. [Back.](#)

Note 95: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943; Gordon, "American Planning For Taiwan"; S document 18a, "Conditions for Japanese Surrender," March 13, 1943, box 77. [Back.](#)

Note 96: P minutes 47, March 13, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 97: After his resignation, Welles used his syndicated column to offer a scathing criticism of British and French rule in the Near East. See, for example, "Welles Criticizes Both French and British Imperialism on Crisis in Levant," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 13, 1945. [Back.](#)

Note 98: P minutes 24, August 29, 1942; P document 47 "Regional Aspects of the Near and Middle East," August 27, 1942, box 56. Welles understood that the British would support a federation in the region. [Back.](#)

Note 99: P minutes 24, August 29, 1942; P document 48, "Syria and the Lebanon," August 27, 1942, box 56. [Back.](#)

Note 100: P minutes 48, March 20, 1943; P minutes 49, March 27, 1943; PIO minutes, November 20, 1942; P minutes 24, August 29, 1942; P minutes 37, December 12, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 101: P minutes 48, March 20, 1943. The British did not hesitate to encourage the independence of French possessions like Syria and Lebanon, arguing that such a gesture would help to promote the Allied cause in the region. [Back.](#)

Note 102: FO 371/31965, Halifax to FO, May 14, 1942, PRO; FO 371/31949, Halifax to FO, June 22 1942, PRO; Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, vol. 4, 228-229. [Back.](#)

Note 103: P document 218, "Agenda for the meeting of April 3, 1943," (Egypt), box 193, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL; P document 52, "Egypt," August 27, 1942, box 56, Notter files; Eichelberger memorandum to Welles, "Some Notes on Security and International Police," 1942, box 190, folder 3, Welles papers, FDRL; T document 302, "The Suez Canal and Egyptian Interests," April 1, 1943, box 63; P minutes 24, August 29, 1942. When, at Welles's request, Isaiah Bowman discussed trusteeship with Sir Cosmo

Parkinson of the Colonial Office, Parkinson emphasized that the survival of the British Empire after the war was thought by London to be the desire of the colonized. Parkinson illustrated his point by telling Bowman about an "Arab at Aden" who recently sent most of his wages, "small as they were," to King George VI to help repair a bomb-damaged Buckingham Palace. See memorandum of conversation between Bowman and Parkinson, February 25, 1943, box 191, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, folder 4, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 104: For accounts of U.S. involvement in Iran during the war see, for example, Stephen L. McFarland, "A Peripheral View of the Origins of the Cold War: The Crisis in Iran, 1941-1947," *Diplomatic History* 4:4 (Fall 1980): 333-351; Eduard M. Mark, "Allied Relations in Iran, 1941-1947: The Origins of a Cold War Crisis," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 59:1 (Autumn 1975): 51-63; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 18-19. [Back.](#)

Note 105: P document 55, "Iran," August 27, 1942, box 56; P minutes 48, March 20, 1943; PIO minutes, November 20, 1942; P minutes 24, August 29, 1942; P document 215, "Agenda for the meeting of March 20, 1943," March 19, 1943, box 193, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL; P minutes 48, March 20, 1943; P minutes 49, March 27, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 106: P minutes 48, March 20, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 107: Welles to Roosevelt, October 20, 1942, box 152, folder 1, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 108: P document 215, "Agenda for the meeting of March 20, 1943," March 19, 1943, box 193, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 109: P minutes 49, March 27, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 110: P document 52, "Egypt," August 27, 1942, box 56; T document 302, "The Suez Canal and Egyptian Interests," April 1, 1943, box 63; P document 50, "Palestine," August 27, 1942, box 56; P minutes 24, August 29, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 111: Welles was also active on the domestic side of the Palestine question, working with the various lobbying groups such as the American Palestine Committee, the Zionist Organization of America, and the Christian Council on Palestine. When Welles resigned, Rabbi Stephen Wise, the leading Zionist in the United States, wrote: "Your vision and your wisdom, your courage and effectiveness cannot long be lost to the American people, which cherishes your service, as my fellow Jews in all free lands will, when the whole story can be told, bless your name." In his 1944 book *The Time For Decision*, Welles presented his views on a Jewish homeland and criticized British policy in its mandate, and three years after the war he wrote *We*

Need Not Fail, which passionately expressed his commitment to a Jewish homeland in Palestine. See Rabbi Stephen Wise to Welles, October 3, 1943, box 93, Welles papers, FDRL; Welles, *The Time For Decision*, 262-267; Sumner Welles, *We Need Not Fail* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948). [Back.](#)

Note 112: Irwin Gellman, *Secret Affairs* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1995), 38. [Back.](#)

Note 113: Welles had deep admiration for Jewish leaders such as Rabbi Wise, the president of the American Jewish Congress; Chaim Weizmann, the president of the World Zionist Organization, who would later become the first president of Israel; and Judge Joseph Proskauer, a prominent American Zionist and friend of President Roosevelt. Welles frequently spoke before Jewish organizations and sought to arrange meetings for Weizmann and Wise with President Roosevelt. In fact, Welles's initial skepticism about a Middle Eastern Federation stemmed from his fear that it might pose a threat to the Jewish population of Palestine, but he concluded that a Jewish-controlled, or bi-national Palestine would become a fully integrated member of a federation. Wise telegram to Welles, October 4, 1942, box 86, folder 5, Welles papers, FDRL; Welles to Wise, June 19, 1942, Welles Papers, box 86, folder 5, FDRL; Welles to Wise, October 7, 1942, box 86, folder 5, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 114: As early as 1942, Welles and Wise held a number of discussions about setting up a war crimes tribunal to investigate atrocities against European Jews, and at one point that same year Welles even discussed with General Eisenhower the possibility of creating a Jewish army in Palestine to aid the Allied forces in the region. Eisenhower to Welles, March 28, 1942, box 86, folder 5, Welles papers, FDRL. For an account arguing that Welles was indifferent to the plight of the European Jews see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1984). "Welles's reaction to the Holocaust remains an enigma," Wyman writes. "On many occasions, he cooperated with Jewish leaders and seemed on the point of forcing middle-level officials to act. But he seldom followed through" (191). For a less critical assessment see Henry Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: the Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1970), which explores the bureaucratic politics involved. [Back.](#)

Note 115: P minutes 24, August 29, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 116: P minutes 24, August 29, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 117: P minutes 25, September 5, 1942; P minutes 49, March 27, 1943; "The Atlantic Charter and National Independence," November 13, 1942, Atlantic Charter file, box 13, Notter files; P minutes 24, August 29, 1942; P document 215, "Agenda for the meeting of March 20, 1943: Annex: Palestine," March 19, 1943, box 193, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, folder 9, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 118: Memorandum of conversation between Welles and Butler, April 21, 1941, box 163, folder 3, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 119: FO 371/35034 "Palestine," memorandum by Cripps, May 4, 1943, PRO; CAB 66/37 WP(43) 246 "Palestine," by Richard Casey, Minister of State, June 17, 1943, PRO; Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, vol.4, 353. Eden's private secretary Oliver Harvey noted that the foreign secretary remained "immovable on the subject of Palestine. He loves Arabs and hates Jews. Our only hope is a firm Anglo-American agreement over Palestine—Sumner Welles and the President favor a Jewish State as Winston does." John Harvey, ed., *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey, 1941-1945* (London: Collins, 1978), 247. [Back.](#)

Note 120: See, for example, the column by Sumner Welles, "Welles says British Should Give Palestine Mandate to U.N.O.," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 31, 1945. [Back.](#)

Note 121: "American Anti-Colonialism and the Dissolution of the British Empire," by William Roger Louis, in Louis and Bull, eds., *The Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (London: Oxford, 1986), 264-265. [Back.](#)

Note 122: P minutes 26, September 26, 1942; P minutes, 27, October 3, 1942; T document 202, "The Italian Empire: Political Considerations," December 29, 1942, box 61; P document 79, "Algeria," September 17, 1942, box 56; P document 81, "Morocco-French Zone," September 15, 1942, box 56. [Back.](#)

Note 123: P minutes 26, September 26, 1942; P minutes 27, October 3, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 124: P minutes 26, September 26, 1942; P minutes 27, October 3, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 125: P minutes 26, September 26, 1942; P minutes 27, October 3, 1942; "Provisional Composition of Regional Supervisory Councils," September 25, 1942, box 193, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, Welles papers, FDRL; P document 168, "The Italian Colonies," January 2, 1943, box 57; P minutes 33, November 14, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 126: P minutes 26, September 26, 1942; P minutes 27, October 3, 1942; P minutes 33, November 14, 1942. Norman Davis described Liberia as "a great independent state ... happy as a clam." See Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 171. For an account of U.S. control of the Liberian economy, see, for example, Judson M. Lyon, "Informal Imperialism: The United States in Liberia, 1897-1912," *Diplomatic History* 5:3 (Summer 1981): 221-243; as well as Lloyd N. Beecher, Jr., "The Second World War and U.S. Politico-Economic Expansionism: The Case of Liberia, 1938-1945," *Diplomatic History* 3:4 (Fall 1979): 391-412. [Back.](#)

Note 127: For Welles's comments, see P minutes 27, October 3, 1942, a

stark example not only of the racial arrogance of a senior State Department official but also of Welles's class prejudices. Welles's views on race could be contradictory. While he thought American blacks deserved better treatment, he persisted in his belief that many other races were inferior. His views were shared by many in the State Department. For example, blacks that entered the foreign service during these years were often relegated to postings in Liberia. See, for example, Martin Weil, *A Pretty Good Club: The Founding Fathers of the U.S. Foreign Service* (New York: Norton, 1978), 90, 125. [Back.](#)

Note 128: P minutes 27, October 3, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 129: P minutes 34, November 21, 1942; PIO minutes 10, October 9, 1942, box 85; P document 148, "A Tentative Plan for a Caribbean Council," November 21, 1942, box 57. [Back.](#)

Note 130: P minutes 34, November 21, 1942; P document 143, "Falkland Islands," November 19, 1942, box 57. [Back.](#)

Note 131: PIO minutes 10, October 9, 1942; P minutes 34, November 21, 1942. [Back.](#)

Note 132: P document 123, "International Trusteeship," box 56. [Back.](#)

Note 133: FO 371/31527 Halifax to F.O. December 12, 1942 and December 26, 1942, PRO; Donald Wright, "That Hell Hole of Yours," *American Heritage* 46:6 (October 1995): 58; Cordell Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 1638-1639; Notter memorandum to Hull on trusteeship, April 15, 1943, box 190, Postwar Foreign Policy Files, folder 4, Welles papers, FDRL. [Back.](#)

Note 134: P minutes 51, April 10, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 135: P minutes 51, April 10, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 136: P minutes 51, April 10, 1943. [Back.](#)

Note 137: Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 1599. [Back.](#)

Note 138: Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History* (New York: Harper, 1950), 133. [Back.](#)

Note 139: P document 236, "International Trusteeship: Summary of Conclusions," July 2, 1943, box 57; P document 240, "Official Statements and Views Pertaining to the Administration of Dependent Areas After the War," July 12, 1943, box 57; Cordell Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 1638-1639. [Back.](#)

Note 140: Trusteeship received little attention at the October 1943 Moscow Conference, at which Hull was the chief U.S. delegate. [Back.](#)

Note 141: Shortly before the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, Harry Hopkins

reassured British officials that Washington's plans for reform in the colonial world extended only to the economic field. At Dumbarton Oaks, the U.S. proposal on colonial matters made no reference to independence, and at the second Quebec Conference the American Joint Chiefs told the British that Washington would allow Britain to reclaim Singapore and help the Dutch return to the East Indies. See Walter LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina," *American Historical Review* 80:5 (December 1975): 1289-1290. [Back.](#)

Note 142: The case has been made that the trusteeship plan might have averted postwar conflict in places like French Indochina. See, for example, Gary R. Hess, "Franklin Roosevelt and Indochina," *Journal of American History* 59:2 (September 1972): 366-367. [Back.](#)

Note 143: Cordell Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 1234-1238, 1304-1305; Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 225, 230. [Back.](#)

Note 144: For example, as Roosevelt retreated from his commitment to trusteeship, he accepted the French return to Indochina. De Gaulle effectively played upon these American fears when he told Jefferson Caffery that France might "fall into the Russian orbit but we hope you do not push us into it." See LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina," 1293. [Back.](#)

Note 145: Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, 567-568. [Back.](#)

Note 146: George Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs* (New York: Norton, 1982), 175. [Back.](#)

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