



Robert A. Taft, *The Constitution and American Foreign Policy, 1939-53*
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Robert A. Taft, The Constitution and American Foreign Policy, 1939-53

Few Senators in the twentieth century have exercised an influence in the United States Senate comparable to that wielded by Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio; and few have made as determined an effort to defend Congressional authority against the inroads of Executive power. The historical debate about the extent of Taft's isolationism over foreign policy has overshadowed his importance as a constitutional critic of the growth of Presidential powers in foreign affairs.¹ The intention of this article is to examine Taft's views, as an unusually influential Senator, upon the respective constitutional roles of the Congress and the President in foreign relations; and to assess the significance of Taft's constitutional objections to the growth of Presidential powers during a particularly important period of American history. An examination of Senator Taft's constitutional position may also demonstrate that the objectives of his foreign policy had a greater consistency than is sometimes suggested by his critics.

Taft entered the Senate in 1939 and quickly advanced to a leading position amongst Senate Republicans as a vehement critic of the New Deal. The self-appointed guardian of conservative Republican principles, he became Chairman of the Senate Republican Steering Committee in 1944. But the period of his greatest Congressional prominence occurred after the Second World War. Through an uneasy party compromise, Taft became the leading Republican spokesman in the Senate on domestic affairs whilst the lead in foreign affairs was taken by Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan, the most celebrated Republican

convert to internationalism. In 1947, Taft became Chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee and, dubbed 'Mr Republican' by his supporters, became the predominant figure in the Republican-controlled 80th Congress. When Vandenberg died in 1951, Taft became in effect the leading Senate spokesman for his party on both domestic and foreign policy. But he did not feel it necessary to assume the floor leadership of his party until a Republican President entered the White House in 1953. Taft then became Senate Majority Leader for a mere five months before a fatal illness caused him to resign.

Taft's Congressional career is but part of his significance in American political history. The son of William Howard Taft, the 27th President, the younger Taft also had great Presidential ambitions himself and was a strong contender for the Republican nomination at three conventions. But on each occasion, Taft — as the candidate of the conservative Mid-West wing of the party — was defeated by a rival from the Eastern, internationalist wing: by Willkie in 1940, by Dewey in 1948, and finally by Eisenhower in 1952.

In Taft's outlook on public policy, domestic questions were of paramount importance. Once the extent of Taft's subordination of foreign policy to the requirements of domestic policy is understood, his constitutional views on foreign relations take on a more coherent meaning. The greatest dangers facing the United States in the late 1930s were exclusively domestic in Taft's view.² Foreign policy questions hardly entered into his conception of essential priorities, which were the restoration of Congressional power and the dispersal of strong Federal government. The domestic New Deal was, for Taft, the great disaster which had befallen the American Republic in 1933, leading Americans away from their traditional liberties to a threatening collectivist future.³ So consuming was this conception of domestic peril that Taft found it difficult to focus upon dangers outside the field of United States jurisdiction.

Thus, according to Taft, the greatest threat facing the United States during the world crisis of 1939 to 1941 came not from the disintegration of the international order but from the excessive enlargement of Executive powers at home. A few weeks before Pearl Harbour, Taft attacked Willkie for emphasizing foreign dangers at the expense of domestic concerns: 'If this attitude of mind prevails then long before we have dealt with armed autocracy

in Europe, our liberty will be swamped by excessive Executive authority, and we will see here a completely totalitarian government.⁴ Ill-founded though such notions were, they remained central to Taft's constitutional thinking.

Taft approached foreign affairs with suspicion and misgiving, recognizing that an active foreign policy was likely to emphasize the role of the President at the expense of Congress. His isolationism in the pre-war period can be partly explained in these terms: war, and preparation for war, would inevitably strengthen the Executive power and increase Federal regulation of American economic and political life — the very opposite of his own domestic policy, which stressed a strong Congress and limited government.⁵

The great difficulty in Taft's emphasis upon the domestic issue of liberty was that he failed to relate it effectively to those foreign policy issues of national security upon which domestic liberty itself depends. But since Taft believed in the invulnerability of the United States (at least until the last few years of his life), he assumed that he was correct in his constitutional thinking to maximize the importance of domestic factors whilst minimizing the significance of foreign policy issues. In the midst of American participation in the Second World War, Taft was still arguing that the real issues facing American citizens were domestic.⁶ Since Taft judged foreign policy from the standpoint of its domestic consequences, how was this view expressed in constitutional terms?

Taft gave a public exposition of his constitutional ideas at the outset of his career as a United States Senator in a series of debates with a well-known New Deal intellectual, Professor Thomas Vernon Smith, broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System between February and May 1939.⁷

When debating the respective powers of the Congress and the Presidency in foreign affairs, Taft asserted that the President's powers were 'quite limited'. He was at pains to emphasize the restraints placed on the express powers granted to the President under the articles of the Constitution, especially the need for the concurrence of the Senate in treaty-making. Taft conceded, however, that: 'from the nature of foreign relations, and from the beginning of the Government, the courts and the Congress have held that the President's power over foreign relations is predominant. The nation cannot speak with a multitude of voices, and the President must be the person who conducts all negotiations with foreign nations.'⁸ But Taft then swiftly moved his argument back

to a position of asserting Congressional authority: 'Congress, and particularly the Senate, is given extensive powers and duties with reference to any Government action other than negotiation in the foreign field.'⁹

When examining the constitutional limits placed on the war powers of the President, Taft displayed the cautious optimism which Congressional conservatives felt in the early months of 1939 in being able to hold the Executive in check. The Senator warned that 'the President should be exceptionally careful about promising support in war, which he cannot give without action of Congress, for Congress accurately reflects today the determination of the American people that they shall not become involved in European war'.¹⁰

On the general question of the restraints upon Executive power, the Senator declared: 'The President is responsible for what this nation says to foreign nations, but he must be very careful in his statements as to what this nation will or will not do, because unlike most executives in European countries, he has not the final power to put his foreign policy into effect.'¹¹

Taft's greatest worry in 1939 was that war would result in the undermining of the Constitution and the eventual destruction of democracy in America. In the event of war he seriously believed that 'there would be an immediate demand for arbitrary power, unlimited control of wages, prices, and agriculture, and complete confiscation of private property. We would be bound to go far towards totalitarianism. It is doubtful whether we would ever return.'¹² These greatly exaggerated views were those of a man who commanded the allegiance of a sizeable body of Republican voters and was shortly to be a serious contender for the Presidency of the United States. Taft's position sheds an interesting light upon the thinking of conservative isolationists as the war clouds gathered over Europe.

The constitutional views which Taft advocated in the debates with Professor Smith, although plainly unoriginal, were deeply and genuinely held. They were also popular. A Gallup Poll revealed that two-thirds of the listeners believed that Taft had won the argument.¹³ The popular reaction to Taft's constitutional conservatism at this time serves as a useful reminder of the great difficulties which President Roosevelt faced in making foreign policy in the fateful year of 1939.

The position of guarded optimism which Taft adopted in early

1939 about restraining the Executive power in foreign relations was, of course, shattered by American participation in the Second World War and the dramatic growth of Executive power which then occurred. Moreover, the Cold War served to perpetuate this Presidential dominance in foreign affairs in the post-war period. For Taft, the constitutional effects were appalling. At the height of the Cold War, Taft warned that the danger to liberty in the United States from Truman's foreign policy was even greater than the extension of the powers of the Federal government in the domestic field.¹⁴ From Taft's point of view, much of what he had feared had come to pass. American involvement in the Second World War and her advance to a world role had greatly enlarged the powers of the Presidency, and the constitutional relationship between the Executive and the Congress in foreign affairs was in danger of being broken.

In November 1951, when Taft was the leading Congressional Republican, he published a book entitled *A Foreign Policy for Americans*. Although written in support of a renewed bid for Presidential nomination, this volume accurately portrays his mature reflections on the nature of foreign policy.

In addressing himself to the place of the President and the Congress in foreign policy, Taft wrote: 'There can be no question that the executive departments have claimed more and more power over the field of foreign policy at the same time that the importance of foreign policy in its effect upon every feature of American life has steadily increased. If the present trend continues, it seems obvious to me that the President will become a complete dictator in the entire field of foreign policy and thereby acquire power to force upon Congress all kinds of domestic policies which must necessarily follow.'¹⁵

The principal points of Taft's position in *A Foreign Policy for Americans* on the constitutional issues over foreign relations can be summarized thus: firstly, Presidents Roosevelt and Truman had usurped the war-making powers of Congress by their use of Executive authority; secondly, the usurpation of powers by the Executive in the foreign policy field was likely to lead to a dangerous erosion of Congressional authority over domestic affairs; and thirdly, the use of Executive agreements, as a method of avoiding the treaty provision of the Constitution, was getting out of control. Taft argued that if the treaty method was not satisfactory as it stood 'then the Constitution should be amended to pro-

vide for the approval of all executive agreements and to define the scope of, and effect of, such agreements much more closely than at present'.¹⁶ This line of argument anticipated the subsequent Bricker Amendment, especially the so-called George Substitute which so narrowly failed in the Senate, shortly after Taft's death.¹⁷

Another very significant constitutional criticism, trenchantly advanced by Taft, concerned the dangers of secret diplomacy. Reviewing the Democrat record in foreign affairs in 1951, the Senator argued that the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations had repudiated what he termed the 'wise democratic doctrine' of open diplomacy, with the result that 'a general practice of secrecy in all the initial steps of foreign policy has been to deprive the Senate and the Congress of the substance of the powers conferred on them by the Constitution'.¹⁸ Taft was especially critical of what he regarded as the secret diplomacy practised by Roosevelt at the Teheran and Yalta Conferences.¹⁹ Whatever the merits of the Senator's particular assertions about Teheran and Yalta, in the light of the subsequent conduct of the Vietnam War by Presidents Johnson and Nixon, it can be seen that Taft's misgivings about the growth of Executive secrecy were well-founded.

Throughout his long period of opposition to Democrat foreign policy, Taft raised constitutional objections to nearly all major foreign policy questions. Given the constraints of space, this article will assess his record selectively, by considering his attitude across a spectrum of issues.

During the pre-Pearl Harbour period, Taft opposed Lend-Lease in 1941 because it would have the practical effect, in his view, of enlarging the war powers of the President. He later complained that the Bill 'gave unlimited power to the President in time of peace to commit acts of war against any nation in the world'.²⁰ His fear of the domestic effects of war was greater than his concern about Nazi victories. In a major speech on the issue of protection of Allied convoys in May 1941, Taft vehemently opposed American entry into the European war on the grounds that, 'Far from safeguarding democracy, war is likely to destroy democracy right here in the United States. Congress today is abandoning the constitutional safeguards. It is granting unlimited powers to the President.'²¹ Thus Taft's opposition to Lend-Lease and the escort of Allied convoys centred upon his twin concerns of endangering American

neutrality and of expanding the powers of the Presidency. That these fears were shared by a considerable body of Senators can be judged from the vote on Taft's key amendment to the Lend-Lease Bill, that no clause should be construed as giving the President additional power to send forces abroad: the amendment was defeated by a vote of 51 to 38.

Predictably, Taft opposed the Atlantic Charter, arguing with Senators Hiram Johnson and Bennett Champ Clark that the President had in effect entered into an alliance with Britain. When Roosevelt despatched troops to Iceland in July 1941, Taft made a vigorous protest on the floor of the Senate, declaring, 'The President has no legal or constitutional right to send American troops to Iceland . . . I believe it would be most unfortunate if the Senate of the United States should acquiesce without protest in acts of the President which might nullify for all time the constitutional authority distinctly reserved to Congress to declare war.'²² However, the Administration case was that the measure was strictly defensive, designed to forestall a German move. Roosevelt's action received strong backing from Congress and public opinion. A national opinion poll showed 61 percent in favour and only 20 percent unequivocally opposed.²³ Taft's isolationist position was being undermined by events and the movement in public opinion.

The last great battle between the isolationists and the interventionists took place over Roosevelt's proposed revision of the Neutrality Act in November 1941. Taft took the position that repeal of the Neutrality Act would be tantamount to a declaration of war or would at least authorize the President to carry on an undeclared war. The Congressional battle over repealing the Neutrality Law so as to allow the arming of merchantmen and the abolition of forbidden combat zones was a bruising affair and was only carried by a vote of 50 to 37. In fact, the Senate majority was smaller than on any major foreign policy issue since the outbreak of the European war. But it proved to be the last major stand of the isolationists, or non-interventionists as Taft preferred to be called. Soon the attack on Pearl Harbour ended the bitter isolationist/interventionist debate in the United States.

Taft's fears about the survival of democratic institutions in the United States, in the event of war, proved largely groundless. The Constitution was not subverted, the President did not become a dictator, and party politics continued on a very active basis. Nor did hostilities interrupt the holding of a Presidential election in

1944. However, it is of course the case that during the war years President Roosevelt did exercise an extraordinary degree of Executive authority over national life, going further than even Lincoln or Wilson. But both Congressional and public opinion accepted the assumption of extraordinary powers by the President as being necessary in a situation of total war.

The war years saw a decline in Taft's political importance, but as Allied victory became more probable he regained some of his old prominence, partly in the debate over policies for the post-war world. Like his father, Robert Taft was attracted by the notion of establishing international law and justice. In theory, an international organization fitted effectively into his general conception of the purposes of foreign policy. For Taft the future security of the United States required world peace and the best method, ideally, of ensuring the peace was to create an international body to enforce the peace. In practice, however, Taft's concern for Congressional prerogatives, as well as his nationalism, prevented him from being a whole-hearted convert to internationalism. Advocating what he called 'practical' internationalism, he opposed the Ball resolution supporting United States participation in a strong international organization after the war. Taft criticized the proposal for an international police force and stressed the dangers of allowing the President too much authority over American participation in collective security actions.²⁴

When the United Nations Charter came before the Senate in July 1945, Taft spoke in favour of ratification but hedged his support by criticizing the absence of Congressional controls upon the United States delegate to the Security Council. Taft said, 'Under the Constitution, only Congress can declare war. It would seem desirable, therefore, that some power be reserved to Congress to direct voting by our representative which involves a war.'²⁵ But Taft joined the overwhelming majority which passed the Charter by 89 votes to 2. However, when the question of sending delegates to the UN arose in December 1945, Taft offered amendments to curb the American delegate's discretion, because of his fear that the Congress might be surrendering some of its constitutional right to declare war. Taft's amendment failed and he joined six other Senators in voting against the sending of delegates. That Taft had a constitutional point was illustrated in 1950 over the Korean War when only President Truman had the power to direct the US delegates at the United Nations.

It was in the post-war years that Taft reached his greatest national importance as a Republican leader. He became the most prominent and influential Republican politician in Congress and the conservative wing of the Republican party came to be largely controlled by Taft and his supporters. But with the internationalist tide running strongly, it was Senator Vandenberg who took the lead for the internationalist Republicans on foreign policy, developing with the Democrat Administration a bi-partisan policy in foreign affairs. Taft and his Mid-West Republican supporters felt no sympathy for this bi-partisan policy.

Senator Taft was a persistent critic of Truman's Cold War foreign policy. One of his greatest disagreements with the Administration came over the proposed North Atlantic Treaty and its associated military assistance programme. The key Article 5 of the treaty provided that an attack against any of the signatories would be regarded by the others as an attack against all. Although Taft had moderated his isolationism since 1941, he could still not accept the rationale of a deep military entanglement with Europe. He decided to oppose the treaty with a mixture of constitutional, political and military arguments. He was also genuinely concerned about delegating to the Executive branch — for the initial twenty year period of the treaty — the ability to commit American troops to combat without specific Congressional approval.²⁶

Furthermore, Taft argued that the North Atlantic Pact was 'wholly contrary to the spirit of the United Nations Charter' in going far beyond the right of collective self-defence as permitted under Article 51 of the UN Charter.²⁷ 'The North Atlantic Treaty' declared Taft, 'is a military alliance. The present treaty does contemplate a peacetime renewal of the old, open-ended lend-lease formula. The present treaty assumes unilateral responsibility for the fate of Western Europe.'²⁸ Taft had not sufficiently outgrown his pre-war isolationism to be able to accept a peace-time military alliance with the Old World and he voted against it. Instead of NATO he proposed the extension of the Monroe Doctrine to Western Europe. But the narrowness of Taft's support in the Senate can be gauged from the vote passing the treaty: it was carried by 82 votes to 13.

When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, President Truman authorized American forces to enter the conflict. As in 1941, Taft accused the President of usurping the war powers of Congress by not securing prior Congressional approval. He was

later to write, 'My conclusion is that in the case of Korea, where a war was already under way, we had no right to send troops to a nation, with whom we had no treaty, to defend it against attack by another nation, no matter how unprincipled that aggression might be, unless the whole matter was submitted to Congress and a declaration of war or some other direct authority obtained.'²⁹

Taft attempted to counter the Truman Administration argument that American forces intervened under the provisions of the UN Charter by suggesting that the Security Council had not properly complied with Article 27 which required that decisions of the Security Council should be made with the affirmative vote of the seven members, including the concurring votes of the five permanent members. Since Russia was boycotting the UN at the time, Taft argued that no concurring Russian vote was forthcoming. This legalistic quibble was not very convincing, although an examination of Truman's actions over Korea shows that the President did adopt an interventionist policy based mainly upon his own powers as President and Commander-in-Chief, sanctioned by UN approval.

On 24 June 1950, Secretary of State Acheson informed President Truman that the North Koreans had invaded South Korea. The two men agreed to request an immediate meeting of the United Nations Security Council. The next afternoon the Security Council met and unanimously passed a resolution, proposed by the United States, condemning the invasion and calling for the withdrawal of the North Koreans to the 38th parallel. As Truman makes clear in his memoirs, both the President and Secretary Acheson expected that the UN resolution would be ignored by North Korea: accordingly the Administration had to consider what action the United States should undertake in support of South Korea.³⁰ Following an appeal from South Korea for assistance, the President ordered American air and naval units to support the South Koreans south of the 38th parallel. This was not enough to prevent a South Korean collapse. On 27 June the Security Council adopted a resolution calling upon members of the United Nations to assist South Korea 'to repel the armed attack and restore international peace and security in the area'.³¹ On the same day Truman met Congressional leaders (though Taft was not included) and they supported the President's interventionist policy. On 30 June, Truman committed American ground forces to Korea, in accordance with the UN resolution of 27 June, but without the formal consent of Congress.

Taft's initial reaction to the crisis, in a Senate speech of 28 June, was to give grudging approval to Truman's decision to intervene in the Korean conflict, but blaming what he regarded as previous errors in the Administration's Far Eastern policy for allowing the crisis to arise. He also delivered a sharp attack on the unilateralist action of the Executive branch, 'No resolution has ever been introduced asking for the approval of Congress for the use of American forces in Korea. I shall discuss later the question of whether the President is usurping his powers as Commander-in-Chief. My own opinion is that he is doing so; that there is no legal authority for what he has done.'³² At that time only a few Senators (Taft, Kem and Watkins) questioned the President's decision not to ask for a Congressional resolution approving his actions, which Truman believed were consonant with his authority under the UN Charter. Most Republican Senators joined in unequivocal expressions of support. However, in retrospect, Truman's constitutional position would have been clarified (as Acheson pointed out at the time) if a Congressional resolution of support had been obtained.³³ Later the Republicans were to make political capital out of the Taftite charge that the Administration had not secured a declaration of war.

But Taft's most serious challenge to the President's war powers came in 1951 over the President's plan for a substantial build-up in the American ground force commitment to NATO.³⁴ In order to emphasize the constitutional issues he believed to be involved, Taft chose to deliver his attack on the Administration's plan in the Senate. On 5 January 1951, he delivered a 10,000 word peroration, setting the scene for the Senate's so-called 'Great Debate' over foreign policy.

Leaving aside the fact that Taft had always been deeply distrustful in principle of NATO, the political motives behind his attack were that following the Taft Republican successes in the mid-term elections of 1950, Taft was convinced that he had a chance of gaining the Republican Presidential nomination in 1952 and the Presidency as well. Moreover, with Vandenberg removed from the scene, the Republican Party now had the opportunity to alter the internationalist foreign policy and return America to her more traditional course in foreign affairs.

In debating the troops-to-Europe issue, Taft contended that under Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, 'there is no legal obligation to send American land soldiers to Europe'.³⁵ In the strictly technical sense this was correct since the Article provided for a signatory to

take 'such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force'. But Taft's position was hardly convincing in that Article 5 dealt with the question of what the NATO allies would do in the event of an armed attack. The Administration proposal was for a military build-up in Europe as a precautionary measure to deter any possible aggression.

In a follow-up speech in the Senate on 29 March, Taft tackled the issue of Presidential power thus: 'If in the great field of foreign policy the President has arbitrary and unlimited power, as he now claims, then there is an end to freedom in the United States in a great realm of domestic activity which affects, in the long run, every person in the United States.'³⁶ Thus Taft repeated again his familiar concern with the domestic consequences of foreign policy and his fear that American overseas involvements might turn the country into what he called a 'garrison state'.

Later the Senator declared, 'Whether there is to be an American army or an international army, I do not believe the President has the power without Congressional approval to send troops to one country to defend it against a possible or probable attack by another country'.³⁷ Whatever assessment is made of the party political motivation of Taft's stance in the Great Debate, it is clear that a substantial part of his argument concerning the despatch of American troops to Europe stemmed from his consistent and long-standing fear of Executive usurpation of Congressional powers.

Although some of Taft's fears about Executive usurpation and the domestic consequences of foreign policy proved quite unfounded, in retrospect much of his constitutional criticism was justified at least over these aspects: the erosion of the war powers of the Congress, the over-use of Executive agreements, and excessive secrecy by the Executive branch. The relevance of this part of Taft's constitutional critique became increasingly obvious with the abuses of Presidential powers in foreign policy by Johnson and Nixon over the Vietnam War. Congressional opposition, backed by public opinion, combined to bring about the curtailment of the worst features and to restore some constitutional balance. Consequently, Congress has made a determined, although not entirely successful, effort to re-establish itself in the conduct of foreign policy, with the passage of the War Powers Act of 1973, the re-assertion of Congressional control over Appropriations on overseas spending, and increased Congressional scrutiny of Executive agreements. Taft had consistently urged such a re-definition of

the role of Congress in foreign relations. To that extent his constitutional position was justified.

But clearly a good deal of Taft's thinking on Presidential-Congressional relations in foreign affairs cannot be accepted. His conception of proper Presidential conduct in the foreign field was too traditionalist, even out-moded, to be fully relevant to the requirements of American foreign interests and needs in the post-1945 period. This was clearly illustrated by his Bricker-style views on Executive agreements. Had Taft's assertion of Congressional powers been successful, and carried to its logical conclusion, the balance in Presidential-Congressional relations would almost certainly have been tilted too much towards Congress. It is difficult to see how Taft's strict and conservative view of constitutional checks and balances could have permitted the necessary scope for Presidential leadership over foreign policy issues, especially those requiring very rapid response by the Chief Executive. In particular, with his relative lack of understanding of military matters, Taft seems to have had no effective conception of how to relate the President's function as Commander-in-Chief to modern conditions. A Taft Presidency in the 1940s and 1950s, judging by his stated positions, would have provided insufficient leadership over foreign policy, especially in guiding the United States in a world role: a role about which he had deep reservations to the end of his life.

Notes

1. For the debate over Taft's foreign policy views, see the critical studies by J.P. Armstrong, 'The Enigma of Senator Taft and American Foreign Policy', *Review of Politics*, Vol. 17, April 1955, and V. Van Dyke and E.L. Davis, 'Senator Taft and American Security', *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 14, May 1952. For a contemporary pro-Taft account see W.R. West, 'Senator Taft's Foreign Policy', *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 189, June 1952. For a revisionist view which is often sympathetic to Taft, see H.W. Berger, 'Senator Robert A. Taft Dissents From Military Escalation', in T.G. Paterson (ed.), *Cold War Critics: Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years* (Chicago 1971). For a decidedly pro-Taft ac-

count see R. Kirk and J. McClellan, *The Political Principles of Robert A. Taft* (New York 1967), Chapter 8. Taft's biographer James T. Patterson provides much valuable material on the Senator's foreign policy views in *Mr Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston 1972). Patterson has also written an essay somewhat sympathetic to Taft: 'Robert A. Taft and American Foreign Policy, 1939-1945', in L.P. Liggio and J.J. Martin (eds.), *Watershed of Empire: Essays on New Deal Foreign Policy* (Colorado Springs 1976).

2. Like Herbert Hoover, the other leading conservative isolationist in the pre-1941 period, Taft argued that Roosevelt's warnings of foreign dangers were merely part of an attempt to distract the American people from the shortcomings of the New Deal and to provide an excuse for enlarging Presidential powers. See M. Jonas, *Isolationism in America, 1935-1941* (Ithaca, NY 1966), 90-91. Professor Jonas's study provides a penetrating analysis of the isolationism of the 1930s and of Taft's own isolationist position during that period.

3. Congressional Record, 77th Congress, 1st Session, 27 October 1941, A 4839-40 and 76th Congress, 1st Session, 25 April 1939, A 1666. Taft's attacks on the New Deal-Fair Deal policy were unrelenting. In 1949 he criticized Truman's domestic programme on the grounds that if enacted in full, it would 'destroy great areas of freedom without accomplishing his stated purposes'. See Taft's article, 'The Republican Party', *Fortune*, April 1949, 109.

4. Congressional Record, 77th Congress, 1st Session, 27 October 1941. During the Second World War Taft strongly disagreed with Walter Lippmann's advocacy of the continuance of the wartime alliance in the post-war world on this same question of the dominance of foreign over domestic issues. In private notes on Lippmann's views, made in his own hand, Taft criticized 'his subordination of ideology, and the importance of the kind of government you have at home. He is obsessed with foreign policy.' Robert A. Taft Papers, Box 697, Library of Congress.

5. See the article by Taft, 'A 1944 Program for the Republicans' in *The Saturday Evening Post*, 11 December 1943, 50. In denouncing the New Deal programme for 1944, Taft wrote: 'Either the whole plan will be a vast failure or it will be carried out by a complete centralization of arbitrary power in Washington. It is the pattern for a totalitarian state.' Later in 1950, Taft attacked Truman's Fair Deal, comparing it with the programme of the post-war British Labour government: 'Both are inspired by a hostility to a free industry'. See Taft's article, 'Is President Truman Taking Us down the British Road?', *Colliers*, 8 April 1950, 46.

6. See Taft's *Saturday Evening Post* article already cited, 17.

7. Professor Smith was at the time a Democrat Congressman from Illinois. The Smith-Taft debates were broadcast by CBS on successive Tuesday evenings from 21 February to 16 May 1939. The transcripts were published under the title, 'Foundations of Democracy: A Series of Debates' (New York 1939).

8. Smith and Taft, 'Foundations of Democracy', op. cit., 184-185.

9. *Ibid.*, 185.

10. *Ibid.*, 193.

11. *Ibid.*, 185.

12. *Ibid.*, 191.

13. Kirk and McClellan, op. cit., 35.

14. Robert A. Taft, *A Foreign Policy for Americans* (Garden City, NY 1951), 5.

15. Op. cit., 21.

16. *Ibid.*, 22.

17. The purpose of the Bricker Amendment was to restrict the power of the Executive branch to make treaties and agreements that might limit American sovereignty. On 25 February 1954, the Senate rejected Senator John W. Bricker's proposal by a vote of 50 to 42. The following day, Senator Walter F. George introduced a watered-down version of the Bricker Amendment, the so-called George Substitute. Under this proposal, an Executive agreement in the foreign policy field would be effective as an internal law only by an Act of Congress. On the crucial motion to send the proposed amendment to the states, the vote was 60 to 31, only one less than the necessary two-thirds majority.

18. Congressional Record, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, 5 January 1951, 55.

19. For Taft's charges about Roosevelt's secret diplomacy at Teheran and Yalta, see Congressional Record, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, 5 January 1951, 55. Taft's more general attack on Roosevelt's and Truman's diplomacy towards the Soviet Union at the Allied conferences was that 'At Yalta and Potsdam we recognised the right of the Russian Army to occupy the Balkans, Berlin and Vienna. We actually withdrew our troops from territory occupied in battle with Germany. . . . At Potsdam President Truman and General Marshall finally abandoned the principles of the Atlantic Charter.' See 'Taft on Foreign Affairs', campaign statement for the 1948 Presidential election, Taft Papers, Box 295.

20. Quoted from the letter by Taft to George F. Stanley, President of the Stanley Manufacturing Company, Ohio, 8 September 1944, printed as an Appendix to *A Foreign Policy for Americans*, op. cit.

21. See text of the speech, entered in Congressional Record, 77th Congress, 1st Session, 19 May 1941, A 2496. The opposition to Lend-Lease came not only from the conservative right wing. Norman Thomas, the Socialist Party leader, adopted a stance similar to that of Taft in arguing that entry into the war would lead to the destruction of American democracy. See W.L. Langer and S.E. Gleason, *The Undeclared War, 1940-1941* (Gloucester, Mass. 1968), 269.

22. Text cited in *A Foreign Policy for Americans*, op. cit., 31.

23. R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York 1979), 276.

24. See Taft quoted in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 18 April 1943, 'The Ball resolution calls for a kind of superstate with an international police force'.

25. Congressional Record, 79th Congress, 1st Session, 28 July 1945, 8154.

26. One of the clearest statements of his position was given in a radio address on the Drew Pearson Hour, 24 July 1949. Taft said, 'I would favour a Monroe Doctrine for Western Europe. But the Atlantic Pact goes much further. It obligates us to go to war if at any time during the next twenty years anyone makes an armed attack on any of the twelve nations. Under the Monroe Doctrine we could change our policy at any time. . . . Only Congress could declare a war in pursuance of the Doctrine. Under the new Pact the President can take us into war without Congress.' See transcript of the broadcast, Taft Papers, Box 697.

27. Congressional Record, 81st Congress, 1st Session, 11 July 1949, 9205.

28. *Ibid.*, 9206. Taft was also concerned that membership of NATO might increase the danger of war. He observed that 'if Russia sees itself ringed about gradually by so-called defensive arms from Norway and Denmark to Turkey and Greece, it may decide that war is inevitable and that it had better come before the arming is completed'. Taft Office Press Release, 20 July 1949, Taft Papers, Box 697.

29. *A Foreign Policy for Americans*, op. cit., 33. See also the report on Taft's speech to the Women's National Republican Club, *New York Journal*, 29 January 1952: 'In the decision on the Korean War, President Truman completely failed to consult Congress itself, although a life-and-death decision like that is the business of Congress alone.'

30. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Volume II, Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952* (New York 1956), 378-381.

31. See the text of the resolution given in B.J. Bernstein and A.J. Matusow, *The Truman Administration: A Documentary History* (New York 1966), 439.

32. The text of Taft's speech is reprinted in Bernstein and Matusow, op. cit., 441.

33. D.S. McClellan, *Dean Acheson: The State Department Years* (New York 1976), 281-282.

34. For a critical contemporary analysis of Taft's position, see the columnist August Heckscher's article, 'Where Does Taft Stand Today?' in *The Milwaukee Journal*, 5 April 1951. Heckscher argued that 'Senator Taft can hardly be looked to for leadership in the realm of foreign affairs. . . . By the test of his voting record he has been almost consistently short-sighted. . . . If he is not a traditional isolationist today, he is an isolationist of a new kind, not less dangerous than the old.'

35. Congressional Record, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, 5 January 1951, 59.

36. Congressional Record, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, 29 March 1951, 2988. There was also a persistent fear in Taft's outlook concerning the dangers of American economic over-commitment abroad. This view had important sources of support in the Mid-West. In a stridently pro-Taft editorial, on 12 June 1951, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* asserted: 'The fundamental fault of the New Deal foreign policy was that it made the desire to help the rest of the world the prime object of American diplomacy.' The editorial went on to criticize 'extending favours to foreign nations'.

37. *A Foreign Policy for Americans*, op. cit., 36. Later Taft modified his position over the 'troops-to-Europe' issue, accepting the 'maintenance of six divisions abroad and even some reasonable addition if at the crucial moment it seems that such addition would result in a completion of the European contribution'. Taft to Charles M. White, President of the Republic Steel Corporation, in a letter dated 29 October 1951. Taft Papers, Box 1099.

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