BERLIN IN January 1945 lay in ruins under a relentless day-and-night bombing. Whole blocks had collapsed in rubble, which burned and smoldered for days. The vast columned Chancellery was half destroyed, its concrete roof smashed through, its imperial halls seared by fire and explosion. To an undamaged wing of the Chancellery Hitler returned in mid-January from his command post in the west; from here, in a conference room with deep leather chairs and thick carpet, the Führer directed his dying battalions. During bombings he moved to a huge concrete shelter in the Chancellery garden.

By now his pale, puffy face, stooped shoulders, shuffling gait, and slack left arm and trembling hand made him look like an old man, but he had lost none of his fanaticism. There was an indescribable flickering glow in his eyes, a visitor noted; when crossed, he raised his fists and shouted his rage. But he still was talking strategy. By now his great counteroffensive to the west had failed. In the east, 180 Soviet divisions opened an attack on a vast front stretching from the Baltic to the Carpathians. The Führer's only remaining hope was that the unnatural coalition against him would crack, as the Bolsheviks tried to possess the Balkans and the Middle East, the Americans tried to take over British possessions, and the English tried to strengthen themselves in the Mediterranean. "Even now," he told his generals, "these States are at loggerheads, and he who, like a spider, sitting in the middle of his web, can watch developments, observes how these antagonisms grow stronger and stronger from hour to hour...."

Moscow was now far behind the front. People were flocking to ballet and concert halls. Almost every night hundreds of guns roared out their victory salutes; some evenings fireworks burst over Red Square for hours, lighting up the huge gold stars on the Kremlin towers. No longer did Stalin have to attend to the details of battle; the strategy was set for the capture of Germany. In response to a plea from Churchill, the Marshal stepped up preparations for a winter offensive that might take some of the pressure...
off the German lunge into the Ardennes. Despite bad weather the Red Army attacked, and Churchill thanked Stalin for his “thrilling message” reporting the offensive. Soon Stalin boasted in an order of the day that his winter attack had thwarted the German winter offensive in the west.

London, peppered for months by flying bombs, was still under fire from long-range rocket bases in Holland. The people were now in their sixth year of war. Churchill, after spending Christmas in Athens coping with the civil strife there, returned to London to confront the deepening cleavage between Russia and the West over Poland. A meeting with Stalin seemed more imperative than ever. It was clear that the Marshal was adamant against leaving his country, so Churchill and Roosevelt gloomily agreed on Yalta as a meeting place. The Prime Minister, elated when Roosevelt decided to go by sea to Malta and thence by air to the Crimea, cabled that he would be waiting on the quay. “No more let us falter. From Malta to Yalta. Let nobody alter!”

In Los Alamos the lights burned late in the laboratories; thousands of Oppenheimer’s scientists and technicians labored in their tiny sectors of the vast project. On the next to last day of 1944 Groves informed Marshall: “It is now reasonably certain that our operations plans should be based on the gun type bomb, which it is estimated, will produce the equivalent of a ten thousand ton TNT explosion. The first bomb, without previous full scale test which we do not believe will be necessary, should be ready about 1 August 1945. The second one should be ready by the end of the year and succeeding ones . . . at intervals thereafter . . . the 509th Composite Group, 20th Air Force has been organized and it is now undergoing training as well as assisting in essential tests . . .”. Stimson underscored the key words in presenting the report to Roosevelt within hours after Marshall received it.

Tokyo was ablaze during the first hours of January 1945 from the bombings of B-29’s that were now making regular runs from the Marianas. As the Emperor returned from family prayers he could smell smoke drifting across the gardens of the Imperial Palace. Only the day before he had sharply questioned Prime Minister Kuniaki Koiso about the setbacks on Leyte. What measures were being taken to retrieve the situation? Imperial Headquarters, unable to reinforce the outlying islands or pull troops back because of American air and naval attacks, began to prepare for a last-ditch stand in Japan. Air Forces were instructed to indoctrinate their pilots in the kamikaze spirit of death-dealing self-sacrifice.

A peace group was arising around the Emperor, but the Army was still in control of the war. The peace party feared that Communism might spread from North China to Japan if political chaos developed in the wake of military defeat. The Americans were insisting on unconditional surrender. What to do? The Emperor showed Prince Konoye a verse he had once written:

“Sublime is the moment
When the world is at peace
And the limitless deep
Lies bathed in the morning sun.”

“THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE A FRIEND. . . .”

In Washington the White House came to life as Franklin Roosevelt returned from Hyde Park and swung into the typically heavy January work load of the American President—the budget, the annual message to Congress on the state of the union, the legislative program, major appointments. He had also to prepare for his fourth inaugural—and make plans for his climactic meeting with Churchill and Stalin.

It was time, too, to gauge public attitudes toward the great international issues that were coming to a head. Cantril’s reports in January 1945 were worrisome. He had discovered, he informed the White House and the State Department, a significant decline since the previous June in public confidence that the President and other officials were successfully handling the nation’s interests abroad, though support personally for Roosevelt remained high. There had also been a decrease, he reported, in the appreciation of expediency and idealism. Without roots in any broad or long-range conception of self-interest or extensive knowledge, internationalist opinion had little intellectual basis and was hence prone to fickleness and skepticism as events occurred that did not fit into the framework of idealism. “With opinion uncrystallized and with people generally disinterested in the mechanics needed to achieve lasting peace, there is little doubt that they expect and desire strong leadership and would support the policies and mechanics the President felt necessary to achieve the ideals he has expressed—particularly if the reasons for proposed steps were made clear.”

Roosevelt had little time to ponder such implications in January
Just two weeks later, as its fighter escort circled overhead, the “Sacred Cow” touched down on the icy runway of the Soviet airport of Saki in the Crimea. Molotov, Stettinius, and Harriman climbed aboard to greet the President and his party. When Churchill landed in his plane a little later, Mike Reilly helped his boss into a jeep. With the Prime Minister plodding along at his side and a crowd of service cameramen walking backward as they shot their pictures, the President moved slowly in his jeep to a guard of honor. The soldiers stood frozen to attention, their commander holding his sword in front of him like a great icicle. The band played the “Star-Spangled Banner,” “God Save the King,” and the “Internationale.”

To Churchill’s physician the President looked old and thin and shrunken in his big cape as he stared at the guard, his face drawn and his mouth open. But once he was transferred to a limousine, Roosevelt watched everything with lively interest—the endless line of guards, many of them young girls with Tommy guns; the gutted buildings and burned-out tanks; and later the snow-covered mountains through which the caravan threaded its way before descending to the coast of the Black Sea. Soon the President was installed in Livadia Palace, a fifty-room summer place of the czars overlooking gardens filled with cypress, cedar, and yew trees.

From the terrace of the palace the President could look north to a striking panorama of mountains overlooking the shore line. One of these mountains resembled a huge bear hunched over with its mouth in the sea. A Crimian legend had it that this was the king of the bears and that years ago a beautiful young girl had been abandoned on the shore and had been adopted by the king and brought up by the bears. Then a prince had sailed from across the sea and had fallen in love with the girl and had taken her away drunk and drunk . . . .

Many of his countrymen felt, when Roosevelt arrived in Yalta early in February 1945, that the Russian bear was gorging itself on neighboring lands and waters in a ferocious quest for security and power. The President shared this fear. He did not arrive in Yalta with any misapprehension of the appetite or the ambitions of the bear. He made the trip as a supreme act of faith in his own capacity to evoke the best in a friend and ally, to reach agreement on immediate issues, to build a new world order that would assign the old ways of international relations—spheres of influence and balances of power and war itself—to the scrap heap.

“I am inclined to think that at the meeting with Marshal Stalin and the Prime Minister I can put things on a somewhat higher level than they have been for the past two or three months,” he had written to Harold Laski a few days before leaving.

He was staking everything on the face-to-face encounter with Stalin; he knew that the trip itself would be an ordeal. He had begged the Marshal to meet with him in Scotland, and later in Malta or Athens or Cyprus or anywhere else in the quiet Mediterranean, but Stalin pleaded illness this time and was as obdurate as ever about leaving his homeland. After crossing the Atlantic on the *Quincy*, he had spent a day at Malta, where he lunched with Churchill, Eden, and Stettinius and conferred with the Joint Chiefs and the Combined Chiefs, and then had flown overnight to Saki. All the reports of Yalta were unfavorable—the buildings had been left empty of everything but lice, the nearest airfield was more than an hour away, Allied communications ships could not go there because of mines and had to be stationed in Sevastopol—but nothing could deflect Roosevelt from his aim to meet with Stalin.

The time seemed ripe for great achievements around the peace table, and so did the company that gathered at Yalta. Victory over Germany was clearly in sight. By the end of January the Russians had invested Budapest, captured Warsaw, overrun East Prussia, and fanned out toward Stettin, Danzig, and the lower reaches of the Oder; the Allies had recovered from the Battle of the Bulge and were mobilizing for a great push eastward, meanwhile maintaining heavy air attacks despite bad weather. In the Far East American troops were closing in on Manila. To Yalta had come the politicians who had forged the grand coalition and the soldiers who were executing the destruction of Nazi Germany. In Roosevelt’s party were the old hands, including Hopkins, Leahy, and Marshall, and also some faces new to Big Three conferences—Stettinius, Byrnes, the State Department’s Alger Hiss, a specialist in international organization, Admiral Land, General Somervell, and even Boss Ed Flynn of the Bronx. With Churchill were Eden and Clark Kerr, Britain’s Ambassador to Russia, and the usual big assemblage of soldiers and sailors, and the gifted permanent officials Sir Alexander Cadogan and Sir Edward Bridges. With Stalin were Molotov, Vishainsky, Maisky, and Gromyko.

The discussions would range across the globe, remake a good part of the map, and reshape the structure of world power. But Roosevelt, for all his wide interests and daring intelligence, was focusing on three questions on the eve of Yalta: Poland, Soviet participation in the Pacific war, and the new United Nations organization. Each of these in turn would embody the harshest choices and dilemmas for his statecraft: the relation of foreign
policy to domestic politics, of immediate military needs to long-time political considerations, of opportunistic compromise to lofty hopes for the postwar comity of nations.

For Roosevelt the new international organization was by far the most important issue on the Yalta conference table. There was no question about an organization being established; the question was how much power it would have and how that power would be organized. Early in December Roosevelt had urged on Stalin that the great powers exercise moral leadership by agreeing that on procedural matters all parties to a dispute should abstain from voting, but Stalin had flatly insisted on the principle of great-power unanimity. Harriman cabled an explanation of why the Soviets were demanding the right to veto consideration by the proposed council of all matters, even peaceful procedures. The main reason, he said, was simply their suspicion of other nations.

It was this kind of pervasive suspicion the President was determined to overcome in private, face-to-face meetings with the Soviet leaders. Stalin and Molotov had hardly arrived at Livadia Palace in their big black Packard on the opening day of the conference, February 4, and sat down in the former Czar's dark-paneled study when the President was telling them how struck he was by the extent of German destruction in the Crimea. He was more bloodthirsty toward the Germans than he had been a year ago, he said, and he hoped that the Marshal would again propose a toast to the execution of 50,000 officers of the German Army. Everyone was more bloodthirsty than a year ago, Stalin said. After discussing military developments, Roosevelt asked about Stalin's meeting with de Gaulle; Stalin seemed mainly impressed by France's military weakness. Roosevelt told his old yarn about how de Gaulle had compared himself to Joan of Arc and Clemenceau.

He would now tell the Marshal something indiscreet, the President went on, since he would not wish to say it in front of the Prime Minister, namely that the British for two years had had the idea of artificially building up France into a strong power that could maintain troops on the eastern border to hold the line long enough for Britain to assemble an army. The British were a peculiar people, he said, and wished to have their cake and eat it. Stalin did not disagree. The mildly anti-British exchanges must have seemed to Roosevelt an auspicious start to his effort to establish personal rapport with Stalin.

Roosevelt and the two Russians proceeded directly to the first plenary meeting, which was devoted wholly to a military review by the generals and admirals. At a small dinner given by the President in the evening, Stalin was in good humor, as was Churchill, who even toasted the proletarian masses of the world.

But as Stalin drank his vodka, covertly mixing it with water, and rose to dozens of toasts, he spoke in favor of great-power supremacy so vehemently that to Eden his attitude seemed grim, almost sinister. Nor was the Marshal to be disarmed by pleasantries. When Roosevelt, at the height of the conviviality, mentioned to him that he and Churchill called him Uncle Joe, Stalin flared up in anger. Molotov smoothed things over. Later, after Roosevelt and Stalin left, the others discussed the unanimity problem in the new world organization. Churchill was inclining to the Russian view, he said, and promptly fell into a stiff argument with Eden, who feared the reaction of the smaller nations.

It was an ill-boding start for Roosevelt's supreme aim at Yalta. To make things worse, the Soviet leaders were still requesting sixteen votes in the proposed Assembly. When Stettinius presented the detailed American proposals for the new organization at the third plenary session, Stalin was at his most surly and suspicious. He baited Churchill over the possibility that Egypt in the Assembly might demand the return of the Suez Canal. He implied broadly that the Anglo-Americans were ganging up on him. He said that his colleagues in Moscow could not forget how at the instigation of the French and British the League of Nations during the war with Finland had expelled the Soviet Union and isolated it and crusaded against it. Roosevelt sat through all this patiently, intervening only to insist that Big Three unity was the keystone to an international system.

The next day Molotov suddenly shifted and declared Roosevelt's voting proposals acceptable. Then almost in the same breath he mentioned the request at Dumbarton Oaks for sixteen seats for the Soviet republics. He would now be satisfied with the admission of three or even two of the republics—Ukrainian, White Russian, and Lithuanian. They had borne the greatest sacrifices of the war.

Even while expressing his pleasure at the shift, Roosevelt recognized the dilemma he faced. "This is not so good!" he wrote on a chit to Stettinius. He had come to Yalta planning to reject the sixteen-seat request, a proposal that would offend both the idealists and the cynics at home. Now the Russians were reducing this to two extra votes, and accepting his voting plan for the world organization. It was the moment for a gesture on his part, but he feared accepting the two extra votes. For a while he kept talking in order to delay a showdown, until Hopkins noticed Stalin's impatience—or was it annoyance?—at Roosevelt's failure to reciprocate.

During the next twenty-four hours Roosevelt was under heavy pressure from outside—and perhaps from inside himself—to endorse the two extra seats for the Soviet Union. The British, with an eye to their own empire and dominions, were siding with the Russians.
Stettinius seemed sympathetic to the idea. Clearly any further delay or division might imperil the whole dream of a United Nations. If he moved now he might get the whole conference held by late April in the United States. At the next plenary meeting he endorsed the two extra votes, but only on the understanding that later the United Nations conference itself would grant the votes, with Big Three support.

Roosevelt's concession disturbed Byrnes and Leahy. The war mobilizer reminded his chief how the opponents of the League of Nations had contended that London, because of the dominions, would have five votes in the League Assembly to Washington's one. He and Flynn later persuaded the President to request British and Russian support for an extra two votes for the United States if needed. Churchill and Stalin both said they would agree to the request if made.

The three leaders were in a mood of self-congratulation when they dined at Stalin's Yusupov Palace a few hours after the initial agreement on extra seats. Stalin toasted Churchill as the bravest governmental figure in the world, as the leader of a nation that had stood alone against Germany at a time when the rest of the world was falling flat on its face before Hitler. Churchill saluted Stalin as the leader of the nation that had broken the back of the German war machine. Stalin then toasted Roosevelt as a man whose country had not been seriously threatened but who had perhaps a better concept of national interest than any other leader, especially in supplying war aid. Roosevelt, in replying, said he felt the atmosphere of the dinner was that of a family, as were the relations among the three countries.

Stalin was in an expansive, almost philosophical, mood. He was talking too much, like an old man, he said. "But I want to drink to our alliance." It must not lose its character of intimacy and frankness.

"In an alliance the allies should not deceive each other," Stalin continued. "Perhaps that is naive? Experienced diplomats may say, 'Why should I not deceive my ally?' But I as a naive man think it best not to deceive my ally even if he is a fool. Possibly our alliance is so firm just because we do not deceive each other; or is it because it is not easy to deceive each other . . . ?

The bleak specter of Poland hung over the conference even as the men of Yalta celebrated the brave new world they were building. It had long been agreed by the Big Three that the war-racked nation would be picked up like a carpetbag and set down a few hundred miles to the west, satisfying Russia's appetite, penalizing Germany's, and, it was hoped, taming Poland's. The product of cynical partition and hopeful re-creation, of Realpolitik and romanticism, Poland epitomized the ancient ways of princes even as it roiled and divided the three leaders.

Roosevelt was under no illusion about Soviet plans for Poland. Stalin had recognized the Lublin Poles in the face of the President's and the Prime Minister's most urgent pleas for delay. As the conference met, the Red Army was completing Poland's liberation—and occupation. The question was how much representation for non-Communist Polish elements could be extracted from a nation that controlled every precinct, viewed liberals and conservatives as bourgeois exploiters, if not fascists, and was absolutely determined to protect the Red Army's rear and its own future frontiers.

Roosevelt decided to be relatively flexible about Poland's new borders—which in any event had been essentially determined by the Red Army's advance and by understandings at Teheran and elsewhere—but to insist on a democratic, independent, and viable Polish government.

"I should like to bring up Poland," Roosevelt said at the third plenary meeting. "I come from a great distance and therefore have the advantage of a more distant point of view of the problem. There are six or seven million Poles in the United States." As he had said at Teheran, he went on, in general he favored the
Curzon Line. "Most Poles, like the Chinese, want to save face."

"Who will save face," Stalin interrupted, "the Poles in Poland
or the émigré Poles?"

"The Poles would like East Prussia and part of Germany," Roosevelt went on. "It would make it easier for me at home if the
Soviet Government could give something to Poland." He hoped
that Marshal Stalin could make a gesture and give Poland Lwów
and the adjacent oil lands. Stalin was silent.

"But the most important matter is that of a permanent govern­
ment for Poland. Opinion in the United States is against recogni­
tion of the Lublin government on the ground that it represents a
small portion of the Polish people. What people want is the crea­
tion of a government of national unity to settle their internal
differences. A government which would represent all five major
parties"—Roosevelt named them—"is what is wanted. It may interest
Marshal Stalin that I do not know any of the London or of the
Lublin government. Mikolajczyk came to Washington and I was
greatly impressed by him. I felt that he was an honest man . . . ."

Churchill backed the President. "I have made repeated declara­
tions in Parliament in support of the Soviet claims to the Curzon
line, that is to say, leaving Lwów with Soviet Russia. I have been
much criticized and so has Mr. Eden by the party which I represent.
But I have always considered that after all Russia has suffered in
fighting Germany and after all her efforts in liberating Poland her
claim is founded not on force but on right. In that position I
abide. But of course if the mighty power, the Soviet Union, made
a gesture of magnanimity to a much weaker power and made the
gesture suggested by the President we would heartily acclaim such action.

"However," he continued, "I am more interested in the question
of Poland's sovereign independence and freedom than in particular
frontier lines. I want the Poles to have a home in Europe and to
be free to live their own lives there. . . . This is what is dear to
the hearts of the nation of Britain. This is what we went to war
against Germany for—that Poland should be free and sovereign.
Everyone here knows . . . that it nearly cost us our life as a nation."
He went on to plead for the establishment at the conference of a
new interim government of Poland pending free elections. "His
Majesty's Government cordially support the President's suggestion
and present the question to our Russian allies."

Stalin asked for a ten-minute intermission. He came back well
primed.

"The Prime Minister has said that for Great Britain the question
of Poland is a question of honor. For Russia it is not only a ques­
tion of honor but of security . . . During the last thirty years our
German enemy has passed through this corridor twice. This is be­
cause Poland was weak. It is in the Russian interest as well as that
of Poland that Poland be strong and powerful and in a position in
her own and in our interests to shut the corridor by her own forces.
The corridor cannot be mechanically shut from outside by Russia.
It could be shut from inside only by Poland. It is necessary that
Poland be free, independent and powerful . . . ." Then Stalin turned
to the Curzon Line and Churchill's appeal for modifications.

"The Prime Minister thinks we should make a gesture of mag­
nanimity. But I must remind you that the Curzon line was invent­
ed not by Russia but by foreigners . . . by Curzon, Clemenceau and
the Americans in 1918-1919. Russia was not invited and did not
participate . . . Lenin opposed it." Stalin was speaking with more
and more heat. "Some want us to be less Russian than Curzon and
Clemenceau. What will the Russians say at Moscow, and the
Ukrainians? They will say that Stalin and Molotov are far less de­
defenders of Russia than Curzon and Clemenceau. I cannot take such
a position and return to Moscow."

By now Stalin was standing. "I prefer that the war continue a
little longer and give Poland compensation in the west at the ex­
 pense of Germany." As for the government, the Prime Minister
had said that he wanted to create a Polish government here. "I am
afraid that was a slip of the tongue. Without the participation of
Poles we can create no Polish government. They all say that I am
da dictator but I have enough democratic feeling not to set up a
Polish government without Poles." As a military man he wanted
peace and quiet in the wake of the Red Army. The Lublin govern­
ment could maintain order, while the agents of the London gov­
ernment had already killed 212 Russian soldiers.

"The military must have peace and quiet. The military will sup­
port such a government and I cannot do otherwise. Such is the
situation."

There was a pause, and Roosevelt suggested adjournment. Dur­
ing the next three days the President and the Prime Minister and
their foreign secretaries waged a tough and concerted campaign to
win concessions from the Russians on Polish independence. The
President informed Stalin bluntly that he would not recognize the
Lublin government "as now composed" and that if the three leaders
could not agree on Poland they "would lose the confidence of
the world." Churchill told him that the Lublin group did not represent
even one-third of the people and he feared arrests and deportations
of underground leaders. He contended that 150,000 men of the
Polish Army on the Italian and Western fronts would feel betrayed
if the London government was brushed aside. He noted acidly that in Egypt, "for example," whatever government held an election won the election. To which Stalin replied that Egyptian politicians spent their time buying each other off, but this could not happen in Poland because of the high rate of literacy there.

Step by step Roosevelt and Churchill exacted paper concessions from the Russians: that the Lublin government be "reorganized on a broader democratic basis" with the inclusion of democratic leaders from within Poland and without; that free and unfettered elections be held soon—perhaps within a month—on the basis of open suffrage and secret ballot; that leaders such as Mikołajczyk could take part in them. What was really at stake, however, was not the general formula but how much opportunity Washington and London would have in fact to influence the reorganization of the government and monitor the conduct of the elections. Even on this score Stalin conceded that Harriman and Kerr could consult with Lublin and non-Lublin leaders in Moscow, but the manner of holding and policing the elections was obscure.

"Mr. President," said Leahy, when he saw the compromise formula, "this is so elastic that the Russians can stretch it all the way from Yalta to Washington without even technically breaking it."

"I know, Bill—I know it. But it's the best I can do for Poland at this time."

The best he could do . . . Doubtless Roosevelt knew already that the Polish compromise would be the most criticized part of the Yalta agreement, but he could hardly have sensed that it would be the heart of the later charges of betrayal, "sellout," and near-treason. If he had known this, though, he would probably have taken the same basic position. He had reached the limit of his bargaining power at Yalta. His position resulted not from naïveté, ignorance, illness, or perfidy, but from his acceptance of the facts: Russia occupied Poland. Russia distrusted its Western allies. Russia had a million men who could fight Japan. Russia could sabotage the new peace organization. And Russia was absolutely determined about Poland and always had been. If the Big Three broke up at Yalta, the President knew, he would lose the great opportunities that lay ahead—for him to win Soviet co-operation by his personal diplomacy and friendliness, and for the United Nations to draw Russia over the years into the comity of nations.

Roosevelt also knew that Poland was a crucial issue not only in itself but also as a bellwether of Communist ambitions in eastern Europe. Fearing the erosion of Western influence, he had taken the lead in drawing up a proposed Declaration on Liberated Europe upholding, on the principles of the Atlantic Charter, "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live," pledging Big Three assistance in holding free elections, and providing that the three governments would establish joint machinery when necessary to carry out these aims. The declaration, which evoked little British or Soviet opposition, was much on Roosevelt's mind as Polish elections were being discussed. Poland, he said, would be the first application of the declaration.

"I want this election in Poland to be the first one beyond question," he said. "It should be like Caesar's wife. I did not know her but they say she was pure."

"They said that about her," Stalin remarked, "but in fact she had her sins."

ASIA: THE SECOND SECOND FRONT

The President seemed so frail, his face so thin and transparent, at Yalta that his friends watched him narrowly for any signs of decline. Eden thought him vague and loose the first evening, and Lord Moran wrote him off as a dying man. Yet the Americans who worked with him closely at the conference—Byrnes, Stettinius, Leahy, Harriman—felt that he handled matters effectively and even skillfully. The main formal sessions came late in the afternoon, a time of day when Roosevelt's strength had typically been at low ebb during the past year, but he conducted himself well in the discussions, even on technical matters on which he was not well briefed, and even though he had the added burden of presiding. He did not speak out as eloquently as Churchill or as bluntly or cogently as Stalin, but he was generally quick, alert, articulate, and even witty. When Churchill, in defending his imperial stand, added that he had sent his arguments to Wendell Willkie, the President shot back, "Was that what killed him?"

Nor was Roosevelt ill during these February days in the Crimea, in the sense of the later charge of the "sick man at Yalta." He worked hard through the day, even though he could not always take his afternoon rest. A cough kept him awake intermittently during the first few nights, but he complained of no cardiac or other pain, and Bruenn found his lungs clear and his heart and blood pressure unchanged. There were no electrocardiographic changes. Bruenn did become concerned, however, at what seemed to be a whipsawing of the President by the English; it seemed that Eden would take him on in the morning, and Churchill, who would sleep until noon, would take over in the afternoon. The evening banquets lasted until late at night. On February 8, after an especially difficult discussion of the Polish problem, his color was gray, and
for the first time his blood pressure showed *pulsus alternans*. Although his lungs and heart were good, Bruenn insisted on no visitors until noon and more rest. Within two days his appetite was excellent and the *pulsus alternans* had disappeared.

Eden conceded later that Roosevelt's seeming ill-health did not alter his judgment. He marveled, indeed, that the President not only kept up with Churchill in the round of formal and informal conferences, but also found time to conduct a whole separate enterprise at Yalta—negotiations with Stalin over the Far East.

It was not until the fifth day that the subject of Soviet entrance into the Pacific war came up between Roosevelt and Stalin. They were meeting privately except for Harriman, Molotov, and the interpreters. Churchill and Eden were not there, nor the American military. Stalin said that he would like to discuss the political conditions under which the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan. He added that he already had discussed the matter with Harriman.

Roosevelt remembered only too well that discussion of mid-December, for Harriman had relayed it to him with some urgency. Stalin had gone into the room next to his office in the Kremlin, Harriman reported, and brought out a map. The Marshal had said that the Kurile Islands and lower Sakhalin should be returned to Russia in order to protect the approaches to Vladivostok. He had drawn a line around the southern part of the Liaotung Peninsula, including Port Arthur and Dairen, and stated that the Soviets wished again to lease these ports and the adjacent area. The Marshal had added that he wished to lease the Chinese-Eastern Railway running from Dairen to Harbin and beyond but—in answer to a pointed question of Harriman's—he averred he had no intention to impair the sovereignty of China in Manchuria.

Since then the whole matter had been anxiously discussed by Roosevelt and a small group of advisers. Churchill was leaving the matter largely in the President's hands. All agreed that the matter must be settled at Yalta.

There would be no difficulty whatsoever, the President said now, in regard to the southern half of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands going to Russia at the end of the war. As for a warm-water port in the Far East, the Marshal would recall that they had discussed the matter at Teheran, and that he, the President, had suggested that Russia be given the use of a warm-water port at the end of the south Manchurian railroad. He had not yet had an opportunity to discuss the matter with the Generalissimo and hence could not speak for China. The Russians could obtain the use of the port either by outright leasing from the Chinese or by Dairen being made a free port under some kind of international commission; he preferred the latter because of the relation to the question of Hong Kong. He hoped that the British would give Hong Kong back to China and that it would then become an internationalized free port. Churchill, he added, would have strong objections to that.

Stalin then raised the question of Soviet use of the Manchurian railways. He described the extensive network the czars had used. Roosevelt said that, again, he had not talked with Chiang but the alternatives were to lease under direct Soviet operation or to set up a commission composed of one Chinese and one Russian. Stalin stated that if his conditions were not met it would be difficult for him and Molotov to explain to the Soviet people why Russia was fighting Japan, a nation that, unlike Germany, had not threatened the very existence of the Soviet Union. But if the political conditions were met the people would understand. Stalin did not register the infinite satisfaction he must have felt in turning the Anglo-Americans' favorite argument—public opinion—back upon them.

This easy, almost casual sparring between Roosevelt and Stalin at once reflected and concealed felt national interests and long-run volcanic forces. The President and his military chiefs had long agreed that the invasion of Japan would be immensely costly and that Soviet intervention on the Asiatic mainland was imperative. Even with Russian participation, the military planners estimated, the war in the Pacific would last eighteen months after Germany surrendered; without Russian aid the war might last indefinitely, with unbearable losses. It was also understood that the Red Army would take part once it had the chance to deploy troops to the east; Stalin had made this clear—even volunteered it—over and over again. The Russians' eagerness to fight Japan in order to protect their postwar interests was so clear, and their promises so definite, that some, including Eden, argued that Roosevelt need make no concessions to Stalin; Moscow would make war anyway.

But Stalin—and probably Roosevelt, too—knew that the fact of Soviet participation was not the vital point. It was the timing and strength of the intervention that were crucial. And here both leaders acted against a background of the harshest kind of *Realpolitik*. Doubtless Stalin knew his lesson better than Roosevelt did because he had learned it under the most excruciating circumstances. In 1939, after years of fearing a coalition of capitalist and fascist nations against Russia, he had cut the Gordian knot—and fractured his own ideological credibility—by the pact with Hitler on Poland. But hardly had the deal been concluded when the Kremlin strategists went through agonies of suspense. What if Hitler inveigled Russia into claiming its half of Poland prematurely and they got involved in fighting Poles before the Poles were ready
and left the Russians to fight all the Poles and even France and Britain? Then when the Wehrmacht came crashing through the Polish defenses, Stalin's fears were transmuted into a nightmare. What if the advancing Nazis did not stop at the agreed-on line—or unthinkably—at the Polish-Soviet border?

Things had turned out all right—Hitler was a man of honor, at least among thieves—and the Kremlin felt it had won its gamble when the Germans ended the Polish campaign locked in combat with Britain and France. But fears rose again in Moscow when the Nazis overcame France. Would the West now make a separate peace with Hitler at the expense of Russia? Britain did not—but worse was to come. The German attack on Russia robbed Stalin of his scales-tipping power. After all his frantic efforts he was at the mercy of the West, which could time its re-entry onto the Continent for its own advantage, not Russia's. This the Anglo-Americans did.

Now—at Yalta—the tables were turned. The Marshal had his allies just where they had had him for three long years. He could intervene whenever he wished—and his timing would turn on political as well as military factors.

So the man who faced Roosevelt across the table in Livadia Palace was schooled in the art of offering and delaying assistance. The President, too, was quite aware of the application of this art to the Pacific, if only because his military chiefs were. They stressed the need for Russia to attack in Manchuria at least three months before the planned invasion of Kyushu; they also saw the Soviet advantage in waiting to attack the Japanese until American troops invaded Kyushu and forced Tokyo to pull troops off the Asiatic mainland. It was the strategy of the European front stood on its head. It was the second second front.

Casting its shadow across these calculations was the two-headed giant China. Despite his deepening disappointment over Chiang's efforts, the President clung to his long-term hopes for a free, democratic, and friendly China. He wanted to win Moscow's support for Chungking and to discourage Russian intervention in China's affairs. To reach his twin goals of Japan's defeat and China's survival, Roosevelt had to induce Stalin to do things that the Marshal had no overpowering desire to do—to join in the war against Japan at a time that would be more advantageous for his allies than for himself, and to support a "bourgeois" regime that was at odds with his ideological comrades in Yenan.

Clearly Stalin held by far the stronger hand. Roosevelt's best cards were that he could legitimize the Marshal's demand for Pacific real estate and Manchurian railways and ports and that he was the most likely of the Big Three to induce Chiang to go along. But to do the latter he had to gain Soviet backing for Chiang.

Roosevelt was disturbed by Stalin's ambitions in Manchuria. Toward the end of the conference he had Harriman ask Stalin and Molotov to agree that Port Arthur and Dairen be free ports and that the Manchurian railroad be operated by a joint Chinese-Soviet commission. Stalin did so, except that he insisted Port Arthur must be a naval base and had to be leased. He granted that Chiang's concurrence was necessary—he preferred that Roosevelt ask Chiang for it—but demanded in return that the Generalissimo agree to the status quo in Manchuria. To all this Roosevelt agreed—and also to the need for secrecy. The matter of informing Chiang was postponed on the ground that no secret was safe in Chungking—and Stalin did not want Tokyo to get wind of his plan and then strike the first blow. Above all, he did not want his careful timing to be spoiled.

The Russians did not ask for as much at Yalta as their power in Asia would have enabled them to gain on their own. Churchill made no objection to the deal when Stalin talked to him near the end of the conference. Eden objected to it because of the secrecy of the whole thing, but the Prime Minister overrode his Foreign Secretary for the reason that British authority in the Far East would suffer if they were not signatories to the agreement.

So by the time of their final dinner meeting at Yalta, on February 10, 1945, the Big Three seemed in broad agreement. Churchill happily presided over the affair at his villa, the reception hall of which had been closely searched and locked by Red Army soldiers before Stalin arrived. The Prime Minister offered a toast to the King, the President, and the President of the Supreme Soviet. In his reply Roosevelt spoke of the time in 1933 when his wife had gone to a country town to open a school. On a classroom wall there had been a map with a great blank space for the Soviet Union—and the teacher had told the First Lady that it was forbidden to speak of this place. He had then decided to open negotiations to establish diplomatic relations with Moscow, the President said. After more toasts he told another story that illustrated how hard it was to have any prejudices, racial, religious, or other, if you really knew people. Stalin said this was very true. Churchill and Stalin discussed British politics; the Marshal thought his friend would win the next election because Labour could not form a government and Churchill was more to the left than the socialists anyway. Churchill remarked that Stalin had a much easier political task, since he had only one party to deal with; the Marshal agreed with this. Switching subjects, Stalin said that the Jewish problem was a difficult one; he had tried to establish a national home for...
the Jews in an agricultural area but they had stayed there only two or three years and then scattered to the cities.

The President said that he was a Zionist and asked if Stalin was one. Stalin said he was one in principle but there were difficulties.

At this point Zion seemed to be on Roosevelt's mind. When Stalin walked over to him at the dinner to ask if he could stay longer at the conference, Roosevelt said that he had three kings waiting for him. The President was willing to stay longer but he was eager to get through the tedium of official drafting of communiqués and agreements and to try his hand at personal diplomacy with the three monarchs, Farouk, of Egypt, Ibn Saud, of Saudi Arabia, and Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia. While the three foreign ministers wrestled with the final conference protocol, Roosevelt motored to Sevastopol, touring the battlefield of Balaklava on the way, stayed overnight on the conference communications ship, and then flew to an Egyptian airfield near Ismailia and boarded the Quincy, anchored in Bitter Lake.

To Hopkins what followed seemed a lot of horseplay, and much of it was. The Commander in Chief donned a huge black cape and seated himself on the forward gun deck to receive his royal visitors. Young Farouk came aboard in his admiral's uniform; Roosevelt urged him to raise more long-staple cotton and presented him with a twin-motored transport. Selassie, a dignified small man in a huge army coat and cap, discussed the disposition of Italian possessions in North Africa with the President; he received four command and reconnaissance cars. The whole affair seemed to reach a peak of peacockery when Ibn Saud hove to in full regalia on the deck of an American destroyer, which had picked him up and seated himself on the forward gun deck to receive his royal possessions in North Africa with the President; he received four command and reconnaissance cars. The whole affair seemed to reach a peak of peacockery when Ibn Saud hove to in full regalia on the deck of an American destroyer, which had picked him up and decide to fly home to avoid the stormy Greek situation, came aboard with his daughter Sarah and son, Randolph, for a family lunch with Roosevelt, Anna, Hopkins, and Winant. To Churchill, the President seemed placid and frail, with a slender contact with life. Roosevelt had admitted in a note to his wife earlier that he was exhausted "but really all right." And now, en route to Algiers, he wrote to "Dearest Babs":

"Headed in the right direction—homeward!"

"All well, but still need a little sleep.

"A fantastic week. King of Egypt, ditto of Arabia and the Emperor of Ethiopia! Anna is fine and at the moment is ashore in Algiers. Give John and Johnnie my love. I hope to come to Washington when you say you are going to be there—one of those 8 days."

"Devotedly"

"FDR."

Roosevelt and Hopkins had left Yalta in a mood of satisfaction and optimism, and the heady alliance with the potentates did not dim the euphoria. But as the Quincy steamed westward through the Mediterranean the mood changed. Pa Watson had been hospitalized by the ship's surgeon on leaving the Crimea, and inexplicably did not improve. Roosevelt had invited de Gaulle to meet him in Algiers, and the General huffily declined. Hopkins was ailing on arrival in Algiers and decided to fly home to avoid the long sea trip. Roosevelt was annoyed because he had wanted Hopkins to help him with his report on Yalta during the return voyage. Luckily he had already summoned Rosenman to meet him at Algiers for the trip.

Two days out of Algiers Pa Watson died of acute congestive heart failure and a cerebral hemorrhage. The President seemed unusually depressed, and exhausted. For days Rosenman could not get him to work on his report to Congress and the people. He would stay in bed most of the morning reading books he had brought with him and looking over documents. After lunch in his cabin he sat with Anna on the top deck in the sun, reading or just smoking and staring off into space. He seemed to show some of his old-time gaiety and animation only at cocktail time and at dinner.
After gliding through semitropical seas the *Quincy* ran into rough weather between Bermuda and the Chesapeake capes. It put into Newport News on February 27, 1945, and the President went directly to the White House. Adolf Berle, who had taken a rather hard line toward the Russians, went around to see him. Roosevelt threw his hands up and said:

“I didn’t say it was good, Adolf, I said it was the best I could do.”