THE SECRETARY OF STATE ABROAD

By HENRY M. WRISTON

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THERE is a general impression that the Secretary of State travels too much. During three and a half years in office Mr. Dulles has gone a distance about equal to 11 times around the earth at the equator. He has visited 38 countries, several of them more than once.

Most of the comments about these relatively well-known facts tend to treat the travels of the Secretary as unique, something of a personal idiosyncrasy. Nothing could be further from the facts. It is indubitable that the Secretary likes his job, including the travel. Perhaps one should say especially the travel. Yet, despite his overpublicized totals he has not been absent as large a percentage of the time as some of his predecessors. James F. Byrnes was away from his desk about 62 percent of his year and a half in office; George C. Marshall had an "acting secretary" in his stead over 47 percent of his two-year tenure. Dean Acheson's record was close to 25 percent; Hull's was over 22 percent and Stettinius's was over 67 percent. Mr. Dulles has been represented by a substitute approximately 36 percent of his time as Secretary. It is clear from these figures that a new pattern of Secretarial conduct emerged before the present incumbent took office. The development is sufficiently important to warrant an inquiry into the underlying reasons and an evaluation of the consequences.¹

Until this century the Secretary was absent only when ill or vacationing. If he engaged in negotiations abroad, he resigned, as John W. Foster did when he went to Paris to present the case of the United States in the Bering Sea controversy and as James

¹The statistics are not comparable in all respects. In some instances the total represents chiefly long international meetings during a short term of office (as Secretary Stettinius's service at Yalta and San Francisco); in others the dominant pattern has been frequent brief trips.
R. Day did early in the McKinley administration to head the delegation in Paris to make peace with Spain.

The Pan American conferences were the first influence tending to a different pattern. James G. Blaine convened the first such meeting in Washington in 1889. Latin nations often sent their foreign ministers; it seemed desirable, in courtesy, for the Secretary of State to attend when the conferences were held outside this country. Nevertheless, it was not until 1906 that a Secretary of State did so. Elihu Root delivered an address to the third conference in Rio, but did not participate in negotiations. The conference in Montevideo in 1933 was, according to Cordell Hull's "Memoirs," "the first time that an American Secretary of State had ever headed a delegation to a Pan American Conference," and he was active in negotiations; at Rio in December 1936 Hull proposed his "Eight Pillars of Peace." He also took a leading rôle at Lima in 1938 and at Havana in 1940.

The Pan American conferences also stimulated "good will" trips. Secretary Root initiated this practice as well. To visit the American Republics he left the Department at the end of June and did not return until October 1906. Philander C. Knox made a "good will" tour of the Caribbean. Charles E. Hughes attended the centennial celebration of Brazilian independence, and Bainbridge Colby went to Brazil and Uruguay in December 1920.

War meetings were the second type of conference to draw Secretaries of State abroad. Robert Lansing went with President Wilson to Paris but did not resign as Secretary despite the length of his stay. Secretaries Hull, Stettinius and Byrnes all accompanied the President abroad. Secretary Hull also attended the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Moscow in 1943, and Mr. Byrnes was in Paris for a meeting of foreign ministers when the famous Wallace speech was delivered.

Wilson had ushered in an era of personal diplomacy. The pattern was suspended during the Harding and Coolidge administrations, but there was a partial return by President Hoover. On the initiative of Secretary Stimson, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald came to confer with President Hoover on the limitation of naval armaments. This was, perhaps, the first peacetime negotiation between heads of state in which a President participated. The practice is now so fully accepted as normal that there was impatience, especially abroad, with the obvious reluctance of President Eisenhower to meet "at the summit," and even more
at the strict limitations which he set upon the subject matter and the time he was willing to devote to the meeting.

Mr. Stimson attended the London Conference on Naval Limitation in 1930, and returned to Europe the following year to explore the possibilities of a reduction of land armaments, visiting Rome, Paris, Berlin and London. At a subsequent conference in which Hugh Gibson was head of the delegation, Secretary Stimson went in person to stimulate action when matters did not progress to his satisfaction. Cordell Hull went to the London Economic Conference as “head” of our delegation, but found Assistant Secretary Moley in easier and more frequent communication with the President. Mr. Roosevelt’s habit of bypassing the heads of departments kept Hull from going abroad with him upon some occasions, the most conspicuous instance being the second Quebec Conference, in 1944, when the President was accompanied by Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury. Nevertheless, by the time Hull resigned late in 1944, the pattern of Secretarial diplomacy was fairly well set.

Four other factors considerably broadened early precedents. The liquidation of peace conference business after the First World War was left in the hands of a Council of Ambassadors; by contrast, in 1945 matters were referred to a Council of Foreign Ministers. It was hoped that this would involve fewer delays, since it is not desirable for any nation to have its foreign minister absent for long periods at a time, whereas ambassadors live abroad and there is less pressure to act expeditiously. It was hoped, also, that negotiations might prove more flexible, since foreign ministers have wider discretion than ambassadors.

The establishment of the United Nations at San Francisco in 1945 was a second factor. The idea had long been discussed; a major effort was necessary to crystallize it into an institution. The President lent the prestige of his presence and the Secretary of State headed the American delegation. The foreign ministers of most of the founding nations were there. From this precedent arose the practice of having the chief diplomatic officer of each great nation attend some of the sessions of the General Assembly each year. While they are usually held in New York, they take the Secretary away from his desk; when they are held abroad, his absence is that much longer.

A third factor subsequently added other occasions for absence. For the first time the United States entered upon peacetime alli-
ances. NATO holds a vital place in the diplomatic as well as the military structure of the West. The Secretary of State is a member of its Council and obligated to attend. SEATO, in like manner, requires his personal attention. Multi-national negotiations, which the sessions arising from these alliances typify, are a temptation to make the Secretary the negotiator. Norman H. Davis, as Special Ambassador in the Hoover administration and as our first Ambassador-at-Large in the Roosevelt administration, performed the function of negotiator in multilateral meetings very acceptably. Nevertheless, the practice of diplomacy by conference has united with increasing speed and comfort of air travel to induce more and more participation by the Secretary.

Soviet tactics supplied still other occasions for Secretarial negotiation. Ambassadors from the Soviets have not had wide discretion; they seem to have been treated, for the most part, as diplomatic errand boys. There has been an almost equal tendency for the top officials of the Kremlin to see foreign ambassadors only sparingly; even when they were admitted, there was marked reluctance to discuss important matters. The Soviet rulers prefer to deal directly with the President, bypassing even the Secretary of State and their own Foreign Minister. World public opinion clearly demands every sacrifice to mitigate tensions. This was dramatized by the demand for a conference “at the summit” and by Churchill’s obvious distress that it was so long deferred. Finally, the President yielded, but attached stringent conditions governing length of time, procedures and topics, and made plain that he would refuse to engage in negotiations personally.

The Secretary of State cannot be so firm in setting limits of that sort. This subjects him to the Soviet habit of protracting “negotiations” interminably, while making repeated propaganda speeches. Such tactics are tolerated because there is always a chance that the forms of patience and the reality of persistence will produce a desirable result. One instance was the sudden Soviet reversal from obstructing an Austrian peace treaty to haste in signing one. The unexpected revision of position on the “package deal” regarding enlarged membership in the United Nations was another. A series of such episodes during the cold war could be mentioned; they explain why patience hopefully waits its reward. Apparently the Soviet Foreign Minister has no such exalted status in the policy-determining hierarchy that his frequent and long absences are as inconvenient as those of the Secretary of State.
Such are a few of the principal reasons for the extraordinary percentage of the time recent Secretaries of State have been away from Washington. Before assessing the benefits and disadvantages it is essential to emphasize that peripatetic diplomacy on the part of foreign ministers is not unique with the United States. Since the phenomenon is not confined to the United States, much less to the present Secretary, there must be a more fundamental reason than any so far mentioned. The underlying cause is to be found in the drastic change in the political structure of the current world, and an even more profound change in the political climate. In the nineteenth century there were many fewer nations, and their order of precedence in international matters was reasonably well established.

The United States was not one of the Great Powers. That we did not so regard ourselves was strikingly symbolized by the fact that, though the Constitution spoke of "ambassadors," Congress did not authorize that grade until 1893. When we started to change our legations to embassies, only four were selected, London, Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg—all capitals of recognized Great Powers. Within the memory of men still active in British public life, Britain had only eight diplomats of ambassadorial rank. That supplies us with a rough estimate of the number of "Great Powers" which made world policy. Britain, for example, still had a vast empire; the dominions had no ministers of external affairs. All that is now changed. Since 1900, 47 new nations have been recognized and eight have passed from the scene. Eighteen of the new nations have appeared since the Second World War.

The political climate has altered even more. It used to be no disgrace to be one of the lesser Powers. The United States could have sent ambassadors earlier; we did not choose to. Until last year Switzerland sent ministers, and was content. But now every nation wants to be treated as a first-class Power and send and receive ambassadors. This is a symptom of acute sensitiveness about status; states are insisting upon equality so far as dignity is concerned. True, the "Great Powers," arbitrarily defined, have a permanent seat and a veto in the Security Council of the United Nations. But the leadership of the Great Powers is no longer meekly accepted. There is a vigorous assertiveness on the part of the smallest and weakest which must be handled with great sensitiveness and consideration. Each has one vote in the United Na-
tions Assembly; more important, voices never heard, or long muted, now speak—sometimes in strident tones—in that world forum.

These circumstances have led to a fundamental decentralization of diplomacy, and the habit of making visits is firmly engrafted upon current practice. The peregrinations of Khrushchev and Bulganin are well known and conspicuous. A colleague of the Canadian Minister of External Affairs spoke of him, kindly, as "ubiquitous." It is said that during his first two years as Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles met Mr. Eden, then Foreign Secretary, no less than 17 times. During his brief tenure at the Foreign Office, Mr. Harold Macmillan was abroad much of the time. While our Secretary of State was at the SEATO meetings, it transpired that the percentage of time spent away from London by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the present Foreign Secretary, was almost identical to the absentee percentage of Mr. Dulles.

Many high-ranking foreign officials come to the United States; a casual inspection of the guest book at the Council on Foreign Relations shows visits from a large number of prime ministers and foreign ministers in a single year. It may be thought that this is not surprising since the United States is so dominant a power in world affairs. New Delhi, on the other hand, is the capital of a nation newly independent, with no great military or economic strength though an important strategic position. Yet in the course of less than two years it has been visited by heads of state or foreign ministers of 19 nations, including all that have any claim to be called Great Powers. And the Secretary-General of the United Nations also went to India. No further evidence need be adduced to show how gross is the error in supposing that travel is characteristic of the American Secretary of State alone. The practice of concentrating an extraordinary amount of negotiation in the hands of the foreign minister is endemic.

There are some favorable consequences of this acquired habit. When it succeeds there are unquestioned economies of time and effort. The fewer minds a policy formulation passes through on the way toward action, the less chance there is of distortion, misunderstanding and consequent confusion. Historically, peacetime alliances have been held together more by external pressure than by bonds of common interest. Whenever the immediate threat is relieved, or even appears to be, the difficulties of concerted action increase. These circumstances accentuate the ad-
vantages of high-level contact. The fabrication of concerted policy proceeds more expeditiously (a relative term, in diplomacy) when meetings are at the highest practicable level. Former Secretary James F. Byrnes remarked that "dividends from personal contacts between leaders flow in long after" the conference ends. After his trip to Asia in March, Mr. Dulles spoke of the importance of talking "intimately with the leaders of each of these ten countries" and asserted that "talking face to face is the best way yet invented for enabling men to understand each other." The same theme appeared in the Anglo-Soviet communique as Khrushchev and Bulganin left London: "one of the important factors in strengthening international confidence consists in personal contacts between leading statesmen, which have produced positive results." This point of view has been universally accepted; instances of its expression could be multiplied indefinitely.

Sometimes, however, there are what used to be known in business as "Irish dividends"—deficits. High-level contacts may accentuate difficulties arising not so much from substantial difference in national interest as from personal vanities, irritability and a whole host of like negative factors. Those who have attended such meetings know there are personal frictions as well as personal friendships. The issues are national, not personal; the tendency to personalize them obscures to some degree their national character. It makes a change from one Secretary to another more serious than it ought to be in the light of the continuing nature of the national interest and the broadly nonpartisan character of foreign policy. To focus the spotlight on one individual rather than upon the State Department and the Foreign Service as a continuing organization tends to make the political standing or the ambition of the Secretary assume a larger share of public attention than is wise. Personal idiosyncrasies should play as small a rôle in the pursuit of national policy as possible. At best it will not be inconsiderable, but to make policy and negotiation appear to be a one-man affair tends to dislocate public opinion.

Among the basic reasons for a professional foreign service and for great emphasis upon the somewhat archaic ritualism of international communication is precisely the need to dissociate the public interest from personal qualities, so far as is practical. The resort to personal diplomacy in our time has produced many instances where the clash of personalities retarded the accommodation of international issues.
There are certain characteristics of the American Government, moreover, which make protracted absence by the Secretary disadvantageous—even if the total is composed of brief, frequent dashes to and from the corners of the earth.

In the first place, the Secretary of State is the principal adviser to the President on foreign affairs. Many issues, however, do not readily yield to simple classification as "foreign" or "domestic;" indeed, as time goes on the distinction becomes ever more difficult to maintain. For these and other reasons there has always been competition for influence among the President's advisers, official and personal. Inevitably that rivalry has been intensified since the United States became a World Power with many complex interests everywhere.

The Secretary of the Treasury, for example, has often been exceedingly influential. The competition between Hamilton and Jefferson in Washington's administration is historic. Cordell Hull's "Memoirs" are eloquent on the point; the Secretary of the Treasury, he said, "often acted as if he were clothed with authority to project himself into the field of foreign affairs and inaugurate efforts to shape the course of foreign policy in given instances." He showed a "persistent inclination to try to function as a second Secretary of State." This came to a climax in the "Morgenthau plan" for postwar Germany, embodied in a memorandum initialed by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at Quebec, and markedly at variance with Hull's ideas. He was much less sensitive to interpositions by Secretary of War Stimson, a former Secretary of State, with whose views he was in close agreement. In preparing his own ideas regarding the treatment of postwar Germany he had kept in touch with Stimson on the ground that the War Department had a vital interest in the matter. When the "Morgenthau plan" was approved, Stimson was even more angry than Hull and had more influence in convincing Roosevelt of the basic error.

It is no secret that the present Secretary of the Treasury takes a "very, very active rôle" in the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, and by his attitude on foreign aid exerts great influence. There is not the same friction with the Secretary of State, or intrusion upon his functions, but there is, nevertheless, a feeling in some sections of the Department of State that the views of the Treasury are often decisive. Other cabinet officers have sought to influence the President. Hull complained that Vice President
Wallace, as head of the Board of Economic Warfare, "sought to appropriate the chief economic war functions of the State Department." During the Truman administration, as Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Wallace got specific presidential approval for a speech on foreign policy that brought Secretary of State Byrnes to the point of threatening to resign.

The vast multiplication of agencies during the war, many of them dealing with situations abroad, also multiplied the occasions in which the President was influenced in vital matters of foreign policy by advisers other than the Secretary of State, who said his work was "bedeviled" by them. The continuation of such separate agencies since the war has perpetuated dangers of confusion in giving advice to the President. Such diffusion of powers and responsibilities makes it the more essential for the Secretary to remain at home and maintain constant contact with the members of the Cabinet and with every agency by which he can keep in touch with the views of others and take them into account in advising the President. One new development emphasizes this point. The National Security Council has been made the principal forum for the discussion and determination of basic policy. It now meets regularly and frequently, with the President himself in the chair. When the Secretary of State is absent no substitute can bring to these critical meetings the weight and authority that go with his office.

There have been many well-known instances where persons holding no office exercised a large influence upon foreign policy through direct contact with the President. The most famous was Colonel House, during the administration of President Wilson; indeed, he often seemed to act as an alter ego. At first Raymond Moley, and later Sumner Welles, had great influence with President Roosevelt, to the irritation of their superior officer. Harry Hopkins, with no State Department appointment, was also a powerful influence; it was Hopkins who inserted what Hull called the "isolationist plank" in the Democratic platform of 1940. Nevertheless, despite that episode, Hull said he "never had any friction, much less clashes, with him."

Clearly, when the Secretary is absent for very considerable periods all the various competing influences have much freer play. Secretary Acheson seems to have been aware of this. He revived the post of ambassador-at-large, which had lapsed after the retirement of Norman Davis; when Philip Jessup was appointed it was
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stated that he would represent the President and Secretary of State in United Nations meetings and in other multilateral negotiations such as the Council of Foreign Ministers. The principal reason for reviving the post was to enable the Secretary of State to stay close by the President and serve more continuously as his adviser on foreign affairs than had some of his predecessors. Not all these hopes were fulfilled, for foreign ministers of other nations were reluctant to accept any substitute for the Secretary. Nevertheless, the appointment may well account for the fact that Mr. Acheson’s percentage of absences was lower than the postwar norm. His influence with the President in matters of foreign policy suffered no such challenge or diminution as had been evident with some of his predecessors.

When the Secretary is away the Under Secretary cannot exercise this central function of advice to the President with the authority of the Secretary himself. This is the more true since, in contrast with early precedents, the Secretary takes with him a very large section of the high-level officers of the Department. In the meeting of Foreign Ministers at Geneva last fall, the following were in attendance in addition to the Secretary: The Counsellor of the Department, the Assistant Secretary for Policy Planning, the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, the Assistant Secretary for Public Information, the chief legal officer, the chief cultural officer, as well as the President’s Special Assistant on Disarmament Problems. Of course, each of these officers took some of his chief aides. One ambassador was in attendance through the entire meeting, another part of the time. This serious drain on the Department is now virtually standard practice.

Several results flow from such a departmental exodus. The Acting Secretary is in the position of a substitute quarterback with a third string team to direct. Further, the "ordinary" work of each absent officer’s section of the Department is to some extent hampered or crippled; taken as a whole this amounts to a serious dislocation of departmental work. Moreover, advice to the President, under these circumstances, will inevitably hew closer to precedent; it will certainly lack the imaginative initiation of new tactical approaches which is often vital to success.

After his status as adviser to the President, the second principal function of the Secretary is to keep under continuous over-all review every phase of our world-wide responsibilities and opportunities. In the present state of world affairs this alone is a back-
breaking task. Over-concentration upon one area seriously im-
pairs the balance; and when so many principal officers are also
over-concentrating upon the same phase, the effect in producing
imbalance is multiplied.

Indeed, it is fair to say that the greater the Secretary’s capac-
ity as a negotiator, the more serious is the distraction from his
broader task. For negotiation is not just a gift; it requires intense
preparation and absorption in the immediate matter, mastery of
details as well as broad outlines. This can be acquired only by
neglecting, for the time being, other phases of our foreign rela-
tions, all of which are constantly changing in perspective. Inev-
itably he loses touch with things done in his absence and may
miss the significance of events in other areas. But for one such
absence, it seems inconceivable that identical notes would have
been sent to Greece and Turkey last September after Turkish
riots in Istanbul and Izmir had done so much violence to Greek
sensibilities. Under less tense circumstances, the haste and conse-
quent inadvertence which occasioned such an error might not
have had damaging results. In the delicate balance of forces pres-
ently operative in that area, however, any dislocation of relation-
ship produces serious consequences. The repercussions of that
error have not yet been fully realized. In somewhat the same
category is the mysterious Goa statement; any benefit to our rela-
tions with Portugal was greatly outweighed by its disastrous
effect in India.

So swift is the movement of events that even brief absences
can seriously dislocate policy formation. The crisis over Cyprus
reached an acute stage with the exile of Archbishop Makarios,
the orientation of Jordan was put in doubt with the dismissal of
General Glubb, the conference of Colonel Nasser with the heads
of Syria and Saudi Arabia still further heightened tension be-
tween Israel and the Arab nations—all while the Secretary of
State and the British and French Foreign Ministers were absent
in other parts of Asia. Essential and urgent political and military
joint planning had to take place without them. So far as the
United States was concerned it had to go forward in the absence,
also, of the Assistant Secretaries of State in charge of policy
planning and of the interests of this country in that explosive
area. The result was not only delay in reaching conclusions until
their return; it required that joint policy be designed while the
principal architects were elsewhere.
A third disadvantage of absence from Washington is its effect upon our own ambassadors abroad. They are responsible for keeping the Secretary informed. One remarked that he had learned to time his most important dispatches to catch the Secretary (and his area Assistant Secretary) in Washington. Another used baseball terms to give vent to his feelings: I feel I am in there pitching with no one catching.

Sometimes it seems to be forgotten that while it is easy to fly the Secretary to a foreign country, it is just as easy to fly an ambassador back to Washington for consultation and instructions. When our foreign relations were relatively simple their conduct was decentralized. Now that they are manifold and complex they tend to be more and more concentrated in one man. This is inherently wrong because it impairs the Secretary’s opportunity for balanced review and supervision; it fails to take advantage of better means of communication.

When the post of ambassador-at-large was discontinued, it was said to be in consequence of a policy decision to rely more on regular ambassadors, even in special situations, and to use fewer special ambassadors. Events have shown that the policy was not deeply imbedded. Not only has the Secretary often gone abroad, but the Under Secretary, the Deputy Under Secretary and several Assistant Secretaries have also traveled a good deal; and there have been a number of special envoys with the rank of ambassador.

It might be possible so to manage visits of the Secretary as to increase the prestige of ambassadors. That this has not been the usual result is evidenced by their continued unhappiness at being temporarily superseded as the President’s personal representative. There is no novelty in this feeling. Regular ambassadors have always resented “intrusion” into the area for which they have responsibility. The bitterness of Charles Francis Adams during the Civil War is classic. Modern diplomats share his feeling that special visits make the ambassador appear inadequate and reduce his prestige. It has an effect, too, upon the foreign offices with which we deal; some in critical areas have shown a marked tendency to hold out rather than conclude an arrangement with the ambassador, in the hope (too often fulfilled) that someone will come out from Washington bringing larger concessions. Instances of this tactic are not difficult to find.

Moreover, one trip breeds another. This has been particularly
true in the case of Secretary Dulles. In a press conference on February 28 of this year he spoke of the imminence of a trip "to South Asia and the Far East that will take me to ten countries, two of which I have never visited before." This statement highlights one very significant difference between the travels of the present Secretary and the journeys of his predecessors. Mr. Dulles has visited more United States missions abroad than any other Secretary, probably more than all his predecessors added together. He seems to feel some sort of obligation to "touch base" at all of them during his tenure of office. The airplane has become more than a convenience; it is a temptation.

Despite the speed of modern travel, each individual call is very brief. So far as the nation visited is concerned, there is hardly sufficient time for important diplomatic exchanges. It is doubtful that such stopovers reflect enough thoughtful consideration to be considered properly even as courtesy calls; their pace is quite out of keeping with the ceremonial tempo of Asian hospitality, for example. The timing and length of stay are often very sensitive matters which a hurried schedule cannot fully take into account; a shorter stay in New Delhi than in Karachi is a case in point. These hasty stops contrast sharply with the conduct of the representatives of the Soviet. Khrushchev and Bulganin took two weeks to see India; they traveled widely, they not only saw officials but gave attention to the intellectuals and, even more, assiduously cultivated people in the mass. They spoke innumerable times and always in appreciative terms regarding the culture and attainments of the Indian nation. They did not give the appearance of wanting anything but friendship; they asked no guarantees and no alliances.

There is room for good-will visits and for sending special embassies to participate in national celebrations and ceremonies. Nevertheless, the growing habit of reducing the resident ambassador to a social symbol and transmitter of communications denigrates his legal status as the personal representative of the head of the state and makes it needlessly difficult for him to fulfil his important and wide-ranging duties.

Frequent and protracted absences of the Secretary of State from the Department limit his contact with the ambassadors of other nations accredited to this Government. Of course, much of the business with the Department is carried on by embassy and departmental officers; not even every occasion for an ambassador
to visit the Department requires the presence of the Secretary. In some instances, however, it is important. When, late last year, the ambassadors of Egypt and Israel were "summoned" to the Department, the purpose was to give a stern warning and dramatize the interest of the United States in the preservation of peace in an explosive area. When they were met by an Assistant Secretary, no amount of skill on his part could substitute for the authority and prestige of the Secretary himself. Certain purposes can never be served by a deputy; when such tasks are committed to others the effect is to treat foreign ambassadors as a good deal less than the personal representatives of the heads of their states.

Even more serious is the break in essential contacts with the Congress. There is an Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations; he performs many useful functions. But there are other relationships, in a bipartisan policy, which the Secretary himself must establish and maintain. The tension between the Executive and Legislative branches is historic. Washington presided over the Constitutional Convention, and was extremely cautious in setting precedents; yet he sought to attend the Senate to discuss a proposed Indian treaty—to get its "advice" as a prelude to its "consent." He was rudely treated; when a second visit failed he never returned, nor has any President since. This breach has made the Senate, if anything, even more sensitive to its prerogative in foreign affairs. The House, as early as Jay's Treaty, tried to use the power of the purse to gain an influence upon foreign policy, and was rebuffed by a slender margin. Ever since the effort has been renewed from time to time and in diverse ways.

Members of both houses want to be briefed by the Secretary. In his three years in office, Mr. Dulles met with committees or subcommittees of Congress 120 times. It is, perhaps, significant that there were 70 such meetings in his first ten months as Secretary, and only 50 in the more than two years since.

Moreover, numbers of appearances do not fully compensate for absence at strategic times. Last November, for example, the Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy of the Joint Committee on the Economic Report held six days of hearings. The statement of the chairman in opening the hearings contains the following words:

I need not repeat how important we feel these hearings are to the strengthening of our foreign economic policy. It was for this reason, hoping for a strong policy statement at the highest level, that we invited the Secretary
of State to appear to deliver an opening address. We are all aware that he is
away.... We suggested that the new Deputy Under Secretary for Economic
Affairs might come. But the Department felt that Mr. Prochnow is too new
in his job to be familiar with the entire range of matters which might come up.
We suggested alternatively the name of Mr. Thurston B. Morton, Assistant
Secretary, who is very well known and respected here on the Hill. He is in
Geneva, too.

... Senator Flanders aided us by requesting the appearance of Mr. Herbert
Hoover, Jr., the Under Secretary. Mr. Hoover was unable to come.

Such passages are, to put it mildly, unfortunate.

In any event, formal appearances are not enough; there is need
for personal and social contact as well, a process that requires
time and fails when it is hurried. The maintenance of a reasonable
degree of bipartisanship makes frequent and free communication
with influential Senators and Representatives absolutely vital.
Fruitful contacts for this purpose cannot occur in either public
or "closed" sessions of committees; they can be effective only
when nothing has to be done for effect. This needs private con-
versation with no object save enlightenment, which should be
mutual. A Secretary can profit by what he hears as well as win
support by what he says. It is no accident that the period during
which successive Secretaries have been away so much has been
one of great difficulty in maintaining this contact. The effort to
do so, in addition to all other things which demand his personal
attention, adds to an already crushing load. Of course, even with
the Secretary in Washington, relations may become strained. Mr.
Acheson as Assistant Secretary was popular with the Congress;
after he became Secretary his relations with it deteriorated.

Absentee Secretaries cannot give the help essential to depart-
mental officers in dealing with the Bureau of the Budget and ap-
propriations committees of the Congress. Historically, the De-
partment of State is starved. By ill-luck, when it became a vital
instrument, at the time of both world wars, neither President
Wilson nor President Roosevelt gave it strong support; both were
too much inclined to personal diplomacy to appreciate the impor-
tance of the continuos, professional organization.

There is, therefore, a desperate need for the Secretary to pull
a laboring oar, as do the heads of other departments who are
seldom absent. The Secretary cannot make the departmental
budget, but he can fight for decent salaries and proper allowances,
for adequate manpower, for a building appropriate to the task
and efficient in operation. No Deputy Under Secretary, however
able, can substitute for the personal interest, attention and effort of the Secretary himself. There is a direct relationship between the fiscally adverse position of the Department and Foreign Service and the long absences of recent Secretaries. So tenuous, indeed, had become the relation of the Secretary to the operations of the Department since the war that it was even suggested that his office should be moved back to the old State Department building—bringing him into closer contact with the President, but separating him even more from his own organization.

Any separation from his own department is very serious indeed. There are significant energies and valuable talents in the professional staff of the Department of State. Sometimes they seem to be buried there. Secretaries of State have been known to go outside the Department for advice and assistance, just because they did not know where to find them in the Department, or, in any event, how to get free, informal access to them. It has always been difficult for such staff talents to be fully exploited by the Secretary, because the thoughts and works of his staff come to him through so many bureaucratic filters that sometimes the substance is all but gone. Nevertheless, some Secretaries have been able to identify able officers and bring them and their ideas to the surface. It cannot be done in absentia.

Finally, the itinerant Secretary does not, in practice, improve flexibility in negotiation. It may be true, indeed, that making the Secretary the principal negotiator actually impairs flexibility. An ambassador can alter his position more readily; it is a hoary device to put forward a position, under instructions, "on his own responsibility," and when that position proves untenable he may have "new instructions." Ambassadors, moreover, can work outside the glare of publicity. They can work in secrecy, which always makes for more flexible negotiation. A prime example was the settlement of the thorny Trieste problem by agreement in October 1954, after eight months of confidential diplomatic interchange. It should remind us that the business of advancing the interests of the United States can sometimes be accomplished in quiet, in confidence—even in "secret," though that has become an odious word. The Secretary, on the contrary, moves abroad in a blinding glare of publicity. It is "open diplomacy" with a vengeance. In the conference of foreign ministers at Geneva last fall, The New York Times alone had five topflight correspondents on hand. Other papers made similar efforts. The "brief-
ing” after each session, the calculated leaks by different delegations and the assiduity of seasoned news gatherers made nearly every word spoken in the conference room publicly available. Under such circumstances, every slight alteration of position is a “defeat,” any lack of tangible progress is a “failure.” If there is no “hard news” the public reads a dispatch saying the Secretary looked cheerful, accompanied by extended speculation as to the sources of his inexplicable optimism; or he looked gloomy, with equal ruminations about possible causes—very soft news indeed.

Over-dramatizing negotiation creates an expectation of tangible results. One of Secretary Hull’s wisest remarks was, “There are no real triumphs in diplomacy.” Ambassador Merchant, while Assistant Secretary, enlarged upon this theme. “Diplomatic victory,” he said, “is something of a contradiction in terms, since a successful diplomatic effort usually involves an accommodation of interests with other countries, and its fruits may be dissipated by the claim that one country or another has achieved a ‘victory.’” International issues of such magnitude as to draw the Secretary into negotiation are complex, and have long, stubborn histories. Rapid “progress” is likely to be a superficial evasion of reality. Often the most important result of a negotiation is clarification, an improved estimate of the situation. What appears in short perspective as a “failure” may well prove a step toward a better approach.

Putting the spotlight upon every step in a long process, moreover, tends to overemphasize the “initiative.” The initiative is valuable, but not always essential. In football many a team with the most first downs and yards gained has nevertheless lost the game. There are times in negotiation when it is desirable to adopt tactics equivalent to a punt in football. Letting the other side carry the ball—that is, assume the initiative—may be a profitable manoeuvre. It becomes almost impossible when immediately there are loud cries of “failure” and “defeat.”

Negotiation in the spotlight by the Secretary inevitably invites propaganda by the Soviets. It is almost impossible not to respond with counterpropaganda. It seems an anomaly to banish the U.S.I.A. from the Department of State because its function is propaganda, and then put the Secretary in a position where he is forced to make propaganda. Yet that is one result of current practices.

No one who has followed events closely since the outbreak of
the First World War can expect to eliminate the attendance of the Secretary of State at all international conferences. The practice is not unique with this nation, and cannot be discontinued unilaterally. Some relief might, however, be achieved by joint action. At one of their frequent meetings the foreign ministers could talk over the dilemma in which they all find themselves and set informal limitations upon excessive travel. For example, they might agree that all foreign ministers would attend the early weeks of each United Nations Assembly. This would facilitate mutual acquaintance and provide opportunity for private and personal discussions of a very wide range of common concerns. Secretary Hull used the Pan American conferences to develop such personal contacts with the Latin American foreign ministers, and Secretary Marshall followed much the same practice when attending the United Nations Assembly.

It is particularly important that our Secretary of State take the initiative in such a curtailment, for absenteeism has gone further in the United States than in any other Great Power. Moreover, it is less to our interest to perpetuate it upon the present scale than to the interest of other nations. The practice can and should be curbed, in the interest of more continuity in advice to the President, a better chance for the Secretary to maintain over-all perspective, a more reasonable share in government cost for the department of the government which must "wage peace," better contacts with Congress in maintaining bipartisanship, more fruitful relations with ambassadors accredited to the United States and better relations between the Department and members of our own Foreign Service scattered about the world.

The vital requisites for the effective discharge of the duties of the Secretary of State are perspective and wisdom. Those qualities find their most effective employment when there is at least a modicum of leisure for quiet reflection. Such qualities are not always accompanied by the rugged constitution and physical endurance required for perpetual motion. There should be such review and reform as to make it possible for men of normal strength hereafter to carry the load.